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The "Good Enough Mother": Winnicott to Neuroscience, to the culture and context-specific perspectives of Johannesburg Inner City Mothers

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The “Good Enough Mother”: Winnicott to neuroscience, to the culture and context-specific perspectives of Johannesburg inner city Mothers

by

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Research report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

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This paper will be submitted to the Journal of Family Issues. It is an international but predominantly American journal.

Scope of the journal: “The journal is devoted to contemporary social issues and social problems related to marriage and family life and to theoretical and professional issues of current interest to those who work with and study families”.

The paper will require shortening before submission to the journal meet the length requirement.

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Masters in Clinical Psychology, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

_____

Kelebogile Mojanaga
847978

December 2019

Dedication

I dedicate this study to God, and to my family who have stood by me and supported me in all my endeavours, and especially to my mother who has sacrificed a lot for me to pursue this degree. To my siblings and cousins, Lesedi, Molatudi, Otlolteng, Obakeng, Tshwaro, Gomolemo, Kgalalelo, Rorisang, Tshepiso, Omphile and Bokang: There will be obstacles, there will be doubters, there will be mistakes, but with hard work, there are no limits. Never stop believing in your dreams.

Lastly, I dedicate this paper to my participants. Thank you for allowing yourselves to participate in a study that shares such a delicate and intimate part of you- that being the precious journey of motherhood.

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Introduction

It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore that recent evidence suggest that most mental health professionals who work with parents have a theoretical grounding in Western-developed theories of parent-child relationships, such as those theorized by Winnicott (1960) and current neuroscientific findings, but have limited knowledge and understanding of local culture-specific models of parenting (Collins, Maccoby, Steinberg, Hetherington, & Bornstein, 2000; Pence & Nsamenang, 2008; Hughes & Baylin, 2012). Recently, researchers have shown an increased interest in infant mental health in relation to early child development in developing countries (Lachman, Kelly, Cluver, Ward, Hutchings, Gardner, 2016). More so, researchers have shown that that stressful situations that are experienced by a mother, as well as the way in which she may manage stress, can also have an effect on the child's rate of development, and mental and physical health (Weinstock, 2001, 2005; Maccari, Darnaudery, Morley-Fletcher, Zuena, Cinque, Van-Reeth, 2003). It has also been highlighted that parenting is a culturally-mediated activity (Bornstein, 2015).

These findings therefore heighten the need for culture-specific voices to be added to the current developed country-dominated dialogues on infant mental health, and this forms part of the main rationale for this study. Therefore this proposal's aims, rationale and literature review will take these dominant understandings and compare it to local culture-specific understandings, in order to argue for the importance of this phenomenon and where these theories may fit, and where they do not fit in local discourses around parenting.

Research Aims

This study aims to capture opinions and perceptions of a "good enough mother" from Johannesburg inner-city mothers, particularly within their cultural contexts. These local context and culture-specific models of mothering will then be compared with Winnicott's theory of the 'good enough' mother and current neuroscientific findings on parenting styles that have been found to enhance child development. Convergences and divergences in understandings of mothering will be explored. The views of local South African mothers who live in 'high risk' contexts will add much-needed context and culture-specific voices to the current developed country-dominated dialogues on infant mental health.

Rationale

There is a need for a study that will inform local early child development programmes for mothers in Johannesburg, in order to make the content and delivery of programmes administered by health professionals more relevant to the populations they serve. In this regard, this study aims to shed light on how inter-generational factors such as poverty and intergenerational trauma are thought about and managed by mothers in the South African context. Studies have shown that large-scale societal factors such as ethnicity and poverty can have a significant impact on the way parents raise their children (Collins, Maccoby, Steinberg, Hetherington, & Bornstein, 2000). Many mothers in the South African context find themselves parenting in situations of economic and emotional hardship. Due to the fact that stress-inducing conditions such as maltreatment and poverty have been shown to have a

significant influence on child development (Weinstock, 2005), therefore, an understanding of how local mothers understand parenting under these conditions is essential.

This qualitative study's focus on the perceptions of local mothers will allow for a more nuanced analysis of local parenting models, making space for understandings of the influence of a multiplicity of cultural, economic and social factors on parenting. The majority of child development and parenting studies have taken place in North America and Western Europe, thus models infant development of parenting in the literature currently represent the experiences of approximately 10% of the world's infants and parents, all of whom are from developed country contexts (Tomlinson & Swartz, 2003). The literature does not necessarily represent the experiences of the other 90% of infants and parents from developed country settings (Tomlinson & Swartz, Imbalances in the knowledge about infancy: The divide between rich and poor countries, 2003).

Assumptions that this knowledge can be generalised across cultural and contextual settings have given rise to the notion of the 'global child', which has been critiqued (Pence & Nsamenang, 2008). It is thus important to comprehensively investigate an Afrocentric version of what makes a parent "good enough". Local studies on parenting from a psychological perspective are sparse, hence the need for a study of this kind; not only because data of this nature may be useful for the development of more specific parenting intervention programs for this population of mothers, but also to fill the gap in literature around this issue, in this particular context.

The rationale for comparing these local models of parenting to the main tenets of Winnicott's theory of the parent-infant relationship and the dominant understandings emerging from neuroscientific research also needs consideration. Winnicott's theory was chosen due to the fact that Winnicott's 1960 paper 'The theory of the parent-infant relationship' is one of the top ten papers searched on PEPWEB and his theory is still growing in popularity (Morris, 2015). The current neuroscience findings (summarised in meta-reviews) on parenting and infant development inform current research and policy regarding early childhood development (Black et al., 2017; Edwards, Gillies & Horsley, 2015).

Literature Review

Introduction

This topic brings to the forefront concepts that have been found to be significant in the mother-child interaction. Therefore, the presented literature review provides meaningful summaries of notable theories and research around parenting styles. Firstly, it explores the importance of parenting in infant mental health, as currently presented in the literature, and explores varying contexts in this regard. Secondly, it explores two major theoretical frameworks that ground this study. These include Donald Winnicott's (1960) theory of the parent-infant relationship and most notably, his concept of the "good-enough mother", and current neuroscientific findings on motherhood and infant development. These concepts are central to this study for the reason that they centre the role of the mother in the development of the child. As a result, it is important to note that this study subsequently uses the mothers'

perceptions as the target of analysis in order to explore what they might think a "good-enough mother" is in the Johannesburg inner-city context.

To do this, this study will firstly conceptualize motherhood for the reader with the understanding that motherhood does not have a universal meaning or significance cross-culturally (Hill-Collins, 2013). Therefore, for the purposes of this paper, motherhood is referred to as a "relational concept, contingent upon social, cultural, and personal perception" (Millman, 2013: 80). Furthermore, notions of "good" motherhood are often entrenched within culture, but it is also crucial to consider that new cultural contexts may have a considerable influence on women's perceptions of motherhood (Millman, 2013). Therefore motherhood is an adaptable concept that can expand in meaning and be transformed in terms of significance in different contexts (Millman, 2013). It can be experienced at a personal level or socioculturally (Millman, 2013).

To this end, this research proposal will motivate why this research is important, by looking at the models of the parent-infant relationship that underpin healthy trajectories of child development. It will include an exploration into the contextual and theoretical background of the study by looking at the parenting in the South African setting. The literature consulted for this paper is recent and relevantly dates from 2003 until 2017, with only a few important references from before this period. Culture, for the purposes of this study will be conceptualized using a social constructionist perspective, and thus culture is understood as a social construction: "Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behaviour" (Spencer-Oatley, 2008: 3).

The importance of parenting in infant mental health

Studies show that parenting is the biggest influencing factor in human development and the importance of evidence-based parenting programs, especially in sub-Saharan Africa has been emphasized (Lachman, et al., 2016; Lancy, 2014; Richter, 2003; Sherr et al., 2017). The importance parenting in infant mental health begins in the early stages of pregnancy (Weinstock, 2005). Literature suggests that stressful environments that are experienced by a pregnant mother as well as the way in which she subsequently deals with the stress, can have an impact on the child's rate of development, mental health and physical health (Weinstock, 2001, 2005; Maccari, Darnaudery, Morley-Fletcher, Zuena, Cinque, Van-Reeth, 2003). Cultural and contextual factors have also been found to have a significant influence on parenting, and the subsequent mental health of the child (Lachman et al., 2016); hence this study looks at context and mental health as mutually inclusive.

For the purposes of this study 'culture' as a concept is acknowledged as elusive. While it is considered to represent a number of factors, such as a signifier of group belonging, a storehouse of knowledge and set of beliefs, it is also considered to be constantly shifting and changing in response to changing contexts and contact with other cultures (Baldwin, Faulkner, & Hecht, 2006). The fluidity of culture has meant that understandings of motherhood are also constantly evolving and transitioning (Phoenix, 2014). While parenting

has been found to differ across cultural contexts, the outcomes of various styles of parenting have also been found to differ across settings. A study by Chao (1994), found that parenting in the Chinese culture is often described as authoritarian, and has often appeared to be "controlling"; however findings suggest that children in China who were raised using this type of parenting style performed very well at academically. The study further found that contrary to the positive effects that this type of parenting style had on the mental development of Chinese children, in European-America, the authoritarian parenting style is considered to be a predictor for poor school achievement (Chao, 1994).

Context and culture tend to inform parenting styles, which play an important role in facilitating infant mental health (Feldman & Masalha, 2010; Feldman, Vengrobler, Eidelman-Rothman, & Zagoory-Sharon, 2013). Therefore, every culture to a meaningful extent, leans towards preparing children to be thinking and social beings that are able to work in groups, manage interactions with people around them, form friendships and perform activities that are essential for survival (Feldman & Masalha, 2010; Chao, 1994).

It is, therefore, the intent of this study to shed light on local understandings of optimal mothering and explore how factors such as poverty and intergenerational trauma are thought about and managed by mothers in the South African context in order to allow for diversity in the discussion. While the importance of environmental influences in the development of the individual has been established (Rotheram-Borus, Tomlinson, LeRoux, & Stein, 2015; Sibeko, Dhansay, Charlton, Johns, & Gray-Donald, 2005; Thompson, Lamb, & Estes, 1982; Winnicott, 1960), little attention is paid to how culture- and context-specific models of parenting incorporate this knowledge outside of the developed world.

Mothering

Mothering is a role that is loaded with a lot of meaning and cultural significance globally, although not universal (Kruger, 2006). Motherhood for the most part is shaped by culture, therefore it is important to consider the context in which the mother is located in, especially because of the various ways social influence can shape her role as a mother (Kruger, 2006). Mothers in various contexts tend to be seen as very instrumental in ensuring the healthy development of the child, but this often perpetuates the ideology that motherhood is all about the mother sacrificing herself, freely giving of herself and being mostly responsible for the child's happiness (Kruger, 2006). One finds that "good" mothering is popularly theorized as the mother being selfless, and possesses unconditional love and time, as well as be able to always be emotionally be available to the children in order to assist the child in regulating emotions (Kruger, 2006).

These views are not only popularly theorized by psychoanalysts like Klein, Winnicott, Bowlby and Kohut, (Kruger, 2006), but a study by Lupton (2000), showed that mothers in western societies, particularly middle-class mothers who participated in her study confirmed these notions (Lupton, 2000). However, the ethnocentric view in African families tends to not prioritize setting and defining boundaries to the roles of motherhood, the difference in the role of the biological mother, the other caregivers in the child's life tend to be fluid. The role of mothering is often a shared job, amongst family or community members and thus the

responsibility for unconditional love, selflessness and emotional availability is shared (Collins, 1997; Magwaza, 2003).

Winnicott's understanding of the role of mothering in child development

Donald Winnicott's theory, similar to recent neuroscientific findings, recognises that the child's brain develops within a context of a subjective world (Winnicott, 1971). Therefore, Winnicott emphasizes the importance of the mother in the child's life, especially during the early childhood development phase (Winnicott, 1960). He further suggests that there is a need for a "good-enough" mother present in the infant's life who can facilitate the healthy development of the infant, especially in the early stages of the child development trajectory (Winnicott, 1965). Maternal care is thus very important for Winnicott, and as a result, in his theory, he introduces the concept of holding, which he suggests plays a crucial role in maternal care (Winnicott, 1960).

According to Winnicott (1960), there are three phases that an infant goes through in the early stages of childhood development. These phases are called integration, personalisation and realization (Winnicott, 1945). In the integration phase, the infant's physical needs include being treated with care, kept warm, being fed and naming the child (Winnicott, 1945). The mother's ability to manage the child's external needs displays the mother's ability to hold the environment for the child (Winnicott, 1945). Winnicott, therefore, describes this as the ability for the mother to care and ensure that the child has sufficient provision in the environment (Winnicott, 1960). The "good-enough" mother is not entirely perfect for delivering this kind of care to the child, but they can give the child a near perfect experience through the holding experience (Winnicott, 1945). Winnicott (1960) suggests that the mother's ability to hold the environment for the infant is necessary in aiding the infant's integration into the world. Through holding the infant has an experience of sufficient continuity. Initially, Winnicott's theory asserts that a "good-enough" mother creates a worldly experience for the infant which is characterized by careful protection and consideration against the potentially harmful nature of reality (Winnicott, 1960). However, through optimal maternal failure, where the infant's needs are frustrated, the infant comes to the realisation that the mother is separate, which is the beginning of the infant's ability to conceive of minds other than his/her own.

It is important to note at this point that Winnicott does not believe that genetics play a substantial role in the healthy development of a child, he rather highlights the nurturing environment in his statement that "the inherent potential of an infant cannot become an infant unless linked to maternal care" (Winnicott, 1960, p. 43). In addition, it is worth noting that Winnicott does not suggest that the integration, personalisation and realisation phase are static phases that need to happen as in definite stages. He rather describes it as a fluid process in child development (Winnicott, 1945).

Winnicott (1960) proposed that the happiness of individuals does not entirely depend on the external issues, but rather in the manner in which parents raise their children. Therefore Winnicott suggests that a good enough mother is a parent who recognizes the vulnerability of

their child, and also a parent who to a considerable extent allows the child to express their emotions whether positive or negative in a safe environment (Winnicott, 1960). Lastly, he emphasized that there is no such thing as a perfect parent, but emphasizes the importance of communicating love to the infant and offering ego-support in maternal care to facilitate the development of a healthy society (Winnicott, 1960).

Winnicott's theory has been critiqued for having an excessive 'developmental tilt' and feminist writers have critiqued his positioning of the mother as 'object' as opposed to 'subject', for the theory's tendency to blame mothers for childhood psychopathology and for the construction of mothering as intensive (Kruger, 2006; Slowchower, 2017).

Current neuroscientific understandings of the role of parenting in child development

Current neuroscience research particularly looks into the interplay of nature-nurture, in relation to genetic expression within a parental context (Winter, 2010). It has been apparent that most recent neuroscientific findings are slowly beginning to recognise the significant role of the environment in child development. The environment in this context also refers to the parent-child interaction. It has been established that the brain does not develop in isolation but rather develops within a context (Hughes & Baylin, 2012; Collins, Maccoby, Steinberg, Hetherington & Bornstein., 2000; Weinstock, 2005). Collins et al. (2000) argue that the characteristics that a child develops are a product of both the environment and genetics. As a result, there is an interplay between genetic effects and the interactions in the environment. Futhermore, this implies that the characteristics that the child may inherit are not only subject to genetics but depend on experiences such as the manner in which the parent behaves/parents (Collins, et al., 2000).

Theory suggests that the developmental interdependence of emotional regulation and attention control in childhood can be closely associated with the quality of the parent-child interaction (Mathis & Bierman, 2015). While contextual factors such as poverty and on-going violence have been found to influence child development, this has been found to be buffered by the parent-child relationship. For example (Feldman & Vengrober, 2011) found that some parents had to raise their children in a context of war, violence and limited resources, had children who did not develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It was found that these mothers' parenting styles were reciprocal, whereby the child learned to use the mother for stress regulation of distress (Feldman, Vengrobler, Eidelman-Rothman, & Zagoory-Sharon, 2013).

The neurobiological development of the infant is thus, is closely influenced by the parental environment, with studies showing that a "good" parent is characterised by displaying warm, sensitive feelings towards the child. As a result, the child develops the propensity to display good emotion regulation (Mathis & Bierman, 2015). This observation was similarly made by Donald Winnicott in his notion of the maternal holding environment (Winnicott, 1960). These warm sensitive feelings include the parent expressing affection and responding appropriately to their child's cues (Mathis & Bierman, 2015). In addition, maternal sensitivity was found to positively correlate with child attention task-switching skills (Mathis & Bierman, 2015).

Neuroscience, therefore, suggests that parents need to be emotionally responsive to the child's needs, an observation that was similarly made by Winnicott (Winnicott, 1960; Hughes & Baylin). Additionally, neuroscience research suggests that a 'good parent' comforts children when the child is distressed and are reliably available to the child, which facilitates the formation of good relationships in the future (Hughes & Baylin, 2012). Good parenting is also characterised in the research as allowing children to struggle with problem solving and challenges in order to build resilience and protecting children from the dysregulative effects of the parents' negative emotions (Hughes & Baylin, 2012).

A "bad" parent is subsequently characterized in the literature as parents who neglect or maltreat their children. Maltreatment can be understood on a continuum from severe emotional, physical or sexual abuse to poor parenting styles. Poor parenting styles are characterised in the literature as those where parenting is directive-critical, which can consequently result in the child exhibiting poor emotion regulation and attention control in early childhood (Mathis & Bierman, 2015). Dennis (2006) emphasizes the importance of the parent's ability to provide external soothing and support to their infants, in order to help the infants to cope with frustrating events, and also assist them in gaining the ability to self-soothe. Directive-critical parents tend to struggle to mentalise infant distress (Mathis & Bierman, 2015). In a later development, Calkins and Johnson (1998) state that parents who are critical of their children tend to give no explanations, rationales and reasoning in their interactions with their children.

Neuroscience therefore emphasizes the importance of protecting the development of the child's brain in the first 5 years of a child's life by stimulating brain growth (Hughes & Baylin, 2012), through physiological and behavioural cues from the parent to the infant, which subsequently stimulates neurobehavioural maturation and influences the infants ability to handle stress (Meaney, 2010). Meaney (2010) characterizes this aspect of parenting as important, and further suggests that the capacity to relate and regulate affect is vital information that is passed on from one generation to another.

In summary, neuroscience, therefore, confirms the following factors (Winter, 2010):

- the first five years of a child's life matter, and last a lifetime
- children are born ready to learn and the best learning happens in nurturing relationships
- the brain of the child develops through use, children often learn from watching and copying, children learn through being involved and by doing
- a child's health and wellbeing is vital to brain development

There is little research done in Sub-Saharan Africa on the interplay of nature-nurture within a parental context. Most studies on child development have focused on the effects of HIV/AIDS and the negative impact of poverty and stress on parenting and child development

(Dawson-McClure, et al., 2015). Little research has focused on parental understandings of their roles in child development from local perspectives.

Parenting in the South African setting

New studies have recently emerged that emphasize the efficacy of parenting styles in different contexts, however no local studies have been conducted (Luo, Jia, Yue, Zhang, Lyu, Shi & Yang, 2017; Feldman & Masalha, 2010; September, Rich, & Roman, 2015; Forehand & Kotchick, 2016). While there have been critiques of US and European dominated literature, informing the optimal development of the 'global child' (Pence & Nsamaneng, 2008), the same can be said for literature on parenting. Local studies on parenting from a psychological perspective are sparse. Most local parenting studies have HIV as a focus or more recently, the parenting of adolescents (Bradford, Barber, Olsen, Maughan, Erikson, Ward & Stolz, 2003; Lachman, Cluver, Boyes, Kou, & Marisa, 2014; Meinck et al., 2017). Existing international research on cross-cultural parenting has tended to focus on issues of autonomy and inter-dependence (Johnson, Radesky, & Zuckerman, 2013), which although useful, tends to treat culture as static. The few local studies on parenting in South Africa have found parenting practices to be largely authoritarian (Barbarin & Richter, 2013; Dawes, Kafaar, de Sas Kropiwnicki, Pather, & Richter, 2004).

Methods

Research Design

This study will use a qualitative research design primarily because it is helpful for acquiring in-depth and extensive opinions, which will be shared by the participants (Babbie, 2013). The research will be conducted under the social constructionist perspective. The social constructionist perspective as a working paradigm is focused on looking at how people tend to describe, explain, or otherwise interpret the world in which they live as well as interpret themselves (Gergen, 1985). In this sense, knowledge is socially constructed and there is a need to explore shared forms of understanding as they currently exist, as they historically existed, and as they might exist (Gergen, 1985).

Interpretive Thematic Analysis (ITA) is appropriate for this study and the method of thematic analysis provided by Braun and Clarke (2006) will be utilised to collect themes that make up participant's understandings of the role of parenting in infant mental health.

Research questions

- How do South African mothers in the Johannesburg inner city conceptualize a "good enough mother"?
- How do their opinions and perceptions compare to Winnicott's "good enough mother" and current findings in neuroscience research on the role of parenting in child development?
- How do these mothers understand the influence of their cultures and contexts on their constructions of mothering?

Participants

A snowballing, volunteer sampling technique will be used in order to acquire participants. Mothers at the in the inner city Johannesburg, specifically in Braamfontein will be invited to be interviewed on a voluntary basis. The researcher then aims to get recommendations from these mothers regarding other potential participants in a snowballing fashion. The sample that will be used is 6 – 8 black South African mothers who are aged 25 years old or older. The reason for choosing this age group is because mothers who are younger than 25 tend to be helped by family members to help raise their children, especially in the case that the mother wants to go back to school (Furstenberg, 2016; Babington, Malone, & Kelley, 2015).The prerequisite is that the mother is the primary caregiver for the child. Each participant must have a child that is older than 1 year old but younger than 7 years old, as the focus of the paper is mothering in the early childhood development years.

Mothers with children who live or/and work Braamfontein were chosen as a sample in order to gain a mixed socio-economic group. The aim of this study is to gather the opinions of local South African mothers who live or/and in both lower and 'higher risk' contexts in order to add much-needed context- and culture-specific voices to the current developed country dominated dialogues on infant mental health.

Participants will either be interviewed at their place of employment (if they are employed) or at the Emthonjeni Centre. These interviews will be done at time and date that best suit the participants within the time frame the researcher has set for data collection.

Procedure

Internal ethics clearance from the School of Human and Community Development at the University of the Witwatersrand will be requested. The mothers that will be part of the study will be on the basis they meet the criteria mentioned in the sampling section. The interview will be a face-to-face interview conducted one mother at a time at the Emthonjeni Centre in an available room with minimal distractions or the participants' place of employment.

The participants will be informed about the nature and purpose of the study prior to the interview being conducted. A semi-structured interview will be conducted and it will be audio recorded provided the participant signs the consent form giving permission for the interview to be recorded and finally, the interview will be transcribed for analysis purposes.

Mothers that are suggested by participants through the snowball sampling method will be contacted via phone or email and invited to participate. The first stage will be to identify mothers in Braamfontein by approaching women randomly in the population (for example, working in local shops and salons), and asking them whether they are mothers and if so, if they may be interested in participating in the study; or if they know mothers who may be interested participating in the study. This means that the researcher intends to use snowballing using organic social networks, whereby the researcher will source participants through contact information that is provided, people the researcher may approach or people the researcher may know or people the participants may know (Noy, 2008). The people recommended will be contacted by the researcher until the researcher secures the number of

participants needed for this study. Therefore, the potential participants that the researcher meets will supply majority of the referrals (Noy, 2008).

Interested mothers will be informed about the study and arrangements to meet for the interview will be made. Upon completion of the study, the study will be submitted to the Faculty for marking and the study may also be used in journal publications both international and locally, in addition, the researcher will provide the participant with an overall summary of the findings if requested. Lastly, with the permission of the participant, transcripts will be archived for future research.

Data Collection

Primary data will be collected using semi-structured interviews. The interviews will be used as a tool (Creswell, 2006) to investigate these Johannesburg mothers' opinions and perceptions of a "good enough mother" within their cultural contexts. Unbiased language that is appropriate for the participants of the research will be used for the participant information sheet and the interview (Creswell, 2014)

A semi-structured interview schedule designed by the researcher in discussion with her supervisor will be used (Creswell, 2014). The questionnaire elicits both the participants' experiences and opinions as mothers and explores understandings of what constitutes good parenting and the processes involved between mother and child. It also taps the mother's experiences of motherhood from within their cultural perspectives. Should the participants not speak English as a medium of communication, the participant information sheet and interview schedule will be translated for the participants in any of the languages that the researcher can speak. The researcher can speak English, SeSotho, Sepedi, SeTswana, isiZulu and can fairly speak isiXhosa.

Permission from participants to audio-record the interviews will be obtained. These will then be transcribed and anonymised. The researcher intends to use a qualitative computer theme analysis program called Atlas.ti version 7 to assist in analysing the data.

Data Analysis

The unit of analysis for this study is the individual and the target of analysis will be their perceptions. In accordance with Braun and Clarke's (2006) method of analysis, the interviews for this study will be audio recorded and transcribed, and then a systematic interpretation of the transcripts will be conducted using interpretative thematic analysis (ITA). ITA is an appropriate analysis to use primarily because it is considered a flexible method in qualitative studies and it is considerably accessible to fairly new researchers. If accurately conducted, it will regulate themes or patterns in the data and will help synthesize the large data collected and transcribed (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic Analysis according to Braun and Clarke (2006) must be conducted using six steps. The researcher will first have to familiarize themselves with the data and subsequently transcribe the data before reading through for general meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2006).The second step involves identifying the coding frame (sentence, paragraph, or phrase) and subsequently, the third step entails assembling the initial codes into potential themes. The

fourth step will involve reviewing the themes. Lastly, the fifth step will require finalizing the thematic map and have each theme defined and named (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Trustworthiness and Credibility

Triangulation will be used as a tool to ensure that the data that is collected and analysed authentically captures and respects the multiple views and perceptions that are offered by the participants (Morrow, 2005). The researcher will, therefore, make use of direct quotes as evidence when presenting the results. In addition, the researcher will make use of a systematic method of analysis to analyse the data collected, in an attempt to ensure that the results have an empirical grounding (Patton, 2002). The researcher will make use of Braun and Clarke's (2005) steps, for an interpretive thematic analysis of the transcripts. In addition, the themes will be checked by the research supervisor, and according to Elliott, Fischer and Rennie (1999), this is a necessary precaution because the research supervisor will review the data for any discrepancies or possible errors.

Furthermore, the researcher integrates theory and grounds the study with major psychological concepts to make sense of the perceived experiences of the participants. According to Patton (2002), it is important to consider and establish the praxis of each study, in order to improve the credibility of the findings. Lastly, in order to account for the responses of the participants in a fair manner, the interviewer will attempt to give the participant integrity by offering deep understanding to the responses the participants give (Patton, 2002); in such an instance, the interviewer will prompt and clarify the meaning of the responses with the participants.

Ethical considerations

Ethics clearance will be requested from the School of Human and Community Development's internal Ethics Committee at the University of the Witwatersrand. In an attempt to gain local permission and access to the day-care centre, written consent will be requested from the manager, as previously stated in the procedure section of the research. Mothers taking part will also be required to sign written informed consent before taking part in this study. The primary consent which will be obtained from the participants is firstly the consent to take part in the study and consent for audio recording the interview.

No deception will be used in this study and participants will be informed that they may withdraw from the study at any point before submission of the research for examination without any negative ramifications. Participants have the option to refrain from answering questions that may make them uncomfortable. There will be no identifying information used in the recordings, transcripts or the research report. Fictitious names will be utilized (e.g. Participant A) in all the data collected.

The questions asked in this study will be for the pure intent of acquiring the mothers' opinions which in most cases will stem from their own experiences of mothering. However, should the questions elicit distressing material for the participant, the researcher will contain the participants' feelings and give the participant an option to terminate the interview permanently or continue on another day. Additionally, referral services will be offered to the

participants, to see a therapist at Emthonjeni Centre at Wits University free of charge should the need arise.

The interview recordings and electronic transcripts will be stored on password protected computers and only my supervisor and I will have access to them. After publication of the research, recordings will be deleted, but anonymised transcripts will be archived for possible future research use (with the participants' permission). The participant may decline being recorded and in case of such an incident, I will take notes during the interview. They may also decline to have their anonymised transcripts archived for future research use, in which case, transcripts will be deleted after the publication of the research. The participants will be provided with a summary of the research findings. My contact details will be made available on the information sheet which participants are requested to keep. Furthermore, participants may contact the researcher or supervisor should they have any further queries. The interview location will be respected and thus disruptions will be minimized. There are no benefits or risks associated with the study.

Reflexivity

In this study, the researcher is the key instrument, and will conduct the interviews by herself (Haynes, 2012). Therefore the researcher has considered the possible bias that could emerge because she is a black female, who is not a mother and, lastly that she is from a Setswana cultural background, as these factors can potentially shape the interpretations she makes. To control for this potential bias, the themes and meanings ascribed from the data will be examined by her research supervisor (Haynes, 2012).

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Appendix 1:

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Introduction

Hello

I'm Kelebogile. I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in my study. With your permission I am going to record the interview but I would like to assure you that everything you say during this interview will be kept confidential, and only my supervisor and I will have access to the recordings. I will assign a pseudonym to your information in the report, for example, Participant A or Respondent B.

I would like to remind you that you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time during the interview. You also have the right to refrain from answering any question/s should you wish to do so. The interview will take an hour of your time. If you are in agreement with this, please sign these two consent forms (See Appendix B & C).

Thank you. If you are ready we can begin the interview.

Demographic questionnaire

1. How old are you?
2. How many children do you have?
3. What is/are the age(s) of the child(ren)?
4. Who raises the children? (Prompt – are you the primary care giver of the child)
5. What racial group do you identify with?
6. What ethnic group do you belong to?
7. What is your home language?
8. Are you employed or unemployed?
9. What is your household income?
10. What sort of accommodation do you have? House, flat, informal housing (shack)?
11. How many people do you currently live with?
12. Are you currently in a relationship with the child's father? Is the father a present or absent figure in the child's life?

Interview schedule

1. Please tell me your story about being a mother? (Prompt – what has it felt like for you?)
2. Please tell me about how you were parented?

- What have you taken from that experience? (Prompt – what have you chosen to do different, and what have you chosen to do the same? And why?)
- How have you understood your parents' parenting style / rephrase: How have you understood the way in which your parents chose to bring you up

Good and bad mothering

3. Please explain to me what you think a baby needs to grow up to be a healthy and happy and successful person (prompts: why would they need that? How would that help the child?)
4. Please explain to me what you think a "good mother" is? (Prompt - what is your understanding/picture of a good mother, and why? What does a good mother do, think, feel towards her baby?)

- From where do you think you got these ideas of what a "good" mother is? (Prompt - from your own mother? TV? Books? Watching other mothers?)
- What do you think having a good mother does for the child?

5. What do you think a "bad" mother is? (Prompt - why?)

- From where do you think you got these ideas of what a "bad" mother is?
- What do you think stops some mothers from being good mothers?
- How do you think these mothers could be helped to be better mothers?
- What happens to the children of bad parents?

Theoretical

6. A man by the name of Donald Winnicott wrote a theory about the mother being a holding the environment for the child. (Offer an explanation of this theory to the participant). Having this theory in mind, do you agree or disagree with Winnicott? (Prompt - why or why not?)
7. This man also spoke about the idea of a 'good enough mother' (offer an explanation) – what do you think of this idea?

8. Research on children's brains has shown that the first few years are very important for development and that how a child is parented can affect the child for years to come. What do you think of this idea? In what ways do you think parenting in the first five years affects children?

Cultural factors

9. With which culture do you identify? Please tell me a bit about how mothers are thought about in your culture?

- How do you think culture has aided/challenged you in being a mother? Is the baby's father from the same/different cultural background to you? If different, how are mothers thought about in his culture?

10. How does the extended family influence the way in which you parent? (Prompt – what ideas do they have?)
11. Do you have any cultural values with regards to parenting that you would like to pass on to your children one day when they become parents? (Prompt – why)
12. Do you have any cultural values that you think they should not keep? (Prompt – why)
13. Do you have any other aspects of parenting that you like to elaborate on?

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix 2:

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050

Tel: 011 717 4503 Fax: 086 553 4913

Hello!

My name is Kelebogile Mojanaga. I am currently completing my Masters in Clinical Psychology degree at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of the degree, I am conducting research on "The Good Enough Mother" from the views of Black South African Mothers. I would like to invite you to be part of my study. The purpose of this study is to understand mothers' opinions and views of a "good enough mother" within their cultural settings. This study will further compare these views with two western theories on child development. My study simply aims to understand what South African mothers who live/work in the inner city think a good parent is, in order to inform new programs that speak to mothers in the South African settings and help them through using their own understandings of parenting.

Participation will involve an interview of more or less an hour with you discussing your views of "the good enough mother". There are no perceived risks or benefits associated with participation in this study. Even though I will know who you are and will use quotes from things you have said in the interviews, your identity will remain confidential and confidentiality will be maintained by not disclosing any information that is of a personal nature in the report. Your identity or your child's identity will not be reported in my research report or any other resulting publications; I will assign a pseudonym to your information in the report, for example, Participant A or Respondent B. Upon completion of the study, the study will be submitted to the faculty for marking and the study may also be used in journal publications both international and locally, in addition, I will provide you with an overall summary of the findings if requested.

I would like to remind you that you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time during the interview. You also have the right to refrain from answering any question. Should you have any questions, you may contact either my supervisor Dr Katherine Bain or me. With your permission the transcripts from the interview will be archived for future research. My contact details and those of my supervisor appear below.

Kelebogile Mojanaga

E-mail: leemojanaga@gmail.com
Contact number: 0765318207

Dr Katherine Bain

E-mail: katherine.bain@wits.ac.za

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050

Tel: 011 717 4503 Fax: 086 553 4913

I, _____ consent to being interviewed by Miss Kelebogile Mojanaga for her study on mothers' perceptions of "The Good Enough Mother". I understand that:

- Participation in this study is voluntary. There are no risks or benefits to my participation.

- I may choose not to answer any questions and I may withdraw my participation and/or my responses from the study until the time it is submitted for examination.

- All information provided will remain confidential. Although I may be quoted in the research report, these quotes will not be linked to my name or my child's name. If I am quoted, a pseudonym (Respondent X, Respondent Y etc.) will be used. None of my identifiable information will be included in the research report.

- I am aware that the results of the study will be reported in the form of a research report for the partial completion of the degree, Masters in Clinical Psychology.

- The research may also be presented at a local/international conference and published in a journal and/or book chapter.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050

Tel: 011 717 4503 Fax: 086 553 4913

I, _____ give my consent for my interview with Miss Kelebogile Mojanaga to be audio recorded for his study. I understand that:

- The recordings and anonymised transcripts (typed up versions of the interviews with no personal details like names) will not be seen or heard by anyone other than the researcher and her supervisor.

- The recordings and transcripts will be kept on password protected computers that only the researcher and her supervisor can access.

- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report.

- Although direct quotes from my interview may be used in the research report, I will be referred to by a pseudonym (Respondent X, Respondent Y etc.)

- I understand that the audio-recordings of the interview will be deleted after publication of the research. If I tick 'yes' below, I give permission for the anonymised transcript of my interview to be kept for future research use by the researcher and her supervisor. If I tick 'no', both the audio-recordings and the transcript will be deleted after publication of this research.

_____ Yes, my anonymised transcripts can be kept for future research

_____ No, I would prefer for the transcript to be deleted after publication of this research.

Signed: _____ **Date:_____**

Appendix 3

Ethics Clearance

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	PROTOCOL NUMBER: MCLIN/18/005 HH
PROJECT TITLE:	The "good enough mother": Winnicott to Neuroscience to the culture and context-specific perspectives of Johannesburg inner city mothers
INVESTIGATORS	Mojanaga Kolobogile
DEPARTMENT	Psychology
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DECISION OF COMMITTEE*	Approved

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

DATE: 29 May 2018

CHAIRPERSON
(Dr Esther Price)

cc Supervisor:

Dr Katherine Bain
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 2020

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES

The "Good Enough Mother": Winnicott to neuroscience, to the culture and context-specific perspectives of Johannesburg inner city Mothers

Abstract:

Mothering is a role that holds cultural meaning and significance, much of which is not universal. This paper presents a model of a 'good enough mother' as conceptualized by seven mothers living and working or studying in the inner city of Johannesburg. This is then compared and contrasted with Winnicott's (1960) model of the 'good enough' mother, and characteristics of parenting currently endorsed by neuroscience research. The convergences, divergences and context-specific nuances in mothering that emerged between models are presented. While all models converge around the concepts of maternal availability, maternal protection, and the need to foster resilience in children, the study found that factors such as access to resources, social support, occupation, and the participants' perceptions of culturally prescribed expectations of mothers influence these mothers' experiences, understandings and performance of mothering.

"...there's no formula to parenting, I've taken that you do what you have to do with the situation you're in" (Kefilwe – Johannesburg inner city mother)

Introduction

Parenting is the biggest influencing factor in human development and the importance of evidence-based parenting programs to support parents, especially in sub-Saharan Africa has been emphasized (Lachman, et al., 2016; Lancy, 2014; Ritchter, 2003; Sherr et al., 2017). Many mothers in developing country contexts find themselves parenting in situations of economic and emotional hardship (Pence & Nsamenang, 2008). The ways in which mothers manage stress can have an effect on their children's rate of development, and mental and physical health (Cinque, Van-Reeth, Maccari, Darnaudery, Morley-Fletcher, and Zuena, 2003; Weinstock, 2005). However, it is also evident that mothers in developing country settings have multiple stressors to negotiate, placing their children at risk. Increased levels of gendered interpersonal and community violence contribute to this, and high levels of post-partum depression have been found in South Africa in particular (Eidelman-Rothman, Feldman, Vengrobler & Zagoory-Sharon, 2013). These impact the mother's capacity to parent (Meaney, 2010). Large-scale societal factors such as ethnicity and poverty, which influence access to resources, have also been found to have a significant impact on the way parents raise their children (Collins, Maccoby, Steinberg, Hetherington, & Bornstein, 2000), as how the mother manages and makes meaning of parenting within this context is likely to be culturally- and socioeconomically-mediated (Bornstein, 2015).

It is becoming increasingly important to evaluate the contextual and cultural applicability of Western-developed theories of parent-child relationships, such as those theorized by Winnicott (1960) and current neuroscientific findings, as these continue to dominate mental health training programs. Assumptions that knowledge can be generalised across cultural and contextual settings have given rise to the notion of the 'global child', which has been critiqued (Pence & Nsamenang, 2008). It is thus important to comprehensively investigate an Afrocentric version of what makes a parent 'good enough'. Mental health professionals tend to have limited knowledge and understanding of culture-specific models of parenting from cultures that differ from their own, or that diverge from the Western-derived models presented in training (Collins, Hetherington, Maccoby, Steinberg & Bornstein, 2000; Hughes & Baylin, 2012; Pence & Nsamenang, 2008). The majority of child development and parenting studies have taken place in North America and Western Europe, thus models of infant development and parenting in the literature currently represent the experiences of approximately 10% of the world's infants and parents, all of whom are from developed country contexts (Tomlinson & Swartz, 2003; Tomlinson, Bornstein, Marlow,and Swartz, 2014). This paper hopes to add to the much needed knowledge base about the experiences of a portion of the other 90% of infants and parents from culturally diverse developing country settings.

'Culture' as a concept is acknowledged as elusive. While it is considered to represent a number of factors, such as a signifier of group belonging, a storehouse of knowledge and set of beliefs, it is also considered to be constantly shifting and changing in response to changing contexts and contact with other cultures (Baldwin, Faulkner, & Hecht, 2006). Culture is also understood as a shared social construction that may "influence (but…not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behaviour" (Spencer-Oatley, 2008, p. 3). The fluidity of culture means that understandings of motherhood are also constantly evolving and transitioning (Phoenix, 2014). Due to its embeddedness in culture, motherhood does not have a universal meaning or significance cross-culturally (Hill-Collins, 2013), rather it can be regarded as a "relational concept, contingent upon social, cultural, and personal perception" (Millman, 2013, p.80). Notions of 'good' motherhood are often transmitted from generation to generation within culture, but it is also crucial to consider that new cultural contexts may have a considerable influence on women's perceptions of motherhood (Millman, 2013). Therefore, motherhood is an adaptable concept that can expand in meaning and be transformed in terms of significance in different contexts (Millman, 2013). It can be experienced at a personal level or socio-culturally (Millman, 2013).

Motherhood and culture in context

Cultural and contextual factors have also been found to have a significant influence on parenting, and the subsequent mental health of the child (Lachman et al., 2016). Existing international research on cross-cultural parenting has tended to focus on issues of autonomy

and inter-dependence (Johnson, Radesky, & Zuckerman, 2013), which although useful, tends to treat culture as static. Styles of parenting have been found to differ across settings, but perhaps more interestingly, the outcomes of various styles of parenting have been found to have different outcomes across contexts. Authoritarian or 'controlling' parenting found in China and Palestine, for example, has been associated with better social adjustment and academic performance in children (Chao, 1994; Feldman & Masalha, 2010), whereas in European-America and Israel, this parenting style is considered to be a predictor for poor social adjustment and school achievement (Chao, 1994; Feldman & Masalha, 2010). Thus, context and culture tend to inform parenting styles (Feldman & Masalha, 2010; Feldman, Vengrobler, Eidelman-Rothman, & Zagoory-Sharon, 2013). Every culture leans towards preparing children to be thinking and social beings that are able to work in groups, manage interactions with people around them, form friendships and perform activities that are essential for survival (Chao, 1994; Feldmam & Masalha, 2010). The efficacy of parenting styles thus appears to depend on the fit of the style with the context in which the child is growing up (Feldman & Masalha, 2010; Forehand & Kotchick, 2016; Luo, Jia, Yue, Zhang, Lyu, Shi & Yang, 2017; September, Rich, & Roman 2015).

Mothering is a role that has a great deal of meaning and cultural significance globally, however, these meanings are not universal (Kruger, 2006). Motherhood for the most part is shaped by culture, therefore it is important to consider the context in which the mother is located, especially because of the various ways social influences can shape her role as a mother (Kruger, 2006). Mothers in various contexts tend to be seen as instrumental in ensuring the healthy development of the child (Kruger, 2006). While the notion of self-sacrificing mothers is found in many cultures, within Western-derived models in particular 'good' mothering is popularly theorized as the mother being selfless, giving unconditional love and time, as well as being consistently emotionally available to her children, in order to assist them in regulating emotions (Kruger, 2006). These views are not only popularly theorized by psychoanalysts like Klein, Winnicott, Bowlby and Kohut, (Kruger, 2006), but perpetuated by mothers in western societies, particularly middle-class mothers (Lupton, 2000). However, in African families, the role of mother is less defined. The role of the biological mother and other caregivers in the child's life tend to be more fluid. The role of mothering is often a shared job, amongst female family members or other community members and thus the responsibility for unconditional love, selflessness and emotional availability is shared (Collins, 1997; Magwaza, 2003).

South African studies on parenting from a psychological perspective are sparse. Most local parenting studies have HIV as a focus or more recently, the parenting of adolescents (Bradford, Barber, Olsen, Maughan, Erikson, Ward & Stolz, 2003; Lachman, Cluver, Boyes, Kou & Marisa, 2014; Meinck et al., 2017). The few local studies on parenting in South Africa have found parenting practices to be largely authoritarian (Barbarin & Richter, 2013; Dawes, Kafaar, de Sas Kropiwnicki, & Richter, 2015). This has been linked to the promotion of respect for elders or deference by children to adult authority commonly found in traditional African cultures (Bray, Gooskens, Moses, Kahn & Seekings, 2011).

While the importance of environmental influences in the development of the individual has been established (Rotheram-Borus, Tomlinson, LeRoux, and Stein, 2015; Sibeko, Dhansay, Charlton, Johns, and Gray-Donald, 2005; Thompson, Lamb, and Estes, 1982), some local research is needed to examine how poverty and intergenerational trauma influence parenting in the South African context. One study has found that mothers in South Africa seem to be re-negotiating the role of motherhood (Moore, 2013). This re-negotiation is a result of social and contextual changes in communities and the political landscape of the country. The dynamic nature of the South African social context over the years is marked by the transition from rural life to urban life; transitions in the political sphere which have influenced housing and labour policies for women; and changing gender roles in households where economic and financial instability have resulted in both parents seeking employment to survive (Moore, 2013). The role of the father in the household has also evolved due to shifting gender dynamics. South Africa has a high level of father absence (Makusha, Van den Berg, Khoza & Lewaks, 2019). Where previously this was attributed to high physical mobility in his role as sole breadwinner, father absence is now a result of a variety of factors, including unacknowledged paternity, financial constraints and maternal gatekeeping (Manyatshe & Nduna, 2014). Parenting has remained the single responsibility of the mother (Moore, 2013). Political instability and violence in during the 70's and 80's in urban areas resulted in mothers being separated from their children because good mothering meant that one had to protect their children from the violence in the city by sending their children to rural schools and thus being cared for by females in the extended family (Moore, 2013). Today, despite changing social contexts, mothers still seem to require the support of females in their extended families to help with child rearing (Moore, 2013). Mothers now appear to have increased responsibility and in many instances are given the sole responsibility to provide financial security and a stable emotional environment. In cases where mothers struggle to provide, risks exist. Inadequate food security is associated with poorer child development outcomes (Gill & Whaley, 2018). However, more needs to be documented from mothers themselves, with regards to how social and cultural factors inform their understandings of their role as mothers.

Winnicott's 'good enough' mother

Winnicott's theory was used for this study due to the fact that his 1960 paper: 'The theory of the parent-infant relationship', is one of the top ten papers searched on PEPWEB and his theory is still growing in popularity (Morris, 2015). Winnicott's theory recognises that the child develops within the context of a subjective world (Winnicott, 1971). Therefore, Winnicott (1960) emphasizes the importance of the mother in the child's life, especially during the early childhood development phase, to facilitate the healthy development of the infant (Winnicott, 1965). Winnicott (1960) referred to this as the holding function of the mother (Winnicott, 1960).

According to Winnicott (1960), there are three phases that an infant goes through in the early stages of childhood development, namely: integration, personalisation and realization

(Winnicott, 1945). Winnicott (1945) does not suggest that these phases happen in definite stages; rather they occur as a fluid process in child development. In these phases, the infant's physical needs include being treated with care, kept warm, and being fed. The mother's ability to manage the child's needs displays the mother's ability to hold the environment for the child, that is, to ensure that the child has sufficient provision in the environment (Winnicott, 1960). Winnicott (1960) suggests that the mother's ability to hold the environment for the infant is necessary in aiding the infant's integration into the world. Through this holding, the infant has an experience of sufficient continuity, characterized by careful protection and consideration against the potentially harmful nature of reality (Winnicott, 1960). However, through optimal maternal failure, where the infant's needs are gradually frustrated, the infant comes to the realisation that the mother is separate, which is the beginning of the infant's ability to conceive of minds other than his/her own.

It is important to note at this point that Winnicott does not believe that genetics play a substantial role in the healthy development of a child, rather he foregrounds the role of the nurturing environment: "The inherent potential of an infant cannot become an infant unless linked to maternal care" (Winnicott, 1960, p. 43). Winnicott (1960) proposed that the happiness of individuals depends on the manner in which they were raised by their parents. Therefore for Winnicott, societal problems such as alcoholism and delinquency are result of the absence of the "good-enough mothers" (Winnicott, 1960). Winnicott suggests that a good enough mother is a parent who recognizes the vulnerability of their child, and who to a considerable extent allows the child to express their emotions whether positive or negative in a safe environment (Winnicott, 1960). Lastly, he emphasized that there is no such thing as a perfect parent, but highlighted the importance of communicating love to the infant and offering ego-support in the form of maternal care to facilitate the development of a healthy society (Winnicott, 1960).

Although still popular, Winnicott's theory has been critiqued for having an excessive 'developmental tilt' and feminist writers have critiqued his positioning of the mother as 'object' as opposed to 'subject', and for the theory's tendency to blame mothers for childhood psychopathology. In the post-World War II period, the responsibility for a child's emotional and psychological well-being was added as a responsibility of mothers, who were already held responsible for the child's physical health as well as their good behaviour (Fox, 2015). Winnicott's theory is considered to fall into the group of theories that construct mothering as intensive (Kruger, 2006; Slowchower, 2017). Intensive mothering refers to labour-intensive mothering in which children's needs take precedence over the needs of the mother (Swenson & Zvonkovic, 2016). In this form of mothering mothers are expected to be available for their children constantly, to hone their creativity, interest in sport, and academics, as well as to take care of their children's overall needs (Swenson & Zvonkovic, 2016). Feminist writers critique the construction of mothering as intensive on the basis that it perpetuates structural inequalities, making particular reference to culturally-prescribed gendered role obligations. Therefore, the feminist writers reject ideas and theories that suggest that mothers should be solely responsible to for child rearing. Instead, they recognize

that mothers should have agency to co-construct the mothering role regardless of the constraints that are imposed by culture, family members or work place expectations. Their view values the perspective of everyone in the family system (Swenson & Zvonkovic, 2016), which is contradictory to Winnicott's theory that tends to value the perspective of the child.

Current neuroscientific understandings of the role of parenting in child development

Current neuroscience findings (summarised in meta-reviews) on parenting are central to this study because it is this research that informs policy and the focus of further research on early childhood development (Black, et al., 2017; Edwards, Gillies, & Horsley, 2015). Neuroscience research has focused on the interplay of nature-nurture in relation to genetic expression within a context of parent-child interaction (Winter, 2010). It has been established that the brain does not develop in isolation but rather develops within a context (Hughes & Baylin, 2012; Collins, Maccoby, Steinberg, Hetherington & Bornstein., 2000; Weinstock, 2005). This implies that the characteristics that the child may inherit are not only subject to genetics but depend on experiences, such as the manner in which the parent behaves/parents (Collins, et al., 2000).

The developmental interdependence of emotional regulation and attention control in childhood have been closely associated with the quality of the parent-child interaction (Mathis & Bierman, 2015). The quality of parental communication has been found to be crucial in the development of children's affect regulation skills. Responsive communication, which entails parental acceptance of emotions and modelling of appropriate ways of managing emotional expression has been found to promote affect regulation, as opposed to communication that dismisses emotion and is critical of affective displays (Theiss, 2018). Dismissive responses although attempts to regulate children's feelings and actions are associated with decreased emotion regulation and increased behavioural impulsivity (Haverfield & Theiss, 2017).

While contextual factors such as poverty and on-going violence have been found to influence child development, this has been found to be potentially buffered by the parent-child relationship. For example, Feldman (2003) found that some parents who raised their children in a context of war, violence and limited resources, had children who did not develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It was found that these mothers' parenting styles were reciprocal, whereby the child learned to use the mother for stress regulation of distress (Feldman, Vengrobler, Eidelman-Rothman, & Zagoory-Sharon, 2013).

The neurobiological development of the infant is thus influenced by the parental environment, with studies showing that a "good" parent is characterised as displaying warmth and sensitivity towards the child. As a result, the child develops the propensity to display good emotion regulation and attention control (Mathis & Bierman, 2015). The characteristics of warmth and sensitivity include the parent expressing affection and responding

appropriately to their child's cues (Mathis & Bierman, 2015). Neuroscience therefore suggests that parents need to be emotionally responsive to the child's needs, an observation that was similarly made by Winnicott in his notion of the maternal holding environment (Winnicott, 1960; Hughes & Baylin). Additionally, neuroscience research suggests that a 'good parent' comforts her child when the child is distressed, and is reliably available to the child, which facilitates the formation of a good relationship in the future (Hughes & Baylin, 2012). Good parenting is also characterised in the research as allowing children to struggle the dysregulative effects of the parents' negative emotions (Hughes & Baylin, 2012).

A "bad" parent is subsequently constructed in the neuroscience literature as a parent who neglects or maltreats their child. Neglect and maltreatment are forms of toxic stress, which has been shown to compromise child development (Shonkoff et al., 2012). Maltreatment can be understood on a continuum from severe emotional, physical or sexual abuse to poor parenting styles (Chao, 1994). Poor parenting styles are characterised in the literature as those where parenting is directive-critical, which can consequently result in the child exhibiting poor emotion regulation and attention control in early childhood (Mathis & Bierman, 2015). Dennis (2006) emphasizes the importance of the parent's ability to provide external soothing and support to their infants, in order to help the infants to cope with frustrating events, and also assist them in gaining the ability to self-soothe. Directive-critical parents tend to struggle to mentalise distress in their children (Mathis & Bierman, 2015). Calkins and Johnson (1998) state that parents who are critical of their children tend to give no explanations, rationales and reasoning in their interactions with their children.

Neuroscience therefore emphasizes the importance of protecting the development of the child's brain in the first 5 years of a child's life by protecting children from toxic stress (Shonkoff et al., 2012). Healthy parent-child relationships stimulate brain growth toward neurobehavioural maturation (Hughes & Baylin, 2012). Through healthy physiological and behavioural cues from the parent to the infant, the infant develops resilience and the ability to handle stress (Hunter, Gray & McEwan, 2018; Meaney, 2010). Emotional connection between parent and child is regarded as key and has been linked to the dveelopment of resilience (Bergman, Ludwig, Westrup & Welch, 2019; Meaney 2010) further suggests that the capacity to relate and regulate affect is vital information that is passed on from one generation to another.

Method

This study used a qualitative research design primarily because it is helpful for acquiring in-depth opinions (Babbie, 2013). A social constructionist perspective was useful in examining how the mothers tended to describe, explain, or otherwise interpret the world in which they live as well as themselves (Gergen, 1985). This perspective would allow for the mothers to give meaning to their own lived experiences and reality thus provide an in-depth understanding of how they deal with events, problems and thus create solutions (Raskin,

2002). In this manner, all the meanings they have constructed reflect a point of view, which will be analysed (Raskin, 2002).

The mothers' shared forms of understanding were explored through semi-structured interviews. Seven Black South African mothers, between the ages of 25 and 44 years old, who either work or live in central Johannesburg, volunteered to be interviewed. They all had a child under the age of seven years old, some with older children. Convenience sampling was used to acquire participants. The researcher selected the area of central Johannesburg and randomly invited Black South African mothers from within these boundaries to participate in the study.

All interviews were conducted in person and were conducted one mother at a time at a place that was convenient for the participant. Language that was appropriate for the participants of the research was used for the interview (Creswell, 2014). Language was considered as important in this study in order to both empower the participants and to ensure rich data (Temple & Young, 2004). Four participants had their interviews conducted in English and no translations were required. One participant's interview was in IsiZulu. The researcher asked the questions in English and occasionally in isiZulu and the participant replied in isiZulu. One interview was conducted in both isiZulu and Sesotho. The final interview was conducted both in Sesotho and Sepedi. In these instances language use was negotiated with the participant. The semi-structured interview schedule (Creswell, 2014) was designed to elicit both the participants' experiences and opinions as mothers and to explore their understandings of what constitutes good parenting. It also engaged with the mother's experiences of motherhood from within their cultural perspectives. Permission from participants to audio-record the interviews were obtained.

An interpretive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to determine themes within the participants' understandings of constructive parenting and the role of parenting in child development. Atlas.ti version 7 was used to assist in analysing the data. Triangulation was used as a tool to ensure that the themes authentically capture and respect the multiple views and perceptions that were offered by the participants (Morrow, 2005). Two types of triangulation were used, mainly data triangulation and investigator triangulation (Thurmond, 2001). Firstly, data triangulation was employed by the use of participants from different socio-economic status, age and income brackets who live in the same context to ensure that consistencies and inconsistencies in the data are captured to increase the potential of identifying similar patterns, in order to increase confidence of the findings collected (Thurmond, 2001). Lastly, investigator triangulation was employed, and therefore, all the data that was collected was evaluated by the research supervisor before the discussion section of this paper was written (Thurmond, 2001). In the reporting of the results, the themes from the mothers' narratives were used to construct a model of 'good mothering' from the perspectives of the participants. A secondary analysis was then conducted where this model

was compared to that of Winnicott (1960) and current neuroscience research. Convergences and divergences between models are highlighted in the discussion of the findings.

Reflexivity on the part of the researcher was considered important and the results of this study are considered as co-constructed by the participants and the researcher. The researcher is a black female, who is not a mother, from a Setswana cultural background. These factors were considered during data analysis as potentially contributing to the ways questions were asked and to the interpretations made. At times, the researcher's not being a mother allowed for fewer shared assumptions and for more prompting to ensure understanding. To ensure credibility of the findings the themes and meanings ascribed from the data by the researcher were also examined by the researcher's supervisor to ensure the meanings remained as close to those of the participants as possible (Haynes, 2012).

Ethics clearance from the University of the Witwatersrand Human Research Ethics Committee was obtained. All participants volunteered to participate in the study and gave their informed consent to be interviewed. All participants' identifying information has been disguised and pseudonyms have been used.

The questions that this study has attempted to answer are:

- How do South African mothers in the Johannesburg inner city conceptualize a 'good enough mother'?
- How do their opinions and perceptions compare to Winnicott's 'good enough mother' and current findings in neuroscience research on the role of parenting in child development?
- How do these mothers understand the influence of their cultures and contexts on their constructions of mothering?

The participants:

The women who were interviewed are from different walks of life, living in different types of accommodation, earning different salaries and from varying educational backgrounds, but all are mothers. The sample used was diverse in terms of demographic features of participants (i.e. age, SES, income). While this sample is somewhat representative of the population of mothers found in inner-city Johannesburg (including both lower and middle socio-economic groups), and allowed for some exploration of the influence of this diversity on motherhood constructions, the diversity in the sample may have diluted patterns in the data.

*Zinzile is a 33 year old mother, who works as a general cleaner at a University in the Johannesburg inner city. She has four children, aged 15, 12, 10 and 4 years old. She raises her children as a single parent on a R7000 ($460) per month salary and they live in a house in a township.

* Nthabiseng is a 28 year old mother of a two year old child. At the time of the study she was a full time post graduate student. Her parents (the grandparents) are the primary caregivers of her child, and she and the father of her child take care of the child financially with the father's salary of R10 500 ($700) per month. They take their son for weekend visits at their flat over the weekends.

*Lihle is 25 year old married mother of one child. Her child is one year old, and she and her husband are the primary care givers of their child. At the time of the study she was unemployed and pursuing a degree full time. Her husband is employed and takes care of the household with an income of R50 000 ($3 333) per month.

*Kefilwe is a 30 year old married mother of one child. Her child is one year old and she and her husband are the primary care givers of their child. At the time of the study she was unemployed. Her husband is employed and he takes care of the household with an income of approximately R60 000 ($4 000) per month.

*Azania is 44 year old single mother of six children, aged 20, 16, 11, 9, 8, and 5 years old. She works as a general cleaner of a bank in central Johannesburg, and raises her children on a salary of R4000 ($266) per month. She lives with her children in a four room house.

*Dineo is 34 year old married mother of one child. Her child is 18 months old and she and her husband are the primary care givers of her child. She is unemployed and pursuing a post graduate degree, but her husband takes care of the household with a household income that is approximately R30 000 ($2 000) per month. They raise the child in a complex (house apartments).

*Keitumetse is a 34 year old single mother of two children. She has a 13 year old and a 9 month old baby. She is currently not living with both her children in the inner city, but she is renting a flat which she shares with two other people. The primary care-giver for her 9 month old baby and 13 year-old adolescent is Kietumetse's mother who lives in the Limpopo province. This arrangement was made because of work constraints (long shifts), which do not allow Keitumetse to take care of her children. However, Kietumetse shared that she travels to Limpopo every time she is not shifted or when she is on her five day break rotation. She also explained that the father of her youngest child is a present father figure. She is currently working as a security guard for a university and supports her children with an income of R8500 ($566) per month.

Johannesburg's inner city mothers' conceptualisations of a good mother

Giving love

According to the participants in this study, a good mother in the context of Johannesburg inner city is one who 'gives her children love'. In this particular context, however, love appeared strongly associated with 'keeping the child'. Keeping the child was understood as a mother choosing to give birth to the child and choosing to raise the child herself.

> You can see that your mother loves you and brought you into this world because they love you. Because if she did not love you she could have put you in a dustbin while you were still young or she would have aborted you when you were just one month old. (Zinzile).

Zinzile's comment suggested thatnot aborting or giving the child up for adoption was equated as an expression of love for a child. Providing materially for the child was also considered as showing love. Azania particularly mentioned how expensive showing a child love is, and stated: "For a child to grow up healthy…my love it is expensive. What this child needs is that they need food, they need love… you hear me right?" (Azania). If the mother is able to meet their child's sufficient material needs and sacrifice her own desires for the child, she is considered to be 'good enough'.

Presence and availability

These mothers also described a 'good mother' as involved and present in her children's life. One mother referred to physical holding, stating in isiZulu "Umtwana u ya sidinga isandla saka mamakhe" (Azania), meaning, "A child needs the touch (holding) from their mother's hand". Notably, the mothers in this context particularly emphasized the need to be involved in the child's school life. A good mother was described as spending time with her children. Most of the mothers strongly valued their own presence in the child's life, and doubted their value as a mother when unable to offer time for their children: Interestingly the importance of presence as a quality of the good mother emerged largely through discussion around guilt about absence or in relation to a wish to be different to their own mothers, some of whom had been experienced as absent.

> …a good mother is a mother that is there for their infant, and that is why I think I am suffering with my guilt (Nthabiseng).

The mothers who participated in this study came from different socio-economic backgrounds, however, maternal guilt was a common experience; the belief that they are not doing enough as mothers, and their concern for how their 'wrongful' behaviour may affect their children.Implied in this concern is that the mothers in this study for the most part feel solely responsible for child rearing. All the mothers who participated in the study expressed how important it is for them to be present figures in their children's lives, in order to be considered "good enough" mothers, however, no mention was made with regards to the presence of the father of their children.

Significant to this sample, four mothers shared their own experiences about being parented by absent mother's, who were absent as a result of work or illness for example. They reflected that that experience affected them negatively and as a result they grew up longing for their mother's presence. It is possible that the experience of growing up with an absent mother and a wish to protect their children from this pain contributed to the emphasis on mother presence in this set of narratives.

> So my mom was a nurse, she was never really home; so parenting for me was in a glimpse, whenever she's home say seven days a week she's working then she's probably off six days a week and then she's off for a day, that day she'll make sure that everything is done, um teaching us whatever she needs to teach us but that day needs to last us the next six days you know. So I really got parenting styles and... from friends' moms…if I'd be going to play next door or in the streets or whatever, I'd pick up some of the things, but my mom's first priority as a single parent was to feed her family. She was very honest about it, in terms of showing us her salary you know like when she gets paid we'd literally just sit and do a budget as a family. So we never wondered why our mom is not there you know; so I think she um... from a mental perspective she covered all of that, because as kids you long for your mom to be there, you long to have a normal family, just to like sit go to Sunday church with your parents and stuff like that, which we'd never had that experience so um yah it was...I won't say she was an absent mom but she... for her she had to provide and that is what she did you know (Kefliwe).

Good communication

It was clear that setting boundaries is considered important for most mothers, and that it is a way of providing a safe and stable environment: "A good mother is a mother who is present but a mother who also sets clear boundaries for her child" (Dineo). However, mothers also expressed a need to foster an open relationship with their children, and reflected on their own experiences of having parents who did not communicate effectively. The idea was expressed that boundaries need to be used in conjunction with fostering an open relationship with your children and that the child should say that "I know that I can approach mom and dad, whether I'm struggling with this or the another I can go to my mom and dad. So we're not friends, but I know that that present in my life and that they need to know that they are available for me, which I think that covers a whole lot of stuff" (Dineo). This point was raised in differently by at least half the participants:

> I think a good mother is a mother who loves her children and is open with them, she can talk to them about everything, me our parents did not tell us much my mother is only telling us things now, like we grew up and our mother did not disclose a lot of things. Like you know how parents cannot discuss a lot of things, like love life, so I think a parent who is enough can teach children, like there are a lot of illnesses out there. If I can be open with her and show her that if you do this then the following will happen, then I believe that I will be a good mother because at the end of the day she will always be protected (Kietumetse).

Thus, a good mother, as constructed by these women, is a mother who is able to foster open and honest communication with her children, particularly around the hardships of life. The mothers' particularly emphasized the need to be able to talk to their children about the harsh realities of life, as an attempt to teach them resilience: Azania talked about how she speaks openly to her child about making mistakes: "The parent must talk to the child and warn them of the dangers of their actions" (Azania). Zinzile shared similar views and said, "So each and

everything that happens to my children, I tell them about life and how this life is. I do not hide anything from them, even when it comes to sex I tell them about how dangerous it is" (Azania).

The mothers shared their desires to raise children who are prepared for challenges that they might encounter. In this context care appeared to refer to the mother's ability to advise her children, when they have to make decisions, and protecting them from external factors that may cause them harm. Azania captured this principal of care as she has experienced it in her context, "The parent must talk to the child and warn them of the dangers of their actions, it is not easy, it is difficult. Just try as a parent, even if they go off the rails, at least you would have told them" (Azania). Good communication thus emerged as mothers communicating about the hardships and dangers of life to their children, not necessarily as listening to their children.

Respect for elders

Furthermore, a good mother was perceived as having to teach her children to respect their elders. Respect was considered crucial in child development. A child who visibly embodies respect in the manner in which they converse with adults, is considered a child who is being raised by a good mother. Zinzile shared what she says to her children about respect: "What you guys need to do is to go to school, and finish school and listen to your teachers when they teach and respect other parents regardless of where you find yourselves" (Zinzile). A shared opinion amongst the mothers was that the child's way of relating socially in the world is a social judgement on the mother. While respect was often linked to cultural beliefs and tradition (to be discussed further below), respect also seemed to equate to a belief that a mother/elder/caregiver and child relationship should never be organised in the same manner that a friendship with peers is organised. Clear boundaries need to be in place and compliance with authority is expected.

Managing emotions

Another aspect of being a good mother was described to be the mother's ability to hide her mistakes and negative emotions from her children in an effort to provide a safe environment for their children. Their reasons for this seem to be motivated by their desire to want to protect their children from hard feelings that may leave the child responsible for / worried about the mother. For example Azania said, "Even when the child can see that you're heartbroken, but when you're around your children just keep a happy face and laugh and play with your child" (Azania).

Zinzile shared similar views and expressed the importance of keeping children away from the truth if it might hurt them. As a result she said that she tells her children everything except sensitive material like the reason why she is a single parent

> So I tell them all of these things so that they can grow up and know that they going to go through many things, like how they do not live with the their father, and the reasons why he does not take care of them should not hurt them because

> they are things stopping him from being around. I do not tell them the reason why, because the reasons are painful in terms of what he did to me, and I will never say it like it is to the children (Zinzile).

Johannesburg inner city mothers' experiences of mothering

The following documents the current experiences of motherhood by the participants, which revealed areas of significant tension given these women's construction of a good mother. It was clear that these mothers feel that they are not always good mothers.

Guilt

At least half of the participants expressed feelings of guilt when it comes to the way in which they mother their children. The guilt expressed is both linked to cultural expectations and social expectations of mothering. This guilt is strongly associated with the time they spend with their children or lack thereof. Most mothers shared that they feel like they are not as present as they should be in their children's lives. Culturally, all mothers expressed that the expectation was that they are stay at home mothers who take care of the household and children. Nthabiseng became really emotional when she was asked by the researcher about her experience of motherhood – "The only thing is that, migrating for work, and being here because I have to study… there is some tension with the guilt and that's the mother guilt that I have experienced."

Absence

The mothers expressed strong views on the importance of not leaving or abandoning ones child no matter how difficult the circumstances they face are. Maternal absence in a child's life was considered prohibited, whether the absence was real or imagined, with Zinzile sharing: "So I do not want there to ever be a time where I leave them or have any distance between me and them". Three of the mothers in this study were students, who stopped working to further their studies in order to be able to provide adequately for their children. One of them is Dineo, and she expressed how it was important for her to spend as much time as she could with her son, to compensate for her mental absence when she goes back to school, and she shares "I stayed at home the whole of last year and I did not go back to work and the decision was because I knew I was coming back for my masters and I don't want to feel like I have not spent time with my child" (Dineo).

Dineo's quote demonstrates that providing for your child's material needs and/or ones physical presence in the household is not enough, but that mothers need to be emotionally and mentally preoccupied with their growing infants.

However, they have all three of these participants felt that the demands the studies have placed on them have made them absent mothers to some degree, and as a result they missed some of their children's milestones Kietumetse and Nthabiseng are both not raising their children but they reflected differently on their absence. Kietumestse did not think she was

absent mother because she makes time to go to Limpopo every chance she gets to see her children. Although it was not explicitly mentioned, it was a salient implicit theme in her responses. Nthabiseng on the other hand felt that she needs to be physically, emotionally and mentally present no matter how physically exhausted she is from her full time studies.

Lack of resources

Most mothers expressed concerns about not being able to provide for their children in the capacity that they feel they should. They expressed experiencing a lack of resources, such as not having enough money for their basic necessities such as food, appropriate shelter or money for their children's education. It was evident that financial provision is considered an important aspect of mothering by these mothers, more than half the mothers have expressed the need to communicate this problem with their children. To this effect, Zinzile shared:

> …sometimes I do not have money, all the money is finished, so I tell them that our lives are not the same with everyone around us, and they should not compare themselves to other children out there who are rich. I held them together by being both a mother and father to them. So when they see that I do not have money, I ask them to understand, and that is why I tell them so that they can mature (Zinzile).

An open outdoor environment that makes growth possible through physical play was viewed as important by these mothers. This necessary resource for their children was seen as limited in an urban 'inner city' setting. For example, one of the mothers cited the limited space for children to play in an urban city space as one of the reason her son lives with his grandparents and not with her in her flat in Johannesburg. She shared: "He also needs space because he's a boy and it would be difficult for him to grow up in flat. Like he likes to run around like in the outdoors" (Nthabiseng).

Most of the mothers feel as though they have not had the opportunity to provide materially for their children in ways that they feel that they should have, and subsequently a salient but implicit theme was that the mothers felt like they have not always been good mothers to their growing children.

Past personal experiences

All of the mothers in the study spoke about their reluctance to parent their children the way that they were parented. When the mothers were asked what experience they have learned from their own experiences of being parented, most mothers shared what they would do differently. It became evident that these mothers' personal experiences informed specifically what they would 'not do' as parents. Zinzile shared her story about how she was raised by different family members, like an adopted child who had no home, and shared the difficulties of essentially being 'homeless' (living in places absent of a maternal figure). She spoke about an experience of attempted rape by one of her relatives and how this has influenced her parenting:

> I have chosen to take care of my own children and stay with them and hold them with my own hands. I do not want them to be raised by someone else, because they will end up growing up the way I was raised. So I do not want there to ever be a time where I leave them or have any distance between me and them (Zinzile).

Zinzile's experience of not feeling safe in her environment, even though she was surrounded by close family and extended family members has resulted in her reluctance to trust 'the village' that is supposedly supposed to help her. Past experiences as a result have reduced her social support as a mother raising four children.

In addition, the mothers felt that their own mistakes informed how they parent and advise their children. For example Azania shared:

> If it was up to me, I don't want any of the children that I have, to have any kids until such time they can be independent. However, generally, I think one or two kids is enough for them, you see? I don't want my children to suffer or be in a position of need. Like for example, sometimes I know that I have to buy them all cell phones but I can't. I have to start one kid at a time and then the next one and so on. So two children are enough and if they don't see a need in their life for a child they should not have one. The only thing that I encourage them to do is to get an education that's all (Zinzile).

Notably, this was the only example of maternal ambivalence expressed in the narratives. Zinzile's linking of the notions of suffering and need with having many children to care for, and her idea that choosing not to have many, or even any, children would be a valid option for her children, implies that she may, at points, experience regret or resentment in her role as mother.

Managing the village that raises the child

Contrary to the researcher's expectations, most mothers in the study expressed how they sometimes felt alone and that parenting was their sole responsibility within their context. They felt this way despite having family members whom they can access, and a community that is positioned culturally to help them. The 'village' is a term taken from the African proverb 'it takes a whole village to raise a child', which refers to family, friends and the extended community, including the driver, neighbour, helper, eldest child and husband. Everyone (the village) is critical and is implicitly ascribed the responsibility to help raise every child in the community, dating back to times of communal, rural living and times where many people were migrating to the cities (Booth & Crouter, 2001).

The mothers evidenced feelings of ambivalence towards the village. All the mothers, to varying extents, shared their opinions about both appreciating the help from family members and extended community for raising the children, but also requiring autonomy with regards to how they choose to parent. It was apparent from the participants' narratives that there is a village that is inevitably set up to help them in their journey of mothering, however, although

it is culturally and contextually appropriate in the dynamic society in which they are living, the mothers had ambivalent feelings about the village.

> You can't actually criticise them because they did their part by raising you and once you are an adult, whatever happens to your life after that they don't care, although they not all the same (Dineo).

She indicated that support from the village is not always continuous nor is it predictable. Dineo spoke about having had to set clear boundaries for her village.

> So I think my husband and I have always been clear about doing things a particular way and the extended family knows, so they'll share their ideas, but it's almost like there's always a certain boundary where they know okay, here no further. I think the difficulties we had, in the beginning, been with our mothers (Dineo).

Some mothers felt judged by the village if they don't live up to the 'village's' parenting expectations, and as a result have decided to things their own way, which sometimes appeared to have the implication of alienating the 'village'. Kefilwe is one of the mothers who shared feeling judged by the village and sometimes feeling unsure about to what extent should she take in what they say.

> …there's no formula to parenting, I've taken that you do what you have to do with the situation you're in. At times, um, especially with me I'm married, I have... already there's, uhm, expectations from my in-laws because they want their heir or their son to... um, their grandson to be a certain way, there's certain standards according to their surnames and what-not on how they...but life does not work like that. That has taught me that, as much as you can want to be the best mother what does that mean to anyone? (Kefilwe)

Thus, the village was reviewed as both a challenge but a welcomed intervention when needed.

Perceptions of mothering in culture and context

Inner-city context: Nyaope

A specific inner city contextual challenge that the mothers reported was the high prevalence of substance abuse amongst the youth. Nyaope is a significant problem in this community and it emerged as a serious concern for the mothers in the interviews. Nyaope is an illegal drug that is also commonly known in South Africa as Whonga, and it is locally produced in the streets of South Africa (Houghton House, 2018). It is a Heroin based cocktail of drugs including ephedrine, cleaning chemicals, detergents, arsenic and antiretrovirals amongst many other similar products (Houghton House, 2018). It is sold cheaply and it is problematic in most communities in South Africa. When the mothers spoke about bad mothering, they

associated bad mothering with nyaope use and addiction amongst the youth. Four participants made mention of nyaope use as a serious and unwanted consequence to bad parenting.

When one of the participants was asked what does having a good mother do for a child, she replied that it keeps them away from social-ills like nyaope. Her story about how to help these children suggested that she feel that the problem may be exacerbated by the rejection these children experience from their families due to addiction:

> You need to call the child in and maybe invite them in the house for dinner and get them very close to you and do not always treat them like you expect them to steal from you, especially because of the illness of whonga/nyaope, these children come in and steal in the house and go sell in the streets (Nthabiseng).

Kefilwe, however, questioned whether bad mothering alone accounts for nyaope addiction. While she pointed out that bad mothering can result in a child being a nyaope smoker, she also expressed that it does not mean that another child who grew up with a bad parent cannot become a lawyer.

Azania felt that mothers should be assisted to be better mothers, as the consequences of the community not helping a 'bad mother' become a 'good mother' is a child becoming a nyaope addict: "They need to know if there are certain things you don't do for the child or if you don't talk to the child, that's why these days you find that there is a lot of children who smoke nyaope, and some end up in jail and some die…" (Azania).

Culture as a source of belonging, values and respect

The terms culture and ethnicity were used interchangeably by the participants. In this context, the mothers' felt that one's ethnic identity and the norms within that ethnicity determine one's cultural orientation. Culture in this context appeared to be used by these mothers as a tool to help an infant to develop an identity. All participants spoke about the importance of a family to teach their children who they are, specifically in relation to the culture and ethnic background from which they come. Culture therefore is crucial to give a child a sense of belonging. Azania spoke about how her six children have different fathers from different cultural backgrounds, and therefore she tells each child at an individual level the need to know their respective father's culture. As a result, this participant buys her children cultural regalia of their respective cultures (defined by the father's culture), as a way to get them in touch with their identities. Azania also explained that one day when one of her children gets married, culturally they are expected to take on the husband's surname and subsequently also adopt the husband's ethnic identity and practice his culture.

> …culture is very important, even if it is not mine. Like for example, if my girl child would to get married, whichever culture she is marrying in she should practice it. If it is a Tswana person, Tswana people have their own way of doing things, you see? She must see that she carries on the culture (Azania).

They also felt that culture taught them values and principles that could also make their children better people. Zinzile reports that "Culture helped me grow up to being a woman

who behaves well until I got married. I behaved well until the time came for me to be lobola'd and then I got married. It moulded me, because in our culture you not allowed to sleep with a man until you married" (Zinzile).All participants reflected on the role of respect in their cultures and the fundamental part it plays in child development, and the need for them to teach it to their children. The mothers first shared their personal experiences as to how respect was taught and modelled to them at a young age and what a significant impact it has had in their own lives as adults. The common theme that resonated with most of the participants was the importance of passing this value on to their children so they can pass it on to the generation after them. When Zinzile was asked what values would she like to pass on to her children, she said the following: "That they should be children that respect, also a child that listens at school and respects elders, the elders which they will encounter" (Zinzile).

Challenging traditional and cultural gender-roles

Despite some clear reverence for tradition and culture, mothers' in the study chose to reflect particularly on the manner in which they feel challenged by culture. A predominant theme in this regard was the need for them to challenge traditional and cultural gender-roles. Azania shared how gender roles prevented mothers historically from receiving education. However, now her children have the chance to acquire education, her wish is for her children to get an education so that they can encourage their children to pursue education as well.

The other mothers' critique of culture centred on the idea that mothers should stay at home and look after the children. The mothers expressed their discomfort with the idea of being domesticated for child rearing, and further added that in recent times, it is difficult to have one person as a provider/breadwinner for the family. In addition, mothers expressed that life has changed significantly from the time they were growing up. They reported that historically, husbands and wives would stay married and raise nuclear families and now mothers find themselves being single parents and solely working for their children. Contrary to the idea that mothers should be 'stay at home mothers', Nthabiseng expressed that culture appears to have shifted and now expects mothers to be multi-taskers - to take care of their children and the household expenses. Nthabiseng reported that she finds it impossible to live up to all those cultural expectations, and as a result, she feels oppressed by culture. Dineo shared her sentiments that culture excuses a lot of men from parenting their children and she feels like that needs to change. Nthabiseng reported below that woman are often the ones having to take care of most household responsibilities and men just give orders:

> …the family structure in black cultures is different. It's very feminine, but somehow we supposed to succumb to patriarchal values. Whereas even if we go to the Eastern Cape in December, the house is going to be full of women, but somehow I'm supposed to understand when something is supposed to be done a certain way because men said so? (Nthabiseng).

These mothers' narratives clearly echoed a uniform voice that there are gendered aspects of their cultures that are unfair to women, particularly those who become mothers. These

mothers all felt that gendered aspects of culture need to be re-evaluated and subsequently should not be values passed on to the next generation.

Discussion

The results obtained in the study demonstrate that the models of motherhood promoted in Winnicott's (1960) theory of the good enough mother and in the current neuroscience research converge more than they diverge with the inner city Johannesburg mothers' perceptions of 'good enough' mothering. Although there are shared constructions of motherhood across the models, there are important areas of tension and divergence which were, for the most part, related to culturally and contextually embedded social and socio-economic factors.

Johannesburg inner city mothers' perceptions of a good mother

From the participants' narratives, a model of a 'good' mother could be constructed. A good mother was described as a mother who gives her children love. In this particular context, love was strongly associated with 'keeping the child' in a literal sense, and also materially providing for the child. A 'good' mother is involved and present in her children's life, with a particular focus on the child's school life. A 'good' mother teaches her child about the hardships of life in order to promote resilience. They also teach their children to respect their elders and comply with authority, in order to maintain social relationships in the community which are essential for livelihood. A 'good' mother also hides her negative emotions from her children to protect them from hard 'truths'. For the most part these tasks were constructed as the sole responsibility of mothers, however, when other caregivers were mentioned, they were often constructed as needing to be managed. Thus, a 'good' mother needs to negotiate the support that she needs and receives from extended family, neighbours and friends.

Convergences between models

A good Johannesburg inner city mother was described as 'keeping her child', providing for her child, protecting her child and needing the 'touch' of a mother's hand. These ideas converge with Winnicott's (1945) descriptions of a good enough mother being concerned with the child's physical needs, which includes being treated with care, kept warm and being fed. The idea of protection also converges with Winnicott's notion of holding, where the mother's ability to hold the environment for the child and protect the child from 'impingements' facilitates the child's integration into the world (Winnicott, 1960). The physical availability and presence of the mother were also highlighted as characteristics of a good Johannesburg inner city mother, and endorsed culturally. The significance placed on maternal care converges with Winnicott's (1960) theory which also recognizes the importance of the mother in the child's life, especially in early childhood developmental phase.

Neuroscience research has confirmed the significance of the role of the parental caregiving environment in child development (Winter, 2010). This was clearly understood in the narratives of the Johannesburg inner city mothers who were interviewed. A clear link was

made between the characteristics that the child may develop and the manner in which parents behave (Collins, et al., 2000). The quality of care received by children was understood to influence cognitive capacity (as implied in the need for parents to be involved with their children's school work), their emotional development (as implied in the need for children to be respectful to ensure good future relationships), and their coping abilities (as implied in the need for mothers to prepare children for the hardships of life).

The importance of contextual factors such as poverty and on-going violence, which have been found to influence child development (Mathis & Bierman, 2015) were also understood by these mothers. The mothers in this study highlighted the current drug problem amongst the youth and attributed this to bad parenting, suggesting an understanding that parent-child relationships can buffer against contextual risks (Mathis & Bierman, 2015).

The management of negative emotion and the ways in which mothers protect their children also appeared to be areas of convergence between models. Winnicott writes that a 'good enough' mother creates an experience for the infant which is characterized by careful protection and consideration against the potentially harmful nature of reality (Winnicott, 1960). However, he also writes about the importance of developmentally appropriate introduction of reality to the child, through optimal maternal failure. He suggests that a good enough mother is a parent who recognizes the vulnerability of their child, and also a parent who to a considerable extent allows the child to express their emotions whether positive or negative in a safe environment (Winnicott, 1960). The neuroscience literature also advocates for allowing children healthy expression of emotion and protecting children from the dysregulative effects of the parents' negative emotions (Hughes & Baylin, 2012). All the mothers in this study felt strongly about physically and emotionally protecting their children against the potentially harmful nature of reality, in that they felt it important to protect children from their own negative emotion and to hide information that was deemed potentially painful (relating to their father's absence).

Divergences between models

While many convergences between the models were evident in general understandings of what constitutes 'good' parenting, divergences emerged in the ways that particular characteristics of a 'good' mother were understood and how mothering is performed. In the mothers' narratives the concept of 'holding' (Winnicott, 1960), as a means of protecting the development of the child's brain in the first 5 years of a child's life (Hughes & Baylin, 2012), was understood to be more physical than emotional. The mothers put emphasis on physical holding, namely, keeping the infant, feeding the infant and providing for their basic material needs.

Winnicott (1960) highlighted the importance of communicating love to the infant and offering ego-support in the form of maternal care to facilitate the development of a healthy child. Although the mothers in this study expressed a similar notion, their definitions of love and subsequent expression of love appeared different to the view offered by Winnicott. For Winnicott, love is communicated through holding and feeding the infant, giving the infant

attention, affection, support, guidance, encouragement and responsiveness (Adams, 2006). For these mothers communicating love meant 'keeping the child' and not aborting the child or giving the child up for adoption. In addition, providing materially for the child was seen as an expression of love. Only one mother referred to physical affection in her description of what children need in order to develop along a healthy trajectory. Thus, these theories converge when it comes to some instrumental expressions of love but seem to diverge when it comes to the emotional expression of love. It is pertinent that some of these mothers expressed concerns about not being able to provide for their children in the capacity that they feel they should. They expressed experiencing a lack of resources, such as not having enough money for their basic necessities such as food, appropriate shelter or money for their children's education. These kinds of stressors have been shown to impact parental emotional availability, as a parental preoccupation with the provision of basic necessities can leave very little time and energy for emotional sensitivity (Murali & Oyebode, 2004; Gill, Koleilat & Whaley, 2018). Maternal presence was constructed in similar ways. In the narratives, the importance of the mother being present was linked to the need for a mother to teach the child about dangers and hardships. There was evidence of more authoritarian parenting styles (Barbarin & Richter, 2013). Maternal emotional presence was not emphasised in the narratives and seemed to be challenged by contextual factors.

The construction of presence as protection and teaching, while likely appropriate for a high-risk context, may also be defensive, as at least half of the participants expressed feelings of guilt about the lack of time spent with their children. The participants with higher levels of education experienced guilt in relation to the impact of their work and studies on their capacity to be physically and emotionally present, which suggests that education levels may be associated with higher levels of exposure to more Western, intensive models of parenting available online and in parenting literature. The participant with the least time available for her child did not express any guilt. In her circumstances, it appears that she has had to adjust her idea of a 'good' mother. By holding down a job in Johannesburg that entails long shifts, she is able to financially support her mother and her children. It appears that many mothers make adjustments to their motherhood roles to accommodate contextual realities, such as the need to earn money, many still experienced guilt in relation to internally-held, more idealised constructions of motherhood, most often expressed in relation to a wish to be different to their own mothers, some of whom had been experienced as absent.

The facilitation of the development of resilience in children also appeared to be understood differently in this sample of mothers. While some convergence was evident around the importance of allowing children to struggle with problem solving and challenges in order to build resilience (Hughes & Baylin, 2012), the mothers in this study tended to take a more didactic approach, rather emphasising the importance of telling children about the 'hard realities' of life to prepare them for the real world. While neuroscience has evidenced the importance of sensitive, nurturing caregiving and emotional security as essential for the development of resilience (Masten & Barnes, 2018), which are facilitated through responsive communication (Theiss, 2018), communication in these narratives appeared more often to be dismissive with the intention to control children's behaviour. Good communication was not

constructed as reciprocal, which may be linked to traditional African notions of the need for children to respect their elders (Bray et al., 2010).

While the views of Winnicott, neuroscience and these Johannesburg mothers converged around the importance of protecting vulnerable children, the ways that this were done appeared different in some of the narratives. Neuroscience recommends the modelling of constructive affect regulation: "The way that parents express their own emotion and respond to children's affective expressions establishes a model for effectively managing emotions in response to adversity, which can help bolster resilience" (Theiss, 2018, p. 10). Some of the mothers indicated the need to hide their own negative emotions from their children, which suggests less constructive expression of parental emotion and perhaps, at times, more dismissive coping styles. While these styles of emotional coping are commonly found in individuals from lower socio-economic groups (Bakermans-Kranenburg & van Ijzendoorn, 2010), the hiding of negative maternal emotion has also been found to be culturally mediated.

Mothering in the Johannesburg inner city: The influence of shifting culture and context

When looking closely at the real life of mothers in the inner city Johannesburg context and the ideal of intensive mothering as outlined by Winnicott and the neuroscience literature, one is able to deduce that intensive mothering requires from the mother tremendous commitment. These commitments include but are not limited to time, and a great deal of physical, emotional, and financial resources from mothers (Dow, 2016). It is clear that at times, these requirements directly conflict with these mothers' work requirements in the city, and at other points with normative cultural and context-driven expectations of motherhood. This brings to the fore ambivalences of motherhood.

The mothers found culture both helpful and constraining. This was a prevalent theme in the data. The mothers were able to reflect that culture had taught them to be multi-taskers which gives them a sense of pride; to be able to manage both work and the household. In addition, all participants were in agreement that culture has taught them valuable ideals, such as respect and the preservation of culture, which is something they would like to pass on to their children. On the other hand, culture was also experienced as quite constraining by the mothers. There was a strong need expressed to challenge existing traditional and cultural gender roles. They critiqued cultural pressure for women to stay in the home as soon as they become mothers and leave behind their work life. These views converge with some feminist writing that has also challenged hegemonic ideologies in society that influence women's work and family decisions (Dow, 2016). Feminist theory critiques ideologies that suggest that a mother's primary responsibility is childrearing and a father's role is to be a breadwinner (Fox, 2015). Thus, it appears that globalisation and increased inter-cultural contact that allows for ideas from other cultures to be assimilated, together with economic pressures on women to work, such as high rates of absent fathers (Makusha et al., 2019) and the increasing cost of living, seem to be shifting gender roles. In this transition, conflicting cultural ideals then appear to be experienced, for example, African mothers as multi-taskers versus African

mothers as stay at home mothers, both of which are culturally condoned. Interestingly, these same tensions are reported in the literature on Western mothers' experiences of hegemonic ideologies about motherhood, where the idea that motherhood cannot be combined with paid employment is being challenged (Dow, 2016).

The pressures exerted by cultural expectations of mothers on the mothers in this study mirror feminist critiques of Winnicott's theory and the intensive mothering models currently supported in current neuroscience research (Dow, 2016, Fox, 2015). Three of the seven mothers expressed opinions that models of mothering endorsed by society are mother blaming. They shared that they feel that in the unfortunate case that the child does not grow up to be healthy, happy and successful, that the mother is unjustifiably held solely responsible by society for this outcome. It is notable that the mothers who felt this way were the mothers who had a higher level of education than the other four mothers. The other four mothers' ideas about the role of a mother appeared to be more strongly influenced by culture. They believed to varying extents, that mothers are responsible for the healthy development of their children. This was also evidenced in the notable lack of comments on the role of the father in child care. Thus, although there was an expressed need to challenge cultural expectations of mothers, the participants' narratives, for the most part, appeared to align with strongly held cross-cultural prescriptions that the mother should be the primary caregiver and hold most responsibility for child rearing. Maternal ambivalence was also notably subtle in these mothers' narratives. The culturally endorsed prescription that a mother should not be disappointed with motherhood or, even worse, the child (Rotkirch & Janhunen, 2010), appeared to be strong, with only one mother expressing a hint of maternal ambivalence about her motherhood.

Ambivalent feelings about the notion of the 'village' – the culturally endorsed system of support for parenting – appeared easier to express. The mother reported finding the support offered by the 'village' as helpful but difficult to manage. All the mothers seemed to appreciate the help from family members and extended community for child rearing, however, they seemed also to unequivocally value autonomy with regards to how they choose to parent. It was apparent from the participants' narratives that while the concept of a 'village' is culturally condoned and contextually useful for many of the mothers, it was experienced by the mothers, at times, as intrusive and not allowing them to make independent decisions when it comes to the well-being of their children; some of the mothers felt that setting boundaries for their 'village', or extended family, was necessary. Again, this shift toward the more Western notion that mothering should occur in a self-sufficient nuclear family (Dow, 2016), reflects some cultural assimilation and the challenging of cultural norms.

Although the mothers seemed to all irrefutably concur with Winnicott that there is no such thing as a perfect mother, it is worth noting that the mothers in this study also seemed to have set high expectations of themselves as parents. Although this was not explicitly mentioned, it was an implicit theme in the results. The mothers rarely made reference to parenting mistakes they made, but rather referred to their struggles with trying to do everything they can to keep their children happy and manage the village that helps raise the children. Mothering for these

women emerged as a lonely endeavour, exacerbated by cultural expectations, unhelpful 'villages' and absent (even when financially present) fathers.

Limitations

It obviously cannot be claimed that a generalizable model of local mothering can be developed from 7 interviews. The participants represent a very small sample of the target population. Therefore caution must be applied, as the findings cannot be generalized to the general population of mothers (Babbie, 2013). Also, all the mothers interviewed for this study were employed or in a supportive partnership, hence the experiences of mothers living below the poverty line are not represented in this sample.

Another limitation of the study is that the current study's interview schedule was in English and during the interview some of the participants where not proficient in the English language, and therefore the researcher had to translate the interview questions during the interview, and subsequently translate the transcripts. This may be problematic in studies that use perceptions as the target of analysis primary because there are seldom direct, one-to-one correlations between words, their meanings, and their subtle suggestions in different languages (Temple & Young, 2004). Consequently, although careful translation with a back translation technique was employed, the three participants whose data was translated may have lost meaning due to word differences between the languages.

Clinical implications and recommendations for future research

It is recommended that future studies focus on a broadened scope of Black African mothers in order to allow for further diversity in the experiences of mothers to be meaningfully captured. However, this study suggests that although motherhood appears to embody some core features cross-culturally, the way that these are understood and performed is highly influenced by culture and context. The most pertinent tension identified is the pressure that mothers face navigating changing gender roles amidst conflicting culturally prescribed mothering ideologies. There is a need to critique cultural and gender expectations, especially those that are centred on paid and family work on the basis that they make the contemporary experience of mothering difficult (Swenson & Zvonkovic, 2016). This view subsequently suggests that families, particularly in the inner city Johannesburg context, need to reconstruct the meaning they ascribe to parenting to better their lived experiences of motherhood.

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