

Exploring intergenerational relational experiences during shared preparation of traditional food in rural communities

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree *Master of Arts in Research Psychology* at the North-West University

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PREFACE

This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Research Psychology. Section B is presented in article format and will be submitted to the **Journal of Intergenerational Relationships (JIR)**. The candidate chose to write this article in accordance with the guidelines of this journal as the chosen research topic is in line with the aim and scope of the journal. The Journal of Intergenerational Relationships (JIR) is the forum for scholars, practitioners, policy makers, educators, and advocates keeping abreast with intergenerational relationship research, practice methods and policy initiatives.

JIR was chosen for publication because it is one of the journals that focus on the intergenerational field integrating practical, theoretical, empirical, familial, and policy perspectives. It also reflects on interactions that occur in familial and non-familial settings, such as community, workplace, school, etc. The findings may be applied to gain an in-depth understanding of interactions in intergenerational relationships for the purpose of practice and program development.

INTENDED JOURNAL AND GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

This article (Section B) will be submitted to the *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships* (JIR) for possible publication.

Instructions to Authors

Research Papers

□ Include relevant literature, research question(s), methodology and results.

Manuscript length: The manuscript may be approximately 25 typed pages, double-spaced, (5000-7000 words including references and abstract). Under special conditions, a paper with >7000 words could be considered.

Manuscript style: References, citations and general style of manuscripts should be prepared in accordance with the APA Publication Manual, 6th edition.

Manuscript preparation: All parts of the manuscript should be typewritten, double-spaced, with margins of at least one inch on all sides. Number manuscript pages consecutively throughout the paper. Authors should supply a shortened version of the title suitable for the running head not exceeding 50 character spaces. Each article should be summarized in an abstract of no more than 100 words. Abbreviations, diagrams and reference to the text in the abstract should be avoided.

Cover page: The cover page must include the following:

- Indicating the article title plus authors' academic degrees, professional titles, affiliations, mailing addresses and any desired acknowledgment of research support.
- ABSTRACT no longer than 100 words.

Below the abstract, provide 3-5 key words for bibliographic access, indexing and abstracting purposes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To **GOD my Father**: You said these words to me “I have chosen you, so do not fear, for I am with you, do not be dismayed, for I am your GOD; I will strengthen you and help you, **I will uphold you with my righteous hand** [Isaiah 41:9-10]”. All my gratitude goes to you, all the glory and praises be to you. **I thank you.**

Dr Chigeza Shingairai, my supervisor, I wholeheartedly thank you for pushing me so hard. Your encouragement, support and patience in me, made a huge difference. I also thank you for believing in me.

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Dr Nicole Claasen, one of the principal investigators of the sub-study which my study falls under, thank you for letting me be part of the project.

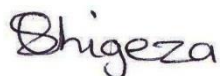
To the participants of Vaalharts, thank you for welcoming us into your community and for your willingness to share your experiences and rich knowledge of the Batswana traditional cooking. Without your involvement, this study would not have been possible.

Financial assistance of the project from South African Sugar Association (SASA) and Africa Unit for Trans-disciplinary Health Research (AUTCHeR) North West University is acknowledged.

To my family and friends, thank you very much for your constant love and support. To my mother **Vivian Nokuzola Molokoe**, my brother **Michael Molokoe** and my father **Johannes Molokoe**, your unconditional love is beyond description. Your voice has always reassured me, I truly appreciate.

PERMISSION TO SUBMIT ARTICLE FOR EXAMINATION PURPOSES

The candidate elected to write an article, with the support of her supervisors. I hereby give my permission that this article may be submitted for examination as per requirements of the degree of Master of Arts in Research Psychology.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shingairai Chigeza". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small dot at the end.

Dr Shingairai Chigeza

DECLARATION BY RESEARCHER

I hereby declare that this research, **Exploring intergenerational relational experiences during shared preparation of traditional food in rural communities**, is my own effort, and that all sources have been fully referenced and acknowledged. Furthermore, I declare that this dissertation has been edited and proofread by a qualified language editor. Finally, I declare that this research was submitted to Turn-it-in and that a satisfactory report has been received stating that plagiarism had not been committed.



Carol Katlego Molokoe

DECLARATION BY LANGUAGE EDITOR

I hereby declare that I have language-edited the manuscript

**Exploring intergenerational relational experiences during shared preparation of
traditional food in rural communities**

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OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie maak deel uit van die *Kom eet saam met my, Batswana-maaltye! Intergenerasie-verhoudings word ondersoek deur die uitruiling van voedselkennis in landelike Suid-Afrika*, 'n sub-studie van 'n wyer projek, die *WIN-platformprojek*. Die algehele oogmerk van 'Come dine with me Batswana meals!' (Kom eet saam met my Batswana-maaltye!) was om hedendaagse tradisionele voedselkennis en die oordra van hierdie kennis deur intergenerasie-verhoudings tussen vrouens van landelike huishoudings in die Vaalhartsstreek van Suid-Afrika, te ondersoek. As gevolg van die globale veroudering van bevolkings, sal generasies waarskynlik langer verskillende interpersoonlike ruimtes deel. Beperkte studies het die verhoudingsondervindinge van generasies van onverwante lede van gemeenskappe deur tradisionele voedselprogramme, ondersoek. Hierdie navorsing is belangrik, want dit fokus op psigososiale gedrag op 'n gemeenskapsvlak en strewende om daartoe by te dra dat toepaslike intergenerasie-programme gevind word in die daaglikse bestaanskonteks waar generasies hulself bevind. Hierdie studie begin deur die verwantskapervaring van vrouens van verskillende generasiegroepe, wat aan die gedeelde voorbereiding van tradisionele kosse deelgeneem het, te ondersoek. Die navorsing word gerugsteun deur Self-Interaksie- en Groepsteorie (SIGT) en Algemene Sisteemteorie (AST). 'n Kwalitatiewe studie was gedoen onder 60 vroulike deelnemers, waarvan 20 die ouer generasie verteenwoordig het (50 jaar en ouer), 20 uit die middel generasie (21 tot 49 jaar) en 20 jong mense (14 tot 20 jaar) uit twee Suid-Afrikaanse gemeenskappe. Valspan wat in 'n semi-stedelike omgewing geleë is en Sekhing in 'n landelike omgewing, is onderskeidelik deel van die Vaalhartsstreek in die Noord-Kaap en die Noordwesprovinsie van Suid-Afrika. Data is ingesamel in Fase 2 (Intergenerasie-aktiwiteit) en Fase 3 (Fokusgroepbespreking) van die wyer WIN-platformprojek en is tematies geanaliseer. Bevindings het onthul dat

generasieelede almal negatiewe subjektiewe persepsies gehad het met betrekking tot interaksies vóór die intergenerasie-aktiwiteit (IGA) en het positiewe subjektiewe persepsies gehad ná die IGA. Verandering in die emosies van die generasieelede het bygedra tot die verandering in persepsies en bevestig daarom dat oop sisteme die potensiaal het om te verander, gegewe die regte omstandighede. ‘n Verdere gevolgtrekking is dat groepsidentiteite, wat voorheen op stereotipiese en veroordelende wyse beskryf is, ook verander het, met die gevolg dat generasies ‘n sirkulêre benadering aangeneem het. Gevolglik kon alle generasies hulself op ‘n kollektiewe wyse identifiseer. Die slotsom is dat die voorbereiding van tradisionele kosse as ‘n intergenerasie-aktiwiteit gewys het dat daar ‘n ander manier is hoe mense teenoor mekaar in verhouding staan en hoe hulle op mekaar reageer en hoe hulle deelname aan die aktiwiteit kan help om verskillende generasies te verenig en hul in staat stel om as ‘n groep te identifiseer: “ons en nie hulle nie”. Daar word aanbeveel dat meer navorsing gedoen word wat verskillende generasies in staat mag stel om mekaar op ‘n positiewe wyse te beskou en om sodoende spanning te verlig en verhoudingsinteraksies te verbeter.

Sleutelwoorde: Algemene Sisteemteorie; Intergenerasie-aktiwiteit (IGA); Landelike SuidAfrika; Selfinteraksie Groepteorie; Tradisionele Voedselkennis (TFK/TVK); Voedselvoorbereiding; Vrouens.

SUMMARY

This study forms part of the *Come dine with me Batswana meals! Exploring intergenerational relations through the exchange of traditional food knowledge in rural South Africa*, a sub-study of a broader project, *WIN platform project*. The overall aim of ‘Come dine with me Batswana meals!’ was to explore current traditional food knowledge and the transmission of this knowledge through intergenerational relations among women from rural households in the Vaalharts region of South Africa. Due to the global ageing of populations, the generations are likely to share different interpersonal spaces for longer. Limited studies have explored the relational experiences of generations of unrelated community members through traditional food programmes. This research is important because it focuses on psychosocial behaviour on a community level and aims to contribute to finding appropriate intergenerational programmes for daily-living contexts in which generational members find themselves. This study sets out to explore the relational experiences of women from different generational group who participated in the shared preparation of traditional food. The research is underpinned by Self-Interactional and Group Theory (SIGT) and General Systems Theory (GST). A qualitative study was conducted with 60 women participants, 20 of whom represented the older generation (50 years and older), 20 middle generational members (21 to 49 years) and 20 younger people (14 to 20 years) from two South African communities. Valspan, situated in a semi-urban area, and Sekhing, in a rural area, form part of the Vaalharts region in the Northern Cape and the North West Province of South Africa respectively. Data were collected in Phase 2 (Intergenerational Activity) and Phase 3 (Focus Group Discussions) of the broader WIN platform project and were thematically analysed. Findings revealed that the generational members had all experienced negative subjective perceptions in relation to relational interactions before the

intergenerational activity (IGA), and had experienced positive subjective perceptions after the IGA. Change in generational members' emotions contributed to change in perceptions and, thus confirmed that open systems have the potential to alter, given the right circumstances. A further outcome is that group identities previously described in stereotypical and judgemental terms also changed, as a result generations adopted a circular approach. As a result, all generations were able to identify themselves in a collective manner. In conclusion, the preparation of traditional food as an intergenerational activity has demonstrated a different way in which people relate and interact and how their participation in the activity can assist in uniting different generations and enabling them to identify as a group: "we and not they". It is recommended that more research be undertaken on intergenerational activities that might enable different generations to view one another in a positive way in order to alleviate tension and improve relational interactions.

Keywords: Food preparation; Intergenerational Activity (IGA); General Systems Theory (GST); Rural South Africa; Self-Interactional Group Theory (SIGT); Traditional Food Knowledge (TFK); Women.

SECTION A INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Globally the ageing population has increased from 9.2% in 1990 to 11.7% in 2013 and will continue to rise to 21.2% by 2050 (United Nations Population Division, 2013). According to the United Nations (2015), population ageing occurs as a result lower fertility and increased longevity. Over the years, the fertility rate has decreased globally from 5.0 to 2.7 children per woman, and is expected to decline by 2.1 children per woman in future (United Nations Population Division, 2013). Declining fertility in combination with increased life expectancy has reshaped the age structure of the population in the world by moving the relative weight from youthful populations to older populations (United Nations Population Division, 2013).

Longevity, “the attainment of the extreme limits of potential lifespan” of the older population (Cevenini et al., 2008, p.1393), has also increased. The longer lives of older people are a result of attention to healthy life styles, with more people refraining from smoking, eating a plantbased diet, limiting alcohol consumption, getting adequate sleep and engaging in regular physical activity (Gregory, Gill, & Petrella, 2013; Moore et al., 2012; Mullen & Hall, 2016). In a study conducted in the USA genetic factors were also found to be contributing to longevity (Budovsky et al., 2013).

Older populations in developing countries are growing at a faster rate than in developed countries (Pillay & Maharaj, 2013). In Africa the older population is increasing at a rate of 2.27% a year (Pillay & Maharaj, 2013). In South Africa, specifically, older people currently represent 8.4 % of the total population, accounting for 4, 54 million people (Statistics South Africa, 2014). Due to the growth of ageing populations, members of different generations will be sharing their lives for longer and in different social contexts. According to McCrindle (2012), a generation is defined as a cohort of individuals born in a similar period of time, and who share a comparable age and are shaped by particular events, developments or trends. The relationships between members of

different generations are referred to as intergenerational. There are two types of intergenerational relationships, namely familial and historical (Biggs, 2007). Familial intergenerational relationships consist of interactions between people who are related, for example, blood relatives and their conjugal units of husband, wife and children (Conger, Conger, & Martin, 2010). Historical intergenerational relationships refer to people who are not biologically related but share the same historical moments (Eke, 2003; Stone, 2008). In this study, people who share historical moments, therefore unrelated generational members, were included in because in this specific South African context historically-related generations have close connectedness as a community and it is not uncommon for unrelated people to be part of multigenerational households (Chilisa, 2012).

Various internal and external forces have shaped intergenerational relations in Africa, such as: migration, unemployment, Apartheid, and an implicit social contract. Migration has widened the social distance between generations (Makiwane, 2007). According to Haden (2016), large numbers of particularly highly skilled younger family members have left South Africa for Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries to find work. About 47,000 of these skilled professionals were teachers and education professionals, and in addition 10,800 health and life science professionals have also left South Africa since 2006 (Haden, 2016). Among these are middle generations migrating to other countries, which indicates physical distance between the generations. According to data recorded by the OECD and based on Code For SA, the United Kingdom gained more than 18,500 skilled South Africans, and Australia gained more than 13,000 (Haden, 2016).

In a study conducted on intergenerational relations among African migrants who had moved to South Africa, UK and France, it was found that the majority of family members from Northern Africa (e.g. Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia) had migrated to European or other African countries for a variety of reasons. These included escaping from political instability and obtaining a better education or suitable employment and economic reasons (Attias-Donfut, Cook, Hoffman, & Waite,

2012). Irrespective of the reason for migration, the geographic separation of family members living and working abroad has weakened the practical support network between generational members and has impacted on the sharing of knowledge and skills from generation to generation (Alber, Van der Geest, Geest, & Whyte, 2008; Morrison, 2006).

Unemployment among the youth globally, and particularly in South Africa, is increasing at an alarming rate. Statistics South Africa (2014) indicated that 25.2 % of the country's population are unemployed and that 70.7% of the unemployed are aged between 15 and 34 years. Consequently, many younger people find themselves in a position in which they cannot strike out independently but are forced to stay with older people and depend on their financial support. Many of these older people receive a means tested pension (South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), which they often use to support these multigenerational households (Kimuna & Makiwane, 2007). For obvious reasons tensions then develop between older people who have some money and younger people (even if they are young adults) who find themselves dependent on them (Makiwane, 2007).

In South Africa, Apartheid has also shaped intergenerational relationships. People in South Africa were divided according to race and relocated forcefully to designated areas for specific racial groupings (Surplus People Project South Africa, 1983). This, according to older people, disrupted the previous close communal intergenerational relations and contributed to intergenerational tension (Roos, Keating, & Kolobe, 2014). In addition, pre-Apartheid, the older people of today were subjected to inferior or no education (Kannenberg, 2014) while in the post-apartheid dispensation of younger people have increased educational opportunities and consequently regard themselves being in a better position (Makiwane, 2007) – a situation that contributes to tension in the relational interactions between older and younger people.

Intergenerational relations are also informed by an implicit social contract (Aboderin, 2006). According to this, it is expected that resources will be distributed downwardly from the older

generation to younger generations. However, when people grow old and become unable to care for themselves, the expectation is that younger people will be caring for them in fulfilment of the social contract (Aboderin, 2006; Makiwane, 2007). An interesting scenario has emerged however:

younger people still express sentiments of honouring the ideal of the social contract, but in reality many older people are uncared-for and neglected (Van der Geest, 1997b). According to Seekings and Moore (2013), older people feel that their elder children are not providing them with the support they deserve. For example, Sheldon (2011) reported that an 80-year-old woman had been locked up by her son in a tiny room with no water and no electricity. Some children from rich families persuade their older parents to move to stay in old-age homes, while some children from poor families force their elders to hand over their pension (Sheldon, 2011). Various researchers have reported on such strained intergenerational relations in Africa and South Africa (Makiwane, 2007; Muia, Maina, & Mwangi, 2013; Seekings & Moore, 2013).

Intergenerational Activities/Programmes

One approach to dealing with strained intergenerational relations is to develop and implement programmes involving members of different generations. These programmes could include familial or non-familial younger and older generations (Generations United, 2007; Luk, 2007; UNICEF, 2013). Intergenerational programmes have therefore become the focus of research on a global scale with the aim of rebuilding a greater sense of community solidarity between generations (Generations United, 2007).

Some intergenerational programmes identified in literature consist of sharing experiences or knowledge, facilitating learning, and developing skills (Generations United, 2007; Hewett, Roos, & De Klerk, 2016; Luk, 2007). A few examples will be discussed: Nortjè (2013) conducted a study using ethnodrama as an intergenerational activity. The perceptions of younger people were recorded before and after the ethnodrama. In another intergenerational programme, 'Computer training

corps', young people volunteered to teach older people how to operate a computer with the aim to transfer technological skills (Kaplan, 2001).

An analysis of intergenerational activities revealed that for the most part only one generational group seemed to benefit from the intergenerational intervention (Hewett, 2014). Research in which both generational members participate as equal partners in a joint activity is scarce, context-unspecific, and involved familiarly-related people (Hewett et al., 2016).

Therefore, in this research, an intergenerational programme was planned to involve three different generational groups jointly in the preparation of traditional food. The assumption guiding this research is that when people engage on an individual level (and not on a group level), they will observe the generational other in terms of other group identities such as (being a woman) in accordance with group and interactional psychology theories (Chigeza, De Wet, Roos, & Vorster, 2013; Vorster, Roos, & Beukes, 2013). In creating an opportunity to engage in a shared food preparation activity, it is anticipated that awareness of other group identities (apart from age) will be facilitated. It is not clear, however, how unrelated women representing three different generational members of the same community experience relational interactions in a joint intergenerational programme in which they were involved in preparing traditional food. It is an attempt to use an activity that is part of all generational members' frame of reference and to involve various unrelated generational members in face-to-face interactions (MacCallum et al., 2010).

Preparing traditional food as an intergenerational activity is based on the theory of Traditional Food Knowledge (TFK), which refers to cumulative teachings and experience gained from the processes of sharing food knowledge from generation to generation (Kwik, 2008). In this context, the preparation of traditional food as an intergenerational activity aims to focus on joint decision-making for obtaining and distributing food, and who prepares, serves and eats it (Almerico, 2014).

Although the role of men in traditional food transmission is acknowledged, this research will focus only on women, for two reasons. First, it is assumed that TFK is transferred predominantly between women because cooking, in this socio-cultural context, is traditionally associated with the role of women. Second, the objectives of this study do not include the exploration of gender roles.

Traditional Food Knowledge integrates multiple disciplines, such as social, cultural, agricultural, and educational (Shariff, Zahari, Salleh, Ishak, & Muhammad, 2012). In the social sciences, the transfer of traditional food knowledge involves the development of personal skills, enhancement of community capacity and the development of identity (Shariff et al., 2012; Kwik, 2008). Culturally, food knowledge is associated with traditional food-related activities, e.g. its preparation, pattern of eating and beliefs, shared by a particular group of people and which give meaning to their cultural identity (Shariff et al., 2012). This cultural identity is then transferred from generation to generation (Shariff et al., 2012).

The only known intergenerational activity involving Traditional Food Knowledge was developed by Shazali, Shariff, Zahari, Norazmir, and Muhammad (2013). The programme was implemented during the Malay festival in Malaysia, as a way of passing down and sustaining the Malaysian culture between related generational members (i.e. parent-child relationships). Therefore, the present research study differs in the sense that the focus is on unrelated women from different generational groups.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theories explaining intergenerational relations include Solidarity-conflict, Ambivalence, General Systems Theory (GST) and Self-Interactional Group Theory (SIGT). Solidarity-conflict and ambivalence theories provide a lens through which to view intergenerational relationships (Bengston, Giarrusso, Mabry, & Silverstein, 2002). GST explains complex intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intergroup and human nature interaction according to systemic principles (Laszlo

& Krippner, 1998). SIGT is used to explain the relational/interactional nature of intergenerational relationships (Roos, 2016).

The theory of intergenerational solidarity describes intergenerational relations in six dimensions, that is: (a) affectual solidarity; (b) associational solidarity; (c) consensual solidarity; (d) functional solidarity; (e) normative solidarity; and (f) structural solidarity (Bengtson & Luscher, 2001; Bengtson & Oyama, 2007). Due to critique that families do not only have solidarity but also experience intergenerational tension, the theory of intergenerational solidarity was later complemented and proposed as the solidarity and conflict model (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991). Lüscher (2011) also explained intergenerational relations in terms of the theory of ambivalence. This proposes that there are two types of ambivalence in intergenerational relations, namely: (a) structural ambivalence, which is an individual's location in the social structure; and (b) psychological ambivalence, which describes positive and negative emotions experienced by an individual when faced with structural ambivalence. Intergenerational relations are regarded as a social system constructed through dynamic, interrelated and mutually-influencing processes (Evans & Prilleltensky, 2007; Prilleltensky, 2014). In this intergenerational programme the notion of the General Systems Theory (GST) that if one part of the system changes, changes in other parts of the system can be expected, is adopted (Laszlo & Krippner, 1998). If the equilibrium of a system is changed (through input such as an intergenerational intervention), the system will strive to restore its homeostasis. This is done by either limiting behaviours that produce anxiety or by encouraging behaviours to manage that anxiety (Kline, 2002).

Intergenerational relations for the purpose of this research are regarded as interdependent, reciprocal and continuous communicative interactions between members of different generations (Beukes, Roos, & Vorster, 2013; Roos, 2016; Stacey, 2001, 2003). Therefore Self-Interactional Group Theory (SIGT), will be used as a guiding theoretical framework for this research. SIGT

proposes that the relational interactions between generational members as well as the subjective experiences of the people who participated in the interactional relation can be observed simultaneously (Roos, 2016).

SIGT developed from interactional theories, relational psychology and communications theories (Hargie, 2011; Stacey, 2007; Stacey & Griffin, 2006; Watzlawick, Bavelas, & Jackson, 2011, and suggests that relational interactions can be studied from a pragmatic point of view, focusing on the intra-personal, inter-personal and group units of analysis (Roos, 2016). “The intrapersonal unit of analysis consists of generational member’s subjective experiences (feelings/emotions) in relation to either an effective relational interaction or perceived problem with the relational interaction. These emotions are viewed as the consequence of the impact of the relational interaction between individuals” (Roos, 2016, p.8). Though the individuals may not be aware of this impact on relational interactions, they always register it consciously or unconsciously and act on the basis of the meaning their interpretation yields (Vorster, 2011). The inter-personal unit of analysis consists of five descriptive levels (Roos, 2016): (1) the context in which the interaction takes place; (2) the definition of the relationship; (3) relational qualities (e.g. observable behaviour); (4) social goals and psychological needs as well as strategies to address the goals and needs; and (5) interactional processes which can be described as an interactional dance between interacting people (Roos, 2016). These descriptive levels will be explained in detail below:

Context indicates who is interacting with whom, where and for what purpose. Further, properties of verbal and non-verbal communication gain meaning within a particular context and within a particular interaction between generational members (Roos, 2016). In this study, three unrelated generational members, referred to as G1 (older generational members), G2 (adult children), and G3 (grandchildren or younger generation) will interact for the first time, for the purpose of sharing traditional food knowledge in a communal setting.

Definition of the relationship refers to the way in which control in communicative interaction emerges between individuals (Haley, 1963).

The following three relational definitions are distinguished:

- A complementary-defined relationship is a relationship in which one of the participating parties assumes a leading position and the other a follower position;
- A parallel-defined relationship in which participating parties alternate between the positions of leader and follower.
- A symmetrically-defined relationship, whereby the above relational definitions may be rejected by interacting members in the interaction. In this kind of relationship both generational members compete for control in the relational interactions.

Relational qualities refer to the observable behaviour between the generational members.

Examples of these qualities include: perspective taking, empathy, unconditional acceptance, congruence, presentation of the self, rigidity/flexibility, locus of control and emotional closeness/distance.

Perspective taking is the ability to adopt the perspective of others involved in the interaction. A lack of perspective taking is described as adopting a self-centred position (Vorster et al., 2013; Grandin & Barron, 2005). Empathy includes cognitive and affective processes during the interaction (Roos & Wheeler, 2016). Cognitive empathy implies that an individual is able to think and imagine the situation from the other's point of view, while affective empathy implies communication of compassion and understanding of the generational other's emotional experience (Howe, 2013). Unconditional acceptance implies accepting and respecting generational others as they are, without judgement or evaluation. For example, the question that could be used to identify this relational quality is: To what extent does the generational other criticize the other? Congruence refers to a state in which the verbal messages communicated by members of one generation correspond to the non-verbal messages of the other generational members. Incongruence therefore

implies inconsistency between verbal and non-verbal messages communicated between the generations. Presentation of the self implies the presentation of the self in the act of communication by means of verbal and non-verbal cues (Vorster, et al., 2013). The manner in which the generational member presents herself may provoke either confusion or a clear picture in the receiver, and if an incongruent or vague message is communicated by the generations, using non-specific statements, or if they lie it will elicit misunderstanding or rejection from the generational other (Vorster, et al., 2013).

Rigidity/flexibility refers to the diversity of people's relational repertoire and their ability to accept change and to respond to changing conditions (Grandin & Barron, 2005). It also implies the manner in which generational members open up to or resist being influenced by the interaction (Roos, 2016). For example, the question that would be used to identify this relational quality is: To what extent is the generational other able to move their own position in response to the generational other's messages? Locus of control manifests internally and externally and is based on the subjective evaluations of rewards and punishments in a particular context (Ross & Mirowsky, 2002). A person with an internal locus of control believes he/she can influence situations and their outcomes, while an individual with external locus of control blames the outside forces of the environment for everything; and emotional closeness/distance implies that people interact on a continuum between being "too close" or "too far" at the extremes and experience a certain level of emotional distance/closeness (Vorster et al, 2013).

Social goals. People interact with one another to pursue social goals or to address their psychological needs. According to Deci and Ryan (2000), social goals are generated and observed from the interpersonal domain, while needs are generated from the intra-personal domain, but manifest on the interpersonal domain. The degree to which people satisfy their needs in inter-individual relationships is linked to their psychological well-being and mental health or discomfort (Roos, 2016).

The group unit of analysis describes intra and inter-group behaviour. This unit of analysis include both intra-and intergroup behaviour since generational interactions imply by definition that group dynamics are involved. Intra-group behaviour refers to the interaction between members of the same generation group, whereas inter-generational group behaviour indicates what occurs between specific generational groups (Roos, 2016).

SIGT proposes that all relational interactions are embedded in broader environments which can include the social, cultural and economic (Roos, 2016). The political environment in which the intergenerational relations of participants in this study were embedded should be contextualized against conditions in South Africa, before and after 1994, when Apartheid ended and the country became a democracy. During Apartheid, many people were forcibly moved according to race, with extreme and far-reaching ramifications for intergenerational relations (Chigeza, Roos, & Puren, 2013; Roos et al., 2014). The political belief system demanded that non-white people were separated, excluded and discriminated against on personal, interpersonal, political, economic, educational, health and social perspectives. People who grew old during that period were affected most, in the sense that they were required to live in rural or peri-urban areas and had to care for their grandchildren while facing the economic migration of younger adults (Cohen & Menken, 2006). In spite of the new democratic society, with free association and opportunities for all, older persons would seem to encounter the effect of the current on-going endorsement of youngsters' rights as negative (Roos, 2016).

The economic environment describes the economic situation of a community which, in this instance, is characterized by hardship of the entire community. Numerous older persons had been prohibited from obtaining appropriate education and training, and they had also encountered the effect of employment reservation, which limited their economic opportunities. As a result, the majority of older persons in that community now depended heavily on receiving a social pension. Furthermore, high rates of unemployment among the young adults were found to be prevalent.

According to the statistics, more than half of South Africa's young adults are unemployed, and they, too, rely on the pension of older persons (Altman, Mokomane, & Wright, 2014).

The broader environments inform the social environment in which interactions between members of different generations take place. Social interaction between generations has been affected by the poor economic conditions, unemployment, HIV/AIDS and other socio-political dynamics of the participating community. So, the fact that the young participants were unemployed and are still financially dependent on older adults placed them at a disadvantage, with reduced social bargaining power in terms of their relationship with the older persons (Roos, 2016).

SIGT proposes that interactional relationships between the generations are circular because they communicate through verbal and non-verbal messages (Hargie, 2011; Roos, 2016). However, as the system as a whole cannot be described at one and the same time, the principle of punctuation or focus will be used (Vorster, 2011). The focus of this study rested on the experiences of each generational group, G1, G2, and G3, as they shared preparation of traditional food.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Globally and in South Africa generational tension and disjointed relationships would seem to prevail among different generations (Ferreira, 2011; Kite, Stockdale, Whitley, & Johnson, 2005; Lin & Bryant, 2009; Nortje, 2013; Roos et al., 2014). Harper (2016) indicates that it was mainly older British people who voted to leave the European Union (EU), whereas the younger people indicated that they would prefer to remain part of the EU. Consequently generational members find themselves having conflicting views, and as the full consequences of Brexit become clear, it is expected that intergenerational tension will be increasing (Whitely & Clarke, 2016).

Intergenerational tension was also observed by Van der Geest (1997b) in Ghana. According to this research, older people complained as they asserted that younger people do not care for them anymore. One older person in this research mentioned "*not having money for food, and that her*

children are far away and hardly visit her” (Van der Geest, 1997b, p.34); while the other explained that in the past they used to take care of their own parents, but that nowadays it was different; some of his own children are around, yet he has not seen them for a while (Van der Geest, 1997b).

In South Africa, previous research indicates strained intergenerational relations between related and unrelated generational members. For example, in research conducted by Muia, Maina, and Mwangi (2013) it was found that adolescents (G3) viewed older people (G1) as burdensome, while older people also expressed dissatisfaction in relation to adolescents’ compliance with expected social-cultural norms of care and respect (Hayes, 2015; Oosthuizen, 2014; Roos & Wheeler, 2016). Furthermore, tension seems to increase when generational members move for control in their relational interactions (Roos, 2016). The tension seems to intensify when younger people develop more autonomy and independence and challenge older people’s relational definition (Oosthuizen, 2014; Roos & Wheeler, 2016). This finding was also supported by Ferreira (2011), in that older people are likely to apply a directive, authoritative way of relating to the younger generations and expect them to accept a submissive position in relation to the older generation (Hoff, 2007; Opong, 2006). However, the manner in which generational members, that is, the older generation, middle generation and the young generation, experience relational interaction during shared preparation of traditional food is unknown. Accordingly, in order to explore the intergenerational relational experiences, this study is guided by the research question: What are the relational experiences of members of three generational groups after they have shared in the preparation of traditional food? The aim is to explore the intergenerational relational experiences of different generations of women as they reflect on what happened in the course of shared preparation of traditional food. The findings of this study will contribute to reducing current gap in identifying appropriate intergenerational programmes in the contexts in which generational members find themselves.

Contextualizing the Study

This section aims to orient the reader to the research design, research context, participants, procedure and data collection methods followed in the sub-study *Come dine with me Batswana meals! Exploring intergenerational relations through the exchange of traditional food knowledge in rural South Africa*. This present study forms part of the sub-study. The overall aim of the sub-study ‘*Come dine with me Batswana meals!*’ *Exploring intergenerational relations through the exchange of traditional food knowledge in rural South Africa* was to explore the current traditional food knowledge and the transmission of this knowledge through intergenerational relations among women from rural households in the Vaalharts region in South Africa.

METHODOLOGY

An interpretive descriptive design was applied (Sandelowski & Thorne, 2008). Qualitative research was used to understand how different generational members construct their experiences in relation to a social reality that makes sense to them (Merriam, 2009). In addition, qualitative research also examines things or people in their natural settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Furthermore, the design is used to provide a perspective of a circumstance and to analyze the situation under study by acknowledging the constructed and contextual nature of human experience which, at the same time, allows for shared realities (Maree, 2007; Merriam, 2009). With this approach, researchers were able to interpret different participants’ intergenerational relational experiences during the shared preparation of traditional food.

Research Context and Participants

The study was conducted in Valspan and Sekhing, two communities that form part of the Vaalharts region in the Northern Cape and the North West Province of South Africa respectively. During a needs assessment, the Black (mostly Setswana-speaking) communities in the region, including Valspan and Sekhing, were identified as vulnerable in terms of high unemployment,

37.7% (Stats SA, 2012), critical health and food security status, and inadequate education and training facilities (Coetzee, 2011). The sustainable diet project conducted in Vaalharts in 2014 indicated a shift in dietary patterns, causing the knowledge and consumption of traditional food plants gradually to decline (Claseen, 2014). However, literature on indigenous and traditional food plants in South Africa shows their potential in contributing to food security and eradication of malnutrition through the use of traditional foods (Van der Hoeven et al., 2013). The study ‘Come dine with me Batswana meals!’ explored current traditional food knowledge and its transmission through intergenerational relations among women from rural households in the Vaalharts region in South Africa. The assessment in the Vaalharts region also highlighted the needs of older persons, especially with regard to health and welfare, as well as need for the young people to be motivated into getting involved in volunteering work to uplift their communities (Coetzee, 2011). In the Valspan and Sekhing communities, as in other rural communities in South Africa, there are multigenerational households, including members of different generations familial and non-familial. In South Africa it is not uncommon in rural and low-resourced communities for multigenerational living to represent 32.2% of three or more generations living together (Stats SA, 2016). The majority of these communities’ members often depend on the older persons’ government social pension payments (Hoffman, 2014).

Participants were recruited for this study with the assistance of gatekeepers in the two communities. The participants were selected by means of purposive sampling. The selection criteria were: (a) women representing three generational groups, using the indication of life expectancy (Life Expectancy, 2015), (b) women aged 50 years and older (G1); women aged 21 to 49 (G2), and adolescents ranging in age from 14 to 20 years (G3). Sample sizes of 20 women of each generation were initially included, but if data saturation was not obtained more people were going to be sampled. A total of 120 women took part in the study.

Procedure and Ethics

Ethical clearance for the present study was obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) in the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University (Potchefstroom campus), and allocated ethical number NWU-00060-16-S1. Two employees of Vaalharts Water Affairs (VWA) who were assigned as local field assistants and had worked previously on the sustainable diets project (as part of the WIN platform project) served as gatekeepers to initiate contact with community members. Local field assistants distributed the flyers in the Valspan and Sekhing communities and explained information in flyers about the research project to interested persons. Willing participants were invited to a meeting in which researchers introduced themselves and explained the study objectives and proceedings. Participants were informed of the purpose of the research study and data collection, about their rights, the risks and benefits of the study, and the voluntary nature of participation and signed the consent forms before taking part. In the case of a minor participant, informed consent was obtained from the parent/legal guardian. Thus minors without their signed assent and the consent of parent/legal guardian did not qualify to participate in the study. Transcriptions of the study were anonymized and participants' identifying information was removed to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Participants were informed that they would not be identified with names in the dissemination of findings. Data was collected through focus group discussion so partial confidentiality was emphasized to all group members and why it was significant for all involved to respect confidentiality. Furthermore, in this study the benefits outweighed the risks. Some of those benefits include, purposeful and on-going exchange of traditional knowledge; creations of meaningful intergenerational relations and interactions through community engagement; enabling the recognition of the benefits of mutual dependency of the young and old; and an evidence based foundation which will inform policies to protect traditional food knowledge and to create environments that facilitate intergenerational relations. Participants were also informed that hard copies of the informed consent forms and field notes will be stored in a locked up cabinet and electronic data will be kept on a password and virus protected computer at the North West University, and all of the data will be automatically destroyed after seven years after

the publication of the results. No financial remunerations were made available for participation in this study. Research procedures were carried out in the communities, thus, there were no expenses for transport. Throughout the course of field work the research team was accompanied by a bilingual (English/Setswana speaking) field assistant, who assisted with translation during talks and research proceedings.

Data-collection method

Data were collected in four phases of the sub-study. In Phase 1, focus group discussions were conducted to assess knowledge of and attitudes to traditional foods of each generation. Phase 2, intergenerational activity (IGA), involved meal planning, cooking and evaluation of traditional dishes, using traditional and locally available foods. In Phase 3, focus group discussions (FDGs) were held; and in Phase 4 the World Café was conducted. In Figure 1 a visual representation of all these phase is presented. To provide context to the study, all four phases are described.

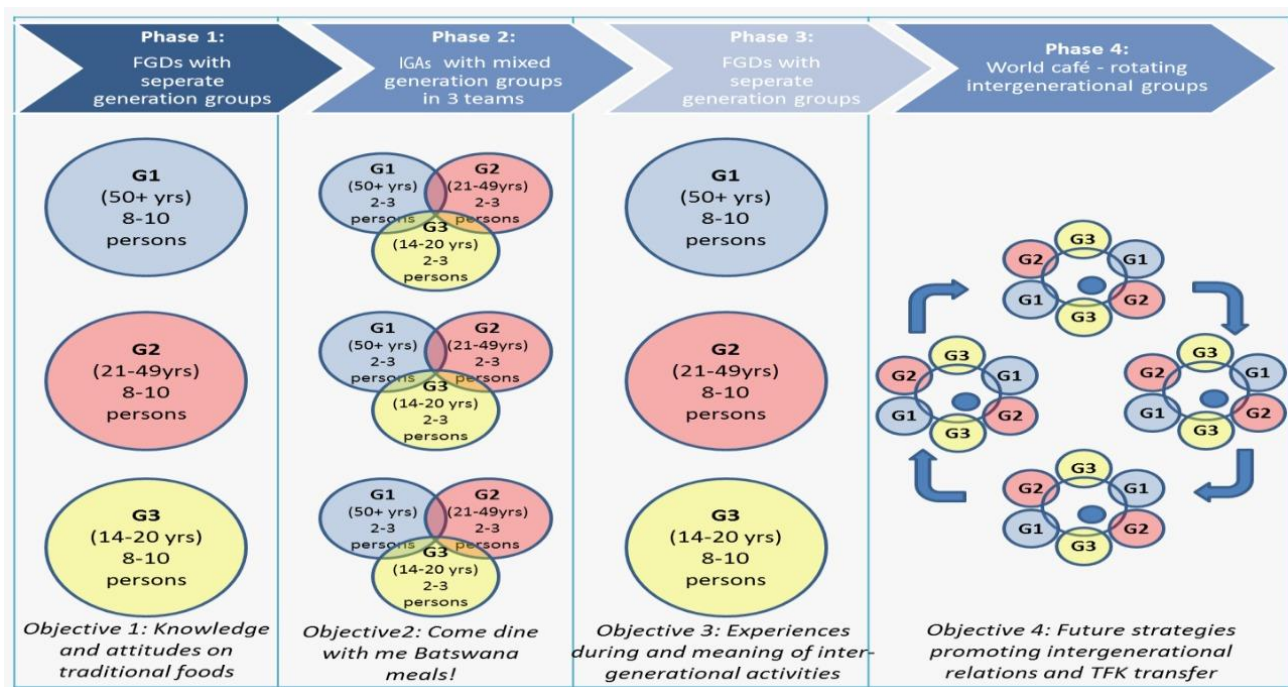


Figure 1: Study designs with four phases of data collection.

Phases of Data Collection

Phase 1: *Focus group discussions (FGD) on knowledge of and attitudes to traditional foods.* Two focus group discussions, with eight to 10 women of the same generation, were held in each community, resulting in a total of six FGDs per community, to explore the attitudes and perceptions of different generations with regard to their knowledge of and attitudes to traditional foods and dishes. The separate group discussions also enabled the three different generational groups to address their concerns separately. The research team asked open-ended guided questions to guide the focus group discussions. Some of the guided questions asked during data collection session were: What do you understand by traditional foods? What type of traditional foods do you use for traditional dishes? What other locally available foods do you use for these traditional dishes? During which occasions do you normally cook or eat traditional dishes? And after their responses on these questions, the researcher finally asked: “Where do you get the ingredients (traditional foods and locally available foods) for these traditional meals?”

Phase 2: *Intergenerational Activity (IGA) - Come dine with me Batswana meals!*

During Phase 2, all three generational groups came together to plan, prepare, eat and evaluate traditional meals. This activity was inspired by the TV reality show ‘Come dine with me’ (ITV Studios and Shiver Productions). Hence it was named ‘Come dine with me Valspan/Sekhing community’. Participants in previous FGDs were asked to group themselves into teams of mixed generations, with two to three representatives of each generational group in a team.

To create rapport among the different generational groups, the meals planned during the previous FGDs (Phase 1) were discussed among group members and consensus was reached on three meals to be prepared during the IGA activity. Each generation consisted of nine to 12 participants, with three to four representatives of each generation. The IGA activities included planning, purchasing and preparing the traditional meals. Throughout the activities one member of the research team accompanied each team of generational members, to observe intergenerational

communication, engagement, interaction and ways of food knowledge transfer. Observations of interactions and activities were recorded as field notes, and supplemented with photos and video recordings. These observational recordings included collaborative dialogue, posture distance, sitting arrangements, non-verbal cues (e.g. body language, silence), reciprocal engagement and the discovery of each other's perspectives. The IGA activities were performed in and outside the community halls. Three to four separate cooking areas were established outside, with fireplaces, tables and chairs. Participants were asked to bring their own cooking utensils. Some of the food they prepared were bought from the supermarket and other food like vegetables were from the participants' gardens. They were asked to prepare a meal which consists of one starch dish, one meat dish, one vegetable dish and a beverage. The meals were served inside the halls.

When meals were ready to serve, all groups came together and described their dishes, the participants enjoyed all meals together and evaluated each other's dishes according to taste, look and traditional food components included in the meal.

Phase 3: *Focus group discussions to reflect on IGA.*

In this phase, focus group discussions were held with three generational groups separately to allow participants to reflect on the food preparation activity. This was also done to allow them to express their experiences of working together as different generational groups without being inhibited by the presence of the other generational members. Six focus groups per community (12 in total) were conducted, with two groups of each generation in the two communities. There were 10 generational members in each focus group discussion. Some of the guided questions included:

Reflecting back on the preparation and making of traditional food with other generational members, what stood out for you?

Please tell me about your experiences, specifically related to your interaction with other generational members?

What in the interaction did you find meaningful and why?

Thinking about your perceptions about the generational other BEFORE the activity, what do you think about them now and why?

Please think about your relationship with the generational other and indicate where you would place yourself in relational to the generational other, before and after the activity on a hypothetical line from 0-----10, where 0 indicates a negative experience and 10 a positive experience, and explain the positioning.

Phase 4: *World Café (WC) for creating future strategies for effective meaningful interactions and relationships across different generations though traditional food knowledge transfer.*

The World Café is a creative process that enables knowledge and ideas to be shared by allowing participants to engage in a collaborative dialogue around questions that matter to real-life situations in their community (Brown, 2002; Schiefferf, Isaacs, & Gyllenpalm, 2004). World Café thus serves as a method of establishing active network of collaborative dialogue around questions that matter in service to real work (Margultes, 2015). In Phase 4, the WC method was used to create a living network of conversation and action around TFK and its contribution to intergenerational relationships in future. While exploring the past and existing experiences in the transfer of TFK across generations, a sense of collective responsibility in making decisions can be fostered. World Café enabled the groups of participants to identify innovative actions that are sustainable in promoting intergenerational relationships through transfer of TFK in their community.

The same group of nine to 12 participants who participated in Phase 2 (IGA), three to four from each generation, sat at World Café tables. Each table was equipped with A3 paper and coloured pens. At each table a facilitator acted as a host and encouraged the group to express their ideas and thoughts visually by writing and drawing on the paper provided. The facilitator also encouraged active listening and gave all members of the group the opportunity to express their views. During this WC each group then firstly explored this question: What experiences do you

have of transferring TFK across generations in your community? After their discussions in their groups the researcher then asked: “What are the potential intergenerational activities that may be done in your community to continue the transmission of TFK and to nurture intergenerational relations?”

After 30 minutes of discussion, each group moved to the next table, while the facilitator remained in place with the documented ideas. The role of the facilitator was to welcome the new group and to explain the key insights, themes, and questions developed by the previous group, and then to encourage the new group to continue working on these ideas, and add their own perspectives. Every half hour participants rotated to the next table, enabling cross-pollinating of ideas, until they arrived back at their original table. The group was then asked to explain what had been written on the paper and to summarize emerging themes and ideas. Finally all groups were encouraged to converge as a bigger group and share their discoveries with each other by presenting their summaries for each question.

Data obtained from all four phases were found not to be appropriate in response to the present research question. Therefore, only data collected in Phase 3 (FDGs) of the sub-study were analyzed for the present study. Phase 3 (FDGs) will be fully described again in the next chapter, which is the manuscript to be submitted for examination following journal guidelines.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, literature indicates the growing population of the older people due to declining fertility and accompanying longevity. Intergenerational relations in this study are informed by global and national unemployment rates of younger people, migration of younger family members, Apartheid, and a changed social contract. The chapter also highlights the importance of intergenerational programmes in building and promoting meaningful intergenerational relationships. The findings of this present study will be presented in article format

in the *Intergenerational Relationships Journal* and will highlight the contributions made to the fields of psychology and gerontology.

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SECTION B**MANUSCRIPT FOR EXAMINATION****Exploring intergenerational relational experiences during shared preparation of traditional food in rural communities**

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Abstract

This study aims to explore relational intergenerational experiences during shared preparation of traditional food. Qualitative data were obtained from 120 women representing unrelated generational groups from two South African communities. Data were collected through Intergenerational activity (IGA) and focus group discussions. Textual data were analyzed thematically. Findings indicated that generations' negative subjective experiences changed to positive after IGA. Generations initially adopted rigid positions, which were later transformed into positive group dynamics. Consequently, circular approach was adopted whereby the generations identified themselves in a collective manner. These findings may be used to improve relational interactions and reduce tension among the generations.

Keywords: Food preparation; Intergenerational Activity (IGA); Rural South Africa; Self Interactional Group Theory (SIGT); Traditional Food Knowledge (TFK).

INTRODUCTION

This study forms part of the sub-study *Come dine with me Batswana meals! Exploring intergenerational relations through the exchange of traditional food knowledge in rural South Africa*. The overall aim of ‘Come dine with me Batswana meals!’ was to explore current traditional food knowledge and its transmission through intergenerational relations among women from rural households in the Vaalharts region of South Africa. The present study looks at the relational experiences of unrelated women representing different generations after they shared in the preparation of traditional food.

This study is significant in light of the fact that populations worldwide are growing older (United Nations Population Division, 2013). Over the past 2000 years, a lower birth rate and longer life expectancy have reformed the age structure of populations globally by moving the relative weight from the young to the older population (United Nations Population Division, 2013). This increased life expectancy of older populations is promoted by a change in lifestyles, such as eating a healthy balanced diet and maintaining regular physical activity (King & King, 2017). Across various countries, including South Africa, populations have been ageing at a faster rate year after year (Pillay & Maharaj, 2013; Statistics South Africa, 2014).

This means that people from different generations will share their lives for longer. A generation is defined as a cohort of individuals conceived within a comparative time frame, and who are almost identical in age and were shaped by specific events, advancements or patterns (McCrinkle, 2012). There are two types of intergenerational relationships, namely familial, which consist of interactions between people who are related, for example, blood relatives and their conjugal units of husband, wife and children (Biggs, 2007; Conger, Conger, & Martin, 2010); and historical, which refers to people who are not biologically related but share the same historical moments (Eke, 2003; Stone, 2008). In this study, participants who share historical moments, therefore unrelated generational members, were included. In this South African context,

historically-related generations have close connectedness as a community and it is not uncommon for unrelated people to be part of multigenerational households (Chilisa, 2012).

Various internal and external forces have shaped intergenerational relations in South Africa. An internal drive, for example, that has formed intergenerational relations is an implicit, unspoken social contract in which it is agreed that assets or resources are to be provided downwardly from the older generation to younger generation who in return care for older people (Aboderin, 2006; Makiwane, 2007). However, the high unemployment rate of the youth has compromised this implicit social contract. Statistics South Africa (2014) found that 25.2 % of the country's population are unemployed and that 70.7% of the unemployed are aged between 15 and 34 years. Consequently, many younger people rely on older people's means-tested state pension (South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) for support (Kimuna & Makiwane, 2007).

Apartheid serves as an example of an external force that shaped intergenerational relations in South Africa (Muia, Maina, & Mwangi, 2013). In terms of Apartheid legislation, people were divided according to race and relocated by force to dedicated, demarcated areas for those specific racial groupings (Surplus People Project South Africa, 1983). This, according to the older people, has disrupted the previous close communal intergenerational relations and has contributed to intergenerational tension (Roos, Keating, & Kolobe, 2014). Intergenerational tension also developed as a consequence of racial discrimination against non-white people who were previously subjected to inferior educational opportunities. Consequently, many older people today are illiterate and are treated in a discriminatory manner by younger people who have had more educational opportunities since Apartheid ended in 1994 (Makiwane, 2007).

Intergenerational Activities/Programmes

To promote intergenerational solidarity, intergenerational programmes have become the focus of research globally (Generations United, 2007), by involving either familial or non-familial younger and older people (Generations United, 2007; Luk, 2007; UNICEF, 2013).

Intergenerational programmes have so far consisted in providing shared experiences or knowledge, facilitating learning, and developing skills or facilitating dialogue (Kaplan, 2001; Nilsson & Herman, 2016; Nortje, 2013). In general, it would appear that intergenerational activities/programmes mostly benefit only one generational group in a particular programme (Hewett, 2014). Research studies in which members of both generations participate as equal partners in a joint activity are scarce, context-unspecific, and most frequently involve familiarly related people (Hewett, Roos, & De Klerk, 2016).

The current study set out to involve generational members in an intergenerational activity in which they themselves are co-constructing the intervention. The intergenerational activity identified for the study is the joint preparation of traditional food, which is based on the theory of Traditional Food Knowledge (TFK). This refers to cumulative edification and experience gained from the processes of sharing food knowledge from generation to generation (Kwik, 2008). In this context, the intergenerational activity, the preparation of traditional food, focused on the joint decision making of how food is obtained and distributed, and who prepares, serves and eats it (Almerico, 2014). It is an attempt to make use of a familiar activity that is part of all generational members' frame of reference, and to include only non-biological generational members in face-to-face interactions (MacCallum et al., 2010). Although the role of men in traditional food transmission is acknowledged, this research focused only on women. It is postulated that TFK in this particular community is transferred between women because cooking, in this socio-cultural context, is traditionally associated with the role of women. Moreover, the objectives of this study do not include the exploration of gender roles. By involving generational members in their roles as women it was anticipated that they will observe the generational other in terms of their identity as women and not only of their group identities of younger and older people (Chigeza, De Wet, Roos, & Vorster, 2013; Vorster, Roos, & Beukes, 2013). However, it was not clear how unrelated women representing three diverse generational members of the same community experience relational

interactions in the joint preparation of traditional food. This study was therefore guided by this question: what are the experiences of the three generational members after they shared the preparation of traditional food?

Traditional Food Knowledge integrates multiple disciplines, such as social and cultural (Shariff, Zahari, Salleh, Ishak, & Muhammad, 2012). The transfer of traditional food knowledge involves developing personal skills, improving community capacity and developing self-identity (Shariff et al, 2012; Kwik, 2008). From a cultural perspective, traditional food knowledge is associated with traditional food-related activities, e.g. its preparation, pattern of eating and beliefs shared by a particular group of people, which give meaning to their cultural identity (Shariff et al., 2012). The aim of this study was to explore the relational interactional experiences of unrelated generational members as they shared the preparation of traditional food.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Different theories explain intergenerational relations but for this study the focus is on experiences of intergenerational relations. Hence General Systems Theory and Self-Interactional Group Theory will be employed.

According to General System Theory, intergenerational relations are a social system which is constructed through dynamic, interrelated and mutually-influencing processes (Evans & Prilleltensky, 2007; Prilleltensky, 2014). Different generations are systems that act interdependently and interrelatedly. Within this study, the intergenerational programme, that is, traditional food knowledge, was used as an intervention to interrupt the equilibrium in or to bring about the desired change (Laszlo & Krippner, 1998; Kline, 2002). Simultaneously, the relational interactions between generational members as well as the subjective experiences of the participants in the interactional relation are observed, based on Self-Interactional Group Theory (Roos, 2016).

Self-Interactional Group Theory (SIGT) asserts that intergenerational relations may be

regarded as interdependent, reciprocal and continuous communicative interactions between members of different generations (Stacey, 2001, 2003; Vorster et al., 2013; Roos, 2016). SIGT developed from interactional theories, relational psychology and communications theories (Hargie, 2011; Stacey, 2007; Stacey & Griffin, 2006; Watzlawick, Bavelas, & Jackson, 2011) and proposes three levels of interaction, namely: the intra-personal unit of analysis (generational member's subjective experiences, i.e. feelings/emotions); the inter-personal unit of analysis (the context in which the interaction takes place, the definition of the relationship, relational qualities, e.g. observable behaviour, social goals and psychological needs as well as strategies to address the goals and needs, and interactional processes); and the group unit of analysis (group dynamics between the generations) (Roos, 2016).

As indicated by SIGT, relational interactions are embedded in broader environments, such as social, cultural and economic (Roos, 2016). The group unit of analysis comprises intra- and intergroup behaviour and thus explores this broader context. The intra-group behaviour is that in which interaction takes place between members of the same group, while inter-group behaviour refers to the interaction between specific generational groups.

Intergenerational interactional relationships are regarded as circular because they interconnect through verbal and non-verbal messages and involve different levels of interaction (Hargie, 2011; Roos, 2016). Therefore, the system as a whole cannot be described altogether and at once and the principle of punctuation or focus will be used (Vorster, 2011). The focus in this study was on the experiences of each of the generational groups, G1, G2, and G3, as they shared preparation of traditional food. The aim was to explore the relational experiences of different generations of women after they had shared in the preparation of the food. The research is important because it will contribute to filling the gap in finding suitable intergenerational programmes to promote intergenerational solidarity.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used an interpretive descriptive design (Sandelowski & Thorne, 2008) and qualitative research to explore different generational members' experiences in relation to a shared food preparation activity (social reality) (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative research offers the advantage of studying things or people in their natural settings in an attempt to make sense of the phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Interpretive descriptive design was applied because it allows researchers to understand the world as it is from subjective experiences of individuals (Maree, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Thomas, 2010). This design allows the researcher to gain insights on the complexity of human sense-making as the situation under study emerges, that is, the exploration of intergenerational relational experiences of women during shared preparation of traditional food (Maree, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Thomas, 2010).

Research Context and Participants

The study was conducted in Valspan and Sekhing, communities that form part of the Vaalharts region in the Northern Cape and the North-West Province of South Africa respectively. During a needs assessment, the black (mostly Setswana-speaking) communities in the region, including Valspan and Sekhing communities, were identified as vulnerable, high unemployment, critical health and food security statuses, and inadequate education and training facilities (Coetzee, 2011). This assessment also highlighted the needs of older people, especially with regard to health and welfare services, and the need to motivate young people to get involved in volunteering work to uplift their communities and by implication the wellbeing of older people (Coetzee, 2011).

In the Valspan and Sekhing communities, as in other rural communities in South Africa, there are multi-generational households, which include members of different generations, both familial and non-familial. The majority of these communities' members often depend heavily on older persons' means-tested state pension (Hoffman, 2014). The participants were selected by

means of purposive sampling. The inclusion criterion was women of three generational groups, based on the indication of Life Expectancy (2015). This states that South Africa's population is increasingly growing older because of declining population growth rates year on year among young people between the ages of 15 and 34 years, in conjunction with increasing growth rates among the elderly aged 50+ (Life Expectancy, 2015). Therefore, in this study women aged 50 years and older were referred as (G1); women aged 21 to 49 were referred as (G2), and adolescents with ages ranging from 14 - 20 years were referred as (G3). A sample of 20 women of each generation in each community was included in the study, but it was foreseen that if data saturation could not be achieved, more people would be sampled. Thus 60 women in each community, giving a total of 120 participants, were recruited for the study.

Research Procedure and Ethics

Two employees of Vaalharts Water Affairs (VWA), who had previously worked on a sustainable diet project (a study under the WIN platform), were assigned as local field assistants and gatekeepers to initiate contact to community members. Local field assistants distributed the flyers in Valspan and Sekhing, communities and verbally explained information on the flyers about the research project to interested persons. Willing participants were invited to an informative meeting at which researchers introduced themselves and explained the study objectives and proceedings. Participants were informed of the aim/purpose of the research study and data collection, and about their rights, the risks and benefits of the study, and it's the voluntary nature. They signed the consent forms before they participated. For the minor participants, informed consent was obtained from the parent/legal guardian, and assent was obtained from the younger participant to enable them to take part. Anyone lacking the necessary consent was excluded from the study. Focus group discussions were held separately with the three generational groups to allow participants to reflect, without being inhibited by the presence of the other generational members, on the food preparation activity and to express their experience of working together as different generations. 12 focus

groups were conducted, with two groups comprising of 10 people each from each generation in the two communities. Transcriptions of the study were anonymized and participants were informed that they would not be identified with names in the dissemination of findings. During focus group discussions partial confidentiality was emphasized to all group members. Furthermore, in this study the benefits outweighed the risks. Participants were also informed that hard copies of the informed consent forms and field notes will be stored in a locked up cabinet and electronic data will be kept on a password and virus protected computer at the North West University, and that all data will be destroyed after seven years after the publication of the results. Moreover, no monetary compensations were made available for participation in this study. Research procedures were carried out in the communities, therefore, there were no costs for transport. The research team was accompanied throughout the field work by a bilingual field assistant (English/Setswana-speaking) who assisted with translation during talks and research proceedings.

Data-collection Method

Data were collected by means of focus group discussions from the sub-study. Focus group discussions are a useful method for the purpose of this study because it consolidates the components both of interview and observation and this enables group interaction to create data that would be unlikely to emerge otherwise (Aziz, 2015). Focus group discussions were held separately with the three generational groups to allow participants to reflect on the food preparation and consumption activity and to express their experiences on working together as different generations without being limited by the presence of the other generational members. Twelve focus groups were conducted, with two groups of each generation in the two communities. This meant that there were 10 generational members in each focus group discussion. The following were the guiding questions: Reflecting back on the preparation and making of traditional food with other generational members, what stood out for you?

Please tell me about your experiences, specifically related to your interaction with other generational members?

What in the interaction did you find meaningful and why?

Thinking about your perceptions about the generational other BEFORE the activity, what do you think about them now and why?

Please think about your relationship with the generational other and indicate where you would place yourself in relational to the generational other, before and after the activity on a hypothetical line from 0-----10, where 0 indicates a negative experience and 10 a positive experience, and explain the positioning.

The data were recorded digitally, transcribed verbatim at the end of data collection and treated as textual data for the purpose of the present study.

Data Analysis

The textual data from focus group discussions were analyzed thematically. Thematic analysis is a process of identifying, analyzing, interpreting and reporting themes within transcribed data (Clarke & Braun, 2013). The thematic analysis steps followed were: (a) immersing oneself in the data in order to be familiar with the depth and breadth of the content; (b) searching for themes in the structure of the experiences; (c) refining; and (d) producing a written report of the identified themes (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

Trustworthiness

In this research study the strategies proposed by Guba (1981) to ensure trustworthiness were applied, namely: (a) credibility, which was achieved through prolonged engagement in the data collection site, and persistent observation, which allowed the researcher to filter the data and collect the most important data (Guba, 1981); (b) transferability, in order for other researchers to determine

how transferable the findings were, the researcher described the research context and participants in detail; (c) dependability, which was achieved by including a detailed description of the study and a description of the design and its implementation, the implementation of data collection and reflective notes in the final report (Shenton, 2004). In addition, the researcher provided a description of the methods for how the data were gathered and analyzed, which would allow other researchers to replicate the study (Tracy, 2010); and (d) conformability, the awareness of the researchers' own predispositions on the data (Guba, 1981). In addition, the principle of crystallization was used to integrate various viewpoints to provide shared conformation of the data. For example, in this study three groups of different generations participated in the research in order to maximize the range of the data gathered. Themes that emerged from the findings were supported by participants' verbatim quotes. This was done to enable the readers to understand these experiences expressed through emotions.

FINDINGS

A summary of the findings is presented in Table 1. The themes that emerged from the findings included subjective emotional experiences, subjective perceptions, intra-group dynamics and outcomes of the Intergenerational Group Activity (IGA). The discussion is first focused on each generational group's subjective experience before and after the Intergenerational Group Activity (IGA); then finally focuses on the intra-group dynamics and outcomes of the (IGA) among Generation 1 (G1) 50 years and older, Generation 2 (G2) 21-49 years, and Generation 3 (G3) 14-20 years.

Table 1. Themes and subthemes

Intergenerational experiences before and after the IGA

Themes	Subthemes
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Subjective emotional experiences	<p>Before IGA</p> <p>G1</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">G1 in relation to G2 and G3: unhappy</p> <p>G2</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">G2 in relation to G1 and G3: unhappy and downhearted</p> <p>G3</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">G3 in relation to G2 and G1: uncomfortable, resentful and fearful</p> <p>After IGA</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">All generational groups: surprised and happy</p>
Subjective perceptions	<p>Before IGA</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">All generational groups perceived the other negatively</p> <p>After IGA</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">All generational groups changed perception from negative to positive</p>
Intra-group dynamics	<p>Start of IGA</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Rigid role positions</p> <p>During IGA</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Role reversions and team work</p>
Outcomes of IGA	<p>Adopting a circular approach</p> <p>Shared identity</p> <p>Lesson learned</p>

Subjective Emotional Experiences

Before the IGA: Unhappy. All three generational groups expressed negative emotions based on their subjective experiences in relation to and anticipated reactions of the generational other. Focusing first on the older generation, G1s expressed unhappiness in relation to G2s: *“I was not happy when we were asked to mix with other groups as I knew G2s and G3s are stubborn”* (G1 participant #3). The G1s were also unhappy to be interacting with G3s and did not feel equipped for the interaction, which they expected to be troublesome. For example, G1 participant #5 said: *“When*

I saw the young ones (G3), I said here comes trouble. I felt weak. I was thinking this is a joke,”

Unhappy and downhearted. The G2s also expressed negative emotions in relation both to G1s and G3s. In relation to the G1s, G2s expressed unhappiness because they had experienced them as rigid: *“I was not happy at all when I was told we were going to prepare the traditional food together with G1”* (G2 participant #6). In relation to the G3s, a G2 participant (#4) explained that her *“spirit was down when we were mixed with other generations especially young ones G3.”*

Uncomfortable, resentful and fearful. G3s express discomfort in relation both to G1s and G2s. One of the G3 participants (#6) explained: *“I was not okay with the idea of working with other older generations (G1 and G2)”* The other G3 participant expressed fear of working with G1 and G2. G3 participant (#10) said: *“I was afraid that the older generations were going to bully us.”*

After the IGA: Surprised and happy. The negative emotions expressed by all three generational group members changed to being happy and pleasantly surprised. G1s said: *“It was a happy day for me. I wish I could have stayed for ever”* (G1 participant #3). The G1s surprised G2s in the way they interacted with them. One of the G3 participants (#9) commented: *“We were surprised that G1 and the G2 would listen to us, we enjoyed working together.”*

Subjective Perceptions

Before the IGA: Negative perceptions. G1s perceptions of G2s had been that they were *“very stubborn and difficult to work with as they are full of themselves and [do] not accept or listen to us older people”* (G1 participant #3). In relation to G3s, G1s perceived them as *“bad mannered [and who] don’t speak with respect to their parents”* (G1 participant #6). G2 perceived G1s as rigid: *“I knew them to be very firm in the way they do things”* (G2 participant #6), and G3s as *“young people [who] do not have good manners and are not responsible at all”* (G2 participant #4). G3s expected that the G1s and G2s *“were going to treat us bad and bully us, because they always want to be respected”* (G3 participant #6).

After the IGA: Positive perceptions. All generational groups confirmed that a shared preparation of traditional food activity changed their perceptions of the generational other from

negative to positive. The G1s perceived that *“the young generation had respect for elders, they were not disrespectful”* (G1 participant #7). In relation to G3s, the G2s also experienced being loved: *“even the G3 those children are full of love”* (G2 participant #1). One of the G3 participants (#1) expressed that, *I realised that both the G1 and G2 have strong love for us and they showed and taught with love”*.

Emotions and perceptions changed because generational members observed other relational qualities while sharing in a food preparation activity. G2 participant #9 said: *“I have never seen such humbleness and love displayed by the G1s on that day, they shared their knowledge on traditional food in a loving manner and not being harsh to us. Participant G3 (#9) said that she “enjoyed working and chatting with [the] old people (G1) [because] they are kind. The middle-aged generation (G2) were also good to us. The G3s also confirmed that even though they “did not know much about the traditional food. The G1 and G2 were teaching us in a friendly manner. We respected each other, no matter what age”* (G3 participant #5).

Intra-group Dynamics

Beginning of the IGA: Rigid roles positions. When the IGA commenced, the generational members adopted rigid roles in the group based on their seniority. G1s adopted the position of leaders and prescribed how the group should interact. A G2 participant (#8) confirmed that the *“older people were just giving us instructions on what to cook and how to cook”*. If G1s were not leading the group, G2s adopted the leading position and G3s had to comply with instructions both from G2s and G1s. G3s found their submissive position overwhelming: *“The instructions were just too much [because] both the G1 and the G2 were just telling us what to do”* (G3 participant #10). The rigid role definition in the groups that formed around a food preparation activity limited the spontaneous participation of all generational members and they *“didn’t get along at the beginning”* (G2 participant #8).

During the course of the IGA: Role reversions and team work. However, as soon as generational members realized that the contribution of each member in the group could benefit the group, the dynamics changed. Participant G2 (#7) said: *“After the G1 noticed that we the middle aged and young ones know something about traditional food, especially garnishing the food to make it look nice, there was no leader any more we were all working as one team.”* In this changed group dynamic, the flow of interactions in the group also changed. Participant G1 (#5) said: *“We corrected each other; the teenagers would also correct us.”* When group norms of sharing and participation had been instilled in the group, a team spirit was perceived. In this regard, a G2 participant # 6 said: *“The young ones G3 would ask anything they did not understand to us, and if we don’t understand we asked the elders. It was team work.”*

Outcomes of the IGA

Adopting a circular approach. All generational members came to acknowledge their own contribution to the relational interactions with generational members. For example, a G1 participant said: *“I learnt that if you talk to young generation in a sensible way, they will respect you”* (G1 participant #3). A G1 participant (#6) said: *“I realized is that if you want children to respect you, you must respect them first. G2s said that G3 reciprocated their love, if they have treated them with love first: “Those children (G3s) are full of love; if you talk to them nicely they will respect you”* (G2 participant # 1).

Shared identity. The participants identified themselves as Batswana women. *Participant G1 #6 explained that “this project has united us the young and old, we are proud to belong to the Batswana tradition”.* The activity also contributed to the development of a shared identity that was not age limited but that extended to a social level of unity. Participant G2 # 4 said, *“this activity was an eye opener; we feel the spirit of Ubuntu it has never happened in this community before”.*

Lessons learned. The shared food activity contributed to participants’ ability to relate and interact with members of different generations. One of the G2 #1 reported: *“I have realized that as*

a person you learn to relate with other people, and if you lack knowledge you must learn to ask.”

Relating and interacting with other people also extend the boundaries of familiarly-related people, breaking down intergroup boundaries. Participant G3 #10 explained it as follows: *“I learnt that it does not matter whether you know the person or not, you can relate with someone you have not met before.”*

DISCUSSION

Findings from this study address the importance of intergenerational activity (IGA) in shaping the intergenerational relationships across generations. The experiences conveyed by participants in this study help to inform our understanding of how subjective perceptions influence relational interactions towards the generational other. It is noted in the findings of this study that these perceptions changed from negative to positive as result of reciprocal and continuous communicative interactions between members of different generations following shared preparation of traditional food (Stacey, 2001, 2003; Vorster, et al., 2013; Roos, 2016).

According to SIGT, the intrapersonal level of analysis of relational interactions gives an indication of what transpires on the interpersonal (between people) and group level (generational groups). Before the intergenerational food sharing activity all generational members expressed negative emotions and perceptions towards the generational other. These emotions and perceptions presented on a continuum from being unhappy and downhearted to resentful and fearful. Emotions and perceptions inform people’s behaviour (Roos, 2016) and when they express discomfort and negative perceptions in relation to others they are likely to avoid relating and interacting with them (Roos, 2016). In this way an unhealthy cycle develops: people fear the relational interactions with those they perceive as threatening, and consequently avoid the interaction and ascribe negative, foreign and fearful identities to them (which are different to their own), thus further reinforcing fear (Roos, 2016). In this study members of different generational groups were judged on their different

generational identities. Consequently, group dynamics seem to be activated between G1s, G2s and G3.

However, following the intergenerational food activity, all generational members expressed emotions of being surprised and even expressed a wish for prolonged interaction. Three reasons are offered to explain the outcomes of this intergenerational activity. First, the nature of the intergenerational activity offered the opportunity for people to relate and interact on an individual level. Generational members had the opportunity to observe the generational other up close and personal in a context of preparing food together. Second, by involving people in a familiar activity with a shared, clearly defined goal, they will tend to experience positive emotions and to develop collaboration among group members. Collaboration comes about when people feel safe enough to change their traditional roles in relation to others and when they are able to contribute their knowledge and skills in the relational interaction (Kwik, 2008). In this shared food activity, all generational members were familiar with traditional food. Even though not all had the same level of knowledge they were clear about the outcomes of the activity. In line with General Systems Theory, preparing food is not a type of intervention that threatens the homeostasis of the system, but rather a familiar activity that is introduced in a manner that allows the individuals as subsystems of the group to adopt new roles as a new system (Laszlo & Krippner, 1998). Change in generational members' emotions contributed to altered perceptions and behaviour, thereby confirming that open systems have the potential to change given the right circumstances. Intergenerational programming would appear to be effective if the individual generational members realize that their individual input may contribute to the success of their respective group. Third, involving people in preparing and sharing food makes them happy (Shariff et al., 2012). Literature also confirms that when people experience joy during positive relational interactions, their thought and emotional frames of reference open up to expand and become receptive of the social environment (Fredrickson, 2001).

Moreover, on the intra-group analysis, generational members adopted rigid positions on the basis of seniority at the start of the IGA. The young and the middle generational members complied

with the older generational members` instructions, and some even reported feeling overwhelmed. As a result, complementarily-defined relationship emerged in which the older generational member assumed a leading position and the young and middle generational members a follower position (Roos, 2016). This rigid position should also be understood in the context of the broader social environment. Due to unemployment, middle generational members are forced to depend on older people to provide for them, often by contributing their pension money (Makiwane, 2007). And since the older generation thus continues to provide for them financially, the middle generation is trapped into submitting to their demands.

The outcomes of this intergenerational food activity demonstrated a different way in which people are able to relate and interact. An important indication is the relational quality of adopting a circular approach to view the relational interaction (Roos, 2016; Vortser, 2011). By adopting a circular approach people are able to move from a linear perspective, in which they view the relational interactions from their own frame of reference, to adopting the perspective of the other. This outcome holds great promise for intergenerational programming: if programmes can be created to facilitate opportunities for generational members to talk about their interaction on a meta-reflective level, more levels of connection can be discovered (Roos, 2016). A further outcome of the programme is that group identities that previously described in stereotypical and judgemental terms, changed. It is as if the generational members moved from a position of viewing the generational other as ‘they’ to a collective and inclusive view of the group members belonging to the same group as ‘we’. A final outcome with great promise is that an intergenerational programme such as a shared food activity has the potential for people to express their needs, as reflected in one of the participant’s comments: “If you lack knowledge, you must learn to ask.”

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A major limitation of this study is that only women and not men, were included and the findings must be therefore interpreted against this background. This study cannot be generalized

because it was conducted only in the Setswana context. It is recommended that relational experiences of generations from other cultures be explored in future studies, and to include male participants.

CONCLUSION

The preparation of traditional food as an intergenerational activity (IGA) demonstrated how relationships on interpersonal (between people) and group level (generational groups) can be shaped through interactions while sharing a familiar activity. The nature of the intergenerational activity offered the opportunity for generations to relate and interact on a group level. This allowed generations to experience positive emotions and collaboration to develop among group members. A change in generational members' emotions contributed to change in perceptions, behaviour and the way they related to one another as different generations. This study contributed to the existing knowledge that when people experience joy in relational interactions, their thoughts and emotional frames of reference open up, and that group identities that could previously have been described in stereotypical and judgemental terms can change. Therefore, preparation of traditional food as an intergenerational programme can play a significant role in enabling generational members to realize that their individual input can contribute to the success of their respective group and to view the generational other as a collective which is not age-defined.

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SECTION C

CRITICAL REFLECTION

Globally, the importance of intergenerational relationships has been emphasized in previous research. This is due to the fact that the gap between generations has been assumed as an inescapable obstacle to communication between the young and old generations (Dadwal, 2014). In South Africa this gap was exacerbated by factors such as Apartheid and migration (Crush, Williams, & Peberdy, 2005). The physical and social distance created by migration continues to exist among the generations (Campbell, 2008), resulting in growing misperceptions and misconceptions by generational members (NCPOP, 2009; Department of communities, child safety and disability services, 2012). Intergenerational programmes have become the focus of research on a global scale (MacCallum et al., 2010), because it has indicated that such programmes are able to alleviate stereotypical and negative views, and increase understanding of the generational other from their experience, and that this often leads to positive perceptions (Murphy, 2012). Sharing traditional food (or traditional food knowledge) as a method of an intergenerational programme that strives to bring about positive change and an understanding of generational members' perceptions, and to transfer skills as a way of reducing social isolation (European Network for Intergenerational Learning, n.d.), was used in this study. This intergenerational programme dismissed unrelated generational members' false assumptions about one another (Melnick, 2014). Accordingly, the aim of this study was to explore intergenerational relational experiences during shared preparation of traditional food in rural communities.

During evaluation before the intergenerational activity, all three generations demonstrated negative subjective emotions, which are interlinked with the expressed negative perceptions. According to Roos (2016), during first-time interaction people are likely to express fear, discomfort, negative perceptions and are likely to avoid relating and interacting with those they perceive threatening. In this study members of different generational groups were judged on their different

generational identities. This may be due to the fact that the generations grew up in different time periods; their perceptions may vary and thus they may encounter challenges in understanding each other (Spence & Radunovich, 2007). Thang (n.d.) also asserted that intergenerational tension may arise because the young generation is connecting less with the older generation because of institutional segregation. According to Self-Interactional Group Theory, all the relational interactions are embedded in broader environments, such as economic and social (Roos, 2016). During apartheid, many older people were prohibited from obtaining appropriate education and training. As a result, they relied heavily on the social pension, which they have to use to support even the young generation because of high rates of unemployment. This is likely to create tension between the generations, because the young generation is compelled to comply with the demands of the older generation.

During the evaluation after the intergenerational activity was performed, the generational members were pleasantly surprised and expressed a desire to prolong the interaction. These findings showed that sharing a familiar activity, such as preparation of traditional food, provide an opportunity for generations to relate, interact, experience positive emotions and develop collaborations among group members. According to Femia, Zarit, Blair, Jarrott, and Bruno (2008), intergenerational interaction is likely to positively influence generational members' perceptions and reduce anxiety, and may encourage the generations to develop strategies that can help them to maintain the interaction throughout their lives. This is also supported by the General Systems Theory, which holds that if one part of the system changes, changes in other parts of the system may be expected and adopted (Laszlo & Krippner, 1998). This implies that as the generations related on a personal level during the interaction, verbal and non-verbal messages could be observed, which gave meaning within a particular context and within a particular interaction between generational members (Roos, 2016). Therefore, change in generational members' emotions contributed to change

in perceptions and behaviour, thus confirming that open systems have the potential to change given the right circumstances.

According to Grandin and Barron (2005), rigidity/flexibility, implies the diversity of people's relational repertoire and their ability to accept change and to respond to changing conditions. Given the stereotypical judgements that were expressed by the generations before the interaction took place, group dynamics seem to have been activated and previously described rigid positions to have changed across generations after they were given the opportunity to collaborate on interpersonal and group levels.

Furthermore, the outcomes of the current study's intergenerational programme is that generational members adopted a circular approach, described themselves in a collective manner and reported that lessons were learned, as highlighted by the findings above. This finding is supported by (Newman, Ward, Smith, & Wilson, 1997; Thang, n.d.) that intergenerational programmes appear to be an effective tool to close the generational gap. Zucchero (2010) reviewed an intergenerational programme, and found "a shift in their own perspective, and a changed view of young adults" as one of the themes. This is vital because, in the current study, a linear perspective from which participants viewed the relational interactions from their own frames of reference was transformed into a circular approach through perspective-taking of the generational other. Therefore, intergenerational programmes have proved to foster more positive attitudes toward older generations, to enhance the older generation's sense of self-worth and to promote a high level of social reconciliation (Drury, Bobrowicz, Cameron, & Abrams, 2017).

Findings of this research support other studies to encourage the use of intergenerational activities that enable different generations to engage in relational interactions. This would enhance positive emotions, perceptions towards the generational other and alleviate fear and tension among generations.

CONCLUSION

Intergenerational programmes aim to bring together diverse groups of individuals, to reduce the sense of isolation and to build a sense of personal and societal identity. The shared preparation of traditional food as an intergenerational programme provided insight into the importance of engaging different generations in an activity with which they can have fun and at the same time learn to appreciate and develop positive emotions and perceptions about the generational other. The fact that the generations' negative perceptions changed after the shared preparation of traditional food to positive perceptions suggests that shared preparation of traditional food as an intergenerational programme was successful in positively transforming the perceptions of all the generations.

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