

Exploring black South African Women Academics' Perspectives on the Relationship
between Culture, Education and Parenting.

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DECLARATION

This work is a master's research dissertation submitted to fulfil the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts by Research (Psychology) by Dissertation only. This dissertation is my own work and has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. All contributions have been formally acknowledged through the appropriate referencing format.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to explore black South African women academics' constructions of culture, mothering and education. The study further explored the relationships inherent between these aspects. The study followed a qualitative design through the utilisation of open-ended interviews that took place at a large urban public university in Johannesburg, South Africa. Nine women in academia who were linked predominantly to the field of health, who were of African descent and who had children between the ages of 0 and 18 years old were interviewed. The results illustrated that the women used multiple sources in the construction of their identities, some of which were congruent whereas between others there were tensions. The largest influence in their constructions of their identities was their religious affiliation, which took precedence over all other influences. At different stages of life their diverse identities held various significances to the women. This study is important because it is the first to investigate mothering in a low-risk African group.

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1. CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Aims

This study is part of a larger project that aims to explore how culture, in what might be inferred as a **high-risk context** for optimal child development, influences how urban Africans construct and understand their role of parenting. Ninety percent of children in the world are born in at-risk populations (Tomlinson & Swartz, 2006). Considerable research, with respect to mothering, has been conducted in high-risk populations, with the focus being on the welfare of the child. There are copious amounts of research that focus on parenting from a Western perspective with minimal research being conducted specifically examining high-risk populations residing in urban African locales. There has been even less research conducted that examines parents' construction of parenting from an African heritage perspective in low-risk populations.

In order to complement the greater study's focus on high-risk parents and to provide a possible basis for comparing the views expressed, my study, in contrast, aimed to explore how **low-risk** urban African mothers construct notions of parenting. The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between mothering, culture and education from the perspective of mothers who are black South African¹ Academics. Customarily "black" refers

¹ In this study, the participants self-identified as "black". The term "black African" was used as a means of describing the sample although it was recognised that such terminology comes with extenuating connotations and associations. The racial descriptor of "black" was used as an indicator in the form of an adjective to differentiate between different groups of people who may consider themselves to be African (see section 2 on Culture – 2.3.4. *The relevance of race and ethnicity*). Once the data was collected, the ethnic identification of participants was described. The term "African" was used to describe geographic location (see section 2 on culture – 2.3.3. *Geographic location*). Importantly, the descriptors given by the participants was used in the analysis and writing up of the research. Very little, if any, research has examined African culture and modes of parenting, without the use of contemporary "Western" perspectives as a reference. "Black African" was used as a marker to differentiate the broad population and 'cultural' location of the group of people whose opinions was sought.

to people who have a “brown or black complexion” (Agyeman, Bhopal, & Bruijnzeels, 2005, p. 1015). This study aimed to explore what was anticipated to be low-risk parenting² in the South African context, as an antithesis to research into high-risk parenting, given that there are numerous studies on the later. The concept of mothering was viewed in terms of the articulation of tensions between the multiplicities of identities of the mothers. Discourse theory holds that discourses each have their own “particular subject position” (Long & Zietkiewicz, 2006, p. 204). This study aimed to focus on how mothers who are black South African academics reconciled their personal, historical and cultural discourses with their educational attainments in relation to how they parent and how they negotiated tensions between contesting premises and inputs. Furthermore, the purpose of this research was to garner data and contribute to the body of knowledge pertaining to the intersection of cultural and educational inputs with regard to thinking about parenting, specifically in the South African context.

1.2. Rationale

There is a plethora of information and research on the effects of mothers and mothering on children but very little on how mothers construct their parenting roles and identity, specifically in this instance, those of parent, academic, woman and being black within the South African context. Furthermore, scant data exists on the impact of parenting on the mothers themselves. Research conducted with academic mothers focuses on the “career performance and career satisfaction” (Swanson & Johnston, 2003, p. 65) of these mothers. There is minimal understanding of the construction of motherhood from the perspective of academic mothers (Swanson & Johnston, 2003). Becoming a mother adds another aspect to a woman’s construction of her identity that necessitates the reconstruction

² Parenting in this study is synonymous with ‘mothering’ or being a mother.

of herself. Consequently, it was considered to be of benefit to study how black South African women academics perceive the relationship between culture, education and parenting.

The majority of the literature on mothering and motherhood focused on Western-developed modes of parenting. Limited psychologically inflected information was available on traditional African modes of parenting and the effect on low-risk mothers. What does exist focuses largely on “high-risk” groups (i.e. those living in circumstances of poverty and particularly HIV/AIDS) and the problems of parenting in such contexts and the developmental consequences for the child (Kruger, 2006). The effect that “race, class and culture [have on the experience of motherhood] is almost entirely missing from the South African literature” (Kruger, 2006, p. 194).

Furthermore, much research has been undertaken to understand and garner knowledge in relation to the population termed high-risk, whilst minimal, if any, research has been conducted in terms of the demographic population termed low-risk, which includes the criterion of highly-educated black South African women academics and their construction of motherhood. It was important to explore how African women who have received and been involved in formal education (which tends to transmit knowledge that originates from ‘Western’ contexts and traditions) used this knowledge in their construction of parenting, given that they might also have parenting knowledge that was culturally influenced by their own life experiences and autobiographical histories. It was imperative to bear in mind that different “ethnic-racial socialization behaviours” (Hughes, et al., 2006, p. 765) may be construed differently across various cultures and may therefore have different associations and significances for the people involved in the interaction (Hughes, et al., 2006).

1.3. Research questions

1. How do mothers who are black South African academics construct their identities as mothers?
 1. a. How is the parenting role understood by mothers who are black South African academics?
 1. b. What ideas, information, experiences and inputs appear to influence mothers who are black South African academics' construction of parenting?
 1. c. How do mothers who are black South African academics, understand the relationship between what they understand to be their cultural and formal educational inputs and their views on parenting?

2. CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In my perusal of the literature it became apparent that there was minimal literature on what it means to be a parent and even less literature on being a parent in relation to different cultures, specifically in the South African context (Kruger, 2006). Most studies that do take into consideration African ethnicities focus primarily on African Americans (Hughes, et al., 2006). Furthermore, there was minimal literature detailing the mothers' perceptions of parenting that did not, ultimately, focus on the outcomes for the child. This study will focus on exploring the manner in which mothering is constructed in the South African context. Bearing in mind South Africa's history, it follows that culture, education and parenting are pivotal and interwoven aspects of mothering in South Africa.

This literature review appraised the literature pertaining to culture (specifically African), education in light of the level of education that the mothers have attained and mothering and/or parenting and the intersectionality of these three concepts.

2.2. The Theoretical Framework

2.2.1. Intersectionality theory.

Initially, intersectionality theory was developed to study feminism (Davis, 2008). Kimberle Crenshaw is recognised as “originating the term *intersectionality*” (Cole, 2009, p. 171). Crenshaw (1991) utilised intersectionality theory to examine factors inherent in the “interactions of race and gender in the context of violence against women of color” (p. 1296) and determined that they could be used to mediate “the tension between assertions of multiple

identit[ies]]” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1296). Significant factors in the interactions of people and formation of their identities are “race/ethnicity, gender, and class” (Acker, 2006, p. 442). Intersectionality explicates the interaction of these different identities that manifest on a daily basis (Phoenix & Pattynama, 2006) and is a means of contextually addressing differences in order to “respond and intervene in specific and useful ways” (Burman, 2004, p. 304). Additionally, intersectionality theory allows for the fact that the multiple identities of people are “interdependent” (Warner & Shields, 2013, p. 804) and need to be studied using a contextual approach (Babbitt, 2011). Parenting is something that happens on a daily basis, the point of this study was to unpack the tensions between culture, education and mothering. Intersectionality theory was deemed appropriate to implement as a framework for this study as having been shown to be useful in examining the relationship between gender and race/ethnicity (Acker, 2006; Cole, 2009) and the interaction of “multiple identities” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1296) that are deemed “interdependent” (Warner & Shields, 2013, p. 804). These identities do not occur in isolation, the process of the interaction between identities is ongoing and fluid and needs to be examined holistically, as an interactive whole because people experience their identities concurrently (Cole, 2009; Wells, Gill, & McDonald, 2015).

Intersectionality theory utilises an interdisciplinary methodology whereby it considers the many social and personal interactions of people (McCall, 2014). Intersectionality theory was considered to be a suitable theory to use in order to examine “multiple intersecting identities” which is what my study aimed to do (Tsouroufli, Reese, & Monrouxe, 2011).

Intersectionality theory may therefore be implemented as a means of understanding the “coalition” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1299) between the various discourses of mothers, which

construct the mothers' multiple identities. The intersections of these identities vary and "in different temporal and spatial moments" (Valentine, 2007, p. 15) different identities come to the fore. Intersectionality theory was an appropriate theory to implement in this study as this study aimed to explore the mothers' construction of mothering and the manner in which individuals construct and express their identities (Crenshaw, 1991). Intersectionality theory formed a theoretical framework for examining the interactions between various social identities (Núñez, 2014). The various identities of the mothers come together to form an individual whose personal identities influence their social interactions (Charleston, Adserias, Lang, & Jackson, 2014). Veenstra (2013) used intersectionality theory to examine individuals' perceptions of their social experiences based on their race, gender and class. Thus illustrating the appropriateness of intersectionality theory as a framework for this research as my research also examines race and gender, in the form of black South African women.

Intersectionality has been applied as a framework for this study to give perspective to the relationships between culture, formal education and parenting. Thereby explicating some of the congruencies and tensions between multiple aspects of identity construction and determining how the mothers' "cultural and socioeconomic contexts" (Kruger, 2006, p. 197) influence the mothers' personal understandings of motherhood. Intersectionality theory was applied, as it seeks to explicate the formation of a myriad of identities and was believed to be relevant to this study (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013). Furthermore, in terms of my study, intersectionality theory "introduces the possibility for deeper analyses of identity among members of academic communities" (Charleston, Adserias, Lang, & Jackson, 2014, p. 285), thereby increasing its appropriateness as a theoretical framework for my study.

Intersectionality is a multidimensional theory that is "applicable across a wide range of social

issues topics, indeed, most issues that involve social groups” (Warner, 2008, p. 462) and is a means to illustrate the multiplicity inherent “in women’s lives and identities” (Mehrotra, 2010, p. 426). Therefore, rich information can be gathered from implementing intersectionality theory.

2.2.2. The theoretical framework of culture.

There is no unequivocal definition of culture, however, it may be broadly defined as the practices, customs, traditions, values, norms and behaviour specific to a group of people (Darity, 2002). Culture forms a structured, organised system or framework in which a group of people can operate and engage with each other and other groups of people (Geertz, 2002). Culture is fluid and at various times and under different circumstances, may change and have diverse definitions, meanings and connotations (Creighton, 1990; Wright, 1998). Refer to the section on Culture (Section 2.3), for an elaboration of culture.

2.2.3. The theoretical framework of mothering.

The act of mothering differs from culture to culture and even from person to person within that culture (Coleman & Karrakar, 1997) and is comprised of diverse discourses; for instance, guilt, discipline and conflict. Therefore, cognisance needs to be paid to the “processes (e.g. racism, imperialism, class, and national, religious and sexual oppression)” (Kruger, 2006, p. 196) that generate these discourses. Crenshaw (1991) makes mention of the need to be mindful of the discourses of mothering and the interaction thereof, when exploring the interactive aspects of women. By means of the process of intersectionality these “processes” (Kruger, 2006, p. 196) interact to create various mothering discourses. See the section on Mothering (Section 2.4) for an explication on mothering.

2.3. Culture

Culture, as a concept, has a role in every society or community. In this study I explored how mothers construct their own cultural positions, what they think culture is and how they define culture. This was executed by means of analysing a series of discourses.

There is no explicit or precise definition of culture and yet it is used freely to describe aspects of people and groups. Academic literature has an abundance of diverse definitions pertaining to culture. Culture is multifaceted, for example, language, geographical location, race, ethnicity, beliefs, practices, religion, rituals, education and gender are aspects whose intersectionality influences the construction of culture and acts as an interactive whole (Cole, 2009). In practice, culture means different things to different people.

The framework of culture provides routine, predictability and guidelines to behaviour (Geertz, 2002). Defining attributes that are core to any culture, change little over time. However, certain attributes are subject to change due to altered circumstances (Creighton, 1990; Manganaro, 2002; Oliver, 1965; Wright, 1998) and in different contexts. Taking into account the changing world in which we live, it is fair to say that cultures themselves are therefore subject to change. It is important to learn “how to work with” (Burman, 2004, p. 293) differences as opposed to seeing them as “obstacles to be overcome” (Burman, 2004, p. 294). In light of the concepts that interact and have an influence on a culture, the response to the query “What is culture?” is multifaceted and complex.

2.3.1. Defining culture.

In endeavouring to explain what culture is, the literature divulged many diverse definitions. Culture was defined as the “shared patterns of life that define social groups”

(Kleinman & Good, 2004, p. 952). Culture is comprised, *inter alia*, of the social “traditions and information” (Danchin, Giraldeau, Valone, & Wagner, 2004, p. 489) that span generations and that differ between cultural groups. Culture is fluid and depicts a process that evolves to instil “emotional and moral meanings” (Kleinman & Good, 2004, p. 952) into everyday behaviours of life. Culture is transmitted intergenerationally (Kimmerle, 1990; Montagu, 1968), this is generally taken to mean from parent (mother and/or father) to child.

South Africa is a diverse society, several characteristics that were seemingly relevant within the South African milieu with regard to thinking about mothering/parenting, were selected in an attempt to be as thorough as possible and to allow for some acknowledgement of the multiple ways in which culture can be constructed. Several aspects of group and individual identity and behaviour that may and have been associated with culture are discussed in the following sub-sections.

2.3.2. Language.

A pervasive characteristic of culture is language (Myers, 1987). Language is the mechanism used by humans to communicate verbally (Bruner, 1981) and is taught to the child by the parent from the moment of birth (Volterra & Taeschner, 1978). Language is therefore an effective vehicle with which to transmit aspects of cultural knowledge and information inter-generationally (Manganaro, 2002; Cabrera, 2001). In using language to communicate inter-culturally, attention must be paid to the possibility of the implementation of cultural stereotypes, additionally, it is imperative to have cultural knowledge of the person with whom one is engaging (Byram & Kramsch, 2008). This is accomplished through the verbal use of language in a direct manner or body language in an indirect inferential manner.

Verbal language is used to express, by means of symbolisation, the cognitive thoughts of people through vocalising specific sounds and combinations of sounds (Hayakawa, 1949). Each sound or combination of sounds has a specific meaning that is understood by people of that language group or culture (Bruner, 1981). In some instances, language may be perceived as being synonymous with culture (Gao, 2006). It must be noted though that despite the importance of language to a culture, not all followers of the same culture may speak the same language. This is evident when people emigrate or move from their geographical location of origin.

Language plays a crucial role in the South African context. There are 11 official languages in South Africa with English being the dominant language of instruction in the educated middle class sector (Long & Zietkiewicz, 2006; Probyn, 2001). In order to co-exist peacefully in a multicultural society it is essential to be able to understand the unique “associations and resonance of words and phrases” (Bradby, 2002, p. 843) of the language used to communicate with various people. Even though children may be taught in their home languages in elementary schools, most tertiary education is conducted in English (De Klerk, 2000; Probyn, 2001), with some also in Afrikaans.

Verbal language is often augmented by physical actions that translate into body language (Brookes, 2005). Whereas spoken language is the symbolic manifestation of people's cognitions through verbalisation, body language is the symbolic display of people's cognitions through physical action; for example, gestures such as signalling have different cultural connotations (Kellerman, 1992; Ribbens, 2007). For instance, the lowering of one's eyes can either show deference or subterfuge, depending on the cultural context. Both verbal and non-verbal forms of language are proportionately significant to communication (Meier,

2007). Some gestures universally convey the same message; for instance, parents demonstrate affection and security toward their children through body contact that exemplifies warmth and affection (Winther, 2008). Language is oft-times associated with geographical location. For instance, in most instances, Zulus originating from Kwa-Zulu-Natal speak Zulu; Xhosas from the Eastern Cape speak Xhosa.

2.3.3. Geographical location.

Geographical location is a visual, relatively stable or predictable characteristic of culture. South Africa's history is essential to understanding the implication of geographical location to culture in the South African context. The *apartheid* legacy of migrant labour was an aspect of the relationship between geographical location and culture that was pivotal to South African society. The former regime's policy of *apartheid*, with its migrant labour force (the use of cheap labour in the mining sector and for domestic labour in urban areas) and the creation of Bantustans (the geographical locations where the black labour force was compelled to reside based on their ethnicity), contributed to the inevitable migration of people from rural to urban areas. The geographical relocation of people exposed them to different cultural inputs which fostered the acculturation of their culture of origin. Mkize (2004) mentioned that acculturation "in South Africa tends to be unilateral" (Mkhize, 2004, pp. 4-8). However, whether black South African women academics carry out the process of acculturation or not and if they do carry it out, how do they do it, has not been examined. The consequences thereof are relevant to this study in terms of the intersection of parenting, culture and education and the interactive influence of these three concepts. Rural/urban migration is still evident in South African society today with many people commuting between urban and rural areas, though without the same levels of coercion or sanction as

under *apartheid* (Collinson, Tollman, & Kahn, 2007; De Brauw, Mueller, & Lee, 2014; Özler, 2007).

Bearing the South African context in mind, geographical location can be broadly divided between rural and urban regions. A large proportion of people who are originally from rural areas, currently live in towns and cities. A factor influencing migration from rural to urban areas is that tertiary education is generally available only in urban areas. This suggests that an educated mother may be more likely to be living in an urban rather than a rural area and would therefore have to decide which cultural characteristics she passes on to her children.

An indication of the effects of urbanization is evident in that there are extensive differences in the attitudes and lifestyles of newly urbanized people compared to people who migrated from rural to urban areas years ago (Burman, 2005). Parents transmit their cultural practices to their children and in so doing they perpetuate the characteristics of their cultures (Geertz, 2002; Lukes, 1985; Montagu, 1968). Conversely, they may also cease to impart the characteristics of the traditional African culture in favour of the adapted form of that traditional African culture (Oliver, 1965). This highlights the roles that geographical location and associated urban acculturation play in the transmission of culture in the South African context (Kimmerle, 1990; Lukes, 1985). Geographical location used to be significant in determining the race and ethnicity of a people. Historically, people of the same race and ethnicity tended to originate from the same geographical location. However, as a result of rural to urban migration this is no longer the case as there are a multitude of different races and ethnicities interacting with one another in diverse geographical locations.

2.3.4. The relevance of race and ethnicity.

Race and ethnicity are overt characteristics of culture. These concepts are interwoven and it is extremely challenging to separate the threads. It has been said that race is determined through the biological make-up of a person (Gans, 2005) and that the characteristics of race appear to be externally manifested and biologically passed down from the parent to the child (Edwards, Fillingim, & Keefe, 2001). However, race, *per se*, is not necessarily a determinant of culture.

Ethnicity, on the other hand, relates more directly to the learnt culture that is transmitted inter-generationally from parent to child (Edwards, Fillingim, & Keefe, 2001) and comprises the learnt fundamental aspects of a culture. The notion of ethnicity captures cultural, behavioural and environmental aspects of people (Agyeman, Bhopal, & Bruijnzeels, 2005). This includes practices, languages, rituals, symbolic meanings and history (Chandra, 2006), as well as appropriate and expected behaviour (Hall, 1993), while at the same time providing a commonality that engenders a sense of belonging and identity. Caution must be exercised to avoid over-homogenizing ethnic groups (Bradby, 2003). This may be mitigated by allowing members of a group of people to define themselves (Agyeman, Bhopal, & Bruijnzeels, 2005) by means of responses to open-ended questions thereby alleviating “fixed-response categorization” (Bradby, 2003, p. 6).

Race and ethnicity function as a basis for unity (Nkondo, 2007) which engenders feelings of belonging and add to a sense of identity. Both race and ethnicity are cultural characteristics that are relevant to women in the formation of their identities (Long & Zietkiewicz, 2006) as well as to mothers when imparting culture to their children, in the form of cultural beliefs, religion, practices and rituals.

2.3.5. Cultural beliefs, meaning systems and associated practices.

Many 'cultural' groupings have their own beliefs, religion, practices and rituals that are executed in a unique manner. Parents who belong to a specific 'cultural' group may pass the affiliated religion and beliefs down to their children through instruction as well as the children observing and mimicking the parents (Okagaki & Bevis, 1999).

Rituals and practices have reference to culture. Rituals are ceremonial practices that infer the observance of a religion or creed (Geertz, 2002). Contrarily, Berg (2003) says that the practice of ancestor worship is not a religious practice but rather a means of "seeing and understanding the world" (p. 196). In concurrence with Berg (2003) practices can also be understood as everyday behaviours that have specific meanings attached, not necessarily with religious overtones (Rogoff, et al., 2007). Thereby illustrating the complexity of the meaning and definition of cultural beliefs, meaning systems and associated practices. The manner in which children are cared for and how mothers parent their children, are examples of cultural practices. Many 'cultures' have tangible objects that represent certain aspects of their 'cultures' in the form of symbols and cultural resources (Geertz, 2002). Cultural beliefs, meaning systems and associated practices are generally taught to children by parents and elders (Geertz, 2002).

2.3.6. Religion.

Understanding how people define religion is imperative to the understanding of people themselves, particularly for "marginalised populations" (Hodge & McGrew, 2006, p. 638). Various definitions of religion exist, however religion may be broadly defined as the "acceptance of a particular set of beliefs and ethics" (Cascio, 1998, p. 524) as well as the

pursuit of a means to connect with a sacrosanct entity (Pargament, 2002, p. 169), through “the external expression of faith” (Gotterer, 2001, p. 188).

“Culture is the symbolic process of worldmaking and religion is one mode of worldmaking” (Heever, 2001, p. 16). An interesting question that has been asked is what is the impact of Christianity on African culture (Mkhize, 2004). Christianity has gained a stronghold in the identity of mothers and “by 1946 over half of the African population were church members” (Walker C. , 1995, p. 432). Religion plays a significant part in culture, and by extension, mothering. Many mothers find that their belief in a God offers them “comfort, guidance, and strength.” (Thomas, 2000, p. 61). They find it “important to raise their children as part of a religious tradition” (Thomas, 2000, p. 61). “Religious issues correlated highly with social concerns” (Renner, Peltzer, & Phaswana, 2003, p. 105) and religion was significant among “Black South Africans” (Renner, Peltzer, & Phaswana, 2003, p. 105). However, it was not determined whether there was a specific religion to which this pertained or if religion in general was associated with social beliefs.

2.3.7. Conclusion.

Culture is the transmission of a way of life that is consciously and unconsciously taught and learnt, inter-generationally and intra-generationally (Kimmerle, 1990; Montagu, 1968). This includes, but is not limited to, deliberately chosen overt as well as covert beliefs, religions, symbols, values, behaviours, rituals and practices (spoken and unspoken) of a group of people (Kimmerle, 1990; Montagu, 1968).

Cultural traits are fluid and may be discarded because they were not implemented or because they were exchanged for cultural traits that were recently introduced (Euler, Hoier, &

Rohde, 2001). “Only when there is competition between several cultural traits to be adopted by the next generation will the significance of specific kin relationships and other possible transmission pathways become apparent” (Euler, Hoier, & Rohde, 2001, p. 156).

People's beliefs, religions, symbols, values, behaviour, rituals and practices form a system that provides an organised framework that guides people in how to live their lives and gives them a sense of belonging and identity (Geertz, 2002). Parents, amongst others, ensure the continuation of a culture by teaching the next generation (Montagu, 1968). Having said this, South Africa has undergone pivotal changes over the past decades and this influences the intergenerational transmission of culture and what is transmitted intergenerationally (Hoffman, 2003). The information provided above delineates the theoretical framework relating to culture within the context of this study.

2.4. Mothering

This study did not deal with mothering in isolation. Mothering is influenced by the mothers' environmental factors and individual circumstances (Mercer, 2006) and is only one aspect of a woman's identity (Moore, 2013). There are many characteristics that interact in the development of mothers' identity thereby forming a multiplicity of maternal identities.

The complexity and significance of culture is made more apparent when examined in conjunction with the experiences of mothering. Universally, females do the job of mothering (Arendell, 2000) and it therefore follows that many parenting decisions hinge on the cultural backgrounds of the mothers, which may have an influence on their way of parenting. Exposure to different parenting behaviours may result in the parent (mother) experiencing internal conflict due to differences between their cultural parenting heritage and current

parenting styles; or a modification of their parenting styles through integrating and/or abandoning certain characteristics aligned to these inputs and influences (Julian, McKenry, & McKelvey, 1994). As a unit, the beliefs and values of both parents influence their manner of parenting (Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, & Melby, 1990). However, Simons et al. (1990) state that generally, mothers are more involved in child-rearing than are fathers, with fathers taking their cues from the mothers' beliefs concerning parenting. The concept that mothers were ultimately responsible for child-rearing was corroborated by Swanson and Johnston (2003).

Parenting requires different approaches at different ages and stages of children's lives, for instance, infancy, early childhood and adolescence. This study focused on children aged 0 to 18 years old. Most parenting literature focuses on the concept of parenting in relation to the development of the child. There is minimal literature that discusses the impact that becoming a mother, has on the *mother*. A number of mothering discourses were selected in order to provide a framework for illustrating the mothers' perceptions of motherhood.

2.4.1. Discourses of motherhood.

The concept of a 'mother' is complex and as such there is not one all-encompassing definition of what it means to be a mother. The concept of motherhood lacks an "explicit definition" (Walker C. , 1995, p. 424) and the word itself is "multi-layered" (Walker C. , 1995, p. 424). In the past, the notion that the role of 'mother' is naturally that of women has come under scrutiny, however there is "no consensus on how to conceptualise and theorise" (Walker C. , 1995, p. 419) motherhood. Previously, discourses of motherhood have subscribed to an ideology constructed on the grounds of "social expectations of what a mother should do" (Kruger, 2006, p. 188). A factor that may influence the practice of mothering is the mothers' cultural parenting heritage. Motherhood can engender conflict in

that mothers may feel torn between the “discourse of [their] culture” (Kruger, 2006, p. 205) and their “lived experiences” (Kruger, 2006, p. 205). Motherhood means different things for different women (Kruger, 2006). It was therefore appropriate to examine what mothering means to different women by means of understanding their mothering discourses. One of these processes is the lack of status that is accorded to mothering or being the primary caregiver and the subsequent implication that mothers are less competent in the workplace purely as a result of being or becoming a mother (Ridegeway & Correll, 2004). The processes mentioned above were not exhaustive and the participants generated processes relevant to them that were not mentioned here.

2.4.1.1. *What is motherhood?*

Motherhood begins with (in most, but not all cases; for instance, adoption and fostering) the biological act of conception, pregnancy and birth (Bainham, 2007; Meyiwa, 2011). Mothers are expected to nurture and teach their children. Walker (1995) states that “the work and the responsibilities” of motherhood are perceived to be “to nurture, to preserve and to protect” (p. 418). The responsibility of mothering includes caring for the child’s physical and emotional needs, while at the same time teaching the child how to socialise appropriately to ensure suitable integration into society (Bornstein, 2001). The goal of parenting is to produce a future generation of people who are active, productive, appropriate, functioning members of society.

Becoming a mother shapes a woman’s identity in a profound and personal manner (Kruger, 2006). Becoming a mother entails a major shift in identity that requires the reorganisation of self to include being a woman, a wife/partner and a mother/caregiver (Harkness & Charles, 1995). Motherhood may therefore either add to, or detract from, the

mothers' previous and on-going sense of self. Minimal literature has explored what it actually means to be a mother, from the *mothers' perspective*.

Motherhood has an effect on the manner in which women interact with their environment and vice versa. To some extent, culture defines motherhood; for instance, specific beliefs concerning motherhood are deemed to be the normal and correct way in which to mother (Kruger, 2006). This influences the way mothers experience mothering, especially if their experiences do not conform to the perceived norms of motherhood (Kruger, 2006). By analysing mothers' discourses, insight is gained into mothers' construction of motherhood.

2.4.1.2. Guilt.

Guilt may be defined as "personal regret over certain specific actions" (Liss, Schiffrin, & Rizzo, 2013, p. 1116). Guilt is exacerbated by fear of not living up to the internalised ideal of motherhood (the 'good' mother) as well as the social expectations of how mothers should mother (Liss, Schiffrin, & Rizzo, 2013). A 'good' mother is expected to "select the family sphere and abandon the employment sphere" (Swanson & Johnston, 2003, p. 64). Cultures impose specific pressure on parents through cultural expectations of what is deemed to be the appropriate behaviour for "good parents" (Sidebotham, 2001, p. 479). "The academic mother needs to stop her own critical gaze at herself that absorbs the reflections of a judgemental world." (Pillay, 2012, p. 154). The dearth of women academics may be ascribed to the fact that mothers are viewed as less competent and perhaps, less committed, to their careers (Cuddy & Fiske, 2004; Ridegeway & Correll, 2004).

The issue of balancing motherhood and being an academic is pervasive in mothering. Mothers need to forgo the feelings of guilt by understanding that they all strive (to the best of their abilities) to be both good mothers as well as good academics (Pillay, 2012). The search for the “elusive balance” (Pillay, 2012, p. 154) between work and academia creates feelings of guilt in mothers. Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2004) found that mothers felt guilt as a result of a lack of time both to mother and to focus on achieving tenure, in addition to the never-ending demands present in their lives. Both in that they feel guilty for not being mothers while at work and for, perhaps, neglecting work while being mothers. As a consequence of work and family times intruding on one other, mothers feel increased tension brought upon by their subsequent feelings of guilt (Swanson & Johnston, 2003). Many mothers feel as if they worked a “second shift” (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004) of work at home in the form of mothering and housework as they were the primary caregivers. Lack of time was a discourse that Zulu (2003) specifically mentioned in conjunction with mothering and black female academics. Lack of available time is a limitation that is felt by most mothers in relation to their work and home environments (Sidebotham, 2001).

Guendouzi (2006) found that balancing the roles of mother/employee resulted in personal stress for the mothers. Mothers placed high “mothering expectations on top of already high work expectations” (Swanson & Johnston, 2003, p. 68) on themselves as a response feelings of guilt that arose from having an identity separate to motherhood. This stress may be as a result of feelings of guilt that arose from conflicting feelings between the mothers' roles of mother and employee. To alleviate these feelings of guilt in association with mothering, realistic depictions of motherhood and what mothering entails need to be portrayed (Shelton & Johnson, 2006).

2.4.1.3. *Balance/Conflict.*

The most prevalent question when exploring motherhood and academia (or work) is the issue of balance and/or conflict. At any one time a mother might have multiple identities active that may either compliment or conflict with one another (Walker C. , 1995). These identities may come into conflict when they become apparent in different areas of the mothers' lives. For instance, missing work to care for an ill child or not attending a child's concert because of work commitments. Mothers are expected to commit "selflessly and fully to the family" (Leonard & Malina, 1994, p. 37) irrespective of their commitments to their academic careers. As a consequence of this ideology, working mothers are deemed less competent than non-working mothers and are therefore less likely to be promoted or offered training (Cuddy & Fiske, 2004; Ridegeway & Correll, 2004). This results in the manifestation of stress as a result of the difficulty inherent in managing time to balance academia, family and relationships (Leonard & Malina, 1994).

Mothers are often not utilised in the employment section as a consequence of being a mother and these gaps in employment as a consequence of childbearing and rearing are "distinctive concerns for academic women" (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004, p. 246). Most mothers see mothering as a priority in their lives and that "their children come first" (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004, p. 248). This raises concerns for prospective employers. Balancing work and family is a complex process as they are inter-linked and issues in the one have consequences for the other (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004). Swanson and Johnston (2003) say that mothers want to be afforded recognition for the way in which mothering positively influences being an academic and vice versa.

2.4.1.4. Discipline.

An integral part of bringing up children is disciplining them. Each society, and culture, has their own rules and expectations as to how children should behave. In a multicultural society the actual standards of discipline are difficult to state categorically. It is therefore important to understand that different cultures have different standards of discipline and to be aware of them (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). In addition to the cultural diversity which influences parenting styles (and by inference the manner in which parents discipline their children) is the issue that discipline needs to vary in order to be age-appropriate for children (Alvord & Grados, 2005).

2.4.2. Mother and child interaction.

A fundamental aspect of motherhood is the relationship between the mother and the child. This is a reciprocal relationship and has consequences for both the mother and the child. Positive interaction and communication between the mother and child improves the emotional communication between them and has an influence on the child's behaviour (Kaminski, Valle, Filene, & Boyle, 2008), whereas negative interaction between mother and child results in anxious children (Hudson & Rapee, 2001). Swanson and Johnston (2003) state that academic mothers see their responsibility of mothering as focusing on being emotionally and psychologically "accessible" (p. 64) to their children. All of the above may impact the mothers' self-efficacy, which plays a vital role in their perceptions of parenting (Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, & Melby, 1990).

Leonard and Malina (1994) found that women keep silent with respect to their roles as mothers in the academic domain. One reason for this was that balancing academia and motherhood was seen to be a realistic achievement. Even though the women experienced

conflict in attempting to balance both their academic identity and their identities as mothers, they remained silent on the issue (Leonard & Malina, 1994). Mothers mentioned that there was a clear boundary between their roles as academics (public) and mothers (private) with both spheres providing both positive and negative experiences (Leonard & Malina, 1994). The interaction between the mother and her child be it positive or negative influences the mothers' self-efficacy as a mother.

The physical care of the child is taken as a given in the parenting scenario. The mothers' ability to care physically for a child's needs increases the mothers' sense of competency (Coleman & Karrakar, 1997) and thereby their self-efficacy. Maternal self-efficacy refers to the mothers' feelings of parental competency, constructed from their confidence in themselves, to perform parenting tasks for their children. The ability to interact appropriately with the child is shaped by the level of maternal reflective functioning. Maternal reflective functioning (MRF) relates to the mothers' awareness and ability to understand their and their child's internal state of mind (Slade, Grienenberger, Bernback, Levy, & Locker, 2005). A mother with a well-developed sense of MRF can understand the situation from the child's perspective and thus react appropriately, thereby increasing the likelihood of a positive outcome for the situation (Saunders & Wooley, 2005). This in turn increases her feelings of competency as a parent, which influences her self-efficacy and has a bearing on her perception of parenting.

Mothers demonstrate sensitivity and emotional warmth by means of appropriate responsiveness and attention in reaction to the child's overtures (Bigelow, MacLean, Myatt, Gillis, & Power, 2010). The marital relations of the parents as well as the significance they attach to their role as parents influence the amount of warmth and nurturance shown towards

the child (Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, & Melby, 1990). During intense childhood developmental stages, the marital relationship influences mothers both in their mothering practices and in their feelings of self-efficacy (Mulsow, Caldera, Pursley, Reifman, & Huston, 2002). Mothers and children do not exist in isolation; some of their interactions take place in the greater social context.

2.4.3. Mothers' involvement in the social world of the child.

Children and mothers need to be able to function in a greater social context. This context includes the extended family, friends and the community (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2003). Mothers are seen as the primary source responsible for conveying societal norms to their children (Walker C. , 1995). Friends and social support are significant in their role of helping women overcome the stress of parenting. This is because having friends who are going through, or have been through, the equivalent mothering issues, "helps to reduce parenting stress" (Mulsow, Caldera, Pursley, Reifman, & Huston, 2002, p. 954). A part of this extended world of the mother and child is the child's school. The mothers' sense of their own education and the impact thereof on the mothers' self-efficacy influences their involvement in their child's schooling (Waanders, Mendez, & Downer, 2007). Increased parenting skills and parenting knowledge results in an increase in the mothers' interaction with the child's schooling (Coleman & Karrakar, 1997). Maternal education is positively correlated with expectations of the child's performance at school as well as the actual performance of the child (Davis-Kean, 2005; Kaminski, Valle , Filene, & Boyle, 2008).

The quality of the interaction between the mother and child in the home and the child's performance at school are positively correlated (Bornstein, 2001). In a study conducted by Miedel and Reynolds (1999) with disadvantaged children, they determined that

positive outcomes of maternal involvement in the child's schooling include a higher reading ability of the child, less grade failure and less time spent in special education. Maternal involvement in school has a long-term effect, with maternal involvement in primary school resulting in lower drop-out rates, more children completing their secondary schooling, as well as completion at a higher level (Barnard, 2004). Besides the effect on the mothers' self-efficacy this is relevant in that these children grow up to be parents themselves and thus the cycle continues.

The mothers' social interactions in the community may affect their parenting styles and practices. It is therefore advantageous for mothers to develop parenting skills that incorporate planning and strategies to deal with children at high-risk times. Constant negative social experiences could result in a low social self-efficacy, exacerbating or creating low maternal self-efficacy (Saunders & Wooley, 2005). What is deemed appropriate social behaviour may also be determined by cultural expectations regarding parenting.

2.4.4. The interaction between mothering and culture.

Culture is a significant aspect of the child and the mothers' social world. Each culture has its own predominant way of parenting that is socially interpreted and at times, transmitted intergenerationally. So saying, mothering becomes the mothers task through the notion (enhanced by most cultural norms) that mothers' have a innate ability to care for children (Cowdery & Knudson-Martin, 2005). This "idealisation of motherhood" (Cowdery & Knudson-Martin, 2005, p. 343) lends itself to the perpetuation of inequality between mothering and fathering because the actual way in which parenting is practiced increases the mothers' connection with their children and side-lines the fathering role (Cowdery & Knudson-Martin, 2005).

Parenting practices are the actual behaviours which mothers exhibit in relation to parenting and the social and contextual environments in which they occur (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Mothers who interact in socially appropriate ways and feel part of a society (culture) tend to mother their children in a (culturally) conventional manner (Chen & Kaplan, 2001). Van Ijzendoorn (1992) determined that the role of being a parent is learnt and that there is a relationship between the characteristics of infants and mothers. It is these characteristics as well as the actual parenting styles that are aligned with specific cultures and passed on from one generation to the next. As parenting is a cultural phenomenon, it may be assumed that certain aspects of culture are also transmitted inter-generationally through parenting (Chen & Kaplan, 2001).

2.4.5. Conclusion to Mothering.

The above discussion on some aspects of parenting forms a skeleton for the development of a theoretical framework of parenting. This includes the role of mothers in ensuring the biological, social, physical and emotional welfare of their children through various methods of care and instruction (Bornstein, 2001). The concept of parenting is a pervasive aspect of human life and understanding of the various aspects of parenting is essential to both the well-being of mothers as well as children.

2.5. Education

2.5.1. Mothers who are black South African academics.

In light of the relationship between culture, education and parenting, it was informative to examine the perspectives of mothers who are black South African academics,

and their views of parenting, culture, education and the interaction thereof. This is relevant as it aids in the understanding of the different aspects of and influences on, mothering.

In my perusal of the relevant literature I discovered material pertaining to the impact of parental education levels (specifically mothers) on the schooling and development of children (Hsiao & Richter, 2014) as discussed previously. My literature search yielded minimal content that specifically referred to parental education and black South African mothers. In as far as mothers who are black South African academics and their experiences of parenting were concerned, there was a dearth of literature; Kruger (2006) corroborates that there is a paucity of literature on this concept. Furthermore, intense research into the available material highlighted the deficiency in the available literature for low-risk parents.

2.6. Conclusion to the Literature Review

Mothering is a universal human undertaking. Mothering cannot be examined in isolation as many factors influence practices and styles of parenting, which in turn influence the mothers' perceptions thereof. Simons et al. (1990) state that a holistic view of parenting needs to be entertained, where the aspects of parenting are considered. The multiplicity of identities that women entertain afford them the opportunity to put into perspective the positive and negative aspects of their lives (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004).

One of the constructs of mothering is the creation of an identity that stems from her culture. This identity is influenced by the characteristics of language; geographical location; the relevance of race and ethnicity; traditional beliefs, meaning systems and associated practices and the religious affiliations of the mothers. The mothers' culture allows them to

explore an organised framework that suggests a way of life to the mothers and gives them a sense of belonging and identity (Geertz, 2002).

As is the case with the notion of culture, being a mother has different meanings to different people. Kruger (2006) stated that further research into motherhood is needed to determine whether there are “uniquely South African motherhood discourses” (Kruger, 2006, p. 197) and to determine how the mothers’ “cultural and socioeconomic contexts” (Kruger, 2006, p. 197) influence the mothers’ personal understandings of motherhood.

The discourses of guilt, conflict and discipline are used by mothers in their construction of mothering. The mother and child interaction with each other, the mothers’ involvement in the social world and the interaction of the mothers mothering beliefs and her traditional heritage all influence her construction of mothering. The education of the mother also influences her construction and perspective of mothering.

3. CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Ethical Clearance

This study has been granted ethical clearance (Appendix A) and the ethics protocol number is MPSYC/15/014 IH.

3.2. Study Design

A qualitative research design, with elements of a phenomenological approach, was deemed appropriate as this type of design lends itself to developing a rich understanding of the significance of social experiences (Patton, 2002; Tuli, 2011). The phenomenological approach considers people as individuals, yet also as part of a greater social context. In addition, elements of the emergent design flexibility approach will be utilized in order to facilitate the adaptation of concepts as the need arises (Patton, 2002). Given the scarcity of literature on South African parenting, in particular on the experiences of formally, highly educated African mothers, an exploratory framework seems appropriate.

3.3. Sample and Sampling

A purposive sampling method was implemented. Purposive criteria sampling enhances the credibility of the study (Aspoas & Amod, 2014) . It also allowed for the accumulation of data that had the potential to produce copious amounts of information that was pertinent to the specific phenomena being investigated and which aided in the generation of a detailed understanding of those phenomena (Patton, 2002). The criteria by which mothers who are black South African academics was defined for the purposes of this study, were that they are racially black Africans and of South African descent, they hold a

postgraduate tertiary degree and they have children that fall in the range of 0 and 18 years old.

I recruited participants from the University of the Witwatersrand's (WITS) pool of academic staff members. The initial email was sent to would-be participants based on their University of the Witwatersrand's staff profile. They were invited to participate in the study if they fitted the criteria detailed in the Participant Information Letter (Appendix C).

An email requesting participation in the study was sent out across all five faculties of the University of the Witwatersrand. In total, sixty-seven emails were sent to the Faculties of Health Sciences; Humanities; Engineering and Built Environment; Commerce, Law and Management and Science. Twenty-one people did not reply. Forty-six people responded. Of those forty-six respondents, thirty-seven declined to participate in the study and nine of the respondents indicated their willingness to partake in the study.

Twenty-five emails were sent to the Faculty of Health Sciences. Seventeen responses were received. Seven respondents indicated their willingness to participate in the study. Of the ten respondents who were unwilling to participate, eight cited that they did not fit the criteria, one cited time restraints and one cited personal reasons. Twenty-seven emails were sent to the Faculty of Humanities. Twenty responses were received with two indicating their willingness to participate in the study. Of the eighteen respondents that were not willing to participate, fifteen did not fit the criteria, two were on sabbatical and one stated personal reasons. Four emails were sent to the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment. There were three responses all declining to participate. The reasons cited were not fitting the criteria and being on sabbatical. Five emails were sent to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and

Management. Three responses were received indicating their inability to participate in the study with two of the respondents stating that they did not fit the criteria and one respondent citing time constraints. Six emails were sent to the Faculty of Science. The three respondents all declined to participate citing that they did not fit the criteria.

Of the nine participants who agreed to be interviewed for the study, seven were directly affiliated to the Faculty of Health Sciences and two to the faculty of Humanities. Even though the nine participants came from both the Faculties of Health Sciences and Humanities they consisted of a very clear group of women who formed part of a segment of the academic world affiliated within the health practitioner domain as well as academia, and therefore as a whole, the participants operated predominantly in health related domains. Their marital relationships ranged from betrothed mothers who were living with the fathers of their children to divorced mothers who had minimal contact with the fathers of their children.

Of the twenty-one would-be participants who did not respond to the email, it is difficult to surmise their reasons for not doing so. Their unwillingness to participate in this study could stem from many factors.

I am a mature, white South African female and the would-be participants might not have felt comfortable confiding in me given South Africa's history. As a mature white woman, they may associate me with the apartheid era, specifically given my age and race. The non-respondents may have believed that I could be judgmental of their mothering practices, firstly as a mother myself and secondly as a white western mother.

A further reason for the non-response could be that my recruitment strategy was not personal enough. Despite each email being personally addressed to the recipient, it was a generic email. A more appropriate strategy would have been an individual email highlighting specifically why they were chosen and how they could have added value to the study as a diverse sample would have made for a more comprehensive result.

Initially, I wanted to investigate the whole spectrum of academic women. The final respondents were predominantly affiliated to the health sector. This is significant as the biomedical field is often seen as a hindrance to traditional African beliefs.

The participants that did respond and partook in the study were relatively junior in their academic positions with the majority of them holding Masters degrees. The reason these specific people took part in the study could be because they identified with me as to the challenges of gathering a sample for their Masters studies. Additionally, they might have had more time and less academic responsibilities thereby allowing them the time needed to be interviewed by me.

The participants that were willing to participate did so as my research topic articulated with their own academic interests. Conversely, the would-be participants who did not participate might have had no interest in the topic and therefore did not respond as they did not see the topic as being relevant to them in any way.

Nonetheless, I believe I attained saturation with respect to the participants because I was able to answer my research questions with the number of participants I recruited.

3.3.1. Measuring instrument.

A semi-structured interview schedule that included both demographic questions and semi-structured questions was used to collect data (Appendix B). The structure of the interview aimed to encourage the participants to unreservedly express their perceptions of mothering. Shelton and Johnson (2006) also used interview schedules for this purpose. The interview was divided into six specific sections. Namely, demographics, parenting, culture, education of the mother, the child's or children's development and three general questions. Demographic information was deemed necessary in order to depict the contextual background of the participants. Demographic information is crucial to ascertain the rate of "equivalence among the samples" (Jackson & Niblo, 2003, p. 23) to gather "information from the respondents within their demographic context" (Jackson & Niblo, 2003, p. 24). The semi-structured questions focused on the mothers' perceptions of parenting, different traditional African cultural aspects as perceived by them and the impact of their autobiographical history and education on their construction of parenting.

3.4. Procedure

I perused the WITS staff database and selected females of black African descent who are academics. I derived this from their names and profile pictures if available. An email, detailing the study, which included the Participant Information Letter (Appendix C) was sent to the selected staff members. The email included a request for any would-be participants to indicate their willingness to participate by return email. Thereafter, I corresponded with those participants, who indicated their willingness to be interviewed, via email, to set up dates and times for the interview to take place. They were informed that when they arrived for the interview, they would be required to sign a letter of consent to participate (Appendix

D) as well as a letter of consent to be audio recorded (Appendix E) before the interview process commenced. No interview took place without these letters being duly signed.

The willing participants who met the criteria of the study were interviewed using the interview schedule (Appendix B). The questions in both the demographic questionnaire and the interview schedule were asked by me. I wrote down the responses from the demographical questionnaire. However, the responses from the open-ended interview questions were recorded with only additional notes being written by me. The duration of the interviews ranged from 40 minutes to 1 hour and 40 minutes. In order to minimize any inconvenience to the participants, interviews were conducted on the premises of the University of the Witwatersrand, in a place mutually suitable to the participant and myself. The choice of a mutually suitable venue was an attempt to reduce the probability of the participant being seen by colleagues (to ensure confidentiality) as well as to ensure that no interruptions occurred during the interviewing process. Interviews allowed me to explore the topic in detail while at the same time allowing for flexibility (Pope & Mays, 1995).

Interviews were also appropriate to use in this study as they generated data concerning “people’s experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings, and knowledge” (Patton, 2002, p. 4). This aligned with the fundamental aspects of this research. The interviews were recorded and transcribed by me as soon as was possible, after each interview took place – after which I analysed and wrote up the data - all of which was stored on a password-protected computer, with access limited to me and my supervisor.

3.5. Analysis

Analysis was executed using a thematic content analysis approach. Thematic content analysis is a method used to identify, analyse and report on patterns, themes and meanings discovered in data through the use of codes, classifications and development of categories (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002; Pope & Mays, 1995). In my analysis I perused the data and identified a large number of themes. I then studied these themes in order to integrate those that were similar to each other. An inductive technique was implemented to further explore the themes that I had uncovered. This allowed for the analysis of the data to evolve in a manner that facilitated the continuous and ongoing generation of themes and patterns (Patton, 2002). I implemented both an inductive and a deductive methodology to analyse my data as I initially induced themes from my data from which I later deduced themes. Elo and Kyngäs (2008) state that inductive techniques are valuable in original research. The data, in this instance, was analyzed using a hybrid of both inductive and deductive methods that were deemed suitable to the study as it evolved.

I reviewed my data numerous times in order to be deliberate and methodical so as to produce an interpretation of the data rather than merely a description of the raw material (Sofaer, 2002). The process of thematic content analysis that I followed was described by Braun and Clarke (2006) as having six steps. Firstly, becoming acquainted with the data and this was accomplished through my initial reading of the data. The following step entailed coding of the data and the identifying themes which, I achieved through rigorous examination of the transcripts from the interviews I conducted. The next stage entailed reexamining the themes and I completed that by re-analysing the themes already deduced. Once that was completed I went through my analysis again and defined and formally named the themes. Finally, I reported my analysis in this dissertation. These steps provided a methodical

framework for the study while still allowing for flexibility of the interpretation of the content and were thought to be an appropriate framework for analysis of this data type.

My analysis followed the framework of my interpretation of thematic content analysis which is that it allows for the analysis of the data to be undertaken in a flexible, yet theoretically structured framework. This method of investigation encourages the generation of new knowledge, which I believe was generated through the analysis of my data.

3.6. Reflexivity

3.6.1. Interaction with the participants from a personal perspective.

Self-reflexivity refers to the researcher's self-understanding, self-awareness and world-views and the influence thereof on the research and research process and vice versa. In order to accomplish this, I had to be able to create, recognise and maintain a relationship with myself in relation to the participant; thereby adding (and being aware of) the identity of myself as a researcher to my multiple selves (Aron, 2000). During the course of my study I made a conscious decision to be mindful of my own cognitions. I was aware that it was inevitable that my subjectivity filtered into my interaction with the participants. This was a common issue as "researchers cannot avoid understanding the phenomena they are researching through their own subjectivity" (Hollway, 2009, p. 471). However, I made a conscious effort to be aware of this subjectivity when carrying out the analysis process. This self-awareness assisted me in separating my feelings and beliefs from those of my participants. Therefore, my self-awareness extended to my interaction with the participants.

In the context of this study I foresaw aspects of myself that necessitated my overt awareness in relation to the participants. Firstly, I am mother myself and secondly, I was aware of the affect the mothers' level of formal education had on myself in that they were more highly educated than I am and I might feel intellectually intimidated. Additionally, I am a white South Africa female interviewing black South African females, given the sensitivity of race and ethnicity in South Africa, I was concerned that this would be a stumbling block to developing a rapport with the participants. During the interviewing process I was mindful of this fact; however, not once, did I feel any discomfort as a result of being a white female. I was also aware that the mothers' experiences were their own and that no matter how I tried I would never be able to see the situation they were describing exactly as they saw the situation. By being aware of my ideologies I could compartmentalise them and use them appropriately in my study. For instance, I could empathise with them purely as a mother and by being mindful of them as individual people with their own experiences and myself as an individual with my own perspectives, I could attempt to understand their viewpoints.

As a mother of five children: a 25-year-old son, 22-year-old daughter and 17-year-old triplets (two girls and a boy). I have my own views of parenting and have been through the stages that the parents, whom I interviewed were currently experiencing. I also have my own perceptions of how parenting changes with the different ages and stages of the children. I therefore "bracket[ed]" (Ahern, 1999, p. 407) those views and perceptions and attempted to be as impartial as was possible when interviewing parents. I am a white South African and have been raised, and reside in, a society based on 'Western ideology'. My parenting styles and beliefs reflect this and I was extremely cognisant of this aspect of myself. The group of women I interviewed was totally different to myself as well as being a heterogeneous group.

I was mindful of the manner in which I expressed myself through language; both verbal and body language, as both my verbal expressions and body language may have had different connotations to different participants. Even though I was cognisant that my verbal and body language may differ to theirs, I was aware that the commonality between us was that we were mothers.

As a mother, I could empathise with them in terms of the general aspects of mothering, for instance, balancing the inherent multiplicity of identities of mother, wife, daughter and employee. I feel that my personal interest in the topic, as a mother and employee, played a positive role in my analysis of the data. Frosh and Baraister (2008) corroborate that the researcher's feelings concerning the topic of research impacts on the analysis of the data. However, their life experiences were very different to my own. I was very aware that the participants in my study came from multiple cultural backgrounds and therefore had disparate perspectives of mothering to those that I had and to each other. I therefore, made a conscious effort not to over-empathise and to attempt to be as objective in my interpretation of their views as was possible.

I was mindful that I was interviewing participants who are more highly academically qualified than I am. I was very aware of this fact and did my best to demonstrate respect for the person that I was interviewing, without being intimidated by their level of education. I was cognisant that my task was to discuss their culture and parenting perceptions and that their level of education was simply another characteristic in the context of the study. I found it very interesting that as soon as I met the mothers I was interviewing, we 'connected' on the basis of us being mothers. Our academic educational level was not an issue that was discussed or dwelt upon. In retrospect, this could be because they obviously knew my

academic position and as I had personally recruited them for my study, I knew theirs. Additionally, we had connected on the level of us being mothers and having analysed the data, that was the foremost identity of the participants, and that formed a 'common' place for us to connect and develop a rapport.

I realised, that the very nature of qualitative research lends itself to the researcher developing her own meaning of the data. During the interview process I saw myself as a sponge. I tried to accept and absorb what they told me without being judgmental or altering my tone of speech during the interviewing process, which may have influenced the participants' responses.

Furthermore, I was aware that conducting the study also had an impact on me personally and as such, I processed my own reactions during the course of the study. It would have been unrealistic for me to believe that I could subordinate all my world-views to the extent that they did not influence my study. However, I kept a journal to increase my self-awareness and develop my objectivity, thereby aiming to minimize my influence on the study and vice versa.

3.6.2. Reflexivity and the quality of the study.

The intersubjectivity between myself and the data collected influenced my analysis of the data. According to Hollway (2009), the inter-subjective role of the researcher is significant to the creation of meanings from both the interview and the data collected.

I was also mindful that all research is required to be of a certain quality in order to be deemed trustworthy. With this in mind, I did my utmost to ensure accountability and

ascertain that the data was gathered through exactly appropriate methods, so producing an analysis generating worthwhile information (Patton, 2002).

I was mindful that the authenticity of the data, the reflexivity of the researcher and a general heightened and intensified understanding of the study are some of the criteria that are used to determine the quality and trustworthiness of a study (Patton, 2002; Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002). The acknowledgement of the existence and role that self-reflexivity plays in research, brings into question the accepted philosophies of what constitutes “reliability and validity in research...as all knowledge becomes temporally and interpersonally positioned” (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008, p. 358). I kept this in mind while collecting and analyzing my data by studying the data from numerous angles and ascertaining if I reached the same conclusions. The process of thematic content analysis as devised by Braun and Clarke (2006) was followed to ensure that there was rigour in the analysis of the data (Aspoas & Amod, 2014; Aspoas & Amod, 2014).

The credibility of the study is linked to the trustworthiness of the researcher and therefore I endeavoured to be especially aware of my conduct during the entire research process (Patton, 2002), specifically in those aspects related to my study.

3.6.3. Reflexivity, data collection and the analysis procedure.

The data collection phase of my research took much more time than I had anticipated. Between the 25th June and the 4th August 2015 I sent out an initial email detailing my study and three follow up emails as ‘reminders’ to the sixty-seven would-be participants. After the second round of emails, I realised that there were too few would-be participants who fit the

criteria of having children aged 0-6 years old as I only had 6 participants. I therefore revised my criteria to include children between the ages of 0-18 years old.

My participants were interviewed between the 7th July and 19th August 2015. The delay in recruiting participants that met the criteria for my study and the further delay in setting up appointments for them to be interviewed by myself was a lesson in patience for me. Ultimately, I conducted nine interviews that were relevant to my study. I felt frustrated that it had taken me so long to reach this point. On reflection, I realised that I might have been slightly unrealistic to imagine that, firstly, the participants would respond promptly and secondly that meetings and interviews would take less time to organise and carry out. Once I had come to terms with this I was more relaxed and ready to begin my analysis of the data I had collected.

My next step was to go through my proposal and code it. On completion I felt totally overwhelmed. I had coded 48 themes! After speaking to my supervisor, I realised that it was appropriate to feel overwhelmed at this stage of the process. I went through my codes and consolidated some codes and discarded others, leaving me with a more manageable amount of themes. I went back to my proposal and extracted the theory I deemed pertinent to each theme. This gave me a theoretical framework for my analysis. I then referred to my transcripts, extracted appropriate quotes from the participants and commenced my analysis.

I under-estimated the amount of time it would take for me to perform the analysis efficiently and found myself falling behind my self-made schedule. Even though I was concerned about not being on schedule, I did not feel overwhelmed. With thanks to my supervisor who reassured me that I was not falling behind, I methodically continued and

eventually, completed, the analysis of my data. During the entire analysis process, I consciously practiced self-reflexivity. This gave me the feeling of being able to get an in-depth analysis of the data. Even though I feel as if I managed to retrieve substantial information from my data, I felt and still feel, that there is much more knowledge I can derive from further analysis of the data I collected.

3.6.4. Conclusion to Reflexivity.

The very nature of social research infers a “particular relationship between researcher and subject” (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008, p. 359) wherein “engaging with reflexivity is a necessary yet complex task” (Shaw, 2010, p. 242). I concur with these statements as I believe that my analysis was assisted by my conscious implementation of self-reflexivity. Throughout the entire duration of this study, from its inception to its completion, I practiced self-reflexivity to the best of my ability. Self-reflexivity allowed me to be aware not only of myself in relation to my participants, but also to be aware of myself in relation to myself and in relation to my supervisor.

I was not anticipating the impact that performing this study had on me as a person. When I reflect on my feelings at the beginning of the process and compare them to my feelings at the end of the process, I realise that one of largest areas of personal growth for me was the development of my self-confidence in recognising that I can hold my own intellectually. As a direct result of practicing self-reflexivity I have been made aware of my personal development as a result of interacting with the participants in my study, as well as with my supervisor.

4. CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

Data was collected by means of a brief demographic questionnaire followed by a semi-structured interview. Analysis was implemented using a thematic content analysis approach. Thematic content analysis is a method used to identify, analyse and report on patterns, themes and meanings discovered in data through the use of codes, classifications and development of categories (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002; Pope & Mays, 1995). Using this framework, the core and sub-themes of mothering, culture and education were extracted, examined and discussed. Analysis of the data was undertaken bearing in mind the South African context in which the study took place. These themes include the multiplicity of the mothers' identities and the relationship thereof; the mothers' constructions of mothering and the influence of the mothers' level of education on their construction of mothering.

4.2. Multiplicity of Identities

The mothers' constructed their mothering discourses by integrating their multiple identities into their roles of mothering and integrating their mothering identity into their various other identities, for instance that of wife, daughter, sister and academic. Becoming a mother added an aspect to a woman's construction of her identity that necessitated the reconstruction of who she was. There is a dearth of information, most notably in South Africa, on the effect that becoming a mother has on the mother herself and how she constructs her multiple identities. These identities include that of mother, wife, daughter, sister, friend, academic (employee) and black South African woman. One of the mothers in my study was a "senior clinical executive for a pharmacy and outpatients...a minister's

wife...a student" (Edzai) and another was "a parent... a wife...a daughter...employed" (Gugu); all these identities needed balancing to form an overall identity for the mothers themselves.

The internal conflict that was evident as a result of the multiplicity of identities within the women in my study, was succinctly expressed by Hlengiwe as she "think[s] for me personally as a black woman I feel that the expectations on me as a black woman culturally have not changed. However, my role within that culture has changed" (Hlengiwe). In relation to my study, this illustrated that she still saw herself as a black woman belonging in a black society; however, she now had added roles to play that included that of a black South African woman academic in the field of health. The mothers in my study all had multiple identities that required multiple interactions in a variety of environments; this balancing of multiple identities engendered internal conflict within the mothers.

The mothers' multiple identities had to be internalised. These identities worked together in an interconnected manner and may therefore influence each other, thus an overriding contextual view of the mothers, that incorporated the concepts inherent in intersectionality theory, was used as a framework for analysing the mothers' perspectives of their everyday lives. Phoenix and Pattynama (2006) corroborated that intersectionality theory is appropriate in the study of the multiple identities that manifest in people's everyday lives. Being aware of the multitude of attributes that form an individual's identity, assists in the study of the manner in which individuals construct and express their identities (Crenshaw, 1991). Individual mothers exhibited varying levels of self-awareness with respect to their multiple identities. These identities interacted within the mothers and allowed them to interpret (through their self-reflection) their everyday world from the perspective of "what I

have seen, from my education, from me also” (Atile). The mothers then had to balance their spheres of education, culture and mothering and “because I was different, because I’m in academia, I’m educated, I want to travel, I want to go to conferences ...It will be an issue.” (Dowe). She had to understand how her identities as an academic, as a mother, as a member of a society related to each other and had to make decisions as to their relative significance in her life.

The multiple identities that prevailed within the mothers in my study presented challenges to these mothers. In dealing with these challenges, the mothers felt internally conflicted which in turn resulted in them feeling as if they were neglecting certain of their responsibilities in relation to these identities. The overall effect of this was that the mothers felt torn between their identities of mothers, wives, daughters and academic employees, which in turn had an effect on their sense of self-efficacy.

4.3. Research question 1. How do Mothers who are Black South African Academics Construct Their Identities as Mothers?

4.3.1. Identity.

4.3.1.1. Introduction.

In post-*apartheid* South Africa there has been an increase in the number of black African women enrolling in tertiary education leading to the renegotiation of the “ideologies of race and gender” (Long & Zietkiewicz, 2006, p. 198). Exposure to various ideas and life experiences has encouraged women to reconsider their ideas of who they are and where they fit in in society. In addition, career-focused women are subjected to additional pressures as

they now have to balance mothering “with work” (Bontle). This may result in internal conflict between the women’s multiple identities.

Furthermore, all the mothers had some knowledge of their cultural heritage, irrespective of whether they implement this cultural heritage into their construction of their identities or not. Culture adds a further dimension to the intricacies of mothering. The mothers in my study attempted to balance traditional values in a modern society and did not subscribe to “that cultural belief of saying women are supposed to do this, men are supposed to do that” (Gugu) as they also “go to work, ... do the same things which ... men are doing.” (Gugu). The set gender roles are no longer applicable to these women because “if there’s a cultural practice that undermines me, that looks at me as like, hmm, you’re a woman, you don’t have a voice, you cannot say this, I discard that, and I challenge it” (Dowe).

Women’s status and roles influence their personalities (Twenge, 2001) and by extension their behaviour (Brooks & Bolzendahl, 2004). Over the past half a century women’s roles and status have been transformed (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Twenge, 2001). One of the consequences of this evolution was that women have become more assertive (Twenge, 2001) and confident to follow their own ideals, even if these ideals conflict with societal norms. However, these women were still expected to fulfil the gender roles assigned to them via their cultural norms. Conflict arose as the mothers now “read books” (Atile and Edzai) and “question things, so for me the group that I interact with in my working environment and in my circle of friends is now different” (Edzai). The mothers now gained knowledge from a multitude of sources rather than accepting their traditional norms without question and have the confidence to assert (Twenge, 2001) their beliefs and knowledge. Exposure to other cultures and their norms on a day-to-day basis added complexity to the

mothers' beliefs and the mothers could now adopt, adapt or discard aspects of their cultural norms regarding mothering to suit their individual beliefs

The participants I interviewed had their own individual perspectives of culture, parenting and education. When analysing the data that related to their traditional cultures, certain trends evolved. I will, therefore, elucidate individually on each participants' sense of their various cultural identities³ before discussing the trends that became apparent when analysing the data. The demographic population from which I sourced my participants was extremely limited and therefore, in the interests of confidentiality, I have only given a very broad background of each mother.

4.3.1.2. *Atile.*

Atile is a 35-year-old Southern Sotho/Xhosa married woman who lives with the father of her two children, aged 6 years old and 18 months old. She has a Masters degree in nursing.

It is evident that Atile had many identities, which she had to integrate to form her sense of self. Among these identities was her cultural identity. She saw culture as a “way of life” (Atile) and “the way that a certain group of people decide these are our norms, this is how we behave, this is what we believe in and it influences how you think, how you act in certain circumstances” (Atile). Her cultural identity was active in her a day-to-day conduct and incorporated her beliefs, practices, ritual and values. She implemented these aspects of her cultural identity on the basis that if a practice was “good, I can adopt [it] and anything

³ This discussion does not focus on the mothers' identities as mothers or academics, that follows in the following sections.

that I think is bad I'm not going to do it. It doesn't matter where it comes from..." (Atile). She was mindful of how she integrated the parenting and belief systems prescribed by her heritage; in her mind it was more important for her to be a 'good' mother and a 'good' Christian than to indiscriminately follow traditional practices. Atile said that "being Christian, I'd say that is my culture or it, if I have another culture, if it clashes with Christianity then I'd have to go with what Christianity says [because] Christianity is my culture⁴. I understand what it is to be a Christian more than what it is to be Sotho" (Atile). Atile understood her Christianity to be her cultural identity and it was this Christian cultural identity of hers that directed her everyday behaviour.

So saying, she adapted some traditional rituals passed down from her Southern Sotho/Xhosa heritage which she integrated into her identities. One of these was the practice of postpartum care of the mother and infant. This practice calls for "a designated period of rest" (Dennis, et al., 2007, p. 488) for the postpartum mother where she and her infant are cared for by her mother and/or elders. Atile went home to her mother after her first child was born, but she did it in a manner that was practical to her. She only stayed for "two days" (Atile) as her mother, the sole reason she was there, then went back to work. When she spoke about going back to her mother for postpartum care, she said that new mothers normally stay for "six weeks" (Atile). Atile would be especially aware of this as she was medically educated, thus assimilating two of her identities into her manner of parenting. Another interesting comment was that her "husband wanted [her] to come home" (Atile) hereby inferring that perhaps he was not traditionally observant either, because if he was, he would understand the traditional significance of her staying at her mother's house during this time and perhaps encourage her to stay there, without wanting her to return home. The main

⁴ See note 1 that refers to the use of the participants' descriptors in the analysis and writing up of the research.

reason Atile gave for wanting to go to her mother postpartum was that it “was helpful to know that she’s there, she’s gone through this and she, she can sort of be there and just counsel me and say, *ja*, it’s hard but this is what you do... [and just] knowing she’s there” (Atile). Atile illustrates that for her, the postpartum practice of going home to her mother was about the support that her mother could give her which is a widespread concept (Mercer, 2004).

A practice that Atile adamantly stated that she refused to participate in, was that of ancestor worship. She did not “believe in slaughtering for the ancestors which is a common principle or thing that is done by black people” because she believes “more in God [and] doing what pleases God more than the ancestors” (Atile). Atile’s religious convictions were stronger than her traditional African views.

Atile often stressed the significant role that Christianity played in her life and specifically said that “I’m a Christian” (Atile). It was important for Atile that her children behaved according to religious norms in social settings, for example “in church you want him to sit down” (Atile). The manner in which she parented her children was based on Christian precepts. She said “I do believe in spanking because my, my faith says it’s right. The Bible says it’s right” (Atile). Her child-rearing practices were determined by her Christianity and not by societal behavioural expectations and therefore her identity as a Christian took precedent over general “social concerns” (Renner, Peltzer, & Phaswana, 2003).

However, when it came to a choice between her traditional African cultural beliefs and her educational knowledge then “if there was a thing in my culture that I strongly believed in, that probably would overtake my education” (Atile). She did not feel as strongly

about her education as she did about her cultural traditions. She had an apparent hierarchy in her multiple identities. Her religious identity as a Christian took precedence over her other identities, including both her identity as a Southern Sotho/Xhosa married woman and her identity as a highly-educated academic. However, she said that if there were traditional African cultural issues that formed part of her traditional African cultural identity, that she firmly believed in then her traditional African cultural identity would take precedence over her identity as an academic. Nonetheless, her traditional African cultural identity would not take precedence over her religious identity as a Christian.

Atile's identity as a woman was prominent in the interaction of her identities. Her gender identity was relevant in both her roles as wife and mother. As a wife, Atile deferred to her husband and tended to "generally let him do what he wants, so that he doesn't feel resentful or he doesn't feel like he can't do the things that he wants to" (Atile). Atile insinuated that as a father (man) he was entitled to "do what he wants" (Atile). This is indicative of two things: Firstly, that she felt that the ultimate responsibility of parenting rested with her as generally society sees women as the primary caregivers and secondly, that from a gender perspective parenting was a 'mothers' job, and fathers did it as only so long as they did not "feel resentful" (Atile) and that parenting did not interfere in what "he wants to" (Atile) do. Mothers are expected to make sacrifices and allow men to do as they want, because "men like to relax" (Atile). She did not mention that women might want to "relax" (Atile) as well, because it is societally not expected that women would relax while men cared for children (Arendell, 2000).

So saying, the interaction of her religious identity and her gender identity was apparent in her ideology as even though she said that "men and women are not the same"

(Atile), she did say that she did not “believe God is unfair that he would say the woman should carry so much responsibility and the man nothing.” (Atile). This was evidence that she could be more religious than traditional, because she interpreted religion as being ‘fairer’ to females than her culture was, as she did not believe God to be “unfair” (Atile). This concept of fairness would also be in line with her identity of herself as a professional academic in the medical field, who had as much right as her husband had to do the things he did and she also felt as if she could have time for herself to “relax” (Atile). The affiliation of her identities as academic, wife and mother were all evident.

The issue of gender identity was also expressed by Atile in relation to the different expectations when mothering sons and daughters, as even when the father of her children supported her in her mothering role, it was done with certain limitations set by the father as “he sort of feels like he needs to take care of the son more than the daughter” (Atile). She did not conform to the traditional norms of parenting sons and daughters and believed that “they both [sons and daughters] need to learn how to take care of themselves. ... I can’t treat my boy differently to my [daughter] which is what culture says...” (Atile).

4.3.1.3. *Bontle.*

Bontle is married with three children aged 9, 7 and 2 years. She lives with the father of her children. She holds a Masters Degree in physiotherapy and is a 40-year-old Tswana woman.

Bontle’s concept of what culture meant to her was that culture was “the kind of beliefs that you adhere to and they influence your practice” (Bontle). She saw the everyday aspect of culture as being “...your beliefs...the kind of beliefs that you adhere to and they

influence your practice [in] daily life” (Bontle). Even though Bontle could tell me what she thought culture was, she said that she did not follow her traditional African practices. At eighteen years old, she converted to Christianity and like Atile, she said that she was “a Christian now” (Bontle). Thereby inferring that the beliefs and practices she integrated into her daily life were those affiliated to Christianity and not her traditional African cultural heritage. Bontle had integrated her Christian identity into her multiple other identities to the extent that she even spoke English exclusively to her children and as a consequence “my kids, they can’t speak my language properly” (Bontle). Even though Bontle said that she was a Christian, she exhibited an affiliation to her traditional African heritage and identity by saying that her children did not speak “my” (Bontle) language.

Bontle experienced internal conflict as a consequence of following her Christian precepts and not her traditional racially and ethnically prescribed norms and therefore did not feel as if she fitted into society. Hence, she felt the need to “isolate myself” (Bontle). In common with Atile, she did not abide by the practice of ancestor worship. “Worshipping ancestors which I don’t do” (Bontle) is common practice and by not participating in this practice, Bontle consciously isolated herself from the members of her family and society that do practice this ritual. She justified her behaviour to herself by saying that she “is a Christian” (Bontle) and “the other things I don’t need” (Bontle).

Bontle’s Christian identity took precedence in defining the way she conducted herself. When she turned eighteen years old she “decided [that] I’m a Christian now, God is enough to protect me.” (Bontle). Up to that stage she had to adhere to the practices that were laid down by her family as “I was young and I did not have a say” (Bontle). It was thought-provoking to note that “God is enough to protect me” (Bontle), was the reason that she gave

for adhering to Christianity and that this was the same as one of the reasons that her parents gave for practicing ancestor worship (“they do it for protection” (Bontle)). She therefore still felt the need to be protected by a higher being and had only changed the deity to whom she turned to for protection, but not the fact that she felt she needs protection.

As a woman, she felt that her gender identity was inferior to that of men as “men are kings” (Bontle). Like Atile, she also deferred to her husband, mostly in terms of bringing up their children. Her internal conflict derived from her understanding of gender roles extended to the way in which her traditional African norms advocated the raising of children. There were definitely different expectations for sons and daughters. Sons were taught “that boys must not cry... I have to balance that in my head, let them be” (Bontle). Bontle said that this had made it harder for her to raise her boys. She intimated that there was a conflict here in what she believed and was taught to her as a child. By saying that she had to “balance” that thought that boys do not cry, in her mind, she implied conflict between what she believed and her husband believed. Ultimately though, she adhered to her way of bringing up her sons and taught “them to know how to clean, I want them to know that your wife gets tired... So both of them need to, to know how to tidy up” (Bontle); she experienced internal conflict as a result of the disparity in her identity as a woman, her identity as a Christian and her traditional African cultural identity.

Bontle’s multiplicity of identities was conveyed in the internal conflict she voiced by saying that she felt isolated, as well as in the way that she adapted certain traditional African cultural beliefs to integrate into her current worldview. The interaction of her identities as wife, mother, Christian and Tswana woman played an integral role in the construction of herself.

4.3.1.4. *Cebile.*

Cebile is a 50-year-old divorced Xhosa woman with three children aged 20, 19, and 15 years old. She holds a Masters Degree in dental hygiene.

Whereas both Atile and Bontle said that they would incorporate certain norms and practices from their heritage into their lifestyles, Cebile was adamant that she would not incorporate African traditional norms and practices. However, like Atile and Bontle Christianity was an important part of her life as she was “brought up by the precepts of the Bible” (Cebile). She interpreted culture as “what you do every day ... everyday practices” (Cebile) and what formed the framework that “forces you to behave [and] how [to] do things” (Cebile). The prominence of her Christian identity was evident as she said that she did “everything according to the Bible. Even when I, when I discipline or reprimand or talk about whatever they did, I always refer, I refer to it” (Cebile).

The relationship between Cebile's identities was apparent in that she said that she uses her Christian identity as a framework for her identities of “everything” (Cebile). This infers that her identities of wife, mother, sister, daughter and academic all interact in some manner.

4.3.1.5. *Dowe.*

Dowe describes her cultural heritage as Basotho. She holds a Masters Degree in social Work and is 42 years old. She is married but does not reside with her husband, who is the father of her two children. Her children are five years old and four years old.

According to Dowe, her traditional African heritage formed a framework for “a way of life” (Dowe) that directed “my path” (Dowe). Part of the purpose of adherence to a framework of culture was that it “connects you with other people” (Dowe); this connection engendered a sense of belonging and identity. Dowe did not follow traditional African practices indiscriminately:

so if there's a cultural practice that undermines me, that looks at me as like, hmm, you're a woman, you don't have a voice, you cannot say this, I discard that, and I challenge it. It's not part of what I will embrace [and] something that has an element of, say ancestral worship and all that. I, I have a problem with that
(Dowe)

Dowe was very aware of the broader community in which she resided. She ensured that her children were aware that there were members of the community who were not as fortunate as they were and integrated the traditional African values of community care. She said that if the practice is “my culture around Ubuntu, around helping others, around belonging” (Dowe), then she would adopt that particular practice and incorporate it into her everyday life because she “choose[s] what I want to take” (Dowe). Like both Atile and Bontle, Dowe said she would follow her traditional African practices only if they did not interfere with her Christian beliefs. Dowe illustrated the importance of agency with culture with regard to highly-educated women. However, she was selective in her implementation of traditional African practices. Like Atile, Dowe implemented the postpartum practice of staying with her mother after the birth of her first child as she “ended up doing it for I think only three weeks and I came back” (Dowe). This was because it was more convenient for her

as her “paediatrician was this side” (Dowe) and she had commitments that she had to honour at work in the form of marking students’ examination papers “while I was on maternity” (Dowe). Another way in which she did this was that she spoke to her children in English as well her home language, which is South Sotho. She said that “I must speak English to them from time to time so that they see that it’s OK” (Dowe). She illustrated the adaptation of her traditional African practices through both her adaptation of the postpartum practices and in speaking English as well as her mother tongue to her children.

Dowe’s parents migrated to the city because they “wanted their children to get an education, so they left the farm. So they left the comfortable life, they left support and went to live [where] there were more schools” (Dowe). The major reason for Dowe’s parents changing geographical locations was to offer their children a better education. This implied that Dowe was exposed to the significance of attaining an education at a very early age. She was aware of the sacrifices (in the form of leaving their rural lives and moving to the city) that her parents made in order for her to be educated. It, therefore, followed that attaining an education was a priority for Dowe. However, in order to do this, she had to compromise some of the aspects of her identities. One of these was the attenuation of her racial and ethnic identity. She had to dilute the integration of racial and/or ethnic norms into her construction of herself. As a result, she did not have a sense of belonging and felt as if she was “water and they [other people] were blood” (Dowe).

One of the means which she used to attenuate her racial and ethnic identity was discarding some of her traditional African practices. One of these practices was the intense involvement of her husband’s extended family in their marriage. As a married woman, Dowe found it difficult to understand why her husband “had to consult [with his family] or before

we do anything he'll just share it with them [his family]" (Dowe). This was evidence of internal conflicts between traditional African norms of the level of family involvement in a couple's lives and the individual expectations of the mother, as to how involved she wanted the extended family, to be in her life. Ultimately, Dowe and her husband separated and got a divorce. She says that "the freedom [to do as she pleases] for me is amazing" (Dowe). Dowe did not want to adhere to a traditional African practice that interfered with her chosen lifestyle, i.e. that of being an academic and relatively independent. She alleviated her internal conflict by discarding the traditional African practices that hindered her chosen lifestyle. If she was not comfortable with integrating a traditional practice, she would not incorporate it into her lifestyle.

In line with Atile and Bontle, she was explicit that she did not observe "ancestral worship" (Dowe) because she does not

necessarily believe that [ancestors have] some form or power, like the way traditionally African people believe... this person is close to God and you can pray to this person to make prayers to God. I don't believe that. I believe you are here.... I can still connect with you in terms of memories, thinking about you and the good times, but not that you have some form of power (Dowe).

Dowe's non-compliance with the traditional African practice of ancestor worship was as a result of logical reasoning; she did not believe that once people passed on, they were in a position to communicate with a deity on a human's behalf. In addition, Dowe said that she

was “a Christian” (Dowe) and as such her Christian identity would have been at odds with her traditional African identity in terms of the traditional African belief in ancestor worship.

As a woman and mother, Dowe did not agree with the traditional gendered norms that you should encourage a boy to be tough and strong and a girl really domesticate the girl. ... [she] totally refuse[d] [because] I try hard to raise my children in the same way and not differentiate between like gender, but it's hard...because I've realised that I'm not the only teacher in their lives” (Dowe).

Atile, Bontle and Dowe believed that they should mother their different-gendered children on the same basis and not according to their genders. Dowe experienced internal conflict with respect to her identity as a mother, because what she felt was the correct way in which to mother her children, was not in line with the traditional African parenting norms. Furthermore, there was the reality that there were external factors (specifically other people) that also have an influence on her children. These factors all impinged on her self-efficacy with regard to her identity as a mother.

Dowe's multiplicity of identities incorporated her adapted forms of her traditional African identity, mothering identity and identity as an academic. She had discarded her identity as a wife in exchange for her identity as a divorcee. The interaction of these identities was evident in her discarding, adopting or adapting of the traditional African norms in order for her to form her own holistic multiplicity of identities.

4.3.1.6. Edzai.

Edzai has a Doctorate degree in social work and is a 44-year-old married Xhosa woman who lives with the father of her two children, aged 16 years old and 14 years old.

Edzai interpreted culture as “sharing the beliefs, what you believe to be right culturally, ... you share that and you abide to that as the community” (Edzai). Her interpretation of culture contained many aspects. Firstly, she saw culture as the “sharing” of beliefs. In Edzai’s case this was interesting as she was “basically taught the Christian principles” (Edzai). Abiding by “Christian values [allowed Edzai] not to feel obligated” (Edzai) to hold onto some of her traditional African practices. She illustrated that for her culture was not purely traditional. Her Christian identity formed her belief system, the same applied for Atile Bontle, Cebile and Dowe. Edzai then went on to say that she stood by what she believed “to be right culturally” (Edzai). One of these practices was “respect for your man” (Edzai). Her identity as a wife included the traditional African norm of respecting her husband. Even though she incorporated the practice of respecting her husband, she was explicit in her view that she was not submissive to him. She said that

My understanding of being submissive culturally, to husbands.

That one, for me, was like, ah-ah, my understanding is that submission for me doesn’t mean to say ‘yes’ for everything ... I mean, the Christian side brought something to say, we’re both God-created creatures, and we’re both human beings, so if we’re both human beings we need to take care of each other and fairly so (Edzai).

She has adapted her traditional African identity to enable her still to be traditional in “respecting her man” (Edzai) but on her terms which meant not being submissive to him. Her traditional African identity was adapted as she did not abide by the traditional African customs indiscriminately - she saw herself as being “more enlightened” (Edzai) and believed that culture was changeable and “should move with the times [and not] be rigid” (Edzai). Atile, Bontle, Cebile, Dowe and Edzai all rejected the notions of being the submissive wife, particularly as dictated by traditional African heritage.

Finally, she mentioned that all the above was done as a collective “community” (Edzai). This demonstrated her view of her identity as a member of a specific community which obliged her to behave appropriately. Edzai’s description of her traditional African identity, Christian identity, her identity as a wife and her identity as a member of a community illustrates that she experiences internal conflict as a consequence of balancing her multiple identities.

In terms of the language that Edzai wanted her children to learn as their mother tongue, she spoke isiXhosa to her children because she wanted to her children to know “who they are in terms of [their heritage]” (Edzai). She also spoke English to her children, as this was the language of instruction in school.

Edzai was conscious of the gender differences in the way mothers and fathers parented their children and she “realised with time that they [children] actually need both parents” (Edzai). With respect to raising boys and girls, when Edzai grew up “the boy would do nothing, from my family’s side ... As a daughter, make sure that you cook a dish for the male, wash their clothes” (Edzai). She did not subscribe to this belief and “now I do it

differently. They both [daughter and son] have family chores. They both wash dishes” (Edzai). Edzai was, once again, illustrating how she has adapted her traditional African norms to fit into her mothering identity, as well as her identity as a woman. In line with Atile, Bontle and Dowe, she brought up her children in the manner that she saw fit, which might not be according to norms derived from her heritage.

Edzai illustrated how she integrated her multiplicity of identities, which included her traditional African identity, her Christian identity, her identity as a mother, identity as an academic and her identity as a member of a community, into her persona in order to fit into the lifestyle which she created for herself.

4.3.1.7. *Fikile.*

Fikile lives with the father of her five-year-old child. They are not married nevertheless *lobola*⁵ has been paid to her family. She is a 28-year-old Xhosa woman who holds a Masters Degree in research psychology and is employed at the Centre for Health Science Education.

For Fikile, culture, in the form of her traditional heritage, had negative connotations as she believed that culture is “usually used to try and confine people” (Fikile). She agreed with Dowe that “culture is forever changing” (Fikile), however, she did not see the necessity to incorporate culture in her lifestyle. Fikile therefore mentioned that there were some

⁵ *Lobola* is the “transfer of bridewealth” (Shope, 2006, p. 69) from the groom’s family to the bride’s family and is seen to form a “relational bond” (Shope, 2006, p. 65) between the families. *Lobola* “is an important part of culture in South Africa” (Heeren, Jemmott III, Tyler, Tshabe, & Ngwane, 2011, p. 79) and is believed to contribute to the “stabilization of the marriage” (Heeren et al., 2011, p. 79).

traditional African cultural practices that she did not practice. One of them was that “when the child is one year, they [her family] introduce the child to the ancestors” and she “was not for it” (Fikile). In addition, “with the dedication as well... by implication I’m giving my child... over to the ancestors. And I, I was just uncomfortable with that.” (Fikile). Fikile, like Atile, Bontle, Cebile, Dowe, Edzai did not follow the practice of ancestor worship. This followed Fikile’s statement that she did not incorporate traditional African practices into her construction of her cultural self. She did, however, acknowledge her Christian identity as one of the multiple identities which formed her sense of self as she was “a Christian” (Fikile). In agreement with Atile, Bontle, Cebile, Dowe and Edzai, Fikile’s Christian beliefs played a prominent role in her life. No matter from where the practices originate, she said that she would not implement any practice that would “harm” (Fikile) her children. In contrast, Fikile was hesitant to express whether she was married or not because *lobola* had been paid; however, the marriage has not been formalised in any other way. The fact that *lobola* was paid illustrated that there were traditional African practices to which she subscribed. This created internal conflict between her multiplicity of identities as she attempted to fulfil the responsibilities inherent in the different identities with the finite amount of time available to her.

Fikile did not agree with the way that the different genders were raised in accordance with traditional African norms, as she saw it as “basically the socialisation of how boysand ... girls should behave” (Fikile). In keeping with Atile, Bontle, Dowe and Edzai she brought her child up very differently to this and said that “I don’t do that [differentiate the way she brings up her children in terms of their gender] because my child does everything” (Fikile). There was no distribution of chores according to the gender of the child.

Fikile's identities that she openly acknowledged, included those of a Christian, a wife and a mother. Even though she said that she did not include traditional African practices in the construction of her identity, her partner had paid *lobola* which was in line with the expectations of her heritage as a Xhosa woman. This was bound to cause conflict with her Christian identity because it was not a recognised Christian belief. Fikile therefore experiences internal conflict between her multiplicity of identities.

4.3.1.8. Gugu.

Gugu is a 26-year old Tsonga woman who holds a Masters Degree in social development. She is married and lives with the father of her two children aged four years old and 18 months.

Gugu did not see herself as abiding by traditional heritage practices; she said that she was "not really cultural. I'm more of religious" (Gugu). Like Atile, Bontle, Cebile, Dowe, Edzai and Fikile, she inferred that her Christian identity took precedence over her traditional African cultural identity. She did not overtly say that this caused her internal conflict, she inferred that she was not actually traditionally African in her traditional beliefs, and that she adhered more to her religious precepts than her traditional African ones. Even though Gugu's mother was "also a Christian [and] I followed her as well" (Gugu), Gugu still felt internally conflicted as she was exposed to traditional African beliefs through her husband.

When she spoke about traditional African cultural practices in connection with her husband she said that ultimately she would have to accede to her husband's wishes because she lived in a "patriarchal society" (Gugu). Gugu experienced conflict between her identity

as a woman in a society that expected women to defer to men and her identity as a woman in a “modern society” (Gugu)

Gugu was yet another mother who spoke English at home to her children as that is the language in which they are taught at school. Gugu spoke to her children in English in conjunction with Tsonga, because “you can’t only speak Tsonga because at school they speak English” (Gugu). Gugu accommodated two of her identities by speaking Tsonga as well as English to her children.

As a woman who was educated, Gugu was ostracised if she did not behave in the manner that was traditionally expected of her, as she would be told that “you are disrespecting your husband and disrespecting your culture, because you are educated” (Gugu). As Gugu did not overtly integrate many racial or ethnic norms into her identity, she found it challenging to have a sense of belonging. She felt misunderstood and perhaps, even resentful, that she was expected to behave in certain ways “because they don’t know how you feel. They don’t know what you are going through,” (Gugu). She illustrates internal conflict between her identities of mother, wife and traditional Tsonga woman.

Gugu exhibited great internal conflict when she contradicted herself, as she said that she was not “really cultural” (Gugu) and then she said that when it came to certain traditional African practice her husband “will decide” (Gugu) what to do, because her husband would not discuss this with her, “he was like you cannot talk, you know, about, about that” (Gugu). So even though she did not want to practice traditional African norms she would consent to them as she felt that she had no choice if her husband wanted to follow certain traditions.

However, the one practice which she adamantly refused to entertain was that “if there were rituals to do with ancestral I would not be involved” (Gugu).

Just as Atile, Bontle, Dowe and Fikile did not adhere to ancestor worship, she adamantly refused to participate in ancestral rituals. However, contrary to Bontle and Edzai, she overtly deferred to her husband with regard to other traditional African beliefs and parenting of sons, the father may feel that “when it comes to that [male circumcision] he will decide and he will tell me what he’s going to do” (Gugu). She inferred that she had no choice but to adhere to that traditional African norm as “we are living in a patriarchal society and there is no way this is; it’s going to change” (Gugu). She felt conflicted as “it’s those women who are bringing their children. So how come they cannot talk about it?” (Gugu). She deferred to her husband who believed that “I’m the king, he’s [their son] the prince” (Gugu) and therefore, if the father wanted to have their son circumcised she could not say otherwise. Her traditional African identity and her “modern” (Gugu) woman’s identity were in conflict. It was interesting to note that even though she was aware of the conflict, she felt helpless to change the status quo.

However, this was not practical and she ultimately said that “so now you are, you know, going beyond your boundaries and that won’t be nice. Because it means now you, you will end up not talking at all.... over so you can’t continue... talking about that” (Gugu). She reasoned that she would allow her son to be circumcised; not because she agreed with the practice, but because she “wouldn’t disagree with the father” (Gugu). However, she did “have little disagreements” (Gugu) concerning some of the beliefs to which she did not want to adhere (including circumcision). In this case, she let it go and deferred to the father,

because she realised that it would cause marital friction, as it is societally expected that women defer to men.

She attempted to balance traditional values in a modern society and “that cultural belief of saying women are supposed to do this, men are supposed to do that” (Gugu) which she did not subscribe to, as she felt that she also “go[es] to work, ... do[es] the same things which ... men are doing.” (Gugu).

The balancing of her multiple identities, which included her Christian identity, her mothering identity, her traditional African identity, her academic identity and her identity as a wife, all required effort and at some stage or another, created internal conflict between Gugu's many identities.

4.3.1.9. *Hlengiwe.*

Hlengiwe has a three-year-old child and lives with the father of her child, to whom she is married. She is a 36-year-old Pedi women who holds a Masters Degree in occupational therapy.

According to Hlengiwe, culture formed a framework within which people are expected to behave. Part of the purpose of remaining within the framework of culture was that it “grounds you as person” (Hlengiwe), and engenders a sense of belonging and identity.

This traditional African framework was flexible and Hlengiwe's grandfather straddled two worlds. He moved to the city as a teenager and eventually started a family. However, when it came time for him to take over the chieftaincy he was expected “to take a second

wife who was more rural” (Hlengiwe). The situation was related very matter-of-factly and this scenario and the way in which Hlengiwe explained it to me, was very significant.

Hlengiwe said that she did not adhere to traditional African traditions that did not fit in with her current beliefs as a woman and yet she readily accepted her grandfather taking a second wife to fulfil his traditional African obligations. Hlengiwe’s grandfather therefore adapted his traditional African cultural norms and took a rural wife, while keeping his urban family as well. Interestingly, Hlengiwe was happy with this decision and sounded impressed that her grandfather had managed to maintain an element of his culture while still living in an urban setting.

One of the areas that illustrated Hlengiwe’s traditionally diverse upbringing and current lifestyle, was illustrated by the fact that “at home we would speak English in our house, we were splitting the languages, but our play [with other children] was really mainly in our language” (Hlengiwe). She still identified with her traditional heritage, as she said that they played mainly in “our” (Hlengiwe) language. There was a tendency for people to be “more cultural ‘cause they grew up in the rural areas” (Hlengiwe). Hlengiwe voiced her belief that if the mothers lived in the city they were “urbanised more than cultural” (Hlengiwe). When people migrated to urban areas they took “on some urban practices so they also didn’t instil a lot of that [culture] on my parents” (Hlengiwe). Her family adapted and assimilated their practices into their ‘new’ everyday lives.

Out of all the mothers I interviewed, Hlengiwe, was the most traditionally African woman in her cultural beliefs. Like Atile and Dowe she observed the practice of postpartum care of the birth-mother by her mother and “went home to my parents for three months” (Hlengiwe) after her child was born. She also adhered to the traditional African cultural

tradition with respect to the disposal of the umbilical cord of her child and “bur[ied] it into the ground” (Hlengiwe). However, in the next breath, she mentions that she did not cut her daughter’s hair at the required age as she “like[d] the soft texture of [her] daughter’s hair” (Hlengiwe). She was also resolute that her child was “not going to go to circumcision” (Hlengiwe) nor “to initiation school” (Hlengiwe). Hlengiwe experienced internal conflict because like Atile, Bontle, Cebile, Dowe, Edzai, Fikile and Gugu she said that she is “a Christian” (Hlengiwe), thereby illustrating internal conflict with respect to her traditional African cultural identity and her Christian identity.

Hlengiwe also found herself conflicted in the way she mothered her children with regard to traditional African cultural norms and their genders. She was aware that

cultural practice is... that girls become more domesticated ...
but I mean in my family my parents have always [treated] boys
and girls ... the same... [but] a boy cannot outcook you!...
You’re still required to have better skills in the kitchen and in
the home than a boy. So I guess in that regard that’s still a bit of
a cultural [belief] (Hlengiwe).

In keeping with Atile, Bontle, Dowe, Edzai and Fikile, she attempted to adapt the different traditional African customs in bringing up boys and girls to align with her current beliefs. However, she acknowledged that she was conscious that boys “cannot out-cook you!” (Hlengiwe) and that with that thought she was “still [being] a bit cultural” (Hlengiwe). The internal conflict she experienced was evident in how she said that she treated her

children the same and yet, immediately following that statement she said how she expected her daughter to cook better than her son does.

Hlengiwe's internal conflict between her multiplicity of identities was patently perceptible and complex. There were multiple identities within her realm that interacted and came into conflict with each other, namely, her identity as a traditional Pedi woman, as a daughter, as a Christian, as a mother, as a woman and as a wife.

4.3.1.10. *Itumelang.*

Itumelang is a single mother of Ndebele/Swazi extraction. She has a 4-year-old child who has a neurodevelopmental disorder. She is 32 years-old and holds a Doctorate degree in neuroanatomy.

For Itumelang culture had negative connotations and she believed that "culture is a burden," (Itumelang). She envisaged culture as a concept that was "reduced to a set of practices [that are] completely irrelevant ... because for me the ceremonies cost a lot of money. I'm very practical" (Itumelang). Contrary to the other mothers in my study, Itumelang professed to neither the ethos from her traditional African heritage nor to any religion. When pressed to describe what she thought culture actually was, she said that culture was, a vague part of life, that people adhered to without conscious thought as "it's not something that's spoken about every day" (Itumelang). She even spoke English, and not an African language, to her son, as that was the language in which he was taught.

The relevance of rural/urban migration was that people's place of origin was part of "how people define themselves" (Itumelang). Like Hlengiwe, Itumelang's integration into

urban life was initiated by her parents when they migrated from rural to urban areas and through the parents adapting and not instilling “a lot” (Itumelang) of their traditional heritage in their children and grandchildren. Even though Itumelang professed not to conform to any type of norms, be they traditionally African or religious, she was very aware of her heritage. The strong sense of identity that was derived from her geographical heritage was evident when she said “that culture is ... where people say they come from” (Itumelang). Where she came from was a part of her identity that she did not openly acknowledge. However, it still formed a portion of her sense of self. She also professed that her traditionally African roots did not form part of her construction of herself. This was contradictory and as a result, she felt internally conflicted as she saw herself as not subscribing to traditional African norms nor religious norms.

Itumelang was aware of the traditional “ceremonies [and] ...practices” (Itumelang) but did not practice any of them. She knew about “circumcision school and...initiation for girls” (Itumelang) but she did not go and she refused to send her child. It was relevant to mention that through Itumelang’s self-description, it was apparent that she saw herself as essentially an atheist and did not subscribe to religious or traditional African practices or beliefs because she felt that “.... it’s just practices that make no sense to me” (Itumelang). She contradicted herself by also saying that she would “allow it [cultural observance] as long as it doesn’t affect me [and] how my son is parented” (Itumelang). Her contradictory remarks explicitly illustrated the huge tension between the multiplicities of her identities.

She said that she was bringing up her child according to her own lifestyle and values. These were gathered from her personal experiences, as well as from other mothers with whom she came in contact, mostly in the academic field of health. The relevance of this was

that, as an academic operating in the health field, her personal experience was shaped by her educational knowledge. The interaction of her multiple identities was evident in what she deemed relevant in her mothering practices. Her education was paramount in her life and as such, was a major influence on her style of mothering.

Itumelang's multiplicity of her identities as a mother, woman, academic in the health sphere and Ndebele/Swazi woman, make for complex interactions and intersectionality between her various identities.

4.4. Trends

In the course of the analysis, certain trends became evident. Inherent to these trends was the mothers' inclination to see themselves as possessing numerous identities. Numerous factors interacted to construct a cultural identity that was individual to each woman. Each woman's construction of her cultural identity was a consequence of the confluence of the intersection of some of her multiple identities. These identities formed as a result of certain characteristics of culture, namely, the language she spoke; the geographical location from which she originated; her racial and ethnic heritage and the beliefs, practices and rituals thereof; the religion she currently practices (if any); her educational attainments and the fact that she is a woman. These aspects of culture were influenced by the specific beliefs concerning motherhood that were deemed the normal and correct way in which to mother (Kruger, 2006). In practice, culture means different things to different people and the different mothers in my study portray the interaction of these aspects differently.

4.4.1. Cultural identity.

The structured and organised framework that culture provided, allowed a group of people to function and interact with each other as well as with other people (Geertz, 2002). The mothers interpreted the concept of culture individually. Initially the formulation of culture was challenging to them. Ultimately, their concepts of culture ranged from the negative connotations to the everyday aspects of their lives.

The consensus amongst the mothers was that culture was a belief system that, when followed, allowed them to identify with a specific community or group of people and engendered a sense of identity. Culture is commonly described as the covert beliefs, religions, symbols, values, behaviours, rituals and practices (spoken and unspoken) of a group of people (Kimmerle, 1990; Montagu, 1968).

By saying that it was a group of practices and beliefs applied to everyday life, the mothers determined that culture was more a way of life than a belief system and did not necessarily refer to their black African heritage. Everyday practices and beliefs consist of characteristics that form a system that provides an organised framework which guides people in how to live their lives and gives them a sense of belonging and identity (Geertz, 2002).

Thus an overriding contextual view of culture that incorporated the concepts inherent in intersectionality theory, was a logical position from which to examine the mothers' construction of culture. The reason for implementing intersectionality theory in this regard was that intersectionality theory was suitable to use in the study of the identities of "race/ethnicity, gender, and class" (Acker, 2006, p. 442). The mothers saw culture as a framework that directs their behaviour. They saw culture as a means of setting guidelines for

behaviour that can be comfortably incorporated into the mothers' self-identity as well as setting parameters for appropriate social behaviour.

Most of the mothers sounded as if they had not even considered their culture identity until they were asked to describe their cultural affiliations. Culture, as it formed the mothers' cultural identity, was therefore an intangible part of life, which people followed without conscious thought. A person's cultural identity translated into everyday behaviour that was taken for granted and integrated into their daily existence.

The mothers in my study all had their individual views of what constructed their cultural identity. These views ranged from adherence to an adapted form of their traditional heritage that fitted into their current lifestyles, to total non-adherence of any belief system. Culture, as a concept, was difficult to define as it meant different things to different people and takes on varying degrees of significance in the lives of people. In my study it was apparent that the cultural identities of the mothers in the form of their traditional heritage, fitted into their lifestyles and not vice versa; thereby illustrating the fluidity of culture.

4.4.1.1. *The fluidity of culture.*

Culture is fluid and at various times and under different circumstances, may change and have diverse definitions, meanings and connotations (Creighton, 1990; Wright, 1998). The mothers in my study illustrated the fluidity of traditional African practices by either adapting or discarding existing practices. The creation and retention of multiple identities allowed each identity to be contextual and multifaceted.

The fluidity of traditional heritage practices and customs was evident with respect to ancestor worship and the postpartum care of new mothers. The practice of ancestor worship was discarded by all the mothers in my study. The second illustration of fluidity was when practices were adapted to fit into the mother's current lifestyle, for instance the postpartum care of the mother – where the mother and the baby were looked after and she was not expected to do anything except learn how to care for her child. However, all the mothers in my study (except for Hlengiwe who went to her mother for three months postpartum), had circumstances which prevented them from spending three to four months with their mothers. Even though the two mothers stayed with their mothers for different lengths of time this was still a clear adaptation of a traditional African tradition to suit their individual current lifestyles.

Certain elements of culture are subject to change due to altered circumstances (Creighton, 1990; Manganaro, 2002; Oliver, 1965; Wright, 1998) and different contexts. Some traditional African practices were not followed as the mothers saw themselves as living in a modern world. This was evidenced in the fact that most of the mothers stated that they observed a Christian belief system. The religious aspect of traditional heritage was also subject to change and that was illustrated by the mothers' beliefs in Christianity and not any traditional African beliefs. The fluidity of culture illustrated how expendable traditional African beliefs and practices may be in certain instances. Thus, even though the mothers' traditional African cultural identity was significant, it was not an overriding identity within the context of the mothers' multiplicity of identities.

The fluidity of cultures allowed the mothers to feel that, if they so desired, they could implement their traditional African heritage into their cultural identity, while at the same time

not compromising any of their other identities. The fluidity of culture was well illustrated by the mothers in my study who adopted, adapted or discarded aspects of their cultures in order to assimilate (or discard) the traditional African norms into the many roles they undertook as mothers, daughters, wives⁶ and academics functioning primarily in the field of health. Both the fluidity of and the unconsciousness of the mothers' cultural identities illustrated how culture involved contradictions and tensions particularly in this sample of urban educated women.

4.4.2. Language.

Language is an integral part of every person's life. Mothers taught their children the language/s which they deemed necessary for their children to fit into a society. Each mother consciously and purposely, chose the language which they used to speak to their children. Language, was an integral part of the mother's interaction with their children; the mothers whose identity was linked to a specific traditional African group spoke to their children in their mother tongue, specifically when communicating traditional African issues. The mothers who saw themselves as "modern" (Itumelang), focused on speaking English to their children. Thus illustrating a definite link between traditional African identity, cultural intergenerational transmission (of identity and belonging) and language.

A fundamental aspect of humanity was that it has language as a tool for communication and expression. Language varies as a consequence of geographical location and heritage. It is also a pervasive characteristic of culture (Myers, 1987) and in some instances, language may be perceived as being synonymous with culture (Gao, 2006). Even though some of the mothers spoke their traditional African cultural language to their children,

⁶ The women's identity as wives will be elaborated upon in the section titled 'Mothering.'

that did not mean that these mothers identified strongly with their traditional African heritage. Language was not indicative of the philosophy associated with the traditional African heritage people followed as, despite the importance of language to a culture, not all members of the same culture spoke the same language. This was apparent in my study as all the mothers spoke English in conjunction with an African language, or even a few African languages. The language of choice for the mothers in my study varied according to their personal situations. Even though all the mothers spoke English, there were times when some of them spoke their mother tongue, especially to their children and extended family, as they determined that their mother tongue would be more appropriate in those situations. The language the mothers spoke at different times was determined by the situation they found themselves in, that is, which identity they were expressing at that time. For instance, that of Christian identity, traditional African identity or mothering identity.

Bontle mentioned that her children did not speak “my” (Bontle) language. Hlengiwe says that as a child she interacted with her friends in “our” (Hlengiwe) language. In terms of Bontle, this is very interesting as she is identifying with a language that she does not perpetuate. Both Bontle and Hlengiwe illustrate that the heritage of the mothers, in terms of the language they speak to their children, forms part of their identity whether they perpetuate their historical language or not.

One of the reasons for only speaking English to their children, was that it was how they were brought up. However, they learnt to speak other languages at home as well as English, in order to converse with their extended family. This was especially true for mothers of primary school aged and older children, because English is the dominant language of instruction in the educated middle class sector (Long & Zietkiewicz, 2006; Probyn, 2001).

Language is an important part of the mothers' identities as it gives them a sense of their heritage, who they are and from where they originate; as such it was apparent that a great deal of thought went into deciding which language would be the mother tongue of their children. Language was an effective vehicle with which to transmit aspects of cultural knowledge and information intergenerationally (Manganaro, 2002; Cabrera, 2001) and this was corroborated by some of the mothers wanting their children to have a sense of their heritage.

4.4.3. Geographical location.

The mothers' geographical origins influenced their identities through the diverse experiences they were exposed to within those various geographical locations. There were two broad geographical locations in which the mothers were located, namely, rural and urban.

Rural/urban migration is still evident in South African society today with many people commuting between urban and rural areas, though without the same levels of coercion or sanction as under *apartheid* (Collinson, Tollman, & Kahn, 2007; De Brauw, Mueller, & Lee, 2014; Özler, 2007). One of the consequences of *apartheid* was that rural/urban migration became a way of life for many people, for whatever reason. This is still the case today, with many people living and working in the 'big' cities, whilst having roots in the rural areas in the form of extended family.

All the mothers in my study lived in Johannesburg; however, Cebile stated that she returned to the rural areas at her husband's behest to attend a funeral and Gugu said that she went back to the rural areas to visit her grandparents. The continuation of mothers visiting their extended family in the rural areas, demonstrated how the legacy of rural/urban migration

was still in evidence today. When people migrate to different areas, the transmission of culture either did not occur, or the culture that was transmitted was adapted to accommodate 'new' environments. Therefore, when some of the women migrated to the city they did not totally abandon their rural identity associated with the traditional African heritage. They continued to have interactions in their rural geographical locations that drew them back to their rural heritage, essentially they still identified with their rural 'selves'. This inferred that the mothers who lived in urban areas adopted an urban lifestyle while discarding or adapting their traditional rural identities. However, whenever they spoke of performing traditional African cultural practices they inferred that these practices took place in the rural areas and not in the cities. The significance of this was that it illustrated that for some of the mothers' traditional African cultural identity still played a role in their lifestyles. Geographical location and associated urban acculturation play a significant role in the transmission of culture in the South African context and have bearing on a person's identity because traditional African groups originate from specific geographical locations (Kimmerle, 1990; Lukes, 1985).

4.4.4. Race and ethnicity.

The notion of ethnicity captures cultural, behavioural and environmental aspects of people (Agyeman, Bhopal, & Bruijnzeels, 2005). This includes practices, languages, rituals, symbolic meanings and history (Chandra, 2006), as well as appropriate and expected behaviour (Hall, 1993). The mothers in my study were aware of the behaviour expected from them in terms of their racial and ethnic identities. Adherence to the norms prescribed by a person's race and ethnicity, provide a commonality that engenders a sense of belonging and identity.

Most of the mothers referred to behaviour that illustrated respecting their spouses or the father of their children. These comments by the mothers indicated that the mothers were still expected to behave in a manner that was deemed racially and ethnically appropriate. If they did not, they were accused of being disrespectful towards their traditional African heritage. These mothers, therefore, had to contend with opposition from within their family as well as from the community and society in which they operated and felt misunderstood and ostracised and as if they did not belong.

The participants in my study all had their own descriptions of what they determined to be fitting and appropriate behaviour that complemented their sense of identity. At times this was contrary to how society, their community, friends and family, expected them to behave. When that happened, the mothers' level of education was often seen as the culprit for her 'misbehaviour.' Thereby indicating that being educated as a mother, was not seen as acceptable with regard to their traditional African heritage and this induced internal conflict between identity as an educated woman and the other identities inherent in her persona.

These personal ideals were inherent in the mothers' sense of identity. Both race and ethnicity are cultural characteristics that are relevant to women in the formation of their identities (Long & Zietkiewicz, 2006). One of the consequences of not following their traditional African prescribed ideals was that they then grappled with the concepts of where they fitted in in the society and with who they were in terms of their identity. This has bearing on the mother's self-efficacy with regard to her identity and sense of belonging as a member of a society. These mothers felt as if they did not belong to any specific culture nor to any specific society. They live in a no-man's land occupied by a select number of their female colleagues.

The mothers were aware of their traditional African heritage. This was true whether they adhered to traditional African customs or not, as even if they did not observe their traditional African norms and practices they were aware that there were traditional African practices they were not integrating into their construction of their traditional African identities.

4.4.5. Beliefs, practices, rituals, values and symbols.

An integral part of any culture is its rituals and practices that give that specific culture a sense of its own identity. Practices can be understood as everyday behaviours that have specific meanings attached, not necessarily with religious overtones (Rogoff, Moore, Najafi, Dexter, Correa-Chavez, & Solis, 2007). Be that as it may, cultures have prescribed practices to which people of that culture are expected to conform in order to 'belong'. The mothers in my study did not conform indiscriminately to any traditional African practices and as a consequence, found themselves internally conflicted. On the one hand, they were expected to conform to certain everyday traditional African practices, but on the other hand, their own personal experiences and ideologies steered them in different behavioural directions. This resulted in internal conflict as a consequence of conflicting identities. It also had an impact on their self-efficacy. Traditional African practices were either adapted, adopted or discarded by the mothers. The mothers did not randomly adopt or discard traditional African practices and those that they did adopt or adapt to, were done so after careful consideration.

Rituals are ceremonial practices that infer the observance of a religion or creed (Geertz, 2002). Eight out of the nine mothers stated that they belonged to some or other denomination of Christianity. Religion, in the form of Christianity was an essential part of their identities and played a major role in their lives.

None of the mothers in my study followed their traditional African heritage beliefs exclusively. These beliefs were adapted to be integrated into their lifestyles. This was relevant, as it illustrated that the mothers' priorities in child-rearing were to bring up their children in the manner that they saw as appropriate and beneficial for both their children and themselves. Their identities as mothers took precedence over their traditional African cultural identities. They did this with the knowledge they had gained through their education and exposure to other cultures in their workplace and religion.

4.4.5.1. *Beliefs that are not used in the construction of mothering.*

There were some traditional African customs that the mothers categorically stated that they did not implement in the construction of their mothering identities, or if they did implement them they were adapted to fit in with the mothers' sense of her identity as a mother.

There were five specific beliefs and practices that were mentioned by the mothers as traditional African beliefs they would not utilise in their construction of their identities. These were: ancestor worship, consulting traditional healers, circumcision, sending their children to initiation school and the conventional submissiveness of women.

4.4.5.1.1. *Ancestor worship:*

The most common practice that the mothers said they did not incorporate into their identities was "worshipping ancestors which I don't do" (Bontle). The mothers who openly stated that they did not practice ancestor worship, declared that their identities were constructed from their Christian faith and not from their traditional African heritage. The most common reason for not practicing ancestor worship was that the mothers said that they

did not see the reason for worshipping their ancestors as they did not “necessarily believe that [ancestors have] some form or power, like the way traditionally African people believe ... this person is close to God and you can pray to this person to make prayers to God” (Dowe).

4.4.5.1.2. *Traditional healers.*

Atile was adamant that she would not “take my child to a traditional healer” (Atile). “I think they’re myths if you ask me, like there’ll be childhood illnesses that I don’t think really exist” (Atile). As a mother whose education was based in the health sector of society, the traditional beliefs make no sense to her and the illnesses and their professed manifestation seem like “myths” (Atile). Even though her traditional African identity and her identity as an academic in the health sector, are in conflict, she is definite in her belief that her “education and ... Christianity will influence what I decide when it comes to such kinds of practices. I wouldn’t do what I think doesn’t make sense” (Atile). The reason she gave for not believing in traditional healers is that her education in the medical field has taught her differently.

4.4.5.1.3. *Postpartum care of the mother.*

The practice of the mother going to stay with their mother, for the first three to four months after the baby is born was mentioned by the mothers and was adapted to form part of their construction of their identity as both mother and daughter. This is a very practical African traditional practice, as parents and daughters could live far from each other and in order to have the support of her mother, the new mother would have to stay with her as she could not easily commute. This is true currently and historically. Most of the mothers who adhered to this practice, did not stay at the mother for the full three to four months. They only stayed for as long as it was seen to be practical and useful to the new mother.

4.4.5.1.4. *Circumcision.*

The mothers did not give actual reasons for not circumcising their children, but all the mothers, at one stage or another in the interview, inferred that they would not adhere to any traditional African practice or belief that would “harm” (Fikile).

4.4.5.1.5. *Submissiveness of women.*

Women's submissiveness to men was a topic that was not overtly discussed by any of the mothers, with the exception of one mother who said that “there were some things I had to challenge” (Edzai). One of the reasons that Edzai gave for not being submissive to her husband was based on her religious beliefs. Her Christian identity took precedence over her predetermined traditional African way of life in this instance. Additionally, saying that religion was the reason for her not being submissive to her husband, might be more culturally acceptable than just saying that she, personally, is not comfortable being submissive to her husband. In so doing, she might have alleviated some of the internal conflict between her identity as a Xhosa wife and her identity as a Christian.

By not integrating some traditional African practices, or adapting them to fit into their existing identities the women indicated the relative lack of importance they placed on these practices. By inference, these women placed less significance on their traditional African heritage identity than on their identities as highly educated women and Christians. An integral part of any culture is its belief system. The women in my study were conscious of their religious identities.

4.4.6. Religion.

One of the aspects used to define culture is religion (Kimmerle, 1990; Montagu, 1968). In my study the mothers saw their religious Christian identities (with the exception of Itumelang who professed to be an atheist) as being the predominant aspect of their construction of their cultural identities. Five of the mothers directly stated that “I’m a Christian” (Atile, Bontle, Dowe, Fikile and Hlengiwe) when asked about their cultural affiliations. Religious standards governed their way of life which encompassed their social behaviour. There were occasions when traditionally African practices and religious practices of child-rearing were congruent, specifically with respect to disciplining children.

Religion played a major role in the lives of the women in my study. Eight out of the nine women adhered to a form of Christianity that they said took precedence over their cultural practices. By saying that “I wouldn’t say it comes from a black culture, it’s just Christian beliefs for me and my husband, we just want them to be God fearing, love God, live right and do their best in life” (Bontle) she is illustrating that her identity as a Christian takes precedence over her traditional African identity. This was apparent with some of the other mothers as well because they “don’t believe in slaughtering for the ancestors which is a common principle or thing that is done by Black people” (Atile). She was identifying with Christianity and not with her heritage as a Southern Sotho/Xhosa woman. The women in the study referred to their traditional African views with the use of predominantly Christian, terminology. Their construction of culture was based on a Christian framework.

It was important for the mothers that their children behaved according to religious standards in social settings and the mothers used Bible precepts to instil discipline in their children. The social behavioural aspect of religion is illustrated by the fact that “religious

issues correlated highly with social concerns” (Renner, Peltzer, & Phaswana, 2003, p. 105), this reinforced the extensiveness of the mothers’ Christian identities in the day to day lives of the mothers.

“Culture is the symbolic process of world-making and religion is one mode of worldmaking” (Heever, 2001, p. 16). The mothers continuously and in numerous contexts, mentioned that Christianity played a significant and ubiquitous role in their lives; to the extent that they even did “everything according to the Bible” (Cebile). This was corroborated by Renner, Peltzer and Phaswana (2003) who found that religion played a fundamental role in the lives of “Black South Africans” (Renner et al., 2003, p. 105).

Many mothers find that their belief in a God offers them “comfort, guidance, and strength.” (Thomas, 2000, p. 61). The mothers found religion to be a source of support, specifically with regard to the internal conflict between the mothers Christian identities and their social identities. This internal conflict influenced the mothers’ self-efficacy as they felt uncertain as to how to act as mothers, there were tensions between parenting norms provided by their religious beliefs and those provided by their traditional African culture. Additionally, they may have felt judged by the sector whose norms they were not following which made them feel insecure as to whether they were being ‘good enough’ parents.

The mothers’ Christian identities took precedence over all their other identities. This was significant for my study, as it illustrated that religion and the accompanying social behaviours influence these mothers to a greater extent than they were influenced by their traditional African heritage or any other aspect of culture, or their education. In terms of my study this was relevant, as it may have engendered conflict within the mothers as well as

conflict between the mothers, their husbands (or fathers of the children) and their extended families, resulting in the mothers taking the decision to “isolate myself” (Bontle). This had repercussions on the mothers’ social relationships which, once again, influenced their feelings of self-efficacy.

So saying, it was interesting to note that while the mothers who followed a form of Christianity said that their Christian identities took precedence over their identities associated with their traditional African heritage, they also said that their traditional African identity would take precedence over their identity as educated academics mainly in the health sector.

Culture is multifaceted; for example, language, geographical location, race, ethnicity, beliefs, practices, religion, rituals, education and gender are aspects whose intersection may or may not influence an individuals’ construction of culture. Different genders view culture from different perspectives and as such the traditional African identities of men and women differ on the basis of their gender identity.

The influence of gender on culture were apparent in my study. The first being the different roles that men (fathers) and women (mothers) played in a culture with respect to child-rearing. Secondly, the different ways in which sons and daughters were brought up from a traditionally African perspective.

The different roles of men and women in a culture were very obvious when it came to parenting. It was apparent in many situations, that no matter what the mother thought, or her personal circumstances (education and other beliefs), the man still had the final say in determining her traditional African behaviour, even in terms of parenting. This was worthy

of note as it was apparent that the day-to-day care of children was the mothers' responsibility. However, in the case of Atile, when it came to traditional African norms and practices even with regards to parenting, the father's wishes took precedence and she felt as if she has to defer to him. The women's identities of both mother, wife and member of a traditional African culture were all influenced by the prescribed roles of women in these environments. This was relevant as it impinged on a mother's self-efficacy in that she may have felt as if she was competent enough to be the primary caregiver of her children, but in other matters such as traditional African practices, beliefs and rituals, her opinion and beliefs were not respected. This affected her self-efficacy as a mother, a wife, a part of the community and a woman. However, ultimately men and women fulfilled different parenting roles and some of the mothers "realised with time that they [children] actually need both parents" (Edzai).

It also emerged from my study that there were different traditional African expectations based on gender roles regarding parenting sons and daughters. However, the mothers in my study did not necessarily incorporate those parenting ideals into their identity as mothers and therefore brought up their children in the way that they thought was appropriate in the world in which they live. There were undeniably different expectations for sons and daughters. The one aspect of parenting that was often mentioned was that domestic duties were a women/girls responsibilities. This disparity between the raising of boys and girls, created internal conflict for the mothers with respect to their mothering identity, wife identity and identity as a member of a traditional African community.

The mothers who are black South African academics predominantly in the field of health, construct their identities as mothers by incorporating their multiple identities into their lives. Five aspects emerged as pivotal influences in the mothers' construction of their

identities as mothers. Firstly, the mothers were aware of the significance of the language they spoke to their children. They all spoke a certain amount of English to their children. One of the reasons being that English was the language of instruction in the schools their children attended, or would attend. Secondly, even though the mothers all resided in urban areas, the geographical location from which they originated still played a part in their traditional African cultural practices. Thirdly, the mothers were aware of their traditional African heritage. The choice to embrace it or not was dependent on individual circumstances. Fourthly, and following from their awareness of their traditional African heritage, the mothers were selective in the beliefs, practices, rituals and values they incorporated into their identities as mothers. The mothers said that they did not believe in ancestor worship, did not consult traditional healers if their children got ill, adapted the practice of postpartum care of the mother to suit their lifestyles and would not allow their children to be subjected to any practice that they believed would “harm” (Fikile) them. Fifthly, religion was an integral part of the mothers’ construction of their identities as mothers, with many mothers following Bible precepts in raising their children. The relationship between the mothers’ cultural identities, religious identities and academic identities were pivotal in the construction of her identity of self as a mother. The interaction of these multiple identities was either congruent or in conflict with one another, resulting in the internal harmony or conflict for the mothers.

4.5. Research Question 1. a.: How is the Parenting Role Understood by Mothers who are Black South African Academics?

4.5.1. Mothering.

4.5.1.1. *Introduction.*

The role of mother is performed in conjunction with the multiple other roles of the women that are derived from the characteristics present in their environs. The mothers integrated factors such as maternal well-being and self-reflection, the mothering role, maternal identity, maternal self-efficacy, conflict and complexity inherent in mothering, guilt, goals of motherhood, discipline and the everyday characteristics inherent in mothering to construct their version of mothering.

4.5.1.2. *How do participants construct mothering?*

Every society has its beliefs as to what are the normal and correct ways to mother children (Kruger, 2006). All nine of the mothers in the study saw their child or children as pivotal to their concept of mothering. This is logical as a woman only becomes a mother once she has a child. However, these mothers only expressed what mothering was in terms of their children with no reference being made to themselves as to how being a mother affected them personally. This was an important omission on the part of the mothers as they did not explore what mothering meant to them and the repercussion of integrating their identity as a mother into their existing multiplicity of identities. Integrating their mothering identities into their multiple other identities, necessitated a rearrangement of all their other identities. It therefore followed that the creation and integration of their mothering identity had a significant influence on all aspects of their persona. Mothering to them meant “somebody who nurtures, who guides, who protects, who loves” (Bontle) and ensured “that the basic needs of their children are met ...” (Gugu) while “guide[ing] them” (Cebile) and being there for “everyday emotional support” (Itumelang). The overriding feeling of mothers was that it

was their “responsibility” (Atile) to ensure the wellbeing of their child, while at the same time instilling values that would ensure that the child grew up to be “someone who will be a good member of society one day” (Atile). All these aspects related to the wellbeing of the child and did not denote the mother’s perspective.

None of the mothers explained (without being directly asked) what mothering meant to them personally. A mother was almost seen in terms of being a ‘job’ wherein her job description was to bring up children in a socially-accepted manner to enable the children to fit into a specific society. The mothers all had to work very hard at overcoming most of the traditional African norms of being a black academic mother which was seen as not fitting the mould of a black African woman. They approached mothering from a different angle. Their education as academics for the most part in the field of health added a further dimension to them as women and influenced their mothering practices as they were generally the first generation of black African women academics⁷ and it was an immense struggle for them.

Women commonly have preconceived ideas on motherhood based on, among other factors, their observation of females who are in their sphere of influence. The specific beliefs concerning motherhood influenced the way mothers experience mothering, especially if their experiences did not conform to the perceived norms of motherhood (Kruger, 2006). What it means to be a mother was often not what mothers had anticipated. This was logical as they had preconceived ideas and societal norms that had governed what mothers were and did and as these mothers nominally did not fit the mould of their ideas of mothers, they had to create new moulds that combined both their traditional African beliefs regarding mothering, as well as their actual experiences of being mothers. Some mothers stated that they found mothering

⁷ Some of these mothers had educated mothers themselves but they were not in academia.

to be “challenging” (Atile) and “really tough” (Atile). The uncertainty inherent in mothering was exacerbated by the fact that these mothers were, to some extent, not conforming to the prescribed norms of mothering and as such there were times when they all felt uncertainty as to whether they were doing the ‘right’ thing by their children, by themselves and by society. They felt “overwhelmed. Because you’ve got a lot of things going on. You know, you are a parent, you are a wife, eh, you know, you are a daughter, you’ve got...other responsibilities, you are employed” (Gugu). In contrast, mothers also said that they “love[d] being a parent” (Bontle); they found being a mother “amazing and so rewarding” (Dowe). This was an anticipated response as these are emotions mothers are expected to feel towards mothering (Bornstein, 2001). This begs the question of whether these mothers honestly felt these emotions or were ‘embarrassed’ to tell me if they felt differently, thereby confirming the notion that there are prescribed ideals of mothering to which mothers are expected to adhere and these mothers were afraid of being judged as bad mothers if they did not state that they ‘loved’ being mothers. The diverse feelings verbalized by the mothers began to illustrate the complexity of motherhood from the perspective of this particular group of black South African academic women.

Another aspect that was found to influence mothers’ perspective of mothering was the age of the children. Cebile said that she “was not ready for it, at the beginning” but “now I love it. I enjoy it”. Her children were between the ages of sixteen and twenty and, therefore, she had more discretionary time to once again do “whatever I wanted to do” (Cebile) and the actual mothering was not as intense as it was when her children were younger. Initially she found it difficult to be tied down to her children. However, as her children grew older and by implication, less dependent, she found mothering to be less demanding and this altered her perspective of mothering.

As her children grew older Edzai found that she could “say to them, ‘okay, Mum will be doing one-two-three between this time and this time, I would appreciate if you don’t disturb me.’ They understand...” (Edzai). Thereby illustrating that differently aged children necessitate different approaches to mothering. It became apparent that mothers with older children (over ten years old) did have more discretionary time and were able to explain and reason with their children. Young children need almost constant supervision and care, which is intensely time-consuming (Zulu, 2003). This was corroborated by Edzai as she said that “I think when they were young, in terms of having my time, that space was not there.” As they grew up, they needed less and less supervision. However, the mothers’ responsibilities do not diminish as her older children then needed different types of support from her; for instance, emotional support and guidance, which are still time consuming.

Implicit in all the mothers’ views of parenting was that “when you look at parenting from the outside it’s easy” (Fikile) and this is not the case; the reality of parenting is very different to the practical day-to-day reality of parenting. The reality of mothering was another issue which was expressed by mothers in their everyday lives as mothers. This was even true for the initial process of becoming a mother as “it’s one thing to fantasise about it. It’s another to actually have a baby” (Itumelang). The same way we expect people to accept us as individuals and as a part of a society, we need to accept these mothers as individuals in their ways of mothering and still accept them as fitting into society.

Many parenting decisions hinge on the traditional heritage of the mothers, which may have an influence on their way of parenting. The impact of their traditional heritage on mothering will be examined in Section 4.6.7. As a unit, the beliefs and values of both parents influence their manner of parenting (Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, & Melby, 1990). However,

Simons et al. (1990) stated that fathers take their parenting cues from mothers as mothers are more involved in child-rearing than are fathers.

Bearing the results in mind it appeared that the women in my study were aware of the beliefs surrounding motherhood. However, they moulded these perceived 'normal and correct ways to mother' to adapt to their everyday lives and 'new' beliefs as to how to mother alongside their roles as black South African women academics primarily in the field of health. The interaction of the mothers' many identities created their construction of mothering.

4.5.1.2.1. *Maternal well-being and self-reflection.*

Being a mother was seen to be a "full time job" (Fikile) and had to be worked on "on a daily basis" (Fikile) even if "you don't feel like becoming, being an adult or being a parent" (Fikile). Mothering was seen as being relentless with no respite for the mothers, especially when their children are young (under 10 years old). The job of mothering made some mothers feel "exhausted" (Gugu) and yearn for "time for myself" (Gugu).

The majority of mothers in the study expressed the need for a hiatus from mothering. However, every mother that expressed the need to have time to focus on themselves said so in an almost apologetic manner, implying that she felt it was not socially acceptable to feel the need to have a break from being a mother and to put themselves, as individuals, first, even for a little while.

4.5.1.2.2. *The mothers' mothering role.*

No matter how different a mother's beliefs pertaining to mothering are, it is still important for mothers to teach their children how to socialise appropriately to ensure suitable integration into society (Bornstein, 2001). Bontle told me that it was her responsibility to "mould (her children's) lives" (Bontle) and teach them how to "manage the outside world" (Bontle). This idea was important as it illustrated that no matter what the mothers' beliefs were pertaining to mothering, mothers still needed to be realistic in that their children need to function appropriately in a wider society. One of the goals of parenting was to produce a future generation of people who were active, productive, appropriate, functioning members of society (Chen & Kaplan, 2001; Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2003). Edzai verbalized her visualisation of movement towards these goals by saying that she saw "that I can impart some knowledge and support and share and look at these amazing souls and be like, 'wow! Really... did I really...'. The mothers' self-reflection in terms of feelings that are associated with parenting have an influence on her self-efficacy (Saunders & Wooley, 2005). By mothers self-reflecting such positive feelings with respect to parenting it increased maternal self-efficacy. This confidence in their mothering skills encouraged them to continue mothering in that manner, even if it did not conform to generally accepted norms and customs. Additionally, positive self-efficacy enabled the mother to have confidence in her ability to attend to the welfare of her children.

Women have many roles in life; one of which is the role that entails focusing on the welfare of their children through various methods of care and instruction (Bornstein, 2001). A mother was seen as "the primary caregiver [and as such] feel[t] the responsibility for the upbringing of [her] child" (Hlengiwe) and therefore mothers feel obligated to "sacrifice [their] time" (Atile) in order to bring up their children. This may be exacerbated by the

mothers themselves, as they may believe that mothers were better at parenting (especially younger children) than fathers were, because they were led to believe that “he doesn’t have that capability to take care of a small child” (Atile). It was generally believed that “mothers are more in tune with their kids’ needs and they are more sensitive” (Atile). According to all the mothers in the study, they were the primary caregivers, with the husband playing a secondary role as father. It was as a result of the central role women played in bringing up children that they were seen as the primary nurturers and teachers of children. This was not to say that fathers were not involved in child rearing; it was just that, according to at least one mother in my study, the fathers were seen more as “helpers” (Hlengiwe). These sentiments, with respect to the role of mothers, lent themselves to question how mothers could fulfil the role of parenting, which encompassed such a broad spectrum of mother and child interaction, while at the same time staying true to themselves and the multiple identities which make up a woman. Bearing this in mind, it was important to explore how mothers were able to fulfil their role of mother in conjunction with their roles of wife, employee, academic, daughter, daughter-in-law and so on.

4.5.1.2.3. *Maternal identity.*

Becoming a mother entails a major shift in identity that requires the reorganisation of self, to include being a woman, a wife/partner and a mother/caregiver (Harkness & Charles, 1995). When a woman became a mother she had to add the identity of ‘mother’ to her sense of self. This influenced the way she understood herself, as she now had another priority in her life for which she has to make time. All the mothers I interviewed, stated that they prioritised their role of mother with some even going so far as to say that they wanted to be a “stay home mum. I want to work from home, that’s my goal” (Bontle). The creation of the identity of ‘mother’ required a reorganisation within the self of the mother. Dowe explained

it thus “when I had my children I had dealt with a lot of childhood stuff, you know, insecurities, issues around your work, as an individual, as a woman”. Being a mother often took precedence over her other identities, hereby illustrating the need for women to reassess their past and present identities. This might cause many conflicting emotions within the woman, that may take time to resolve (if it ever is resolved) and impacts on her perspective of parenting.

4.5.1.2.4. *Maternal self-efficacy.*

The kind of mother and child interaction that the mother and child have, has an impact on the self-efficacy of the mother in terms of her perception of her mothering skills (Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, & Melby, 1990). Mothers who “love being a parent” (Bontle) saw being a mother as a positive experience. They felt as if they had “become a better person just by becoming a mother” (Atile). These mothers saw themselves as competent mothers and had high maternal self-efficacy. However, there was also the element of uncertainty surrounding a mother’s ability to mother and mothers may have felt that they had “done [their] best as a mother with the knowledge that [they] had” (Atile). This statement by Atile inferred that she was not certain that she was the ‘best mother’, however, she did do the best that she could do with what she knew. Being a mother also lead to the mothers feeling so “very frustrated that I want to cry” (Itumelang). These feelings of frustration made perfect sense taking into consideration the various demands placed on Itumelang and only having a finite time available to fulfil these demands. Additionally, Itumelang felt a “constant stress” (Itumelang) as a result of her child having a neurodevelopmental disorder and this intensified the stresses of mothering for her.

Mother and child interaction in a social setting influences the mother's self-efficacy, as negative social experiences could result in a low social self-efficacy, which exacerbates or creates low maternal self-efficacy (Saunders & Wooley, 2005). She may worry that she was not being seen as "a good enough parent" (Gugu) in terms of what she had been led to believe by society was a good mother. Even though mothers had "tried to become a good mother." (Atile) and may have believed that they were "doing a good job" (Fikile) there may still have been feelings of inadequacy, which could surface when children did not behave in what were deemed socially appropriate ways.

The mothers were concerned about being 'good' mothers. Inherent in the concept of being a 'good' mother, was that they judged a good mother to be someone whom 'others' thought were good mothers as well as their own perceptions of being good mothers. It became apparent that the self-efficacy of mothers varied according to how mothers were feeling at the moment and the situation in which they found themselves. A mother may "enjoy" (Itumelang) her relationship with her child and feel "very proud" (Hlengiwe), while at the same time experiencing immense frustration. Many mothers said that they mothered in the present meaning that they mothered according to the circumstances they found themselves in at that specific moment; some of them even admitted to feeling as if they were "always winging it" (Itumelang). The mothers in my study all had a relatively high level of maternal self-efficacy. They believed they were doing the best that they could do and were generally confident in their ability to be 'good' mothers. Thus, a renegotiation of their mothering abilities may induce feelings of doubt, at that particular time, if they are unsure of their mothering abilities pertaining to that particular situation.

Additionally, the mothers' ability to care for their children's physical needs influences their maternal self-efficacy (Coleman & Karrakar, 1997). Caring physically for their children was high on the mothers' list of priorities regarding child care. All the mothers were concerned about their children's physical (and emotional) wellbeing, with two mothers admitting to being overly concerned due to past experiences. This made them more protective over their children and thereby more prone to being overly concerned about their children's physical well-being. Atile had trained in the medical sector and she admitted that her overprotectiveness was as a direct result of her training, she was worried when they became ill and was also concerned about them eating healthily.

One of the consequences of guilt is that it tends to lead to uncertainty regarding the mothers' parenting abilities, which in turn influences their maternal self-efficacy (Hsu & Sung, 2008). One aspect of mothering that engendered guilty feelings was the way in which mothers disciplined their children. Mothers were undecided about how to "make these children listen to me... without being harsh, without having to feel guilty" (Gugu). These feelings of uncertainty and guilt influenced maternal self-efficacy. Maternal self-efficacy was one aspect of a mother's holistic self-efficacy. If she saw other mothers, supposedly, balancing their myriad identities without guilt, this could result in a general low-self-efficacy as well as a low maternal self-efficacy as she may have felt as if she was not a 'good' mother according to herself and others. Thereby affecting her style of mothering and her mother-child interaction. Mothers in academia specifically, needed to forgo their feelings of guilt by understanding that they all strived (to the best of their abilities) to be both good mothers as well as good academics (Pillay, 2012).

4.5.1.2.5. *Conflict and complexity inherent in mothering.*

Given the multiple identities that coalesced within a woman, it was logical that there were times when she felt conflicted between some or all of them. One of the ways of coping in those circumstances was to “do things based on logic not so much on ‘this is how it’s supposed to be done’... I mean I question things” (Hlengiwe). However, when she felt ambivalent about adhering to her traditional African philosophy or not and experienced conflicting feelings between her identity as a mother, wife, daughter-in-law (member of a culture) and her education, she went “to my family on that one!” (Hlengiwe). She also said that “I guess my practices are influenced more by my Christianity and my faith” (Hlengiwe). This explicitly revealed the internal conflict between her traditional African identity and her identity as a Christian woman. On the one hand she said she would ask her family (who follow traditional African traditions) for advice and on the other hand she would follow her Christian faith. A consequence of this was that the women were conflicted as they felt that “sometimes like I’m losing who I am, or I’ve lost who I am ... as a black woman, black person” (Hlengiwe).

A woman’s identity of mother was pervasive in that the responsibilities of mothering more often than not, took precedence over all her other identities. Additionally, mothering impacted on how she fulfilled her other responsibilities, even if she was not consciously aware that her decisions were taken with reference to her being a mother. Her role as a mother occupied a large portion of her time and emotions because

at times it becomes emotionally exhausting for me as a mum
because I also have my own day-to-day issues, so sometimes you
get in touch with theirs [children] when you’re already

preoccupied with something, so you have to juggle and make sure that you balance, and say 'okay, which one do I prioritise, is it mine, or hers, or his?'... Then ... for the sake of them because they're children, you prioritise them. (Edzai)

Being a mother was only one of many identities a female assumed. The mothers' tended to feel "overwhelmed" by the many identities that made them who they were and the demands that came with each identity. This was significant in that it illustrated the pressures placed on mothers to fulfil their numerous roles. Being a mother was still seen as a "woman's job" (Cowdery & Knudson-Martin, 2005) and as such these women had to work harder to fulfil all the demands placed on them in the various aspects of their lives in order to prove to themselves, and others, that they were capable of being mothers, daughters, wives and at the same time employed academics.

The multiple roles that mothers play, may engender feelings of conflict in mothers as it is foreseeable that mothers may feel torn between the "discourse of [their] culture" (Kruger, 2006, p. 205), what they perceive is expected of them in the various roles and their "lived experiences" (Kruger, 2006, p. 205). All the mothers that I interviewed expressed difficulty in balancing work (academia), mothering and the traditional African expectations prescribed by their heritage that was placed on them as women. Gugu explained it by saying that she is expected to continue "working...[and] have to have an education, you have to do that, but still you need to comply or submit to cultural beliefs" (Gugu).

The mothers in the study all felt as if they were the primary caregivers. Additionally, the society in which they existed expected them to be the sole caregivers. As such, they were

conflicted in balancing the various aspects of their lives. They were expected to prioritise mothering, which most of them said they did. However, if the need arose to prioritise their academic careers they felt that something “has to suffer” (Fikile) and that “I’m only giving half” (Itumelang), thus, resulting in the child being compromised as “it’s the child that suffers [when] you’re here” (Fikile). This implied that they did not feel as if they had a balance in their lives. The implications of attempting to balance work, life and their traditional African heritage was that the mothers in the study all felt as if society expected them to put mothering above their careers. When they did not and advanced their careers to the (perceived) detriment of their children the feelings of guilt that arose were so intense that they later tried to rectify the situation by just “want[ing] to be there now, because I know I have not been there for some time. ... in a way I neglected them, although I would not say that in front of them” (Cebile).

Atile and Bontle were very direct in their expression of their internal conflict, and stated openly that they wanted to be stay-at-home moms (as did Dowe, Gugu and Hlengiwe). However, only Atile did not want to work at all. Bontle said that she wanted to be a “stay home mum. I want to work from home, that’s my goal.” It was interesting to note that she did not want to stop working; she wanted to be able to balance her work and home life on her terms. She was not abandoning her mothering duties; rather, she was modifying them to fit her life (Julian, McKenry, & McKelvey, 1994). This made sense in her mind because this then eliminated one of the areas of conflict, that of being an employee and a mother. However, it did not eliminate the need to balance her work and mothering, as realistically, there were times when work would have to take priority over mothering, even if she was working from home and for herself. On the other hand, Atile intimated that she did not want to work at all if she could be a stay-at-home mom. She said that being a stay-at-home mom

would give me time to focus on my children and my home without having this extra work, work load. And I think being a lecturer is not easy because there's work that you take home sometimes. You don't leave it at the office. (Atile)

All this illustrated the immense internal conflicts experienced by women in terms of their careers, culture and responsibilities as mothers. These mothers inferred that they were the primary caregivers and if there was a conflict between their multiple roles, the role of being a mother needed, and was expected, to take precedence. This was not a unanimous finding in my study, as Cebile felt as if she had initially compromised her mothering and focused on advancing her career. However, the feelings this engendered led her to try to make up time with her children once she had achieved her degrees, illustrating that the internal conflict was so strong that mothers felt the need to redress the balance in favour of being mothers as soon as they possibly were able to do so.

The conflict inherent between the multiple roles mothers played increased the complexity of motherhood. These roles included the responsibilities a mother had as a mother, wife, daughter, sister and employee. The holistic relationship between these roles increased the need for the woman to balance her various responsibilities, thus engendering feelings of conflict and guilt with respect to not devoting enough time to some responsibilities. Ultimately, the overriding issue for mothers was a lack of time to devote to each of their roles to their satisfaction.

4.5.1.2.6. *Guilt.*

An overriding theme with all the mothers was the feeling of guilt they experienced with regard to the conflicting demands and responsibilities associated with their multiple identities. Guilt is experienced as an internal emotion (Bedford, 2004). However, it is caused by both internal and external circumstances (Elvin-Nowak & Thomsson, 2001). Expectations of employers are external causes of guilt and the expectations of the mothers themselves, regarding being 'good enough mothers', are internal causes of guilt. Mothers experienced conflict when attempting to balance both work and mothering (Guendouzi, 2006). This is corroborated by Johnston and Swanson (2006) who found that for the mothers in their study "motherhood and employment remain in tension" (p. 517). If they focused on work they felt "guilty" (Johnston & Swanson, 2006, p. 517) about neglecting their work responsibilities and vice versa.

This was especially apparent in relation to their identity as mothers. Guilt is exacerbated by the fear of not living up to the internalised ideal of motherhood (the 'good' mother) as well as the social expectations of how mothers should mother (Liss, Schiffrin, & Rizzo, 2013). The matter of discipline was a guilt-provoking concern that was expressed by Gugu. She was very conflicted regarding the 'right' way to discipline her children "without being harsh, without having to feel guilty" (Gugu) because she felt "so full of guilt" (Gugu) as a result of being "in conflict with [her]self" (Gugu) when she disciplined her children. Socially, her family told her that she was "too harsh" (Gugu). The feelings of internal guilt created by herself, as well as feelings of guilt as a consequence of her family's criticism, increased her uncertainty in her mothering skills, thereby influencing her maternal self-efficacy. Both her internal idea of how to mother, as well as what she was being told was socially-appropriate mothering behaviour, were in conflict, engendering feelings of

uncertainty within herself. This was a circular relationship as feelings of uncertainty, guilt and self-efficacy all related to one another.

The search for the “elusive balance” (Pillay, 2012, p. 154) between work and academia created feelings of guilt in mothers. Cebile felt as if her life had “been revolving on my studies...my work, my education” and that she had been neglecting her children in favour of advancing her studies. This was corroborated by Dowe, who focused on her “PhD work” and took on work as a lecturer, resulting in her feeling “guilty that I took work”, thereby inferring that she should have focused on her mothering. Women in academia had two distinct aspects to their careers. One was the teaching and research aspects of their jobs and the other was the furthering of their own personal education. This added time-pressure to a mother’s already time-stressed life and once again the mother had to balance her various responsibilities. The feelings of guilt that a mother felt in this case, was exacerbated by her feeling as if she was “giving half-half” (Itumelang).

Mothers in academia were also prone to external expectations and judgments. “The academic mother needs to stop her own critical gaze at herself that absorbs the reflections of a judgmental world” (Pillay, 2012, p. 154). All the mothers found it “difficult to balance it [mothering] with work” (Bontle). They felt guilty as they had to “come to work, you’ve got other responsibilities’ (Gugu) and they therefore felt as if they were “neglecting [their] children in some ways” (Gugu). This feeling of balancing and having to “juggle” (Itumelang) responsibilities ultimately lead to feeling that they “don’t do any one thing well” (Itumelang). This fact echoes Itumelang’s feeling of “giving half-half”.

Not only did mothers in academia experience guilt as a result of balancing work and mothering, they also had to incorporate into that balance, their identities of wife and daughter. Many mothers feel as if they worked a “second shift” (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004) of work at home, in the form of mothering and housework as they were the primary caregivers. The mothers in my study said that they did receive some assistance from their partners with regards to household chores and caregiving. This inferred that child-care duties were shared. However, the mothers were still seen as the primary caregivers and the primary home-makers. The help they received was help that they asked for and it was not considered to be part of any of the husbands’ daily chores, as it was the mothers’ responsibility. Work was seen as a further responsibility of a mothers in addition to caregiving and homemaking. The women felt as if it was socially frowned upon if they compromised their mothering and homemaking responsibilities in order to work. Once again, the evidence pointed in the direction that child-rearing and home-making were ‘women’s work’ and that if women want to have careers, they had to prioritise their role of mother and wife and incorporate their ‘career’ into their other lives. Fikile said that she returned to work very soon after her child was born because “when you have a greater dream and goal you tend to try and prioritise, you know [and] it was not a risk that I was sort of willing to take to say, let me just take the year off” (Fikile). When that was not possible and their career needs overrode their mothering needed, they felt guilty for not conforming to their internal expectations concerning mothering, as well as the social expectations of mothering. Cebile “wanted to look after my children... [and] ...do everything myself.” (Cebile)

Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2004) found that mothers could not fulfil the never-ending demands on them to their satisfaction and this engendered feelings of guilt. Atile, Bontle, Dowe, Gugu and Hlengiwe openly expressed their wish to be stay-at-home mothers.

However, only one of them wanted to stop working totally - the rest wanted to work flexi-time and “finish work at twelve [noon] and spend the afternoon” (Hlengiwe) with their children. In addition, the overriding feeling amongst the mothers (with few exceptions) was that being a mother was their primary priority. Therefore, by not being able to devote enough time and attention to the mothering aspect of their responsibilities, their level of guilt was increased. They “fe[lt] like my kids deserve the time” (Atile) but they were unable to spend the time with them as their other responsibilities needed attending to, for instance; making dinner or writing up an article for publication.

Guilt was also as a consequence of not being able to do any one thing as well as they would like. Itumelang felt as if she was “not able to do as much with my time as I want to” and that she was “constantly tired...[and] giving half half.” Essentially, the mothers implied that it was a matter of “just balancing the guilt” (Bontle). The all-encompassing resource that was the source of the feelings of guilt in mothers was lack of time to do, what they considered to be, justice to all their responsibilities and demands. The whole concept of guilt was very apparent in this specific group of black South African women academics' lives. They experienced internal conflict as they believed that some aspect of their lives was always compromised and they could not devote as much time as they would have liked to the responsibilities and demands of their multiple identities.

4.5.1.2.7. *Goals of motherhood.*

Most mothers had preconceived goals which they wanted their children to attain. These goals may have been as broad as wanting their children to “contribute to humanity... to be educated [and to] ... go beyond where I have been” (Bontle). A means by which mothers determine their children could reach some of these goals was through education.

The role of education, both of the child and the mother, played a highly significant role in the goals a mother set for her children. Therefore, educational goals featured prominently in the goals of motherhood. This was significant in the South African context, as, during the *apartheid* era there were “deeply entrenched racial inequalities” (Buchmann & Hannum, 2001, p. 80), partly as a consequence of “legislative constraints which undermined the provision of education for black South Africans” (Nimubona & Vencatachellum, 2007, p. 152) .

If the circumstances determined that the child might not be able to achieve the goals to which she subscribed, a mother might have experienced a range of emotions and even disbelief “how can this be happening to my child” (Itumelang). The end of the predetermined goals for their child was a devastating situation for parents to find themselves in as they “can’t even imagine a future” (Itumelang) for their child. Their whole identity as a mother and outlook towards mothering had to be changed and adapted to suit the unforeseen circumstances.

It was interesting to note that the goals that mothers set for mothering were goals for what they wanted their children to achieve in order to better their children’s lives. These goals did not have a direct impact on the mother herself. However, mothers saw it as their responsibility to ensure that their children were given the means to achieve the goals that they set for their children. The mothers utilised discipline to teach their children behaviour they deem appropriate.

4.5.1.2.8. *Discipline.*

The way a parent disciplined the child was indicative of a type of interaction between the child and the mother. Cebile, Dowe and Edzai directly mentioned the issue of discipline, without being asked. The mothers indicated that knowing how to discipline and how much discipline to execute was difficult as “discipline, it’s, it’s a tough one” (Cebile).

Additionally, different cultures have different standards of discipline (Darling & Steinberg, 1993) and this may be significant if the fathers have different traditional African cultural heritages to the mothers. All the mothers inferred that they did discipline their children. Every aspect of child rearing requires discipline; for instance, just teaching children how to fit into society requires discipline.

The process implemented to achieve discipline was to set “boundaries” (Dowe) and establish a set of “rules” (Dowe). Dowe saw her “mother doing this [and believes that] instilling discipline from a very early age is very important” (Dowe). She did not see it as unnecessarily harsh but “just instilling discipline” (Dowe). If the rules were not followed there are “consequences, ... because I’ve laid boundaries” (Edzai). A mother needed to practice discipline on herself as well because she had to be able to say “no and then [have] to stick at that no” (Cebile) and she also needed to be “consistent with all of them” (Cebile).

Discipline was also influenced by the mothers’ religious observance. All the mothers, with the exception of Itumelang, adhered to different sects of Christianity and disciplined their children accordingly. According to Atile

the Bible says you, when you discipline your kids you shouldn’t spare the rod, which means you can use physical punishment and

that is also according to our Black culture. That you can use physical, which might not be such a modern or Western way of operating kids. I do believe in spanking because my, my faith says it's right. The Bible says it's right. (Atile)

Additionally, she had “read ... Christian books about discipline because I'm Christian” (Atile). Atile found a balance between her traditional African heritage and her religious persuasion with respect to disciplining her children. However, there was conflict between her educational knowledge and the manner of discipline advocated by both her religion and her African heritage. Her “education comes in by saying you cannot now assault your child just because you are punishing them. There has to be a balance” (Atile) so she did not “hit [her] kids at every turn...” (Atile). As a mother she had to adapt, balance and integrate different types of discipline to fit in with her lifestyle and beliefs. She did not adhere to any one aspect of discipline exclusively. Atile had to overcome feelings of guilt with respect to the norms that she was not adhering to and she had to accept within herself that she was not following socially-accepted behaviour and that she did not feel torn between the various expectations. Once again the mothers' self-efficacy was an issue in this context as it affected the mothers' relationship with their children as well as the mothers' feelings of themselves as mothers. If the mother was confident in the decisions she had taken she felt that she was being the best mother she could be in this regards and her maternal self-efficacy will increase (Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, & Melby, 1990). This will influence her interaction with her children as she felt that she was “with my children ...[and]...I just love it (Dowe).

In addition to the cultural diversity which influenced parenting styles (and by inference the manner in which parents discipline their children) there was the issue that discipline needed to vary in order to be age-appropriate for children (Roman, 2014). Atile, Dowe and Gugu's children were under ten years old and the disciplining of their children was in the form of teaching them basic and appropriate social behaviour. This took the form of setting "boundaries [and establishing] rules" (Dowe). Their manner of parenting was essentially to set rules and boundaries that were not too strict and therefore did not make them feel guilty (although they did experience guilt at times). Cebile and Edzai's children were all between the ages of fourteen and nineteen and were being disciplined in line with subtler and morally appropriate social behaviour. For instance, they were being taught not to drink, smoke or party "too much" (Cebile). Hence, the manner in which mothers disciplined their children was not uniform across all ages. The different ages of the children necessitated the focus of discipline to be on different aspects of the children's lives. This forced the mothers to be flexible in their manner of parenting and to adjust their manner of discipline to suit the age of the child.

Discipline is a complex and personal issue (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Parents may be guided by culture and society but ultimately it was the parent who had to enforce the discipline that they saw as appropriate to ensure that their children fitted into the society in which they lived. Whatever the mothers' views on discipline were, they all agreed that their children needed to be disciplined; it was just a matter of how to discipline them and how strict or harsh the practice of discipline needed to be.

4.5.1.2.9. *Everyday characteristics inherent in mothering.*

The everyday characteristics of mothering centred on needing support for the everyday parenting responsibilities and balancing the responsibilities inherent in the multiple roles mothers play. As mentioned briefly in sections 4.5.1.2.1. *Maternal well-being and self-reflection* and 4.5.1.2.5. *Conflict and complexity inherent in mothering*, the overriding resource that mothers felt they needed, and did not have enough of, was time. Time to do what they deemed necessary for themselves and to perform their respective roles to the standards to which they expected from themselves and that, they believed, others expect from them. If they happened to have “free time” (Itumelang), they just wanted to spend it by “being by myself” (Itumelang) or doing “small things like going to the gym” (Atile). They did not schedule any time for themselves into the practicalities of their day-to-day routines. As mothers, they put the day-to-day needs of their families and employers first and were, generally, left with no time for themselves. The result of this is that mothers saw the practicalities of mothering as extremely demanding and this impacted on their perspectives of mothering in that mothering was seen as a time-consuming and oft times stressful, part of their lives.

Mothers who are black South African academics operating predominantly in the field of health, understood their parenting role to be an amalgamation of many elements in their lives. Mothers understood their roles as mothers to be pivotal to their reality and primarily their responsibility. They cared for their children’s physical and emotional well-being, sometimes to the exclusion of their own well-being. Once they became mothers, the mothers had to integrate their mothering role into the multitude of other roles they played in their lives. The mothers’ maternal self-efficacy was influenced by their perceptions of their ability to fulfil their mothering roles. The mothering role was seen as complex with feelings of

conflict that originated from balancing their multiple roles. The issues of guilt, discipline and their goals of mothering influenced the mothers' understandings of their parenting role. The lack of time for themselves and time to fulfil their mothering role to their satisfaction, was an overriding issue in the mothers' understanding of their parenting role. The mothers' perspectives of mothering included their expression of their well-being, their role as mothers, their maternal identity and their maternal self-efficacy.

4.6. Research Question 1. b.: What Ideas, Information, Experiences and Inputs Appear to Influence Mothers who are Black South African Academics' Construction of Parenting?

4.6.1. Intergenerational transmission of parenting practices.

'Intergenerational transmission' is a term that is used to express the passing down of norms, values, beliefs and practices from one generation to the next and includes traditional African cultural parenting norms. Cultural parenting norms and general education on how to be a parent are taught to the child by the parent from the moment of birth (Volterra & Taeschner, 1978). Children are exposed to both societal and traditional African cultural behavioural norms by their parents. In this way, parents educate their children on how to become appropriate members of the society to which they belong.

Intergenerational transmission of norms (not necessarily only cultural) was mentioned by Gugu, Dowe, Edzai, Hlengiwe and Atile. Parents transmitted their cultural practices to their children and in so doing, they perpetuated the characteristics of their cultures (Geertz, 2002; Lukes, 1985; Montagu, 1968). With respect to having children, Atile said that she appreciated having her mother "just counsel me [and tell me] this is what you do." The intergenerational transmission of norms did not necessarily have to be through conscious and

direct instruction. The mothers learnt through observation of their own mothers. Mothers pass their religion and beliefs down to their children through instruction as well as the children observing and mimicking the parents with respect to both religion and mothering practices (Okagaki & Bevis, 1999). For example, Gugu's mother was "also a Christian. So I followed her as well" (Gugu). Dowe implemented her mother's manner of discipline. She "saw my mother doing this, ... that instilling discipline from a very early age is very important" (Dowe) and undertook to do the same with her children. Mothers followed in their parents' spiritual footsteps as well. When "I really need that spiritual deepening I know that I fill my soul when I go to my [Christian] church of origin" (Edzai). Even if the mothers did not follow the same traditional African beliefs as per their traditional African heritages, as their mothers did, they still followed some belief system and implemented those beliefs in the same ways as they had observed their mothers' implementation of their traditional beliefs. The mothers saw how their mothers prepared them for general life and remembered

my mom, when we were growing up she would say to us like,
'you know what, when you get married, I don't want you to be
an embarrassment that you can't cook and you can't clean. So
she taught all of us to do that. (Hlengiwe)

She perpetuated this practice and as "I always say as soon as she's [her daughter] tall enough to see over the kitchen sink, she's going to start washing dishes" (Hlengiwe). These mothers respected and continued to selectively follow intergenerationally transmitted norms that they had been taught by their mothers. In turn, they wanted their children "to follow in terms of our footsteps. You know, respect religion, go to church ... try by all means to go by

those teachings because we believe that is what gives us direction in terms of the life we need to live” (Gugu). These mothers illustrated how traditional African beliefs, meaning systems and associated practices may be taught to children by parents and elders (Geertz, 2002).

Conversely, they may also cease to impart the characteristics of their traditional African culture and impart characteristics of their adopted culture (Oliver, 1965). Bontle said that even though she is a “black person... I was not raised in a very cultural way. There was no culture besides the culture of worshipping ancestors, which I don’t do” (Bontle). Even though there were traditional African cultural beliefs practiced in her home, Bontle did not adhere to them now and would not let her children (who are young) adhere to them either. There was no intergenerational transmission of traditional African values from Bontle’s parents to her. Itumelang, did not find anything that she saw her parents doing, worth adopting or even adapting to suit her lifestyle because she thought that “they were just too lazy to, to take a stand in any direction” (Itumelang).

As parenting is a cultural phenomenon, it may be assumed that certain aspects of culture are also transmitted intergenerationally through parenting (Chen & Kaplan, 2001). This thought by Chen and Kaplan (2001) that certain aspects are transmitted intergenerationally is relevant in the current situation in South Africa today. In the South African context, the intergenerational transmission of traditional African norms cannot be taken for granted. The mothers in my study all intimated that they only perpetuated the norms that they saw as fitting into their lifestyles. Traditional African norms were adopted only if they fitted into the mothers’ current lifestyles; if they did not, they were either adapted to fit in, or discarded. The mothers’ lifestyles were not compromised to accommodate their

cultural beliefs. The norms and practices that were transmitted were the ones that the mothers saw as being able to integrate into their current world.

4.6.2. Social expectations of mothering.

Most social behaviour is linked, in some way, to specific social expectations. The “social expectations of what a mother should do” (Kruger, 2006, p. 188) have been pivotal in the ideology of discourses of motherhood. The overriding social expectation of mothering was whether mothers are ‘good enough’ mothers. The mothers in my study questioned whether they were “doing things the right way. So [they] tried to become ... good mother[s]. [and to do their] best” (Atile). Atile did this through searching for knowledge on mothering, thereby illustrating that she wanted to garner information relating to external social expectations to assist her mothering decisions. Her search was for knowledge that was not derived from her traditional African heritage. It was done using resources that she has access to, via her education. Her education therefore influenced how she sought parenting knowledge and what knowledge she applied to her manner of parenting.

These mothers experienced conflict between the social expectations of their education-based worlds and the social expectations of their traditional African philosophies based on their traditional African heritage. They had to deal with the “challenge either [to their] cultural or [to their] religious beliefs” (Gugu). Gugu explained the dilemma as follows “so, because of your education status, then it becomes OK, so now you think you are better than, you know, what, what religion believes or what our cultural believes. So I’d become a bad person.” It was necessary for all the mothers to balance their traditional African way of life and educational beliefs all the time. Even if they said that they were not traditionally

African they still existed in a world where their traditional African heritage was a factor and they were socially expected to fit their mothering styles into the cultural mould of mothering.

Cebile, knew what was socially expected of her, but still mothered as she saw fit. She was seen by her family as being “a bit too much[and] very strict.” (Cebile). However, she did not adhere to the social expectations of the society in which she resided and continued in her manner of parenting even though she said it was “not nice when, when you are being accused of being too strict” (Cebile). There was obvious internal conflict between what she saw and what she was told, were social expectations and how she believed she wanted to mother her children.

To some extent, traditional African heritage and the accompanying beliefs, defined motherhood; for instance, specific beliefs concerning motherhood were deemed to be the normal and correct way in which to mother (Kruger, 2006). Mothering was an integral, culturally social role that mothers played. In the past and in line with broad traditional beliefs it was culturally expected that females included the identity of motherhood in their construction of their self (Gillespie, 2003). Even though some of the mothers implied that they did not adhere to the expectations prescribed by their traditional African way of life with regard to their manner of mothering, they sub-consciously viewed women “especially in, in black, our culture” (Itumelang) who did not want children as “weird” (Itumelang). This added another level of social expectations to mothering in that “there’s a lot of responsibility to do the right thing” (Hlengiwe). Not only were mothers expected to mother in socially appropriate ways but it was almost taken for granted that women want to become mothers. This belief was questioned as “I’m not confident that I chose it [becoming a mother] because

it's really something that is for me...I think there's a lot of, you know, socialisation that kind of primed me" (Itumelang).

Generally, all the women felt torn between what was socially expected of them and how they intuitively wanted to mother. They found it difficult to "carv[e] my own path [and to make] the decision that this is the right thing for me and my child and my family" (Hlengiwe). No matter how much the mothers said that they did not adhere to expectations surrounding mothering, their comments belied their expressions. This illustrated that no matter what the circumstances or beliefs of the mothers, parenting social expectations, especially in relation to mothering, played a huge role in mothering, by setting guidelines that may be in conflict with the mother's own ideas of how she wanted to mother. The mothers in my study all experienced internal conflict and expressed difficulty in dealing with the dichotomous social and personal expectations apropos mothering, as they were constantly aware of what was deemed socially normal, accepted and expected means of mothering. Furthermore, it was also apparent that the traditional African heritage of the mothers was an element of mothering, that could not be easily separated from their parenting beliefs and practices, whether they adhered to the traditional African ethos of parenting expectations, or not. The traditional African cultural aspect, therefore, added another layer of maternal internal conflict.

There were times when Atile's identity as a mother conflicted with her identities as a daughter and as a sister and then she felt as "they're [her extended family] putting me under pressure. Like there's pressure and they're adding on to my pressure" (Atile). The pressures of motherhood did not end at mothering; they were exacerbated by the expectations placed on her in her role as wife, daughter and sister. Atile felt as if her role as daughter did not adapt

to incorporate her role as a mother because she was still expected to behave towards her parents as she did before she became a mother and “visit them every weekend” (Atile).

Until a woman became a mother, her role of wife, daughter and sister took precedence in her life. Once she became a mother, she might experience guilt because now she has to include another identity into herself that took time from the other identities, thus making her feel that “I need to do more for both of them [parents]” (Atile). She felt conflicted between her many identities and found prioritising them difficult. In her role as a daughter “they [her extended family] depend on me, so, that’s what people call Black Taxes or whatever,” (Fikile) to give them financial support.

Children and mothers need to be able to function in a greater social context. This context includes the extended family, friends and the community (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2003). If children did not behave in socially appropriate ways, the mother felt as if their behaviour reflected on her mothering skills and that she was not a “good enough parent” (Gugu). This in turn had bearing on her maternal self-efficacy. A threat to her maternal self-efficacy increased the internal conflict she experienced between the social expectations of mothering and her internal beliefs concerning mothering.

With respect to mothering and social expectations the complications were immense as situations are fluid and circumstances change (Aston, 2008). However, if mothers and children wanted to be part of a society they need to demonstrate socially appropriate behaviour (Kruger, 2006). This was generally taught to children by their mothers. Additionally, there were social conventions as to the manner in which mothers tended to mother their children when teaching them appropriate social behaviour.

All the mothers in my study had their own views on mothering. So saying, there were always elements of social propriety in their mothering behaviour, the most obvious being discipline. Therefore, social expectations were influential in the way mothers mother their children, no matter what the mothers said to the contrary, as they wanted their children to grow up to be appropriate members of a society and this was possible only if their children were seen to be behaving according to social expectations.

4.6.3. Marital relations.

Not only did mothers have to cope with being mothers, but they also had to consider the practicalities of being a wife. These roles were intertwined and could not be easily separated, especially if they were living with the husbands/partners. As a result of being the primary caregiver, mothers tended to be “too understanding, to say, ‘he’s working hard, he’s busy, he’s tired, if they cry at night I’m not going to wake him up... whereas I’m also going to work, but I would feel like, ag shame” (Edzai). One of the greatest challenges facing mothers was that they felt as if they needed to be exemplary caregivers, wives and employees, all in equal proportion without compromising any of their responsibilities. This was also a societal expectation, as mothers were seen to be the primary caregivers, wives were expected to run the home and as employees they were expected to perform as well as men, if not better, to prove that they “can do it all” (Hill, 2005). This was not possible, as the nature of life is that different aspects of a person’s life need more attention at different times (Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, & Melby, 1990). Hence, children may be sick and need their mother to take off work, thus reducing her productivity at work; as a wife and mother it may be that she might not be able to cook for her husband as she has been caring for an ill child. This engendered conflict within the mother herself. One of the mothers stated that her husband was “doing more of the domestic things at home, he helps me out with the cooking”

(Hlengiwe). Even though it sounded as if he was taking on more responsibilities at home, her phrasing belied this as she said he “helps” (Hlengiwe) her out with the cooking. She was still seen as been responsible for cooking, but he “helps” (Hlengiwe) her when she was busy. He has not taken over the responsibility of cooking, so that she did not have to do it.

The marital relations of the parents, as well as the significance they attach to their role as parents influences the amount of warmth and nurturance shown towards the child (Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, & Melby, 1990). This was as a direct consequence of how the mother felt about the marital relations. Cebile, Dowe and Itumelang were not living with the fathers and were either formally divorced from them or separated from the fathers. The other six mothers said that their marital relations had a definite effect on the way they mothered. When the relationship was going well and “we are fine ... everything flows well” (Bontle). The better the marital relationship, the more confident mothers felt about their mothering skills. Hlengiwe overtly expressed this when she said that “when we’re in a happy place, obviously the parenting is a breeze, and when we’re not in a happy place then it’s a nightmare” (Hlengiwe). When there was strife in a marital relationship, the mother’s ability to mother was compromised as she felt unable to deal with the demands of mothering. The time that she would usually use to mother, was time that she used to “sort out you” (Bontle). She felt overwhelmed by the ‘normal’ demands of mothering and just wants “space” (Bontle) to deal with the marital issues.

With respect to marital discord, a mother was also insistent that “whenever we had issues we, we’d make sure that it, that, we dealt with our issues together and not involve the child or drag the child [into it]” (Fikile). This was true for the mothers who were not living with the children’s fathers as well. Even though Cebile, Dowe and Itumelang were not living

with the fathers, they still had a relationship with these fathers, if only through their children. Dowe said that even when she was going through her divorce, he “was still an amazing, caring, loving, kind person to my children [and that] he [her separated husband] remains one of the most committed, amazing fathers that I’ve ever met.” This was not true for Cebile who “at the moment how I feel about him I don’t want any contact with him now” because “there’s nothing from him that he [her son] would be, he’s [her son] going to gain” (Cebile). These mothers expressed the impact of their marital relations on their children, not on themselves personally. The one mother who did mention the impact on her personally, as a result of marital discord, was Itumelang. She said that

I was constantly disappointed when we were together and I felt
I’m not, I’m not a happy person, I’m not a happy woman...and
that makes me an unhappy mother to my son... I think I also had
expectations, you know, of him, that he never quite lived up to.
(Itumelang)

All the mothers were concerned about the wellbeing of their children during periods of marital discord. Even if they wanted time to themselves to deal with the situation they were still aware of their children’s needs. The mothers, whether they lived with the children’s fathers or not, all admitted that their marital relationships affected their children, positively or negatively. This exacerbated the pressures they were feeling, as not only did they have to deal with the marital discord, they also had to find time to fulfil their usual mothering responsibilities. Two major concepts arose from the discussion on marital relations. The first being that the mothers all saw the fathers in light of how they fathered and the effect of that fathering on their children. Secondly, they described their marital

relations in terms of practical co-parenting. Only one of the mothers mentioned the emotional aspect of her marriage. She said that she “was not a happy woman” (Itumelang). The other mothers did not mention any feelings or emotions with regards to their husbands/partners, nor whether they loved/liked their husbands/partners or not. Possibly because they are so busy coping with the practicalities of their multiple identities as mother, wife, daughter and employee that they do not have time to reflect on their marriage. As long as there were no overt problems, they did not consider the actual emotional aspect of their marriage/relationship.

Mothering does not come into existence in isolation (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2003). There has to be a father involved, if only initially (Mulsow, Caldera, Pursley, Reifman, & Huston, 2002). Only Cebile and Itumelang said that the fathers were not integral parts of their and their children's lives in the role of husband/partner and father. Nomaguchi and Milkie (2003) recognised the fact that children function in a greater societal context, therefore inferring that children and mothers do not interact in isolation. Perhaps, because most mothers were seen as the primary caregivers, the mother-child relationship was pivotal to mothering, with the father participating in a supporting role. The relationship between a wife and husband/partner took on a whole new meaning, when the wife became a mother and the husband/partner became a father.

The introduction of children into a relationship adds to the identities of both the wife and husband/partner (Harkness & Charles, 1995). They are now mother and father as well as woman and man (Harkness & Charles, 1995). The mothers that mentioned the impact that mothering had on their marriages, mostly said that it was a positive impact. Bontle said that having children “strengthened” her relationship with her husband. Atile said that though their

“routine has completely changed ... it is different but in a good way” (Dowe) finds it easier to be separated from her husband because “for me [being separated] is amazing” and “when there’s a conference, all I need to do is to make arrangements about, you know, there’s enough food and who will do this while I’m away, and, and I go” (Dowe). Dowe was not unhappy with her husband, *per se*, in her marriage (she still speaks highly about him). However, she felt that her identity as an academic was being compromised, as she could not be a wife, mother and academic without compromising one or another of them. She chose to separate from her husband and in so doing, organised her life to enable her to pursue an academic career. This was not the reason she gave for the separation. She said that they were university sweethearts and had grown apart. However, when she spoke about her career in academia and her role as a wife, it was apparent that the driving force behind her separation was to pursue her career in academia.

The mothers’ marital relationship had an influence on their manner of parenting. The mothers took into account the fathers’ parenting ideologies as well as their own parenting ideologies and if they were discordant internal tension, concerning parenting practices, arose within the mother. When the parents were discordant, the mothers admitted to being less functional as mothers. They did not say that there should be no disagreements, but that “there will be disagreements. What is important is how you handle the disagreements” (Edzai). In light of my study, the mothers’ marital relationships were important to the extent that they affected the mothers’ quality of mothering and thereby her maternal self-efficacy. If she felt good about herself and thought that she was being a ‘good enough’ mother, her maternal self-efficacy increased, thus influencing her perspective of mothering and of herself. Additionally, the mothers had to expend emotional energy on being wives.

4.6.4. The mothers' relationships with their own mothers.

In my study, it was apparent that there were five major aspects to the mother and daughter's relationship once the daughter became a mother. They were: the level of closeness between both mother and daughter; conflict in the relationship as well as internal conflict within the daughter; a level of guidance by the mother to her daughter; a newfound respect and appreciation of the mother by her daughter and general emotional and physical support of the mother by her mother (grandmother).

The relationship between a mother⁸ and her daughter is exceedingly complex (McNab & Kavner, 2001). When daughters become mothers, the complexity of their relationship is increased, as it adds a further dimension to their interaction (Van Gaalen & Dykstra, 2006). All relationships are fluid (Aston, 2008). As the mother-daughter circumstances and life stages change and evolve, so too does the mother-daughter relationship (Van Gaalen & Dykstra, 2006). In terms of my study, becoming a mother altered the daughter's perspective of her mother as she now saw her mother in a different light (Van Gaalen & Dykstra, 2006). She can now empathise with her mother as a fellow mother (Van Gaalen & Dykstra, 2006). This engenders both feelings of additional bonding and/or divergence (Lefkowitz, 2003). In my study, this was apparent in Cebile's relationship with her mother, as she mentioned they "were close grew apart.... then we became close again." (Cebile). This illustrated that the manner of mother-daughter relationships was not a stable, unchangeable state; the relationships were fluid and as circumstances changed so did the relationships. With respect to feeling close to their mothers, seven out of the nine mothers said that they were close to their mothers. When the daughter became a mother, the mother-daughter relationship

⁸ The term 'daughter' will be used to denote the participants in my study, the term 'mother' will be used to represent the participants' mothers and 'children' are the offspring of the participant (daughter).

changed and in some instances this meant that it became “characterised by warmth, ... and increasing status for the daughter” (Lefkowitz & Fingerman, 2003, p. 613). Their mother was often their “first point of contact” (Edzai) even though the daughters are mothers themselves. Atile, Dowe, Fikile, Gugu and Hlengiwe said that they were “very close” to their mothers. Both Bontle and Itumelang “were never close” (Bontle) and they “did not have a great one [relationship]” (Itumelang). The complexity of mother-daughter relationships was apparent in these mothers’ comments.

As close as a mother-daughter dyad was, there was also bound to be a certain amount of conflict inherent in the relationship, most especially when the daughter first became a mother. This was most apparent when there was significant financial and practical support exchanged between mothers and daughters, as there was also a high probability of conflict occurring over “material and personal issue” (Van Gaalen & Dykstra, 2006). Conflict could be initiated if the daughter did not want to adhere to mother’s style and type of mothering (Van Gaalen & Dykstra, 2006). Bontle was sent to boarding school and vowed that her “kids are not going to boarding school” as she felt that by being in boarding school, and being brought up essentially by her much older sisters more than her mother, she “had to figure [things] out myself” (Bontle). She did not want to bring her children up as she was brought up by her mother. However, she was conflicted, as she said that her “my mum cared for me. My mum protected me and my mum guided me to be the best” (Bontle). Atile had internal conflict centred round her responsibilities as a mother and as a daughter. Her mother “feels like I don’t have time for her.” In contrast to what her mother felt, Atile felt as if “they [her parents] need to give me that space to say she’s now married” (Atile). It was obvious that there was conflict between different aspects of the daughter’s identities as wife, mother and daughter. This was not unexpected as daughters needed to reorganise the priorities in their

lives so that they were comfortable with the situation as it presented itself. This may have entailed going against a life-long practice of prioritising their mothers, whereas now they and their mothers, were both mothers and the daughters needed to prioritise her nuclear families. The conflict daughters experienced with respect to their mothers arose out of the daughters need to integrate their role as mother into the relationship they had with their mothers as daughters, as well as the feelings daughters had concerning the way that they were mothered as children.

Guidance from mothers to daughters did not only take the form of mothering. Daughters are influenced by the attitudes of their mothers and took guidance from their mothers in the roles they chose to live (Sholomskas & Axelrod, 1986). Shomoskas and Axelrod (1986) stated this in 1986 and it is still relevant today, as Edzai still spoke to her mother “about almost everything. I share my concerns if I have [any], pertaining [to] my marriage life, relationship with kids, personal issues...” (Edzai). Daughters were divided in the level of guidance they received and acted upon from their mothers. Out of the nine mothers, only Bontle and Itumelang said that they would not mother as their mothers had mothered them and did not act upon the guidance they received from mothers, presuming they received any guidance at all. One of the reasons stated was because “She didn’t know, um, how to be a parent” (Itumelang). Hlengiwe, Edzai and Cebile said that when they “needed some guidance” (Edzai) their mothers were the first people to whom they turned. It emerged from my study that the concept of intergenerational guidance was a sensitive subject. None of the daughters acted on the advice of their mothers without question and with total adherence. The daughters who did act upon the advice of their mothers did so on their own terms. They only applied the advice that they could relate to and that they saw as fitting into their lifestyle and ‘ignored’ the advice they saw as not relating to them.

Intergenerational transmission of parenting knowledge occurred, but only when the daughters agreed with the way in which they were raised and were and still are, close to their mothers.

In terms of the mother-daughter relationship, the mother's support was almost taken for granted as "the person who I would expect most support is my mother. And she is giving me that" (Gugu). Support from the mother was a factor of the mother-daughter relationship that varied in intensity and practice. With respect to daughters receiving support from mothers, this correlated with a close mother-daughter relationship, especially while daughters were growing up. Daughters who were close to their mothers, both while growing up and currently, professed that they got support from mothers while raising their own children.

A mutually respectful relationship with their mothers was aided by mothers allowing daughters a certain degree of independence while growing up (Kretchmar & Jacobvitz, 2002). This could even take the form of teaching the child how to clean and then delegating that chore to the child. This was clear in my study, as many of the mothers openly stated that they developed a new-found respect for their own mothers. Many of the mothers started "appreciating my mother more when I become a mother" (Atile) and they now had "great respect in how she managed that home" (Dowe). Becoming a mother enabled daughters to understand and appreciate what it meant to be a mother.

My study illustrated that, generally, daughters had a good relationship with their mothers; with only Bontle and Itumelang saying they did not have close relationships with their mothers. The daughters' respect for and appreciation of their mothers increased when the daughters became mothers with only Bontle and Itumelang saying otherwise. There was evidence of intergenerational transmission of mothering through the guidance (and

acceptance of this guidance) of mothers to daughters. The mother-daughter relationships were not easy to fathom as “historically and transculturally, ideas about the relationship between mothers and children vary” (McNab & Kavner, 2001, p. 194). This was relevant in my study, as the mothers came from diverse traditionally African backgrounds and as such what one mother-daughter dyad would see as a ‘good’ mother-daughter relationship, another dyad may see as dysfunctional. That was why, especially in the South African context, it was important to understand the daughters’ relationships with their own mothers from the perspectives of the daughters themselves. As a result of the daughters’ transition to motherhood, their relationship with their own mothers’ increased in complexity, necessitating a renegotiation of both their roles. Mothers had to incorporate their new roles as grandmothers into their multiple identities and daughters had to assimilate their new roles as mothers, into their multiple identities.

4.6.5. Extended family.

Children and mothers need to be able to function in a greater social context (Collins, Maccoby, Steinberg, Hetherington, & Bornstein, 2000). This context includes the extended family, friends and the community (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2003). The mother’s relationship with her extended family, included parents, siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins because “for most African people when you talk about family you’re talking everyone because we don’t say relative, we say family. I’m thinking cousins, whoever” (Dowe) and had a bearing on their perspectives of parenting. In some instances, the relationships with extended family was so close, that the children “grew together” (Cebile) implying that they a lot of contact and interaction within the extended family. The mothers’ relationships with their own mothers also influenced the level of interaction between the mother and her extended family. Contrarily, the mothers who did not have close relationships with their mothers did not have

close relationships with their extended families. This was not to say that a close relationship was not desired, as they would like to have “at least a decent relationship” (Bontle), but it seemed as if childhood relationships between mothers and daughters influenced the adult mothers' relationship with their extended families.

If mothers had ‘good’ relationships with their extended family members, they were more likely to be able to call on them for support. When Dowe was going through her divorce, her “family was very supportive so if I needed a weekend, um, my sister will come, take the kids and I would just be at home, crying, read, watch TV. You know. So they were very supportive.” Various members of the mothers' extended families offered support to the mothers, these included “my gran [and] grandfather” (Fikile), “my older uncle” (Gugu) and “my cousins [and] younger brother” (Itumelang). The type of support offered ranged from fetching the children from school and looking after them until the parents could fetch the children “on our way home” (Hlengiwe), to emotional support, as when Dowe was going through her divorce. Fikile attributed this willingness to offer support, to the fact that “within the black community there's the extended family and there's just always somebody to just ask” (Fikile).

Most of the mothers felt supported by their extended families. However, there were times when “they don't know how you feel. They don't know what you are going through” (Gugu) and there was also the expectation that “I'm the eldest and the expectation that ‘you're the one who has to support’” (Edzai) and this made it “extremely challenging, just handling it alone” (Itumelang) for the mothers. These mothers expressed physical and emotional fatigue and perceived parenting as “quite a burden” (Itumelang). This decreased their feelings of maternal self-efficacy.

Being close to their extended families allowed the mothers to share the responsibilities of parenting with their extended families, thereby alleviating the chances of mothers' feeling overwhelmed. By not feeling overwhelmed by their responsibilities and feeling as if they could cope, mothers developed a positive perspective of mothering. This, in turn, increased their feelings of maternal self-efficacy. This indicated that the type of relationships that mothers had with their extended families, influences their perspectives on mothering.

4.6.6. Friends.

Apart from their extended family; children and mothers, function in a social context that includes friends and the community (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2003). Bontle, Dowe, Fikile, Gugu, Hlengiwe and Itumelang directly stated that they have "very good friends" (Bontle) who "just surround me" (Dowe) and "that I can just go and de-stress and talk about issues that I can't talk about at home." (Fikile). These friends were "extremely, extremely, close [and] know everything" (Itumelang). With these friends, they were able to share "what I experienced, this is what I'm going through, either my own emotions or with the children, for me that helps" (Edzai). The relationship they had with these friends did not necessarily centre around being mothers; it was also comprised of "social thing[s]" (Hlengiwe). The purpose of having good friend relationships became apparent when the mothers expressed how they interacted with their friends. Interaction with friends was seen as an opportunity to discuss mothering as well as a 'time-off' from mothering. This allowed the mothers to develop positive feelings in connection with mothering, as they were either validated in their mothering skills, helped to overcome difficult situations or they could just be individuals and not 'mothers' for the time they were with their friends. Interaction with friends alleviated the

level of stress felt by the mothers (Mulsow, Caldera, Pursley, Reifman, & Huston, 2002). In turn, this increased their positive feelings in relations to mothering.

4.6.7. Traditional African norms and mothering.

Traditional African heritage and the related practices and beliefs influence mothering behaviour, whether the mothers adhere to the specific beliefs concerning motherhood or not. There are cultural beliefs and practices specific to mothering that were understood to be the accepted way in which to mother (Kruger, 2006). The mothers in my study were all aware of the specific parenting traditional African beliefs that originated from their heritage, however they did not employ them in the construction of their mothering identity. Furthermore, as previously discussed in *section 4.4.5. – Beliefs, practices, rituals, values and symbols*, the traditional African practices that the mothers carried out were carefully selected and considered by them before being implemented into their and their children's lives.

Certain ideas, information, experiences and inputs that appeared to influence the mothers in this specific group of black South African academics' construction of parenting were apparent. Firstly, the intergenerational transmission of parenting practices. The mothers either adopted or adapted parenting practices from their mothers that they deemed appropriate to their lifestyles or discarded those that were not seen as fitting into their views of parenting. Secondly, social expectations of how the mothers were expected to mother were also influential in the mothers' construction of parenting. The mothers all aimed to be 'good' mothers and were cognisant of the mothering guidelines socially expected. This resulted in the mothers' experiencing internal tensions between the social expectations of mothering and their personal mothering ideals. Thirdly, the mothers' marital relationships influenced their construction of parenting and their maternal self-efficacy. If their marital

relationship was harmonious their maternal self-efficacy increased as the mothers felt as if they were able to mother their children better than if there was marital discord, which made the mothers feel as if their ability to mother was compromised and decreased their maternal self-efficacy. Fourthly, becoming mothers influenced the mothers' relationships with their own mothers. In the instances where the mother-daughter relationship was close, becoming a mother strengthened the mother-daughter bond. If the mother-daughter relationship was not close, then becoming a mother highlighted the dissention in their relationship. The mothers expected a certain amount of support from their own mothers and in most cases this was given. Fifthly, the mothers valued support from their extended families. This support increased their maternal self-efficacy by the very assistance they received from their families. Sixthly, the support of friends in whom they could confide, was also influential in their construction of parenting. The mothers valued the fact that they received advice from their friends both about parenting as well as general life issues. Furthermore, the support from friends was a 'time-off' from mothering. This increased the mothers' maternal self-efficacy. Seventhly, traditional African norms influenced the mothers' construction of mothering in that they were aware of these norms. However, they carefully selected the norms which they thought were appropriate for their lifestyles and did not incorporate traditional African norms that did not concur with their personal ideologies of parenting.

4.7. Research Question 1. c.: How do Mothers who are Black South African Academics, Understand the Relationship Between What They Understand to be Their Cultural and Formal Educational Inputs and Their Views on Parenting?

4.7.1. Postgraduate educated mothers.

The mothers' level of education had an impact on her perception of traditional African mothering practices and norms. This was especially relevant in the South African context, as there had been an increase in the number of black African women enrolling in tertiary education, leading to the renegotiation of the "ideologies of race and gender" (Long & Zietkiewicz, 2006, p. 198). Mothers merged their educational knowledge with their parenting practices and parenting knowledge. Their education had an impact on their mothering practices as

now I read books, now I compare things, now I question things,
so for me, the group that I interact with in my working
environment and in my circle of friends is now different and I
learn from them, through the interaction, how they do things,
and I read and I understand differently than I used to. So all that
experience influences how I do things at home (Edzai).

Edzai said that she applied the knowledge she had gained from education, in making decisions regarding mothering practices derived from her traditional African heritage and that she adhered to the practices that she felt were "critical" (Edzai) for the welfare of the family, in light of her knowledge she had acquired through her education. Being highly educated gave these mothers a different perspective of parenting.

The positive impact of maternal education on the child has illustrated that maternal education is positively linked with expectations of the child's performance at school, as well as the actual performance of the child (Davis-Kean, 2005; Kaminski, Valle, Filene, & Boyle,

2008). However, there has been minimal, if any, investigation on the impact of maternal education on the mother herself. In as far as the effect of maternal tertiary education, from the perspective of black South African women academics', there was a dearth of information.

There were three main matters that the mothers in my study expressed as being pertinent to black South African mothers in academia operating for the most part in the health sector, namely, interrupted (or uninterrupted) education as a consequence of being a mother, balancing education and traditional African heritage and the impact of their education on their manner of mothering.

As a mother in academia, a difficulty was whether to postpone one's studies in order to have children, or to do the two concurrently. When asked if their studies were postponed for any reason, Bontle answered unequivocally "Yes, having kids." However, she purposefully postponed having one of her children until "after my Masters" (Bontle). Atile also purposefully postponed doing her PhD until her "son had grown and it [mothering] wasn't such a challenge anymore" (Atile). There were instances when the mothers having children interrupted their studies and this interfered with the mothers' plans for the future in that "I was hoping that by the time I'm 30 I would have had my PhD already" (Fikile). When Dowe had her children she also "had to stop. I wanted to, I graduated, I got my Masters in 2006, um, and I wanted to go straight into my PhD but that's when I realised that you know what, I have to start a family" (Dowe).

As black South African mothers engaged in tertiary education and holding tertiary degrees, there were bound to be times when there was a need to balance their educational knowledge and their traditional African knowledge. Only Itumelang did not adhere to any

traditional African cultural norms and therefore did not feel the need to balance her education and culture. If the mothers did not adhere to any traditional African beliefs, they said that their education had to be balanced with their religious Christian beliefs. Mothers said that their education and culture “complement each other” (Bontle). She saw her Christianity as her culture and utilised both her education and her Christian culture to balance her parenting; she did not refer to her traditional African cultural norms as she had stated she did not believe in them. Her education showed her that there were “things that I don’t have to adhere to.” (Atile). She did not have to take her children

to a traditional healer because of this sickness that I don’t think really exists. Because you get told that if the child has this mark it means that they are going to die, and because I’ve trained and I, I know what happens when children are born, I know they get marks on their body when they come up, so that doesn’t mean, it’s, it’s a myth, so my education has opened my eyes to such things. (Atile).

As a result of her education training Atile viewed diverse situations differently and applied her educational knowledge to the situation. Consequently, Atile did not adhere to traditional African cultural beliefs as a result of her specific educational training. It was imperative to balance education and culture and/or religion

because you are educated you broaden your horizon in terms of knowing things, but also knowing that and also culturally knowing who you are, you need guidance from a parent, from

somebody who has walked the path before you, to say 'this works, this doesn't work, if you do this, this will lead you there'. If you have education and you forget about your roots, you're not going to succeed (Edzai).

However, one of the mothers prioritised her cultural beliefs over her educational knowledge, as she said that if there was no realistic way to balance education with her traditional African cultural beliefs, her choice would be that of "just submitting to your religions and cultural beliefs" (Gugu). Conversely, the ninth mother did not adhere to any traditional African cultural or religious beliefs and so did not feel the need to balance any of it.

All the mothers, with the exception of Itumelang, felt as if there were times when they had to balance their education and their traditional African heritage and Christianity. If that was not possible, one of these eight mothers said that she would definitely choose her culture over her education, if only to "have peace of mind" (Gugu). Christian religious practices and beliefs took precedence over the educational practices of all the mothers who subscribed to Christianity. It was apparent that the education of the mothers influenced their view of culture and religion in terms of applying the norms to their manner of parenting.

All the mothers said that their education impacted on the way they mothered their children. Atile had medical training and that made her hyper-aware of her children's health as she felt she was "too concerned about [their] health and eating healthy" (Atile).

Gugu was aware that what was important was “knowing their milestones” (Gugu). Through her education, she was aware that there were certain milestones children should reach at specific stages of their development. She was therefore concerned with these milestones, as she measured her child’s performance against the norm and if she happened to find them not fitting the developmental norm she would attempt to implement intervention strategies that may support the development of these milestones. This influenced the way in which she mothered her children. Mothers used their educational knowledge in playing with their children to “look out for things that are age-appropriate” (Hlengiwe). The mothers also used their specialised educational knowledge to assist them in recognising any difficulties their children might be experiencing and in appropriately implementing strategies that could assist their children. Itumelang said that “I think if I wasn’t where I am educationally I might subscribe more to the culture and I think if I subscribe more to culture then my son wouldn’t be developing, you know, the way that he is now” (Itumelang). Therefore, her educational knowledge definitely influenced the way in which she mothered her children.

As a result of being highly-educated themselves, the mothers wanted at least the same level of education for their children and therefore “they [her children] know if one wants to please me they must do their work. They must perform very well at school” (Cebile). The mothers’ understanding of their own education influenced their engagement in their child’s education (Waanders, Mendez, & Downer, 2007). Providing their children with an education was a high priority with the mothers, as they wanted their children to be “educated” (Bontle, Edzai, Gugu, Dowe and Cebile) because they saw education as a means to “brighten their future” (Gugu). Therefore, being educated had an impact on the manner of mothering because “all that experience influences how I do things at home” (Edzai).

Socio-economic status played a part in the amount of enrichment a mother was able to give her child. She could only enrich the child's education if she had the resources with which to do it. The resources were obtained with the help of the job she had, as a consequence of her higher education. Additionally, being involved in higher education and in possession of a postgraduate degree, made the mother more aware of the benefits of education that she wanted to pass on to her children. Being an educated mother, especially one involved in academia, made a woman realise that she could search for mothering information from sources other than the expected norms of culture, family and society. As a highly-educated mother, she was concerned about her child's development and well-being and aware of the resources available that could provide her with the information she requires. The connotations were both positive and negative. Viewed positively, the resources enabled her to enhance her child's development. However, if her child did not follow the expected guidelines, then the mother could feel as if it was as a result of her manner of mothering and this would impact negatively on her maternal self-efficacy.

Being educated played an integral part of how the mothers mothered their children. They used knowledge gained from their specific academic fields and applied it to their parenting behaviour. As educated mothers, they were able to select what they thought was the best way in which to mother their children. The general consensus was that "the education, the culture and the religious culture. They all add value" (Cebile).

From this study it was clear that there was a distinct link between education and mothering; what was notable was that each mother applied this in a manner unique to her, her circumstances and her children. There were differences in the mothers' traditional heritages, their ethnicities and the ages of their children. However, there were commonalities in that all

the mothers placed a high value on education. Furthermore, seven out of the nine mothers held their degrees in Health Sciences or were employed by the School of Health Sciences.

4.7.1.1. Black South African women academics.

The paucity of literature relating to black South African women academics and their experiences of parenting was corroborated by Kruger (2006) and was evident throughout this study. The women in my study all intimated that they enjoyed their positions in academia. There were drawbacks and these were in the form of how other people related to them as academics and mothers. They felt as if they were living in limbo between academia and motherhood, with neither these aspects of their lives actually appreciating their unique challenges.

The mothers saw continuing education as a means of affording them “more opportunity, better opportunities to apply for other jobs [in academia] should there be” (Cebile). Additionally, “the more you study the more you belong if you are in an academic institution...And the more you, you are able to relate to everyone” (Cebile). Cebile saw her education as a means of bettering her standing in academia. It also gave her a sense of belonging. At this stage, as a black South African woman in academia based in the health sector, she was an anomaly and therefore struggling to find a sense of belonging and acceptance for who she is. There was “that line between culture and you as an academic or a person in academia.... it was a challenge at the beginning...” (Fikile). These women felt as if they neither belonged to a specific culture nor did they fit comfortably into the world of academia. This engendered internal conflict and influenced their self-efficacy both as mothers and academics functioning primarily in the field of health. Gugu’s internal conflict was in evidence by her saying that she would only like to work part-time. Her feeling was

that “you still want your own education, you still want to be engaged in terms of you as a person feel fulfilled to say, you know what, I’m doing what I like” (Gugu). However, generally mothers were expected to put the welfare of their children first. Conversely, as an employee (academic) it was expected that academia would be her first priority; hence, the resultant feelings of conflict.

The mothers all viewed their education as an integral part of their lives. They saw their education as a valuable resource that they could use to assist them in parenting, but there were also negative aspects to being highly educated mothers. Finding a balance between the realities of parenting and educational knowledge was difficult as “sometimes I think knowledge is good but sometimes it just overtakes you and you’re caught” (Atile). This was illustrated by Bontle who said that she tended to “hover” (Bontle) over her children and was “over protective” (Bontle) of them and ensured that “they can wash their own things and even with my nanny I’m really on her case” (Bontle) and if her children were “sick I was just worried” (Bontle). Even though it was natural to be concerned if your children are not well, Bontle intimated that as a result of her training in the medical field, she felt that she was more concerned about her children’s health than she would be without her medical training.

As an academic working in the health sphere, Itumelang had the knowledge to make her aware that there were options with regards to bringing up her son. This added another layer of complexity to her world, as she employed more “resources and so much energy” (Itumelang) to ensuring that he was provided with the best opportunities that she could give him, albeit without the certainty that “things will ever change” (Itumelang). Through her education, she was cognisant that there were other ways of raising her child (who has a neurodevelopmental disorder) rather than only consulting her traditional African heritage and

the related precepts thereof. Her view of parenting was coloured by her son's disorder, which added another dimension to her view of parenting. This was apparent in that she said that she "think[s] that the world needs more education" (Itumelang). This was as a result of the extra issues that she had to deal with as a mother.

The mothers were very aware of their heritage, whether they adhered to it or not. They verbalized that what they

think for me what makes our lives different now from, or that makes me different from any other woman, an average woman growing up in a township, is the level of independence ... and access to resources and that I am able to do things without, you know, I think the basics are taken care of (Dowe).

Being an academic enabled the women to be less dependent on their families (husbands, if they have one) and to be able to live a lifestyle that was not focused on providing the basics for themselves and their children. "If I worry, I worry about not go[ing] on holiday because next year these kids are going to a good school which costs more" (Dowe). Having an education made her see the importance of giving her children as good an education as she possibly could give them. As a mother, she was prepared to make personal sacrifices ("not go on holiday" (Dowe)) in order to provide her children with an education that would stand them in good stead in the future. Being in a position of independence, which allowed them to make decisions about their children's future, as well as not having to be concerned about the day-to-day expenses of living, allowed the women to focus on furthering their education that, as previously mentioned, impacted on their standing in

academia. This, in turn, gave the women more time to focus on the aspects of mothering that were not seen as primarily necessary; i.e. going to the “zoo[and] creating memories” (Bontle).

A further issue for this particular group of black South African women in academia was that their families behaved as if there were no “limits to how much advantage they can take...there’s no real appreciation of ... what it means to be an academic, to go this far” (Itumelang). She felt as if her extended family only saw the monetary benefits (which they believe to be plenty) and did not realise that she was “still a person, I’m still in society, I still pay the same price as anybody else” (Itumelang). She was not the only mother in my study whose family expected her to assist them financially. However, Itumelang felt taken advantage of by her family, as she was not generally on good terms with her family. Given the relationship, or lack thereof, that she had with her family, she felt that they exploited her both financially and in terms of her status.

An added consequence of being highly educated black South African mothers primarily in the field of health, was that it had a positive influence on the mothers’ self-esteem, as they became “role model[s] for the sisters and the brothers and for Mum” (Edzai). This increased their general sense of self-efficacy; they saw themselves as competent academics, ‘good’ mothers and as daughters and sisters who made their families proud.

The mothers in my study were all highly educated academics predominantly in the field of health ranging from having just completed their Masters degrees, to having accomplished their PhD studies. They all saw their education as benefiting them in their

lives. However, they believed that as black academic mothers they needed to consciously make an effort to fit into the world of academia.

The same applied to their traditional African heritage and the allied philosophies. This left them feeling conflicted as to their sense of identity and feeling as if they were in limbo. They dealt with the uncertainty, by putting their Christian religious beliefs first and foremost. This was significant in terms of my study, as it illustrated that no matter how important the mothers' education was in their lives - their religious and traditional African heritage affiliations and mothering took precedence.

4.7.2. The relationship between culture, education and parenting.

4.7.2.1. Introduction.

The world has become an interrelated domain. This has encouraged the “cross-pollination of ideas between cultures” (Mkhize, 2004, pp. 4-28) to occur faster than it did previously. According to Mkhize (2004), with historical development comes trials and tribulations. This specific cohort of mothers who are black South African academics operating mostly in the field of health encountered trials and tribulations both in their personal and professional domains; as they lived, and are living, through historical development within South Africa.

All nine mothers in my study agreed that there was a relationship between culture, education and parenting. However, they said that they integrated the three into their lifestyles in a manner that suited them as individuals. Dowe openly said that her education was more

instrumental in her parenting methods than was her traditional knowledge. Whereas Hlengiwe said that

they're very closely intertwined. ... I mean, for me, my culture, as little as I practice it ... there is still a strong element of it in me. My education dictates what I do as a parent [and ultimately] my child's needs at that time, would have a strong influence I guess on making that decision and what I'd do (Hlengiwe).

Fikile said that "parenting and culture are imposed" (Fikile) on one, inferring that there are a set of norms to which mothers are expected to abide. She mentioned that there was conflict between her traditional African heritage, her Christianity and her educational knowledge and while she is "a Christian, I'm, I'm also an academic, so I had issues with, you know, certain practices" (Fikile). Fikile also said that with respect to parenting and education "you have to seek the information [and] you can select what you find appropriate" (Fikile). Fikile also mentioned that integrating her traditional African heritage, education and parenting engendered feelings of conflict in her relationship between traditional African heritage, education and parenting. Gugu agreed there was a relationship between these three aspects of mothers' lives; however, Gugu said that the relationship engendered conflict when she had to explain to others (she inferred but did not say outright, that it was her family), that "I have to go to work, I have to provide this, ... but at the same time I'm still obliged to do all this [cultural practices]" (Gugu). Itumelang's perception of the relationship between culture, education and parenting was that education and parenting interacted while she saw her traditional heritage as being "a hindrance" (Itumelang).

In terms of my study, the mothers illustrated that education, traditional African heritage and parenting form a reciprocal relationship in that they were linked to each other, on multiple levels and with varying degrees of significance. The mothers' religious (Christian) beliefs took precedence over their educational aspirations for their children. When the mothers spoke about their 'culture' they were not referring to their traditional African culture, they were generally referring to their Christian religious beliefs. Unless specifically asked to elaborate on each one separately and the meaning of each one in their lifestyles, the mothers rarely voluntarily differentiated between what they termed their traditional heritage from their religious beliefs. It was apparent that there were conflicting sentiments with regards to the relationship between the mothers' educational parenting knowledge and the ethos of their traditional African heritage when the mothers specifically referred to their traditional African heritage (not Christianity), stating that the circumstances dictated to which they adhered.

From a holistic perspective, traditional African heritage, education and parenting all formed part of a whole and as such had a significant role to play in the raising of children and therefore in the lives of mothers. The relationship between these three concepts impacted on the mothers' perspectives of mothering as, depending on their perceived success of balancing all three, their perspective of mothering was positively or negatively impacted, thereby affecting their maternal and general self-efficacy.

Edzai, Gugu and Itumelang all expressed the belief that both traditional African heritage and education were instrumental in raising children. Culture

gives the roots for the child to say 'this is who you are, this is where you come from', education – these are the things that you might not have known if you were only focusing on the culture. If you have education and you forget about your roots, you're not going to succeed (Edzai).

Gugu echoed this sentiment as she believes that "you know you are working, you have to have education, you have to do that, but still you need to comply or submit to cultural beliefs" (Gugu). Hlengiwe said that

my culture, as little as I practice it but there is still a strong element of it in me. My education dictates what I do as a parent [however,] my child's needs at that time, would have a strong influence I guess on making that decision and what I'd do (Hlengiwe).

Even though "Religion is [the] priority... they are linked and I think a parent should make sure that all those three aspects are instilled to a child... because ... The education, the culture and the religious culture. They all add value" (Cebile). The mother's experience and perspective of mothering influenced the educational direction that the mother took. Itumelang had a child with a cognitive disorder and she was "busy changing my whole research career" (Itumelang) to focus on cognitive childhood issues. She thereby aligned her education with her mothering experiences.

Notwithstanding that the relationship between culture, education and parenting was holistic, there was bound to be conflict and complexity when attempting to arrive at a practical balance in the mothers' lifestyles. Intersectionality theory has been proven to be beneficial in the study of the interaction between interdependent identities of people, specifically those of race, ethnicity, gender and class (Acker, 2006; Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1991; Phoenix & Pattynama, 2006; Warner & Shields, 2013). It is for these reasons that it was applied as a framework for this study, to give perspective to the relationships between traditional African heritage, formal education and parenting, thereby explicating some of the tensions between multiple aspects of identity construction.

4.7.2.2. *The interaction between culture, formal educational knowledge and mothering.*

Culture, formal educational knowledge and mothering interact and play significant roles in the lives of the mothers, individually and together.

Traditional African principles regarding mothering add another aspect to the mothers' identities of themselves as mothers. Not only do they have to create and develop a way of mothering that they believe is 'good', they also have to keep in mind their traditional African customs regarding mothering practices. "For...black people, culture is very important" (Bontle) and it therefore followed that mothers took their traditional African customs, regarding parenting into consideration when they became mothers. However, this was not what I generally found in my study. The mothers were very selective in the traditional African beliefs they chose to adopt with regards to mothering their children. The practices that were applied to their mothering practices tended to be those that encouraged behaviour such as "respect[ing] an adult, how you behave, your morals" (Cebile) and "to be caring. ...to

be honest and to be responsible” (Edzai). Mkhwanazi (2014) corroborated the concept of respect being an integral part of traditional African heritage. Upon closer analysis, it was difficult to determine whether these practices originated from the traditional African heritage or society, as they all point to creating children who are able to function appropriately in the community or broader society. Barring Itumelang, all the mothers stated that their Christianity took precedence over their traditional African heritage. Itumelang emphatically said that she was “not at all the traditional African cultural person” (Itumelang); she did what she thought was right by her son no matter from where she got her mothering knowledge.

As an aspect of the mothers' identity, traditional African heritage, whether adhered to or not, and religion in the form of Christianity, played major roles in motherhood in South Africa. Bontle did not adhere to cultural precepts; she brought her children up according to a sect of Christianity and said that for her “what’s amazing is for other black people, culture is very important” (Bontle). She excluded herself from bringing her children up culturally by saying that culture is significant to “other” (Bontle) people. Itumelang, who subscribed to neither culture nor religion, expressed the significance of becoming a mother “especially ..., in Black, our culture. ... I’ve had, had two colleagues at least here who say no it’s not something they would ever consider [having children]. But that was easier for me to accept because they are White” (Itumelang). This comment by Itumelang illustrated the deep entrenchment of the mothers' heritage in their psyche even if they claimed not to adhere to cultural norms.

With the exception of Itumelang, all the mothers in my study found it “important to raise their children as part of a religious tradition” (Thomas, 2000, p. 61). They believed that parenting was a responsibility given to them by God and that “the first responsibility that God

has given us as parents is to take care of our own children” (Edzai). The parents taught their children that God was there for them in an all-encompassing role. Cebile, who was divorced from her husband, went as far as to tell her son that “if he needs a father, he has Father in heaven. ... he can pray to him, talk to him anytime, read the Bible, he will get the guidance he, he wants” (Cebile). The mothers used Bible precepts to instil discipline in their children. The mothers that sought knowledge on how to discipline their children “read books, Christian books about discipline because I’m Christian” (Atile). Christian religious norms were implemented as a foundation for rearing children.

The concept of discipline was viewed congruently by both traditional African heritage and religious practices because “the Bible says ... when you discipline your kids you shouldn’t spare the rod, which means you can use physical punishment and that is also according to our Black culture” (Atile). Atile chose to follow a means of disciplining her children that incorporated both her traditional African heritage and her Christian religious precepts. The significance of her traditional African heritage and Christian norms regarding child-rearing agreeing with each other, was that she would not experience internal conflict when disciplining her children. She would not be torn, either consciously or sub-consciously, between her traditional African heritage and her Christian religious beliefs. This allowed her to develop a high level of maternal self-efficacy with regard to the manner in which she disciplines her children.

It must be kept in mind that most of the mothers said that their Christian values and related behavioural expectations would take precedence over their education and most of the time, even over their traditional African heritage. The relevance of the need to balance religion, traditional African heritage and formal educational knowledge was that this resulted

in the mothers experiencing internal conflict which in turn influenced their feelings of general self-efficacy. They coped with the internal conflict caused by the need to balance religion, traditional African heritage, formal educational knowledge and mothering by assessing the situation at the time and implementing behaviour that they deemed appropriate for that particular situation.

When speaking about their traditional African heritage and religious beliefs, the mothers in my study referred to them as interrelated. The mothers' desire to balance their traditional African beliefs and their mothering skills, was a particular source of conflict for the mothers. The mothers felt that as

modern parents ... you do have cultural borders that – a framework I guess that guides you, but you're also in a Western environment... trying to merge the two and make sure that your child does not lose their culture but still is able to cope with the Western world that they are existing in at the moment.
(Hlengiwe).

Balancing the complex relationship between traditional African heritage, formal education and parenting was challenging as they “do relate and they don't relate [to each other]. They do relate that they [children] need education for themselves for their future.” (Cebile); “they don't relate because according to the Bible we are all we are all equal ... and our God is not looking for someone who's got masters or PhD” (Cebile). This illustrated the conflicting relationship between their Christian beliefs and education. She felt that there is a relationship albeit a conflicting one. As on the one hand, practically, children needed a

formal education; on the other hand, children needed to adhere to their Christian values as well. Ultimately, if there was a choice to be made she “make[s] it clear to them that He comes first. Our God comes first and then your education. If you are studying you’ve got to pray first, you’ve got to read your Bible after doing studying.” (Cebile). Her religion took precedence, yet there was the feeling of compromise, so that both religion and education were able to occupy their own niches in her life and the lives of her children.

The mothers were very aware of their need to integrate their traditional African heritage, religious beliefs and formal educational knowledge into mothering their children. This was especially relevant when examined in the context of South Africa with its myriad of cultures. The mothers’ education steered them towards developing mothering behaviour that might not have concurred with their traditional heritage. The mothering norms which the mothers’ parents adhered to, were different to the ones which the mothers’ themselves practiced. They saw their parents as not being aware of different means of parenting because their parents

only knew this thing which were exposed to them and nothing beyond that. So that then limited how we, we viewed things ...now we are parents and we are, we are educated, we see things differently we’ll want our children to get a different exposure (Gugu).

Mothers are continually trying to “balance [themselves] by exploring what culture says, explore what education says, explore what faith is...” (Atile).

You don't have to have all three or hold all three at the same level or give them the same attention. But at the same time you need to think and hear what does culture have to say? Does it agree with what I believe in? Does it not, what does Education say? Does it make sense? Reason things out. So that's my philosophy (Atile).

In terms of the conflict inherent between the mothers' educational knowledge and traditional African heritage and affiliated beliefs, the mothers adhered to their individual opinions of what they thought were appropriate, under different circumstances. Their views fluctuated from culture taking precedence over education and "if there was a thing in my culture that I strongly believed in, that probably would overtake my education" (Atile) to the view that "I'm an educated woman and I got my education at Wits. It was not like someone throwing a certificate. I am capable to do it. So I refuse to be treated in a certain way. I assert myself" (Dowe). The mothers were very aware of the "line between culture and you as an academic or a person in academia, the decision being that you, you don't just accept [culture], you know" (Fikile). As a mother who functioned in the South African context with its multicultural nature, the mothers found balancing their traditional African heritage, education and maternal roles as "a challenge ... I'm a Christian, I'm, I'm also an academic, so I had issues with, you know, certain practices" (Fikile). Only one mother stated that "I think if I wasn't this educated I still wouldn't be much more cultural" (Itumelang).

As far as Itumelang was concerned, her education made her "open, um, to whatever idea works. I do what works" (Itumelang) - she used her knowledge gained from her education to parent her child. She did not verbalise any conflicting feelings regarding this

aspect of her identities. However, a thought-provoking issue with Itumelang was that her child had a cognitive disorder and she said that “the sum value of a human being does not lie in what he is capable of academically” (Itumelang) - given that she was a highly qualified academic in the field of health, this may reasonably cause internal conflict. Her identity as an academic was an integral part of her identity. The other mothers in my study all stated the relative importance of giving their children an education that would enhance the opportunities open to them (Davis-Kean, 2005; Kaminski, Valle, Filene, & Boyle, 2008). Additionally, Itumelang’s professional identity hinged on her educational attainment. By saying that this part of her identity did not necessarily define who or what she was as a human being, it was apparent that her life circumstances and her education were engendering conflict within her being.

One of the greatest challenges as a black South African woman academic is that “there aren’t many black lecturers at Wits” (Hlengiwe). This made it difficult for the mothers and their colleagues in academia to know where they stood in academia, as there was no set precedence. Additionally, there was no precedent set that explicated the interaction of academia and mothering. Therefore, there was no framework to guide mothers and others in the understanding of the interactions between mothering and academia. Additionally, the legacy of *apartheid* was still apparent as these women state that

It’s because of the instilled sense of inferiority that I had as a black woman growing up in *apartheid* South Africa, that I think that I cannot do those [academic] things. But once I recognised my own oppression and deal with it and discard some of those things that I’m capable, you know, I have, um, the intelligence,

I have, if I sat with this theory and read, I can presume the same result [as anyone else] (Dowe).

Having a tertiary education definitely coloured the mothers' view of mothering. My study revealed that the mothers faced challenges in their attempt to balance their roles as employees in academia and their roles as highly educated mothers. The South African context exacerbated this conflict, as the mothers felt as if they were at a disadvantage as black South African women. Dowe voiced her initial feelings of intellectual inferiority as a consequence of growing up in *apartheid* South Africa; she has subsequently overcome these feelings. Furthermore, the mothers had to balance the conflict that arose as a consequence of them mothering their children differently to how they were mothered themselves. People in the mothers' social realm attributed the difference in the mothers' mothering behaviour to the mothers being highly educated. Their educational knowledge played a prominent role in their execution of mothering their children. The fact that education played such a prominent role in mothering, even in the South African context where there is considerable sensitivity towards the acknowledgment of various traditional African cultural norms inherent in the society, indicated the important role that being an educated mother in academia plays in the realm of mothering.

Mothers in the South African context raised their children to straddle diverse cultures. Foremost among them being their specific traditional African heritage and the "Western world" (Hlengiwe). This engendered internal conflict within the mother that, in turn, influenced her maternal self-efficacy. If she adhered to her traditional African principles, she was then a 'good' mother according to her traditional African parenting norms, but might not be seen as a good mother in terms of Western parenting norms and vice versa. All the

mothers emphatically stated that, even if they did observe some traditional African customs and practices, they would not observe any of the norms that they deemed hurtful (emotionally or physically) to their children.

Even though the mothers in my study were subjected to feelings of internal conflict as a result of attempting to balance their multiple identities, they conveyed confidence in their choice of parenting behaviour and therefore had good maternal self-efficacy. The South African context added complexity to the mothers' decision-making processes with regard to their traditional African heritage and mothering behaviour. However, they resolved this conflict through what they deemed as logical reasoning, adhering to their Christian religious precepts and being mindful of the welfare of the child.

There were conflicting beliefs in the way which religious/cultural beliefs and educational knowledge were applied to mothering. The mothers used their personal understandings of motherhood to adapt the tensions between the multiple aspects of identity construction in order to arrive at a point where there was minimal, if any, tension or conflict within the mother in terms of adhering to her traditional African heritage and education. This was significant, as it would therefore not unduly negatively affect the mother's perspectives of mothering and in turn her maternal self-efficacy.

Mothers who are black South African academics working primarily in the field of health, stated that there was a relationship between what they understand to be their cultural and formal educational inputs and their views on parenting. The role of culture and education in each of the mothers' views on parenting varied. Each mother had her personal views of the relationship between culture, education and parenting. The degree of their observance to

their educational aspirations or traditional African cultural beliefs, with specific regard to parenting, was diverse. However, with the exception of Itumelang who was an atheist, they concurred that Christianity and its associated practices took precedence over both their cultural and formal educational inputs. Parenting also influences education (but not religious beliefs) and this was illustrated by one of the mothers changing the direction of her education in the future.

The influence of the mothers' educational input was overt in that they all placed great importance on their children's attaining a formal education. They also used their educational knowledge to decide whether they would implement traditional African parenting practices in their construction of parenting, or not. At times this resulted in tension between their cultural and formal educational inputs. In those instances, the mothers examined the situations individually and acted according to what they felt was appropriate.

With respect to the relationship between the mothers' traditional heritage and beliefs in parenting, my study illustrated that the mothers were aware of the parenting norms associated with their traditional heritage. Some traditional African practices relating to parenting were totally discarded, while others were adapted to suit the women's lifestyles and beliefs. The results demonstrated that even if the women thought they were not conforming to traditional African parenting norms; on a fundamental level they were adopting the social norms of parenting. It was expected of them to have children and they did, even if, in hindsight, they realised it was not the right choice for them. However, it must be mentioned that the norm relating to the social expectation of women becoming mothers is universal, and is not specific to a culture (Arendell, 2000). Chen and Kaplan (2001) state that certain aspects of culture are transmitted intergenerationally through parenting. However, the

mothers in my study only adopted or adapted, their traditional heritage parenting norms that they saw as relevant to their ideologies of mothering.

Whether mothers adopted parenting traditional African norms associated with their African heritage, or not, their experience of mothering was influenced by the assumptions of traditional African precepts which they were expected to incorporate into their mothering practices. Not adhering to these norms had a profound influence on the way mothers experienced mothering, especially if their experiences do not conform to the perceived norms of motherhood (Kruger, 2006). This may have had an impact their maternal self-efficacy, as they may then have doubted their ability to mother. This was certainly not the case with any of the nine mothers in my study. They were all confident that they were doing the best that they could do for their children, given their individual circumstances. This is not to say that they did not have doubts, they did, but their doubts were not with respect to complying with their traditional African or not, it was more with respect to bringing up happy, healthy children who would one day become functional members of society and the conflict in balancing their multiplicity of identities. They did not believe that by not adhering to the philosophies originating from their traditional African heritage beliefs they were compromising their children's lives in any way. If the mothers experienced conflict between their formal educational inputs and their traditional heritage, they turned to their religion in the form of Christianity. When life-decisions had to be made, including parenting practices, religious precepts took precedence over both their cultural and formal educational inputs.

In light of the above discussion, it was apparent that the mothers in my study believed and illustrated, that there was a relationship between the mothers' cultural inputs, her formal educational inputs, her traditional heritage and her religious beliefs, specifically in the form

of Christianity. This relationship was fluid and varied according to the circumstances in which the mothers found themselves.

5. CHAPTER 5: Conclusion

5.1. Limitations of this research study

A limitation of this study was that this group was not a culturally homogenous group and therefore some of the results may be as a result of traditional African heritage variations rather the factors mentioned in the study. Moreover, this study was specific to mothers who possessed higher tertiary education degrees and this was shown to influence their perceptions. This group of women were predominantly linked to the field of health. This impacts on their insight of the influence of culture and education on parenting as traditional African beliefs are oft times perceived as a hindrance in health related spheres. This study was conducted sourcing participants from one particular educational institution which has its own ethos and this could have a bearing on the participants' worldview. The participants of this study were exclusively female which, understandably, alters the results of the study as mothering has a unique position that is different to fathering.

5.2. Recommendations for further research

Bearing the limitations in mind, it would be beneficial to explore the following points in order to contribute further research to the body of knowledge. Research whose participants includes a homogenous group would be worthwhile undertaking to determine whether the outcomes were affected by the lack of cultural homogeneity or by other factors. Additionally, it would be beneficial to include other tertiary educational institutions in order to ascertain whether the tertiary educational institution itself was a contributing factor to the results determined by this study.

Further research into whether the challenges faced by this demographic of women are unique to them, or are universal, would be advantageous to the development and subsequent implementation of intervention strategies specifically designed to support black South African academic mothers. Additionally, it would be beneficial to explore the perceptions of academic women across multiple disciplines of academia.

Finally, it would be beneficial to conduct this study with participants who are fathers (as opposed to mothers), in order to ascertain whether being a mother is itself, a determining factor in the relationship between culture, education and parenting.

5.3. Conclusion

My study yielded interesting and useful information with respect to how mothers, who are black South African academics predominantly in the field of health, construct parenting and their identities as mothers. The sample consisted of a very clear group of women who formed part of a segment of the academic world chiefly affiliated within the health practitioner domain as well as academia. This specific sample was comprised of a particular cognitive discipline that had a particular way of framing the notions of good mothering in light of their involvement in health related fields.

It was meaningful to note how mothers constructed their identities and the resultant similarities and differences inherent in their identities. There was no general uniformity of any of the specific mothering aspects across my participants. Nonetheless, all the mothers had a holistic view of mothering. Their mothering identity was constructed as a product of the confluence of their culture, education and personal circumstances.

This specific group of Black South African mothers incorporated their parenting identities into their construction of the milieu of their multiplicity of their identities. With regard to their traditional heritage the mothers incorporated traditional practices into their lives only if they were congruent with their worldviews. It was apparent that the mothers' religious affiliations and formal educational knowledge, took precedence in their lives.

This specific group of Black South African mothers, who are academics operating primarily in the field of health, approached their parenting role, first and foremost, from the perspective of the effect their mothering behaviour had on their children. The mothers perceived the ultimate purpose of mothering as being to bring up children who would ultimately be appropriate members of society. When asked directly, they found it challenging to actually elucidate how they felt as mothers, that is, their perspective of mothering. What was apparent, was that it was taken for granted that mothers were the primary caregivers of their children and mothers perceived the responsibilities of parenting to be exclusively their domain, with the fathers' role being that of support. A universal finding in my study was that mothers said that they found it challenging to balance the many responsibilities associated with their multiplicity of identities.

Many ideas, information, experiences and inputs influenced the mothers in this particular group of black South African academics construction of parenting. The mothers' construction of mothering was influenced by the knowledge that they gained from their education, from their traditional African heritage, from social expectations as well as from their personal beliefs. The mothers' relationships with their own mothers was not an overt indication of how these mothers' viewed their construction of parenting. Further influences on the mothers' construction of mothering included their marital relationships, relationships

with their friends and extended families. If the above-mentioned aspects of the mothers' lives were positive and relatively stress-free, the mothers felt as if they were able to be 'good mothers' and vice versa. Feeling as if they were competent mothers increased their maternal self-efficacy.

The mothering discourses that were revealed to be influential in the construction of parenting in this specific group of black South African academics who functioned predominantly in the field of health, was narrowed down to ten main discourses. Firstly, the mothers' sense of well-being was influenced by the fact that the mothers saw mothering as a relentless task, from which they expressed the desire to have a reprieve in the form of time to themselves. Secondly, their overriding role as mothers was seen to be the primary caregiver for their children and ensuring the children's general well-being. Thirdly, the mothers had to learn to integrate their identity as mothers into their existing multiplicity of identities. Fourthly, the mothers generally had a high sense of maternal self-efficacy. Fifthly, mothers found mothering to be complex and to produce conflicting emotions as a result of balancing their many roles. Sixthly, the mothers were very aware of their children's welfare and of their responsibilities, as wives, mothers, daughters and employees. Seventhly, mothers felt guilt as they believed that they were unable to do any of their multiple roles justice, mostly as a consequence of not having enough time. Eighthly, a primary goal of all the mothers was to provide their children with the opportunities and resources, to enable them to fulfil their individual potentials. Moreover, a further goal of the mothers was to bring up children who would one day fit into society as appropriate members of the society to which they belonged. Ninthly, the mothers saw discipline as an integral part of mothering and utilised both their religious precepts, cultural norms and educational knowledge to implement this discipline.

Tenthly, the mothers all mentioned the challenging nature of performing the everyday responsibilities inherent in mothering.

The mothers in my study were very aware of the influence of both their formal educational knowledge and their traditional African heritage on their identities and views as mothers. The mothers' level of formal education was influential in the manner in which they conducted their mothering roles. However, culture, mostly in the form of their Christian precepts, also played a significant role in their views of motherhood. Once again, there was no universal precept as to the role that the mothers' traditional African and formal education played in their views on parenting. Each mother utilised the aspects of traditional African heritage and education that she saw as fitting with her personal view of how to parent her children.

The results of my study elucidated that mothering for this specific group of black South African academics who work mostly in the health field, is a complex role for which there are no prescribed or set guidelines. Each mother adheres to her own personal views of how best to mother her children, bearing in mind her traditional African heritage and her level of formal education. They analysed different belief systems and integrated the ones that they felt were most applicable into their lives. Each participant applied these belief systems in ways that were unique to them and deemed appropriate (by them) to the situation.

More than twenty years after *apartheid* has ended in South Africa, this specific group of black African academic mothers who operate predominantly in the field of health are still finding it challenging to balance their roles of mother, wife, daughter and academic with regards to their traditional African heritage and education.

It was blatantly obvious that the mothers in my study still felt as if they were expected to conform to the philosophies originating from their traditional African heritage; some of them were still overcoming feelings of intellectual inferiority in the workplace and were continuing to wrestle with the challenges of balancing their multiple identities, without losing a sense of who they thought they were. The way the mothers felt about how they managed the various aspects of their lives and the relationships between these aspects, directly influenced their self-efficacy in the different domains of their lives.

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APPENDIX A – Ethics Clearance Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: MPSYC/15/014 IH

PROJECT TITLE:

Exploring Black South African Women Academics' Perspectives on the Relationship Between Culture, Education And Parenting.

INVESTIGATORS

Jacqueline Ambrose

DEPARTMENT

Psychology

DATE CONSIDERED

17/06/15

DECISION OF COMMITTEE*

Approved

This ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application

DATE: 17 June 2015

CHAIRPERSON
(Professor Brett Bowman)

cc Supervisor:

Dr Gillian Mooney
Psychology

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR (S)

To be completed in duplicate and **one copy** returned to the Secretary, Room 100015, 10th floor, Senate House, University.

I/we fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure, as approved, I/we undertake to submit a revised protocol to the Committee.

This ethical clearance will expire on 31 December 2017

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES

APPENDIX B – Interview Schedule (Control group 3)

BIRP
Babies in Relationships Project



Babies in Relationships Project (BIRP)**Admin:**

Date _____

START AUDIO-RECORDING**Demographics:**

This study is part of a wider research project entitled *Babies in Relationships Project (BIRP)*. The questionnaire for this study will be conducted in a conversational style in order to elicit the information that is deemed pertinent to this research study. The contextual background of the participants, drawn from the participants' responses to the demographical questions, is highly relevant in relation to this study as well as the broader project. Ethical clearance has been granted for the wider project (Protocol No: M150210). All the demographic questions will be asked verbally and all answers will be recorded in writing, by the interviewer. The interview will be audiotaped and then transcribed by the interviewer.

Mother's details:

Mother's name _____

Mother's DOB _____

Home Language _____

Other languages _____

Cultural group _____

Marital status _____

Are you living with father of the child _____

Highest level of education _____

Occupation (what is your current occupation) _____

Current employment status/title: _____

Full time ☐ Part time ☐ Flexi-time ☐ (*Mark the appropriate box*)**Your mother:**

Your mother's culture _____

Her highest level of education _____

Her occupation _____

Your father:

Your father's culture _____

His highest level of education _____

His occupation _____

If cared for by another relative/foster parent, specify who _____

This person's culture _____

Highest level of education _____

Occupation _____

Home address _____

If not at the above address, where do you live at present (address)

Contact number: _____

Alternative contact number _____

(Name: _____ relationship: _____)

If different to above, who cared for you when you were a child?

Children's details:

Name	Sex (M/ F)	Age & Date of Birth	Natural birth/ Caesarean	Bottle/ breast fed	Biological /step-child /adopted/ foster	Addition information
		(dd/mm/yy)				
		(dd/mm/yy)				
		(dd/mm/yy)				
		(dd/mm/yy)				
		(dd/mm/yy)				

Sexual and reproductive health

Have you had any complications with your sexual or reproductive health? _____

Have you ever been on contraception? _____

Are you on contraception at the moment? _____

Pregnancy/Parenting details:

Number of pregnancies: _____

No. of miscarriages/terminations (specify year):

Number of living children: _____

What age was/were your child/children when you returned to work? _____

End of demographic section

Start Interview

Note: 1. *The questions refer to all the children in the mother's care.*

2. *If the participant has more than one child between the ages of 0 and 18 years old, ask how it feels to be a parent to all of them. Be cognisant of children with special needs and if they focus on them, bring the focus back to all the children.*
3. *All questions are written in the singular form (i.e. for one child), however if they refer to more than one child the questions will be adapted to the plural form.*

Being a parent:

- What do you think a parent is?
- How do you feel about being a parent?
- Is it different to what you envisaged parenting to be before your child was born?
- If yes, how is it different?
- How do you think you have been managing as a parent? *(Provide examples).*
- Over time and as your child has grown older, have you felt differently about yourself as a parent? *(Wait and see response, and if needs be, probe with: Better, worse, both? Please elaborate).*
- What are you enjoying about being a parent? *(Please give examples).*
- What are you finding hard about being a parent? *(In what way, please give me some examples).*
- Is there anything you worry about regarding being a parent in the future? *(Please give examples).*
- Describe your social activities and how you spend your free time
- What else would you dream of doing if you had the time/facilities?
- **Father presence and role:**
- Are you still in a relationship with the father?

If relevant:

- Do you feel supported by your child's father? *(Please elaborate).*
- Would you want more support from him? If so, what kind of support?
- Has the birth of your child changed your relationship with the father of the child? If so, how?

- What kind of relationship does the father of your child have with your child?
(What sorts of things do they do together? What do you think the father feels about the child?)
- Do you think your relationship with the father of the child influences how you are as a mother? If yes, how?
- How is he managing as a parent? *(Please give me an example).*
- Are there things the two of you disagree about with regards to parenting?
(Probe for detail).
- How do you manage these disagreements? *(Probe for detail).*

Family:

- How are your relationships with people in your family at the moment? *(Please give examples).*
 - What are your child's relationships like with people in your family? *(Please give examples).*
 - Describe your relationship with your mother while growing up.
 - Still alive/deceased? _____.
 - If deceased, when did this occur (year)_____.
 - If alive, describe relationship with your mother now.
 - Describe your relationship with your father while growing up:
 - Still alive/deceased? _____.
 - If deceased, when did this occur (year)_____.
 - If alive, describe relationship with your father now.
- (If cared for by another relative)*
- Describe your relationship with this relative while growing up:

- Still alive/deceased? _____.
- If deceased, when did this occur (year)_____.
- If alive, describe relationship with this relative now.
- Do you feel supported by your family? *(In what way? Wait for answer, and then ask for an example).*
- Would you want more support from them? If so, what kind of support?
- Do you think these relationships influence how you are as a mother? If yes, how?
- Are there any other people who form part of your support system?
- If yes, who are they and how do they offer support?

Cultural practices:

- What do you think culture is?
- What would you understand your culture to be?
- Are there any cultural/religious beliefs in your family about how to care for children? *(Probe - why should certain things be done – belief behind them)*
- From whom/where did you learn these things? How do you feel about these things?
- Is there anything specific to your culture around raising a girl/boy? *(Please give examples).*
- Have there been any specific cultural beliefs that you feel have helped you as a parent? If so, what are these and how have they helped? *(Probe for detail).*
- Have there been any specific cultural beliefs that you feel have made things harder for you as a parent? If so, what are these and how have they made things harder? *(Probe for detail).*

- Do you think your and your child's experience would have been different if you were in a different cultural group? If yes, what would be different? (*Probe for detail*).
- Given your responses to your cultural beliefs, do you **adhere** to these cultural beliefs with respect to the way in which you parent your child? (*Probe for detail, i.e. with reference to parenting*).

(Only if participant states/indicates non-adherence to cultural beliefs)

- If you do not adhere to your cultural beliefs pertaining to child rearing, what prompted you to forgo your cultural beliefs? (*Probe for detail, please give examples*).
- Do you think that your views on parenting have been influenced by any other cultures?
- If yes, what are they?
- How do they influence the way you parent?
- If not, why not?
- In what language do you speak to your child?
- If more than one, are there specific times when you use a specific language?
- If yes, when and why?

Education of mother:

- You stated that you are a/an _____.
- What is your family's attitude toward your education?
- Has your education ever been interrupted for any reason?
- Do you think that your education influences the way that you parent your child?

- If yes, how does your education influence the way you parent? (*Probe for detail, please give examples*).
- If no, what do you think are the reasons that your education does not *impact the way you parent?* (*Probe for detail, please give examples*).
- If you adhere to cultural beliefs pertaining to child rearing, how does your education influence your adherence? (*Probe for detail, please give examples*).
- If you do not adhere to your cultural beliefs as a consequence of your education, how do you feel about not adhering to these cultural beliefs? (*Probe for detail*).

Child's development:

- How has your child's general health been?
- By 1 year of age, babies really start to show their personalities. Your child is.... years old. What kind of a child is your child? (*Disregard if the child is under 1-year-old*)
- How do you think your child's development is progressing? Is he/she growing well? Learning?
- Do you think your child is happy? What makes you think that? (*Please give examples*).
- Is there anything you are concerned about? (*Probe for detail and explore what the parent thinks this specific problem may mean for the child and themselves?*)
- What have you done/intend to do about this worry?
- Do you feel you need more information about childcare and child development? If so, what kind of information?

- Is there anything you worry about regarding your child's development in the future? (*Probe for detail, please give examples*).
- Has anything changed in your ideas about what a child needs to grow up to be a healthy, happy adult? If yes, what?
- Have you started thinking about schooling for your child yet? Do you have any ideas about this?

General:

- What do you think the relationship between culture, education and parenting is?
- If you could turn back the clock, would you do anything differently, in terms of becoming/being a parent? (*Probe for detail, please give examples*).
- Would you like to recommend anyone else that you think would be interested in participating in this study?

APPENDIX C – Participant information letter (Control group 3)

BIRP
Babies in Relationships Project



Babies in Relationships Project (BIRP)

Dear Prof/Doctor/Mr./Ms.

I am a mature student currently working on my Master of Arts by Research (Dissertation Only) as part of a wider research project, namely Babies in Relationships Project (BIRP) (information thereon will be provided upon request). I am doing exploratory research into the experiences of parenting as seen from the viewpoint of the mothers themselves. My focus is on the role of culture and education in parenting from the perspective of mothers who are black South African academics, with an emphasis on the South African context. Much research has been undertaken in light of parenting and the consequences on the developmental outcomes of the child. However, no research has been conducted from the perspective of mothers who are black South African academics and how they perceive their roles as parents in interaction with their culture and education. I am looking for participants who fulfill the following criteria: 1) hold a postgraduate tertiary degree; 2) are racially black; 3) are of South African descent and 4) have at least one child aged 0 to 18 years old.

Participation in this study will entail the completion of a demographical questionnaire and one semi-structured interview to be performed concurrently; the duration of both should be no more than one to one and half hours in time and will be conducted at a mutually convenient location on the grounds of the University of the Witwatersrand.

Choosing to be part of this study is up to you, and you will be not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not in the study. The answers that you give to questions will be included in my study, but your identity will be protected. The audio recordings will not be accessible to anyone other than my supervisor and me. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. You may refuse to answer any questions that you would prefer not to answer and you may choose to withdraw yourself from being a part of the study at any time.

The audio recordings will be secured in a locked desk drawer and transcriptions thereof on a password-protected computer with access strictly limited to my supervisor and me. Information from your questionnaires and quotes using your words may be used in the reports on the research. However, no identifying information will be included and any quotes used will be used with quotes from other parents' interviews.

If you do choose to participate you will be requested to complete and sign a letter of consent to participate as well as a letter of consent to be audio recorded before the interview commences.

We do not anticipate that you will experience any distress in this process. However, should you require counselling, this can be obtained at no cost to you at the Emthonjeni Clinic at the University of the Witwatersrand (011 717 4513).

Kind regards

Jackie Ambrose

If you would like to report any problems or complaints that you have with this research, you can contact my Research Supervisor, Dr Gillian Mooney on gillian.mooney@wits.ac.za or 011 717 4514.

Alternatively, if you have any problems with regard to any part of the research process, you can contact the University of the Witwatersrand's Human Research Ethics Committee (Medical) administrator, Zanele Ndlovu at zanele.ndlovu@wits.ac.za or 011 717 2656.

APPENDIX D - Consent to participate (Control group 3)

BIRP

Babies in Relationships Project



BABIES IN RELATIONSHIPS PROJECT (BIRP)

I _____ (mother) consent for myself to be interviewed at the University of the Witwatersrand (1 Jan Smuts Avenue, Parktown) for the purpose of the Babies in Relationships Project (BIRP).

I understand that:

- Participation will involve me being interviewed and audiotaped at the University of the Witwatersrand. These interviews will occupy between 1 and 1.5 hours, at a time convenient for the researcher and me.
- Participation in this research is voluntary.
- I have the choice of declining to answer any questions that I do not want to answer.
- I may stop participating in the study at any time.
- There are no benefits or risks to participating in the study.

- No personal information, such as names (mine, my children's, or my family's names etc.) or places (where I live, where I am from etc.) will be used when a research report is written.
- The audio recordings will not be heard or handled by anyone other than the researcher and the supervisor, unless I give my permission for my audio recording to be used for teaching purposes.

I give my permission for myself to participate in this research.

Signed (mother): _____ Date_____

APPENDIX E - Consent to be audio recorded (Control group 3)

BIRP

Babies in Relationships Project



BABIES IN RELATIONSHIPS PROJECT (BIRP)

I _____ (mother) consent to be audio recorded at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I understand that:

- The audio recordings will not be heard or handled by any people other than the researcher and her supervisor who will preserve my privacy, unless I give my permission for the audio recordings to also be used for teaching purposes.
- After the report is completed my audio recordings will be secured in a safe place in a locked desk-drawer.

(Please tick next to the option you would like)

☐ Yes – I also give permission for excerpts of the audio material to be used for teaching purposes.

☐ No – I do not permit excerpts of my audio material to be used for teaching purposes

Signed (mother): _____

Date _____