

**Single and married mother-preadolescent relationships:
Understanding and comparing the interaction between self-
esteem and family functioning**

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the Department of Psychology, in the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences,
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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study was to assess the psychological well-being of mothers and their preadolescent children (aged 10 to 12). Specifically, the study used a mixed methods sequential explanatory design to compare and understand the interaction between 245 single and married mother-preadolescent relationships with regard to self-esteem, autonomously-supportive and psychologically controlling parenting practices and their familial environment within low and high socio-economic settings.

A qualitative component was used to explore mothers' understanding of their relationships with their preadolescent children. The Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory and the Satisfaction with Life Scale were used to assess the psychological well-being of mothers and children, the Perceptions of Parents Scale for autonomously-supportive maternal parenting practices, Parent Psychological Control for psychologically controlling parenting practices and the Family Environment Scale for family functioning. The mean age of the children was 11 years, while the mean grade level was grade 5. There were more female (65%) than male (35%) participants with the majority belonging to the Coloured (57%) race group. The results indicated that both mothers and preadolescents were psychologically well with the majority having medium to high self-esteem levels and being satisfied with their lives regardless of marital and socio-economic status. There was a significant positive relationship between mother and preadolescent self-esteem levels. Mothers used more autonomous-supportive rather than psychologically controlling parenting practices. Families were perceived as being more cohesive, had less conflict, were more organised, more achievement orientated and had more control. A hierarchical regression analysis indicated that socio-economic status, psychologically controlling

maternal parenting practices and how satisfied a child is with his or her life were the strongest predictors of child self-esteem. The findings are significant for understanding the differences between single and married as well as low and high socio-economic status mothers, the psychological well-being of preadolescence as a developmental stage, the mother and preadolescent relationship and family functioning within a post-apartheid South African context. The findings provide an understanding of how healthy families function within enhancing and hindering environments and emphasises the importance of parenting. Recommendations are provided for the maintenance of psychological well-being of mothers, children and families in South Africa. The limitations of the study set a cautionary tone for the interpretation of the quantitative results. The implications of the limitations for this

study are discussed.



DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted it at any university for a degree.



.....

Signature: Nicolette V. Roman

February 2008

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis

to *GOD*,

the creator of life,

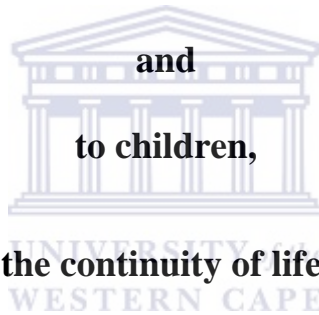
to *MOTHERS*,

the bearers of life

and

to children,

the continuity of life.



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Thank you God, for providing me with the grace, blessings and passion to complete my journey and in the process of completing my journey enabling me to make a difference in the lives of others.

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Definitions of keywords

Self-esteem:

Self-esteem is the adult's ability to know and accept who he or she is and feel competent enough to face the challenges which life has to offer. With regard to children, self-esteem is the child's practical application of the satisfaction of knowing who he or she is and wants in life over time (Roman, 2003; Statt, 2003).

Mother-child relationship:

The strength of the relationship between a mother and a child is based on the type of communication between the mother and the child which can either be nurturing or non-nurturing; accepting or non-accepting; dominant or confusing; overprotecting and overindulging (Bigner, 1998; Hartley-Brewer, 1996; Pervin & John, 2001).

Single mothers:

A single-parent family system can be created in several ways: (1) divorce, desertion, or separation of the adults; (2) death of an adult; or (3) never married mothers.

Socio-economic Status:

A continuous index based on one or more variables applied at either an individual or higher level (Higgs, 2002). Furthermore, the identification, development and measurement of socio-economic status may include various variables such as occupational status, education, income, material consumption, assets or wealth and family structure (Barbarin and Richter, 2001; Bornstein, Hahn, Suwalsky & Haynes, 2003; Mfenyana, et al., 2006).

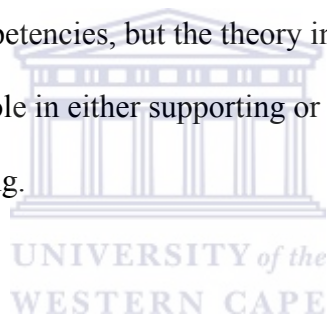
Preadolescence

The stage of Middle Childhood falls between the ages of 10 and 12 years. This stage is also known as the pre-pubescent or pre-adolescent stage. It starts when the child

enters school and ends with the start of puberty. The developmental changes in early childhood are integrated in middle childhood so that the child may prepare him/herself for adolescence and adulthood (Seifert, Hoffnung & Hoffnung, 2000).

Self Determination Theory

An organismic and dialectical framework for the study of personality and development thus arguing that humans have natural, innate and constructive tendencies to develop an ever more elaborated and unified sense of self (Deci & Ryan, 2004: 5; Van Steenkiste, 2005). The theory of Self-Determination (Deci and Ryan, 1985) holds that an individual has the capacity and need to have choices. An individual also has the capacity and a need to allow these choices to determine his/her actions and develop into competencies, but the theory in addition maintains that the environment plays a crucial role in either supporting or hindering the quality of an individual's human functioning.



Autonomy

According to Chirkov, et al. (2003:98) "A person is autonomous when his/her behaviour is experienced as willingly enacted and when he or she fully endorses (supports or approves) the actions in which he or she is engaged and/or the values expressed by them". Autonomy is different to independence which is "the circumstances of not relying on others for support, help or supplies".

Autonomy-supportive Parenting Practices

Autonomy-supportive parenting was formulated by Grolnick and Ryan (1989) which is the parents' (mothers') ability to be supportive, involved and to provide structure in the process of parenting children without being controlling.

Psychologically Controlling Parenting

Controlling parenting is defined as “control attempts that intrude into the psychological and emotional development of the child (e.g. thinking processes, self-expression, emotions and attachment to parents)” (Barber, 1996: 3296).

Satisfaction with Life

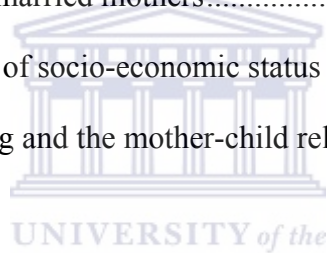
Satisfaction with life is the extent to which an individual is satisfied with his/her life as a whole (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985).



TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 BACKGROUND	1
1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY	2
1.3 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT	8
1.4 THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	9
1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	12
1.6 A STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS CHAPTERS	13
1.7 CONCLUSION	16
CHAPTER 2	18
A THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF SELF-ESTEEM WITHIN THE MOTHER-PREADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIP	18
2.1 INTRODUCTION	18
2.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SELF	19
2.3 A THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE DEVELOPING SELF	20
2.3.1 Psychosocial theory	20
2.3.2 Self-determination theory (SDT)	23
2.3.2.1 Psychological needs	24
2.3.2.2 Intrinsic motivation and internalisation	27
2.3.3 The effects of the environment on the self	29
2.3.4 Parenting	29
2.3.4.1 Parenting styles	31
2.3.4.2 Parenting practices	36
2.3.5 Family Environment	43

2.4	SELF-ESTEEM AS AN INDICATOR OF PERSONAL FUNCTIONING	49
2.4.1	Self-esteem as an indicator of child outcomes in association with family functioning	53
2.4.2	Self-esteem and satisfaction with life	57
2.5	CONCLUSION	58
	CHAPTER 3	60
	THE CHALLENGES OF MOTHERING PREADOLESCENTS	60
3.1	INTRODUCTION	60
3.2	THE CHALLENGES OF MOTHERHOOD	61
3.2.1	The history of South African mothers	65
3.2.2	Marital status as a stereotype of mothering	70
3.2.2.1	Single versus married mothers.....	71
3.2.2.2	The challenge of socio-economic status	77
3.2.2.2.1	SES, well-being and the mother-child relationship	82
3.2.3	Support	85
3.3	UNDERSTANDING PREADOLESCENTS	88
3.3.1	Parenting preadolescents	93
3.4	THE CHALLENGES FOR MOTHERS IN SOUTH AFRICA	96
3.5	CONCLUSION	98
	CHAPTER 4	100
	METHODOLOGY	100
4.1	INTRODUCTION	100
4.2	A MIXED METHODS (MM) RESEARCH DESIGN	101
4.2.1	A Pragmatic Approach	102
4.2.2	Different Mixed Methods Designs	107
4.2.2.1	Sequential Designs.....	112



4.2.2.2	Concurrent Designs.....	113
4.2.3	Strengths and Weaknesses of Using a Mixed Methods Approach	114
4.3	RESEARCH DESIGN OF THE CURRENT STUDY	115
4.3.1	Location of Study	117
4.3.2	Participants	118
4.3.2.1	Quantitative Sampling	119
4.3.2.2	Qualitative Sampling	120
4.4	DATA COLLECTION STRATEGY	121
4.4.1	Quantitative Measurements	121
4.4.1.1	Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI):.....	122
4.4.1.2	The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985).....	123
4.4.1.3	Family Environment Scale (3 rd ed.) (Moos & Moos 2002):.....	124
4.4.1.4	Demographic Questionnaire	125
4.4.1.5	Perceptions of Parents Scale (POPS).....	126
4.4.1.6	Parental Psychological Control (Barber, 1996)	126
4.4.2	Qualitative measurement	127
4.4.2.1	Pilot Study.....	127
4.4.2.2	Pilot sample.....	128
4.4.2.2.1	Participants in pilot study 1.....	128
4.4.2.2.2	<i>Children</i>	128
4.4.2.2.3	<i>Mothers</i>	128
4.4.2.3	Pilot data collection process.....	129
4.4.2.4	Results and changes after the pilot study 1	132
4.4.2.5	Participants in pilot study 2.....	133
4.4.3	DATA COLLECTION OF MAIN STUDY	134

4.4.3.1	Phase 1: Quantitative component.....	134
4.4.3.2	Phase 2: Qualitative component.....	135
4.5	DATA ANALYSIS	136
4.5.1	Phase 1: Quantitative analysis	136
4.5.2	Phase 2: Qualitative analysis	139
4.6	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	140
4.7	CONCLUSION	141
	CHAPTER 5	143
	QUANTITATIVE RESULTS	143
5.1	INTRODUCTION	143
5.2	SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS	144
5.2.1	Demographical data for mothers and children	145
5.2.1.1	Age distribution of mothers and children	145
5.2.1.2	Educational level.....	148
5.2.1.3.1	Marital status, Race and Language	149
5.3	SECTION 2: PERSONAL FUNCTIONING	151
5.3.1	Self-esteem of mothers and children	152
5.3.2	Mother and child satisfaction with life	156
5.4.	SECTION 3: FAMILY FUNCTIONING	162
5.4.1	Socio-economic Status	163
5.4.2.	Family Environment	164
5.4.2.1	Intercorrelations between mothers' and children's perception of the family environment.....	166
5.4.2.2.	Family environment: Cohesion (Coh)	168
5.4.2.3.	Family environment: Expressiveness (Express)	169
5.4.2.4	Family environment: Conflict.....	170

5.4.2.5.	Family environment: Organisation (Org)	170
5.4.2.6.	Family environment: Achievement Orientation (AO).....	171
5.4.2.7.	Family environment: Control.....	172
5.4.2.8.	Family environment: Independence (Indep).....	173
5.4.2	Maternal Parenting Practices	174
5.5	SECTION 4: THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PERSONAL FUNCTIONING and FAMILY FUNCTIONING	179
5.5.1	Socio-economic status and self-esteem	179
5.5.2	Socio-economic status and satisfaction with life	180
5.5.3	Family Environment and Personal Functioning	181
5.5.3.1	Cohesion, self-esteem and satisfaction with life.....	181
5.5.3.2.1	Expressiveness, self-esteem and satisfaction with life	183
5.5.3.3	Organisation, self-esteem and satisfaction with life	184
5.5.3.4	Achievement Orientation, self-esteem and satisfaction with life	185
5.5.3.5.1	Independence, self-esteem and satisfaction with life.....	186
5.5.3.6	Control, self-esteem and satisfaction with life.....	187
5.5.3.7	Conflict, self-esteem and satisfaction with life.....	188
5.5.3	Parenting practices, self-esteem and satisfaction with life	189
5.6	PREDICTING EFFECTS FOR CHILD SELF-ESTEEM	192
5.7	CONCLUSION	194
	CHAPTER 6	196
	QUALITATIVE RESULTS	196
6.1	INTRODUCTION	196
6.2	PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS	196
6.3	THEMES	199
6.3.1	MOTHERHOOD AND MOTHERING	201

<i>Defining motherhood</i>	201
<i>Motherhood as real</i>	204
<i>Motherhood as perfect</i>	205
6.3.2 MOTHER-PREADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIP	206
<i>Challenges and happy experiences</i>	206
<i>Strengths and weaknesses</i>	212
<i>Early childhood and preadolescence</i>	215
<i>Changes to the mother-child relationship</i>	219
<i>Mothers' future expectations</i>	220
6.3.3 FAMILY OF ORIGIN	222
<i>The factors in the family of origin</i>	223
<i>Relationship with own mother</i>	226
<i>A comparison</i>	229
<i>Changed view of mother</i>	231
6.3.4 SUPPORT	233
<i>Type of support</i>	234
<i>Ideal or not</i>	237
6.3.5 THE SIGNIFICANT OTHER	238
<i>Type of discipline and caring</i>	239
<i>Mothers' perceptions of the relationship</i>	242
<i>Influence of significant other upon the child</i>	244
6.4 CONCLUSION	245
CHAPTER 7	247
DISCUSSION	247
7.1 INTRODUCTION	247
7.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE FINDINGS	247



7.3	MOTHERS AND PREADOLESCENTS: PERSONAL FUNCTIONING	248
7.3.1	Mother and child psychological well-being	251
7.3.2	Single versus married mother-child well-being	252
7.3.3	Socio-economic status (SES) and mother-child well-being	254
7.4	MOTHERS AND PREADOLESCENTS: FAMILIAL INTERACTION	258
7.4.1	Maternal parenting practices	258
7.4.2	Family environment	262
7.4.2.1	Family environment and psychological well-being	264
7.5	THE EFFECTS ON CHILD SELF-ESTEEM	267
7.6	LIMITATIONS	270
7.6.1	Sampling	270
7.6.2	Instruments	270
7.6.3	Data collection	271
7.6.4	Missing data	271
7.6.5	Generalisability	271
	CHAPTER 8	272
	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	272
8.1	CONCLUSION	272
8.2	RECOMMENDATIONS	274
	APPENDIX A	i
	APPENDIX B	iii
	APPENDIX C	iv
	APPENDIX D	xii
	APPENDIX E	xx



LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1	The differences between quantitative and qualitative research	100
Table 4.2	Reliability of Questionnaires for pilot 1	129
Table 4.3	Reliability of Children Questionnaires for pilot 2	131
Table 5.1	Mothers' age as a function of marital status and SES	142
Table 5.2	Children's age and gender as a function of mothers' marital status and SES	144
Table 5.3	Mothers' educational level as a function of their marital status and their SES	145
Table 5.4	Children's grade level as a function of their mothers' marital status and SES level	145
Table 5.5	Mothers' marital status, race and language for married and single mothers and mothers living in high and low socio-economic environments	147
Table 5.6	Children's first language as a function of the marital status and the SES level of their mothers	148
Table 5.7	Frequency of mothers and children with high, medium and low levels of self-esteem in the total group and in the four subgroups	150
Table 5.8	Correlations between mothers' and children's self-esteem	151
Table 5.9	Mean level of mothers' and children's self-esteem as a function of mothers' marital status and SES level	152
Table 5.10	Frequency of each of the seven degrees of satisfaction points for mothers and children (for the total group and for each of the four subgroups)	153
Table 5.11	Correlations between mothers' life satisfaction and self-esteem	154
Table 5.12	Mean scores and SD for life satisfaction and self-esteem for the total group of mothers and for the subgroups of mothers	155
Table 5.13	Correlations between children's life satisfaction and self-esteem	156
Table 5.13bis	Intercorrelations between mothers' and children's scores for self-esteem (S.E.) and satisfaction with life (SWL)	157
Table 5.14	Children's Mean scores and SD for life satisfaction and self-esteem as a function of mothers' marital status and SES level	158

Table 5.15	Marital status and SES	160
Table 5.16:	The frequencies of mothers and children scoring high or low for the family environment scales	162
Table 5.17	Correlations between mothers' and children's perception of the family environment	163
Table 5.18	Mothers' and children's scores for cohesion as a function of marital status (MS) and SES	165
Table 5.19	Mothers' and children's scores for expressiveness as a function of marital status and SES	166
Table 5.20	Mothers' and children's scores for conflict as a function of marital status and SES	167
Table 5.21	Mothers' and children's scores for family organisation as a function of marital status and SES	168
Table 5.22	Mothers' and children's scores for achievement orientation as a function of marital status and SES	169
Table 5.23	Mothers' and children's scores for control as a function of marital status and SES	170
Table 5.24	Mothers' and children's scores for independence as a function of marital status and SES	171
Table 5.25	Relative frequency of children's perception of mothers' autonomy support (MAS) as high or low	172
Table 5.26	Children's perception of mother's autonomy support (MAS) as a function of mothers' marital status and SES	173
Table 5.27	Relative frequency of children's perception of mother's psychological control as high or low	173
Table 5.28	Children's perception of mother's psychological control as a function of mothers' marital status and SES	175
Table 5.29	Correlations between mother and child self-esteem and SES	176
Table 5.30	Mother-child satisfaction with life and SES	178
Table 5.31	Correlations of cohesion with self-esteem and satisfaction with life	179
Table 5.32	Correlations of expressiveness with self-esteem and satisfaction with life	180
Table 5.33	Correlations of organisation with self-esteem and satisfaction with life	181

Table 5.34	Correlations of achievement orientation with self-esteem and satisfaction with life	182
Table 5.35	Correlations of independence with self-esteem and satisfaction with life	183
Table 5.36	Correlations of control with self-esteem and satisfaction with life	184
Table 5.37	Correlations of conflict with self-esteem and satisfaction with life	185
Table 5.38	Correlations of children's perception of mothers' autonomy-supportive parenting practices and involvement with children's self-esteem and satisfaction with life	186
Table 5.39	Correlations of children's perception of maternal psychological control with their self-esteem and satisfaction with life	187
Table 5.40	Correlations between family environment and parenting	188
Table 5.41	Regression analysis predicting child self-esteem	190



LIST OF FIGURES

	Pg
Figure 1.1 A model of the mother-preadolescent relationship	7
Figure 2.1 Moos & Moos (2002) dimensions of the family environment	43
Figure 4.1 Sequential and Concurrent Designs	108
Figure 4.2 An illustration of different mixed method designs	111
Figure 5.1 The prevalence rates of mothers and child self-esteem across the groups	150
Figure 5.3 Distribution of socio-economic status	161



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The interest in the present study was founded on a previous study by the present researcher at Master's level. The study showed that there was a positive relationship between the self-esteem levels of single mothers and their children in a low socio-economic environment (Roman, 2003). This subsequently elicited questions such as "Would the same be true for married mothers?", or, "Could the socio-economic status of both single and married mothers be the reason for low or high self-esteem levels?" and, if so, "How could two individuals with the same socio-economic status have different self-esteem levels?", or, "Are parenting practices perhaps the link in mother-child self-esteem levels?"

In retrospect, these questions led to a search of South African literature, which highlighted one study conducted by Mahabeer (1993) with no relationship between mother and child self-esteem scores. Mahabeer's study had also been conducted in a low socio-economic environment. Other studies conducted in South Africa (Seran, 2002; Taljaard, 2000; Wallis & Price, 2003) were qualitative and projected Motherhood from the perspective of working mothers and the impact motherhood had on their careers. Studies conducted by Jeannes (2002) and Taljaard (2000) provided insight into women's experiences of motherhood as well as the prevailing gender role inequality present in South Africa. The literary search extended to international studies where a vast amount of studies concerning mother-child emotional well-being and specifically self-esteem had been conducted.

Various international studies (Brody, et. al., 2002; Rosenberg 1984; Shelton, 1990; Skuy, Koeberg & Fridjhon, 1997) indicated that mother psychological well-being was important for, and was related to, child psychological adjustment and development. Specifically, Verschueren and Marcoen (1999; 2002) found that a child's positive sense of self was better predicted by the quality of the child-mother attachment than by the quality of the child-father attachment. Similarly, Grolnick and Ryan (1989) found that because mothers were more involved with their children than fathers, the mother-child, rather than the father-child relationship, accounted for achievement, competence and some aspects of behavioural adjustment of their children. The literary search provided the answers, but the question remained "Are these findings conclusive for an environment in South Africa where the phenomenon of the extended family prevails?" Certainly, many individuals have evolved as emotionally well-adapted adults although they had come from dire home environments as children.

1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

All people are born from a mother and in most cases this becomes the first form of communication and example of relationship formation. The interactional relationship between mother and child enables a process of socialisation. During the process of socialisation children internalise the roles, rules, values and morals pertinent to the family and wider community in which they live (DeGenova and Rice, 2002; Calhoun, Light and Keller, 1997). The concern is that as children internalise the roles, rules, values and morals, they could in fact internalise the self-esteem levels of their mothers too.

Self-esteem is important as it provides a fair indication of not only what we know about ourselves, but also the psychological well-being of individuals and how

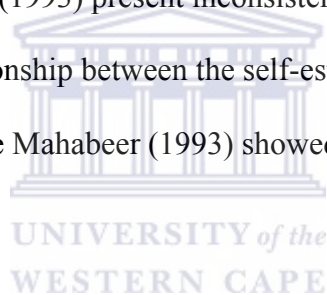
individuals could progress in life. The findings of global self-esteem levels are normally presented as high or low, negative or positive (De Witt & Booyesen, 1995, 1999; Hartley-Brewer, 1996; Mahabeer, 1993; Rhodes, et. al., 2004; Roman, 2003; Van Der Ross, 1993). Low self-esteem has been linked to a lack of self-respect, motivation, feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, the belief that one is not as good as others and the inability to reach personal potential which can cause pain, distress, breakdown, bad behaviour, relationship problems and even depression (Van Der Ross, 1993; De Witt & Booyesen, 1995; Hartley-Brewer, 1996). High self-esteem has been linked to happiness and general psychological adjustment, which according to Cheng and Furnham (2003: 5) is synonymous with “psychological well-being, mental well-being or subjective well-being”. A pattern is formed in the development of self-esteem from birth to adulthood. During preadolescence, the first applications of self-esteem are seen as comparisons are made to others.

Preadolescence is a developmental stage within middle childhood, more specifically known as late childhood and/or early adolescence. Literature concerning the phase of middle childhood development is very limited in comparison to early childhood development and the phase of adolescence. The phase of middle childhood development is considered the transitional period of *coregulation*, which is defined by Papalia, Olds and Feldman (2004: 350) as “The transitional stage in the control of behaviour in which parents exercise general supervision and children exercise moment-to-moment self-regulation”. The acquisition of competence is especially important for a healthy developing self during this of phase of development.

In order for the acquisition of skills for social competence and values for becoming independent and responsible adults to occur, children need strong affectionate

relationships, good role models and to be guided or directed in what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour by means of the process of socialisation (Bigner, 1998; Bukatko & Daelher, 1995; Hartley-Brewer, 1996). Children therefore need parents who are “firm and demanding, yet warm, supportive, concerned, interested and active in their guidance” (Roman, 2003: 35). The use of certain parenting practices therefore becomes of paramount importance as children develop and adjust to the environment.

While international studies such as Brody, et. al. (2002); Grolnick and Ryan (1989); Rosenberg (1984); Shelton (1990); Skuy, Koeberg & Fridjhon (1997); Verschueren and Marcoen (1999) 2002) show that mother psychological well-being is important to the psychological well-being of their children, South African studies conducted by Roman (2003) and Mahabeer (1993) present inconsistencies in their findings. Roman (2003) found a positive relationship between the self-esteem of mothers and the self-esteem of their children, while Mahabeer (1993) showed no relationship between mother and child self-esteem.



The mother-child dyad cannot be considered in isolation of positively or negatively contributing psychosocial factors because these factors could impede the child’s ability to interact and integrate the processes of socialisation. Thus, researchers (Bornstein & Bradley, 2003; Duncan & Raudenbush, 1999; McLoyd, 1998) believe that the influence of social environments should also be examined when considering child development, which could include being a single or married mother, having support or lack thereof and high or low socio-economic status.

The purpose of this study was, thus, to highlight and explore the influence of specific psychosocial factors such as family background, being a single mother, how satisfied mothers and children were with their lives, socio-economic status and support which

related either positively or negatively to the self-esteem levels of both married and single mothers and thus the self-esteem of their children. Thus, in a very broad sense, the psychological well-being of single and married mothers and their children was compared and assessed. While psychological well-being is a broad term having different meanings for different people, in this particular study psychological well-being is indicated by self-esteem and satisfaction with life of mothers and their preadolescent children. Concurrently, the study focused on specific parenting practices, which were autonomy-supportive and psychologically controlling maternal parenting practices, within particular family environments. Cumulatively, parenting practices and the family environment were used as indicators for family functioning. It was hypothesized that these practices were related to the mothers' self-esteem and the self-esteem of their preadolescent children. The current study provides a "voice" to mothers about their current status of emotional well-being, more specifically, mothers' interpretations of their experiences of motherhood, within the contexts of support, previous family background and the influence of a significant other on the relationship with their preadolescent children.

The present study posits a theoretical model for child self-esteem (see Figure 1.1) that psychosocial factors namely, socio-economic status (also referred to as SES hereafter) and satisfaction with life would be related to mother self-esteem. The purpose of the study was not to establish causal relationships between the variables as the current study uses cross-sectional data. For example as a result of a mother having high or low self-esteem a mother may use psychologically controlling practices which could create a particular family environment and diminish the child's self-esteem.

Concurrently, it may be possible that children's self-esteem may influence parenting practices, whereby parents demonstrate less psychologically controlling behaviour

because their children are high functioning and subsequently produce a particular family environment.



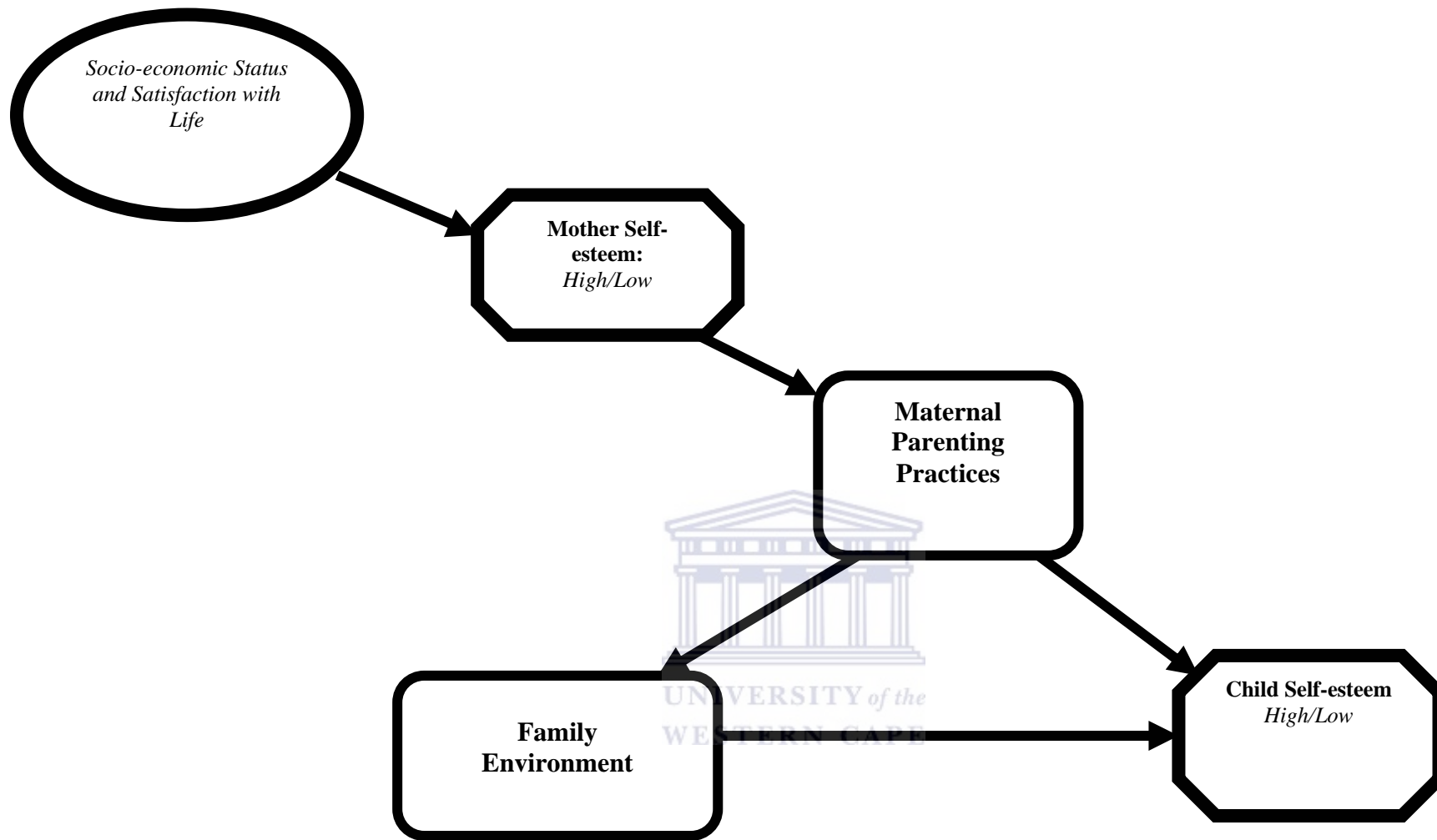


Figure 1.1: A MODEL OF THE MOTHER-PREADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIP

1.3 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

As international literature and research provide vast amounts of information concerning mothers and their children, as well as information about the effects of psychosocial factors in their environments, South Africa's *own* empirical information remains almost non-existent. Research regarding families and individual well-being is important as it could have predictive value for future well-being. Additionally, the emotional care and well-being of children at different stages of development is vital for current and prospective development of families and communities.

South Africa has a unique and unparalleled socio-political history, diverse population and constitution. Increasingly, women and children have gained rights and protection in communities and in the larger South African society. With all the changes and enactments of rights, parenting has and is changing and parents are challenged to find ways other than corporal punishment to discipline their children. South Africa desperately needs research in the areas of parenting and family well-being and, specifically, with preadolescents. South African literature concerning studies conducted on the emotional well-being of mothers and their children as well as autonomy-supportive or psychologically controlling parenting is either minimal or non-existent. We cannot assume that the findings of international studies would be consistent and applicable in a South African environment as there are distinctive differences within a South African context. The important role and influence of the mother on the child remains credible in the context of a Westernised perspective. In a South African context, the mother's influence on the preadolescent's self-esteem is challenged as children are in many cases reared in an extended family environment. Particularly, in South Africa, the structure of the extended family continues to be unchanged and thus

the application of Westernised beliefs and findings in studies becomes questionable. It would be important to establish exactly what the nature of the relationship is between the self-esteem levels of mothers and their preadolescent children and the use of autonomy-supportive and psychologically controlling parenting practices within their environments *in South Africa*. This study will play a pivotal role in establishing the relationship between the mother and child against a backdrop of varying factors in rearing the future adults of this country. The main research question to direct the study was: What is the nature of the relationship between mothers and preadolescents? This research question guided the subsequent aims and objectives of the study.

1.4 THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The study aimed to understand the relationship between single and married mother-preadolescent relationships within low and high socio-economic environments. The main purpose was so assess the psychological well-being of mothers and preadolescents by measuring self-esteem and satisfaction with life.

The **objectives** of the study were therefore to:

- Investigate the extent to which single and married mothers' self-esteem are related to the self-esteem of their preadolescent children;
- Examine and compare the strength of the relationship between socio-economic status, satisfaction with life, and single and married mothers' self-esteem;
- Examine and compare the strength of the relationship between socio-economic status, satisfaction with life, and the self-esteem of preadolescent children of single and married mothers;

- Determine the extent of the relationship between family environment of single and married mothers and the self-esteem levels of their children;
- Ascertain the relationship between family environment and autonomy-supportive maternal parenting practices;
- Ascertain the extent of the relationship between family environment and psychological controlling maternal parenting practices;
- Examine the extent to which maternal autonomy-supportive parenting practices is related to the self-esteem levels of their children;
- Examine the extent to which maternal psychologically controlling parenting practices is related to the self-esteem levels of their children;
- Assess which of the variables: mother's self-esteem, SES, autonomy-supportive and psychologically controlling parenting practices and family environment are the most significant predictors of the child's self-esteem;
- Explore and compare how single and married mothers perceive motherhood and mothering in the context of family background, support and the significant other in the lives of their preadolescents;
- Explain single and married mothers' perceptions of the role of the significant other.

HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses, for the current study, were formulated on the basis of the aims and objectives of the study and were formulated as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Mother self-esteem will be significantly related child self-esteem across marital status and socio-economic environments.

Hypothesis 2: Mothers' and children's satisfaction with life will be significantly related to their self-esteem across marital status and socio-economic environments.

Hypothesis 3: Mother and child self-esteem will positively relate to socio-economic status for both single and married mothers.

Hypothesis 4: Mother and child satisfaction with life will positively relate to socio-economic status for both single and married mother-child dyads.

Hypothesis 5: Family environment: Cohesion, Expressiveness, Organisation, Academic Achievement, Control and Independence will positively correlate with Mother and child Personal Functioning [self-esteem and satisfaction with life] but Conflict will negatively correlate with Mother and child Personal Functioning [self-esteem and satisfaction with life] and this is also so for the subgroups of marital status (Hypothesis 5a) and socio-economic status (Hypothesis 5b).

Hypothesis 6: Children's perceptions of maternal autonomy-supportive parenting practices will positively relate to their self-esteem and satisfaction with life across marital and socio-economic status.

Hypothesis 7: Children's perceptions of psychologically controlling maternal parenting practices will negatively relate to their self-esteem and satisfaction with life across marital and socio-economic status

Hypothesis 8: Family environment: Cohesion, Expressiveness, Organisation, Academic Achievement, Control and Independence will positively correlate with maternal autonomy-supportive parenting practices but Conflict will negatively correlate with maternal psychological controlling parenting practices and this is also so for the subgroups of marital status (Hypothesis 8a) and socio-economic status (Hypothesis 8b).

Hypothesis 9: Child self-esteem is significantly predicted by socio-economic status, mother self-esteem, maternal parenting practices and family environment.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study offers a holistic picture of the mother-preadolescent relationship, the psychosocial factors which impact on the self-esteem levels of the mothers as well as the parenting practices used. An important issue that has not been adequately researched and addressed in South Africa is parenting practices. Although Amoateng, Barber and Erickson (2006) and Barber, Stolz and Olsen (2005) have examined psychologically controlling parenting practices with South African adolescents, autonomy-supportive and psychologically controlling parenting practices have thus far not been examined with preadolescent children, children aged 10 to 12 years, in South Africa. A 'new perspective' or another cultural perspective of parenting practices, mother and child emotional well-being and motherhood experiences in different environments, rather than the traditional typology of authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parenting styles within the traditional context of married, white, upper-middle class or Westernised mothering is provided by this study. Also within the

context of Self-Determination Theory, no other study has, either locally or internationally, been conducted with single mothers or within low socio-economic environments. The relevance of the study has implications for psychologists and/or counsellors, as children would need to be assessed or counselled in a broader psychosocial context possibly meaning that mothers could require counselling as well. This study adds to the research with regard to preadolescents. The study shows the different experiences of mothering and hopefully provides insight to Local and National Governments when formulating policy for children, mothers and families.

1.6 A STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS CHAPTERS

Chapter 2: A theoretical understanding of self-esteem within the mother-preadolescent relationship

The theories appropriate for the study are critically analysed and discussed in Chapter 2. Psychosocial Theory provides a clear understanding of the developmental stages of both the mother and child, especially the challenges faced by individuals and the achievements attained in the various stages of development. The psychosocial theory is used as a platform for Self-Determination Theory. This chapter includes the terms and concepts central to Self-Determination Theory such as competence, autonomy, relatedness, self-regulation, autonomy-supportive and psychologically controlling parenting practices. Both theories emphasise the development of the self and the implications of the environment to be either enhancing or hindering in the development of the self.

Chapter 3: The challenges of mothering preadolescents

Chapter 3 looks at the dichotomy of married and single mothers within a dichotomous environment of low and high socio-economic status. The chapter portrays the history of the South African mother, where she comes from and where she is now, highlighting and comparing the influence of psychosocial factors on the self-esteem levels of both single and married mothers as identified by past research studies. Furthermore, the challenges which mothers face have a bearing on the way in which they parent, which subsequently has implications for the well-being of their children. Preadolescence presents its own challenges and therefore can become an addition to the challenging environments with which many mothers are confronted with.

Chapter 4: Methodology

The study has a mixed methods approach as a single method approach to research. This chapter presents information concerning the sampling procedures, participants, instruments, data collection processes and the ethical considerations of the study. In using a combination of mixed methods, the chapter illustrates the strengths and weaknesses in using the mixed methods approach and the applicability to the current study.

Chapter 5: Quantitative Results

The data of the *quantitative part* in the study was analysed by means of the Statistical Package in the Social Sciences (SPSS) to provide information in terms of percentages, frequencies, means, standard deviation, Chi-square and correlations, which were used to describe the characteristics of the sample, to determine the significance of the nature of relationships and to test the hypotheses. The Chi-square test and the Pearson

correlation were used to establish relationships or associations between the variables based with regard to the nature and characteristics of the variables. A statistical procedure of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used while investigating for the significant difference of groups. A hierarchical regression analysis showed that the SES, mothers' parenting practices and how satisfied children were with their lives predicted children's self-esteem.

Chapter 6: Qualitative Results

The researcher adopted a deductive approach in terms of the theoretical or descriptive framework as set in the conceptual framework of the study of chapters 2 and 3. Because this qualitative part is a phenomenological study, an analysis was followed within the framework of the aims and research questions of the study, which drew attention to the significant statements of the mothers and the structuring of their significant responses into themes or clusters. Pattern matching and explanation building were used to identify relationships between the responses of the respondents, thus developing a description of the meanings and essences of the perceptions and experiences, representing the group as a whole.

Chapter 7: Discussion

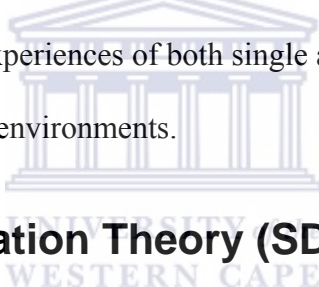
The answers to the research questions, aims and hypotheses are revealed in this chapter with the main findings of the quantitative part of the study being integrated with the perceptions and feelings of the qualitative part of the study. Thus this chapter not only provides significant relationships by numbers, but it provides the possible reasons, feelings and perceptions of these relationships and therefore supports the statistical information.

This final chapter concludes and summarises the main findings of the study.

Recommendations are provided for mother well-being, best parenting practices for, and management of, preadolescent children to encourage a healthy family environment and further child well-being.

1.7 CONCLUSION

The study presents a South African perspective of the mother-preadolescent relationship. It presents mothers' perceptions and feelings about motherhood, while at the same time reveals their relationships with their children. The environment is considered as a possible influence on emotional well-being of mothers and children and thus the study compares the experiences of both single and married mothers living in high and low socio-economic environments.



Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides the framework for understanding the development of the self, emotional well-being, the influence of the environment and the interaction between mothers and children. Autonomy support and psychological control are concepts relevant in SDT as parenting practices and thus are presented as the potential mediators in the mother-child relationship. An understanding of Self-Determination Theory is presented in the following

chapter.

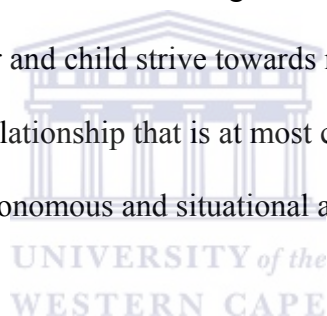


CHAPTER 2

A THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF SELF-ESTEEM WITHIN THE MOTHER-PREADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIP

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The mother-child relationship develops as the child matures over time and the mother accommodates her understanding of and interaction with, her child. The mother-child relationship is therefore not constant over time, but rather has challenges or crises as well as achievements or successes in order to adjust to the emerging independence and ‘own self’ of the child. The emotional well-being of both the mother and the child becomes crucial as the mother and child strive towards maintaining a relationship of normalcy, in other words, a relationship that is at most conflict free, since the child becomes more competent, autonomous and situational and contextual factors become more influential.



This chapter specifically examines and explores self-esteem as a key indicator of psychological well-being of both mothers and their preadolescent children. Self-esteem, in itself, is a process of development across time as the self is shaped and moulded into either a level of acceptance or a level of rejection as the child develops an identity. The literature of self-esteem and its correlates are quite extensive across developmental stages. The focus of the current study is specifically focused on the global self-esteem of preadolescent children in relation to parenting practices and family environment. Thus it is the purpose of this chapter to provide first a theoretical understanding of the development and functionality of the self of both mothers and their preadolescent

children. In the next paragraph two approaches of the concept of self-development are discussed. In paragraph 2.4, the concept of self-esteem will be discussed in detail.

2.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SELF

Who are you? What type of person are you? Can you describe yourself? What are your strengths and your weaknesses?

These are questions posed quite regularly in people's lives either from people who know or who want to know the person. The reaction is normally to look within and find the qualities or characteristics which can best describe who we are. So, the responses to the questions could range from, for example, *"I am friendly and loving"* to *"I am a loner"* or from *"I am an achiever"* to *"I am a loser"*. It is easier to describe the outer self than the inner self because the physical qualities are clear in the eye of the beholder. For example, a person could describe that she is wearing a red dress with black shoes. She could further say that she has brown eyes and blonde hair. The inner qualities are often based on what other people have said and people's reactions to certain behaviours. For example, Jack has been told that he is a very positive person because he is always motivating people. Furthermore, when Jack sits at his desk during lunchtime, rather than interact with his colleagues, he could be considered a loner. So when Jack is asked to describe himself, he could say that he is very helpful, encouraging and prefers his own company. The accumulative and integrated (or not) descriptions an adult has of him or her self is the picture that has been created over time. It is a developmental process that is especially highlighted by Erikson's (1963) psychosocial theory.

2.3 A THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE DEVELOPING SELF

2.3.1 Psychosocial theory

Erikson's (1963) psychosocial theory uses the term *ego* instead of self to describe the developing person as a separate individual to his/her parents. His eight stage theory covers the entire lifespan of the individual and presents the self or ego and the environment as intertwining. Statt (2003: 51, 139) believes that the *self* is "roughly the equivalent of the ego", which is the "conscious and rational mind". He also refers to the *self* as that part of an individual's personality that is "conscious of its identity over time". The self is the 'I am'.

In a sense, the relationship between the self or ego and the environment is reciprocal because, as the child develops, the environment provides tasks and challenges at particular stages to the child. The environment consists of parents, society and the child's culture. The challenges or crises and tasks are revealed in each stage as complementary poles which the child has to overcome. So the task for the child would be to trust the environment while, at the same time overcoming the challenge of mistrust. Once the child has synthesised or balanced the complementary poles the child acquires a virtue which becomes part of the self. These virtues are ego strengths, which are the more positive parts of the self.

Erikson (1963: 245) believes that identity will only be achieved once the child has attained the virtues of the previous stages. He maintains that "ego identity cannot begin to exist without trust", which is in the first psychosocial stage of development. The virtues that the child should have attained before acquiring an identity are hope, will-power, purpose and competence so that the child becomes prepared to acquire the other virtues of reliability, love, care and wisdom. These virtues would not be effectively or

successfully attained if the child has not overcome the challenges or crises posed by the environment. So the environment predetermines the person to evolve while, at the same time the person can change the environment to a certain extent. Behaviour not only results from the interaction of a person and the environment (Lewin, 1952). It may also affect the person and the environment (Lens & Vansteenkiste, 2006).

Parents are central in Erikson's theory. Parents should provide consistent, predictable and secure environments for the child's development, but he also states that the developing child helps parents to develop. He states: (1963: 69)

Parents who are faced with the development of a number of children must constantly live up to a challenge. They must develop with them. We distort the situation if we abstract it in such a way that we consider the parent as "having" such and such a personality when the child is born and then remaining static, impinging upon a poor little thing. For this weak and changing little being moves the whole family along. Babies control and bring up their families as much as they are controlled by them; in fact we say that the family brings up a baby by being brought up by him/her. Whatever reaction patterns are "given" biologically, and whatever schedule is predetermined developmentally, must be considered to be a series of *"potentialities for changing patterns of mutual regulation"*.

If the environment is consistent, predictable, and always the same, the child will trust this environment and subsequently move on through life forming relationships with others, for example, with teachers, peers, family members, spouses, and so on, thus establishing ego strength, "...to integrate the timetable of the organism with the structure of social institutions" (Erikson, 1963: 246).

Hence, in the current study the participants were children aged 10 to 12 years and mothers in the stage of young adulthood. According to Erikson (1963), children aged 10 to 12 years are in the stage of middle childhood, also known as the school-age, and the task of this stage is for the child to acquire a sense of industry while at the same time overcoming the challenge of inferiority.

Bigner (1998: 315-316) defines a sense of industry as “the development of a positive attitude toward work and a mastery of the “tools”, or academic and social skills, which are learned appropriately at this time of the life span”. A sense of inferiority, on the other hand, is “a pervasive attitude of personal worthlessness”. Thus, if the child is not able to acquire a sense of industry the child will feel inferior to others in the environment and will not have gained the virtue of competence. This stage is before the stage of adolescence or, as Erikson points out, the young person has the task of acquiring an identity or the challenge of role confusion.

After having acquired a sense of identity herself, the adult mother is eager to lose and find herself in another. There is the need to share an identity. If a healthy friendship and intimacy with another individual is formed, the young adult has overcome the challenge or crisis of this stage and has attained the virtue of love. The adult is then able to commit to an intimate relationship. If, however, this challenge is not resolved, the mother experiences isolation, fears relationships and becomes self-absorbed.

Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (2003) emphasise that Erikson’s theory, although psychoanalytic, is more compatible with the humanists because he implicitly shows the motives for human nature. These motives of human nature are to:

- develop their inherent potential
- know and accept themselves and their possibilities
- know that they can feel at home with these characteristics and potentialities in the social environment.

In a sense Erikson’s virtues could be compared to needs which an individual has, more specifically, basic psychological needs. Also, it seems that the satisfaction of these virtues/needs is dependent on the individual interacting with his/her

environment at particular stages of development in order to strive towards a higher level of development. These virtues/needs do not show themselves together, but rather evolve over a period of time. For example, the virtue of will-power is preceded by hope and followed by purpose. These virtues do not occur at the same time. They are gained at different stages of development. For Erikson (1963), the self will develop optimally if in unity with the environment.

Erikson has been criticised for not providing empirical evidence for his theory and for the fact that his work is based on interpretation and speculation (Louw, Van Ede & Louw, 1998; Papalia, Olds and Feldman, 2004). Although Erikson provides a clear developmental explanation for how the self develops and hints at the needs that individuals have, his theory fails to fully explain the inner drives that a person has to reach their fullest potential, how the environment could hinder or enhance the development of the individual and why people's reactions and interactions are similar or different in various environments. His theory also does not specify how parents should practice raising their children. He tends to be vague in addressing these issues. Self-Determination Theory provides an explanation almost similar in many respects to Erikson's theory and fills the gaps to understand the individual's ability to direct his/her behaviour within an enhancing or hindering environment.

2.3.2 Self-determination theory (SDT)

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) has developed over the past three decades in the form of "mini-theories" which link to form SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2004: 8-9; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Van Steenkiste, 2005). The larger theory of SDT provides an "organismic and dialectical framework for the study of personality and

development”, thus arguing that humans have “natural, innate and constructive tendencies to develop an ever more elaborated and unified sense of self” (Deci & Ryan, 2004: 5; Van Steenkiste, 2005). Individuals are naturally curious, and children more so. SDT posits that individuals are motivated to develop towards their fullest potential and thus develop towards a unified sense of self. In the process of actively developing, there is a tendency for “knowledge and personality to be synthesised and organised”, thus resulting in an integration or assimilation of knowledge and experience with the self, subsequently leading to “a coherent sense of self – a sense of wholeness, vitality and integrity” and ultimately well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2004: 3).

At a simplistic level, “energy and direction of behaviour” are prerequisites in order to achieve potential. According to Deci and Ryan (1985: 3) and Van Steenkiste (2005) energy equals the needs an individual has. These needs are “innate” or “acquired through the interaction with the environment” and therefore needs require to be satisfied in order for the individual to achieve his/her fullest potential.

2.3.2.1 Psychological needs

The basic psychological needs are described by SDT as autonomy, relatedness and competence (Deci & Ryan, 2004: 8-9; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Van Steenkiste, 2005). Active individuals are prone to “volitional and initiate behaviours” in order to satisfy their needs, which may be internal, for example the need to belong, or external, such as the need to attain an A symbol in a test because there is a reward for doing so. These psychological needs are present from birth and one need does not take precedence over the other nor do they occur at different times in the lifespan of development. In other words, an individual would not have the need of relatedness at age 2 and then the need of competence at age 6. Nor is the need of autonomy more

important than the need of relatedness. These needs are part of an individual's psychological make-up and the satisfaction of these needs will encourage the person towards reaching his/her fullest potential and psychological well-being.

The need for autonomy

People feel satisfied when they do a task which they feel they *want* to do. According to SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2004: 8-9; Grolnick, 2003; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Soenens, 2006; Van Steenkiste, 2005) autonomy is not independence.

Independence means not relying on others or external resources. Autonomy is about making choices or doing activities which are harmonious with the self. For mothers these activities could be reading, playing a sport, shopping and mothering. For children the need for autonomy could be choosing particular clothes to wear, playing a particular game with peers and playing a sport. When people act autonomously, they choose to do a particular activity because they want to. They do the activity volitionally and it becomes self-determined (Soenens, et al., 2007). According to Gray and Steinberg (1999), when individuals feel autonomous, they have higher self-esteem, increased feelings of academic mastery and a better sense of own control over their lives as well as a feeling of pride in their efforts. If an activity is not fun and not congruent with the self but is coupled with consequences or a reward, the person would be controlled to do the activity (Deci & Ryan, 2004: 8-9; Grolnick, 2003; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Soenens, 2006; Van Steenkiste, 2005).

The need for competence

When people have the skills and abilities to do a task and they feel self-confident in their abilities to do the task, they will continue to do the task. SDT posits that individuals have a basic psychological need to feel competent in activities or tasks they

do (White, 1959). This need is similar, yet different, to the virtue of competence which children acquire in middle childhood (Erikson, 1963). Competence, for Erikson, is more about the acquisition of abilities. The difference is that SDT (2004: 7) emphasises the need for the acquisition of “a sense of confidence and the effectance in action” rather than “an attained skill or capability”(Bandura, 1997). The need for competence would encourage individuals to find more challenging activities to thus enhance their skills and capacities resulting in confidence in the self with resultant psychological well-being. According to Deci and Ryan (1985: 144), competence can only evolve if “there [is] a match between what the person is able to do and what is required of him/her by the task at hand”.

The need for relatedness

It is a human need to belong either to someone, something or somewhere. People need to feel connected and thus would want to care for, and be cared by, others. The need for relatedness encompasses the need to experience love, warmth and affection and, therefore, acceptance (Grolnick, 2003). For both children and mothers relatedness is about belonging to each other, in a family and in a wider community. The mother-child relationship will function more effectively when they feel connected.

The satisfaction of these basic psychological needs requires that certain “processes and structures relate needs to behaviour”. In other words, the individual is directed towards action in order to satisfy his/her needs. SDT states that an individual is intrinsically motivated to satisfy their needs.

2.3.2.2 Intrinsic motivation and internalisation

According to SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2004: 8-9; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Van Steenkiste, 2005), intrinsic motivation and internalisation are ways in which people will be growth-oriented and have a more integrated self. Van Steenkiste (2005) states that people have different reasons or motives for engaging in their environments, but people who act on challenges in their environments do so because their behaviour is autonomously regulated or self-determined. Furthermore, he emphasises that intrinsic motivation and internalisation are two separate types of autonomous regulations.

Intrinsic motivation is the energy which people have to strive towards more challenging activities and thus enact their full potential, towards a more integrated self to enhance their well-being (Deci & Ryan, 1985). An intrinsically motivated action is not instrumental to reach other outcomes, it is a goal in itself, it is auto-telic (for example, playing soccer for the fun of it). People who engage in activities because it is fun and enjoyable do so because of the positive feelings that these activities will encourage. Harter (1982) found that intrinsic motivation increased the self-esteem of individuals. For example, when mothers spend quality time with their children they do so because they have opportunities to express love and nurturance and receive love and affection and find the interaction with their children as fun and enjoyable and, therefore, want to interact with their children. These encounters between the mother and the child are opportunities to enhance and satisfy the need for relatedness as well.

According to Van Steenkiste (2005), certain activities are not as enjoyable and are most times seen as chores which can be burdensome and boring. These activities would not be carried out because the person wants to do them or volitionally wants to do them.

When people do activities which they do not actually want to do, but because they need

to or must, people would then be extrinsically motivated to do those activities. For example, children would prefer to play a computer game rather than do a chore such as washing the dishes. When they do the chore it is not because the activity is fun but rather because there are consequences, such as not receiving pocket money or not being able to play a computer game, for not doing it and it is part of the daily routine. Children, therefore, eventually accept that they have to do the activity and they therefore have effected a process of internalisation.

Internalisation can be defined as an “incorporation of attitudes, standards, and opinions of others and particularly those of parents, into the personality” (Corsini, 2002: 499).

Similarly Grolnick, Deci and Ryan (1997:136) define internalisation as a “natural developmental process in which children (as well as adolescents and adults) progressively integrate societal values and prescriptions into a coherent sense of self”.

Grolnick, Deci and Ryan (1997:135; 139; 140) concur that socialisation will only be effective once children not only behave in accordance with parental demands, but rather take ownership of “values and attitudes”. They state this in the following way,

...socialization may conjure up a picture of powerful parents forcing standards and behaviours onto passive or resistant children, effective socialization requires something more than behaviour in accord with parental demands. It involves an inner adaptation to social requirements so that children not only comply with these requirements but also accept and endorse the advocated values and behaviours, experiencing them as their own...socializing agents [parents] can force...the real goal is for children to carry them out volitionally...socializing agents [parents] can “teach”...the important thing is having the children “own” those values and attitudes.

Thus internalisation is the progression from “acquiring beliefs, attitudes or behavioural regulations from external sources” and adapting these into “personal attributes, values or regulatory styles”. But internalisation is more than simply acquiring and adapting from external sources. It is the inner willingness to behave a certain way because ‘*I*

want or choose to do it', rather than what someone else wants or chooses. It becomes embedded, deep-rooted and blended in the self. Consequently, the behaviours become regulated by the self or behaviours become self-regulated or self-determined.

Internalisation is therefore a developmental process and is “energised by the intrinsic needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness”.

However, there are factors in the environment which would encourage or discourage the individual to become active. These factors could be parents, family, teachers, peers, societal organisations and so on.

2.3.3 The effects of the environment on the self

Chirkov, et al. (2003: 97) believe that an individual's well-being is “enhanced” when psychological needs are met or will be “diminished” when the social environment is “frustrating”, preventing the gratification of these needs. In other words the environment plays a crucial role in either supporting or hindering the quality of human functioning and development. The environment is seen as challenging opportunities to satisfy needs and it is the individual who will initiate the satisfaction of these needs. Active individuals will therefore interact with their environments in the way that they voluntarily behave because the choices they make are from ‘within’. Although SDT research extends across many areas of society such as sport, organisations, schools and physical health, the focus of the current study is on the influence of autonomy-supportive and psychologically controlling parenting which creates a family environment for the child.

2.3.4 Parenting

Parenting is the mechanism through which a child will learn appropriate and inappropriate behaviour; learn right and wrong choices in decision-making; acquire

skills; understand roles and accept or not accept the norms of a community. Thus parenting plays a major part in entrenching socialisation and an understanding of the self.

Parenting has been and is a controversial topic because there is no prescriptive book for parents showing them how to raise their children. Raising children can be a challenge for some parents while for others it may be easier. The bi-directional and reciprocal nature of the mother-child relationship calls for a different parenting approach at different stages of the development of the child. So a child in early childhood will be parented differently to a child in middle childhood or adolescence.

There are many factors which play a role in raising children. For example, parents in two-parent families come from different family backgrounds and were therefore raised differently. The way in which they were each parented, is brought to the parent-child relationship where parents may either choose to parent in the same way as their own parents or not. Parents may then either agree or disagree as to how the child should be parented. Children may pull for parents to react a certain way, for example, a child who is joyful may be easier to parent than a child who is disruptive. The socio-economic status of the family, being a single parent, other family members in an extended family such as grandparents as well as the physical and emotional well-being of the parents may all play a role in the way in which parents parent their children.

Each parent has a different way or method of parenting his or her children. Often the method of parenting results from examples modelled on the way in which a parent had been previously parented. On the one hand, for example, parents may not have liked the way in which they were disciplined or interacted with by one or both parents. The result may be that the parents would choose to parent from the extreme to which they had

been exposed. On the other hand, parents may choose to repeat the methods their parents used when they were reared. According to Roman (2003:39), each parent “has a unique style of parenting” and this is dependent on the age of the child, the structure of the family and the background of the parent. Irrespective of the style of parenting chosen, parents need to realise that they are central and “primary agents” to and in the process of socialisation of the child, to realise the goal of encouraging children to become participants in a community or a wider society as responsible and prosocial adults (Bigner, 1998; Hartley-Brewer, 1996; Pervin & John, 2001; Bukatko & Daehler, 1995). Ultimately, the way in which parents parent their children is related to child behavioural outcomes and eventual adult outcomes. But, what determines “good” parenting?

2.3.4.1 Parenting styles

The ultimate goal of good parenting is to raise well-adjusted, competent and responsible adults. Parents are usually described as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ parents and tend to be viewed in a structure of love and discipline or limits. The behavioural outcomes of children are often associated with the way children were raised by their parents, on a basis of love and discipline or limits.

One of the key researchers in parenting was Baumrind whose research on parenting dates back to the 1960’s when she first encountered and typified different styles of parenting. According to Baumrind (1966, 1967, 1968, 1978), parenting can be divided into three categories or types based on the styles parents use. These categories or styles are authoritarian, permissive and authoritative styles of parenting.

When parents are *authoritarian* they have set standards and rules which their children *have* to obey. The authoritarian parent has low love and high limits. This style of

parenting is based on the belief that the child has to obey no matter what the situation; what the parent says is truth and law and cannot be questioned. The child's opinion is not asked nor accepted. The authoritarian parent is very restrictive in communicating with his/her child because the parent has a certain standard of obedience and behaviour to uphold and the child has to comply with this standard or face the consequences which are often forceful and punitive.

Although an authoritarian parent loves his/her child, the parent appears to be less nurturing towards his/her child and believes a child remains a child, even when an adult. This results in a delay or stagnation of the child's development and a belief that growth, as a person, is dependent on harshness, sternness, strictness and sometimes cruelty rather than warmth and tenderness. Discipline is a major concern with the authoritarian parent because they "value obedience as a virtue" (p. 255) and when obedience is not provided by their children or their children do not respond in an appropriate way, parents would retaliate in a "punitive, forceful" manner in order to bring the children back in line with what is expected. In many cases the use of physical punishment, as an external form of discipline or behavioural control, is utilised rather than encouragement of the internalisation of 'right' or 'wrong' behaviour. Thus the child is subordinate to the parent and there is no reciprocity or "give and take" in the relationship between the parents and the child. The word of the parent is law and the child has no say. According to Baumrind (1978: 255), individualism and autonomy of the child are discouraged by authoritarian parents, but she also believes that authoritarian parents "may be very concerned and protective or they may be neglecting". In essence authoritarian parents apply their parental power through "reinforcement contingencies" and place "uncompromising demands on their children"

(p. 251). Children of authoritarian parents are unhappy, aimless, do not get along with others, low in achievement motivation and social assertion.

In speaking of *permissive* parents, Baumrind (1978: 251, 255) states that the permissive parent views the child as being free:

...the child has a natural tendency to self-actualisation – left to itself the child will learn all it needs to know and will turn to conventionally approved modes of behaviour when and if it wishes to do so...the immediate aim ...is to free the child from restraint as much as is consistent with survival...

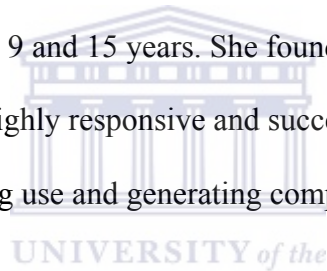
The permissive parent is accepting, assenting and has a benevolent and compassionate manner towards the child's impulses and actions. The parent becomes a resource rather than the socialisation agent to shape and change the child's continuous behaviour and therefore will not apply rules and structures when raising the child. While permissive parents encourage individualism and autonomy in the child, Baumrind (1978: 255) considers permissive parents to be "self-involved and offer freedom as a way of evading responsibility for the child's development", although they are "loving and protective". The children of permissive parents lack impulse control, are self-centred and low in achievement orientation.

Authoritative parents have structures and rules in place when raising their children, but they also encourage their children to provide input in decision-making in the family and provide reasons for rules and structures. Authoritative parenting is warm, supportive, encouraging, accepting and responsive. Baumrind (1978:255) describes the authoritative parent as,

Both autonomous self-will and disciplined conformity are valued by the authoritative parent...exerts firm control when the young child disobeys, but does not hem the child in with restrictions...enforces the adult perspective, but recognises the

child's individual interests and special ways... affirms the child's qualities, but also sets standards for future conduct...

The authoritative parent is "rational and issue-orientated" and encourages autonomy and individualism. The authoritative parent focuses on the child's behaviour rather than on the child's person. Thus when the child misbehaves, for example, being rude to a parent, the authoritative parent would focus on what the child is doing wrong by saying "Rudeness will not be tolerated because it is disrespectful" rather than saying "You are rude". Ultimately, the authoritative parent encourages social competence and thus responsible adults. Children of authoritative parents were highly achievement motivated, energetic, socially outgoing, autonomous, friendly and socially receptive. In subsequent research, Baumrind (1991) conducted a longitudinal study within- and across- time periods at ages 4, 9 and 15 years. She found that authoritative parents who were highly demanding and highly responsive and successfully protected their adolescents from problem drug use and generating competence.



These styles of parenting were the beginning of understanding the effects of parenting on child outcomes. Baumrind (1991: 62) further notes that there is a fourth classification which is a rejecting-neglecting parenting style. Rejecting-neglecting parents are "disengaged" and are "neither demanding nor responsive" to their children. In addition, these parents do not provide structure in the home nor do they monitor their children. They are not supportive "but may be actively rejecting or else neglect their childrearing responsibilities altogether". Baumrind found the children of rejecting-neglecting parents to be the least competent.

Baumrind's (1966, 1967) theoretical model was used as stepping stones for future research with regard to parenting and child outcomes. Further empirical research was conducted to establish the effects of parenting styles on child outcomes and adjustment

(Karavasilis, Doyle & Markiewicz, 2003; Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg & Dornbusch, 1991; Milevsky, Schlechter, Netter & Keehn, 2007; Rudy & Grusec, 2006; Schaefer, 1991; Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, Mounts & Dornbusch, 1994). The findings of the research support Baumrind's theory of parenting styles. Authoritative mothering was found to relate to higher self-esteem and life satisfaction with lower depression for children; secure attachment; academic achievement; maturity and competence. Furthermore, it was found that permissive mothering is more detrimental to the child than permissive fathering. Authoritative parenting had more positive outcomes than permissive, authoritarian and neglectful parenting.

Sorkhabi (2005) found that Baumrind's parenting styles have similar functions across cultures with authoritarian parenting being detrimental to the development of children, while authoritative parenting is not. Culturally, that is Westernised perspectives of parenting against Eastern and Africanised parenting perspectives, may not hold the same meaning. According to Darling and Steinberg (1993) parenting styles have variable effects as a function of the child's cultural background, the processes through which parenting style influences the child's development and the operationalization of parenting style. A study conducted by Rudy and Grusec (2006) found that mothers of children in middle childhood living in collectivist cultures approved of authoritarian parenting more than did individualist mothers but did not think negatively about their children nor did the children have low self-esteem scores. Maternal authoritarianism was associated with maternal negative emotion and cognition only in the individualist group. Furthermore, maternal negative thoughts and feelings, associated with authoritarianism in individualist but not collectivist groups, may be more detrimental to children's self-esteem than authoritarianism in and of itself. Thus, parenting styles are best understood in a context rather than as the application of parenting practices as

such. However, because parenting practices and developmental outcomes in children are variable, research should focus more on “unpacking” parenting types (Gray & Steinberg, 1999) and their effects on children and move beyond parenting types and more towards practices. Studies should therefore become more variable specific in relation to child outcomes.

2.3.4.2 Parenting practices

The current study focuses on two particular dimensions, autonomy-support and psychological control, as parenting practices utilised by parents, specifically mothers with their preadolescents. The choice of using autonomy-supportive and psychologically controlling parenting practices is based on the theory of SDT.

SDT focuses on dimensions of parenting in relation to child outcomes. According to Grolnick (2003), more than three decades of parenting research has shown two consistent dimensions in the parenting research. The first dimension includes warmth versus hostility; warmth versus coolness; child centredness; caring and empathic versus rejecting and indifferent; involvement and acceptance versus rejection. The second dimension includes democratic versus autocratic; firm control versus lax control; psychological control versus psychological autonomy; controlling versus autonomy supportive; restrictive versus permissive. Clearly an interpretation of parenting concepts and their practices is extremely important and caution needs to be taken when applied to other cultural contexts such as South Africa.

Autonomy supportive parenting practices

Children have basic psychological needs which need to be satisfied in order to attain optimal psychological well-being. In applying autonomously-supportive parenting

practices a child would feel autonomously motivated to do particular activities which are not considered to be fun (no intrinsic motivation). They can achieve such autonomous motivation via internalising values, rules and morals, needed in order to be integrated in society.

Parenting acts as the facilitator for these processes towards optimal child development and well-being. As previously stated, autonomy is often confused with the term independence. Dependence is not the opposite of autonomy. When children become independent, they do not require help or assistance with tasks which they are able to do themselves. They are self-sufficient. The term independence has more of a separatism effect, similar to detachment. It provides an idea that a child is totally separate from the parent, in some instances emotionally as well.

In terms of SDT, the opposite of autonomy is heteronomy (Deci & Ryan, 2004: 8-9; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Van Steenkiste, 2005). According to Corsini (2002: 443) heteronomy is defined as “a state characteristic of childhood when children are unable to evaluate or regulate their own behaviour; inability to make independent moral judgements”. He defines autonomy as “a state of independence and self-determination, either in a society or an individual; a basic tendency and desire to be free to control the self” (p. 86). This definition of autonomy raises confusion as he defines autonomy in terms of independence. These terms are different in terms of SDT because autonomy is having the ability to make choices, have self-control and self-regulated behaviour, while at the same time maintaining ‘close ties’ with the family. In terms of autonomy, parents are involved and supportive in their children’s lives. Thus, when parenting is supportive of autonomy the outcome for the child’s behaviour is more self-regulated and there is more self-control.

Parents who practice autonomy-support are warm and caring, involved and provide structure. Children feel that they can take responsibility for and initiate their own actions rather than being coerced, forced or pressurised to do something and solve problems (Grolnick, 2003; Grolnick, Deci & Ryan, 1997). Children are afforded an opportunity to voice an opinion and have a choice in family matters which are age appropriate. Autonomy-supportive parents encourage “self-initiation”, acknowledge the child’s perspective and feelings and minimise the use of controls. Minimising controls does not entail a lack of behavioural control. Autonomy-supportive parents are also involved, acting as a resource to their children and taking an interest in the child’s activities. They spend more time with their children and know more about what their children are doing in their daily lives and therefore apply monitoring principles (Grolnick, 2003). Even though autonomy-supportive parenting entails encouraging self-regulation in children, these parents provide structure to their children.

Structure entails providing “reasons and purposes for doing activities; communicating expectations that are optimally challenging; explaining and consistently administering consequences and providing informational feedback” (Grolnick, Deci & Ryan, 1997: 147). Structure includes teaching children about limits and boundaries or parameters such as eating food at a table, addressing adults appropriately, respecting other people’s possessions, going to bed at an appropriate time and as well as monitoring the child’s activities. Pettit, et al. (2001) found that monitoring was anteceded by proactive parenting and there were fewer delinquent problems. Similarly, Kurdek and Fine (1994) found that family acceptance and family control were positively related to adjustment with increased self-regulated behaviour and psychosocial competence at higher levels of family control. Additionally, Gray and Steinberg (1999) found that increased parental involvement, autonomy granting and structure resulted in positive behavioural

conduct, improved psychosocial development and mental health, as well as academic progress for their children.

Structure enhances feelings of competence and self-efficacy and it allows the satisfaction of the basic need for competence (Grolnick, 2003). Importantly, children should be provided with age appropriate information so that they are aware of the consequences, the consequences for their own behaviour and the possible effects their behaviour may have on other people. Children feel secure when they know what to expect. Furthermore, when requesting a child to participate in an activity or behave in an appropriate manner, there must be a match to the child's stage of development or ability to understand cognitively and emotionally and the "regulatory demand". This match results in less frustration, anger, hopelessness, helplessness and feelings of incompetence.

Autonomy-supportive parenting is similar to Baumrind's authoritative parenting style (1966, 1967, 1978, 1991) as they both have warmth, caring and nurturing characteristics as well as raising children in a structured environment in the absence of being controlling. They are both very positive ways of parenting. The difference is that autonomy-supportive parenting could be said to be embedded or rooted in Baumrind's parenting style. It is the practical lens to see how parents actually parent their children and presents a clearer understanding of the outcomes for self-regulated or self-determined child behaviour.

There are positive outcomes for children linked to autonomy-supportive parenting, particularly in cross-cultural studies conducted by Chirkov, Ryan, Youngmee and Kaplan (2003); Chirkov and Ryan (2001); Vansteenkiste, Zhou, Lens and Soenens (2005). The results show that children, who had been raised with autonomy-supportive

parenting practices, tended to be more adaptive in their learning attitudes and strategies, have academic self-motivation and success and higher well-being. In separate studies autonomy-supportive parenting promoting volitional functioning was found to result in prosocial behaviour, social competence and general positive well-being (Gagné, 2003; Soenens, et al., 2007). Grolnick (2003) had similar findings, but also found that children were self-regulated both at school and home. Thus there was an improvement in behaviour. Grolnick (2003) points out that the goal of parenting is, not only to have obedient children, but for parents to have close and positive relationships with their children. Autonomy-supportive parenting encourages strong parent-child relationships and parents are highly valued. The child is well-adjusted, competent, has self-confidence and higher levels of self-esteem. According to Harter (1999), the more supportive parents are the higher the child's self-worth will be. In a study conducted by Avery and Ryan (1988), children were asked to describe how autonomy-supportive and/or controlling their parents were when interacting with them (the children). The results showed that children who had more autonomously-supportive parents perceived themselves to be socially and cognitively competent, had higher self-worth, significantly higher adjustment and were more popular with their peers. As autonomy-supportive parenting encourages enhanced psychological well-being, controlling parenting practices tend to hinder the psychological well-being of children.

Psychologically controlling parenting practices

As autonomy-supportive parenting entails being involved with the child and providing structure to the child, too much of this dimension of parenting may result in parents being controlling. While limits, boundaries and parameters are a must in order for

children to be adjusted, being overly involved could result in controlling parenting because parents can become over-protective.

According to Deci and Ryan (1985: 95), controlling events are experienced “as pressure to think, feel or behave in specified ways”. Controlling parenting is defined as “control attempts that intrude into the psychological and emotional development of the child (e.g. thinking processes, self-expression, emotions and attachment to parents)” (Barber, 1996: 3296). Historically, Barber (1996: 3297) emphasises that psychological control has been implicitly dealt with and was therefore not granted the same significance in psychology research as other constructs such as parental warmth and autonomy parenting dimensions. According to Barber (1996) psychological control, as a construct, gained explicit attention in the 1960’s. A key researcher was Schaefer (1959, 1965) who showed that psychological control was defined by other behavioural scales such as Intrusiveness, Parental Direction and Control through Guilt, Possessiveness, Protectiveness, Nagging, Negative Evaluation, Strictness and Punishment. The problem was that Schaefer placed psychological autonomy and psychological control as two opposite ends on a continuum. Results of studies have found these two constructs to be distinct and highly incompatible (Grolnick, 2003; Soenens, 2006; Soenens & Van Steenkiste, 2005; Vansteenkiste, Zhou, Lens & Soenens, 2005). These researchers have shown that, when parents are not autonomy-supportive, it does not necessarily mean that parents are psychologically controlling. Similarly, a lack of psychological control does not necessarily mean parents are autonomy-supportive. Parents can simultaneously be autonomy-supportive and psychologically controlling. Clearly, conceptualisation of the constructs is important.

Barber (1996: 3297) describes psychological control as “insidious” which

potentially inhibits or intrudes upon psychological development through manipulation and exploitation of the parent-child bond (e.g. love withdrawal and guilt induction), negative, affect-laden expressions and criticisms (e.g. disappointment and shame), and excessive personal control (e.g. possessiveness, protectiveness).

Barber (1996; 2002) clearly delineates the differences between psychological control and behavioural control by stating that behavioural control is used by parents as attempts to “control and manage” their children’s behaviours. As explained previously, behavioural control is important for children to have structure, limits, boundaries and parameters in their interaction with others in society and for their socialisation and adjustment. Also behavioural control is important for parents to monitor the activities in which their children are involved. This process of monitoring and behavioural control is especially important for children living in high-risk environments where there is the constant threat of being coerced to participate in gang-related activities and crime. According to Barber (1996: 3299), psychological control is “inhibitive”, while behavioural control is “facilitative” of development.

Research studies have linked psychological control to lowered self-esteem levels, higher drop-out rates at school, maladaptive learning attitudes and ill-being (Bean, Bush, McKenry & Wilson, 2003; Van Steenkiste, Zhou, Lens & Soenens, 2005). Furthermore, Pettit, et al. (2001) found that psychological control was anteceded by harsh parenting and children’s externalising problems such as substance abuse and theft. Additionally, high levels of psychological control were associated with more delinquent problems for girls and for teens who were low in preadolescent delinquent problems and with more anxiety/depression for girls and for teens who were high in preadolescent anxiety/depression. Similarly, Doyle and Markiewicz (2005) conducted a longitudinal study and found that parental psychological control was associated with

increases in internalizing symptoms over time, an effect not mediated by attachment insecurity, which contributed independently.

Psychological control is more related to self-concept functioning than external behaviour (Soenens, 2006). In other words when parents are psychologically controlling, the direct effects for the child is more with regard to feelings of worthlessness, anxiety and depression than committing crime. The choice of parenting plays a major role in the family environment which is created. For example, when parenting is too controlling, the family environment could be one of feeling stifled, incompetent and unacceptance, which could eventually result in conflict. On the other hand, when parents choose to allow children to provide an opinion in family decision-making, there is a sense of cohesiveness between family members. Thus in terms of SDT, Grolnick (2003:20) believes that autonomy-supportive parenting would result in “closeness and relatedness”, while psychological control would not and, therefore, result in conflict because the individual is unable to act in a self-determined way.

2.3.5 Family Environment

Although SDT does not specifically discuss family environmental functioning per se, the theory does, however, deal with autonomy-supportive and controlling parenting and the impact this has on children and their well-being. SDT has not been linked yet to family environment dimensions as posed by Moos and Moos (2002) such as cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, organisation, achievement orientation, independence and control. The definitions of each dimension of family environment are shown in Figure 2.1.

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- A. *Relationship Dimensions*
1. *Cohesion*: degree of commitment, help and support family members provide for each other.
 2. *Expressiveness*: extent to which family members are encouraged to act openly and to express their feelings.
 3. *Conflict*: amount of openly expressed anger, aggression and conflict in the family.
- B. *Personal Growth Dimensions*
4. *Independence*: extent to which family members are assertive and self-sufficient, and make their own decisions.
 5. *Achievement Orientation*: extent to which activities (e.g. school or work) are seen in an achievement-oriented or competitive manner.
 6. *Intellectual-Cultural Orientation*: interest in political, social, intellectual and cultural activities.
 7. *Active-Recreational Orientation*: participation in social/recreational activities.
 8. *Moral-Religious Emphasis*: emphasis on ethical/religious issues and values.
- C. *System Maintenance Dimensions*
9. *Organization*: degree of clear organization and structure in planning family activities and responsibilities.
 10. *Control*: set rules and procedures used to run family life.
-

Figure 2.1: Moos's (2002) dimensions of the family environment.

Moos and Moos (2002) show research studies examining family factors such as independence, and child and adolescent outcomes. Independence and autonomy are used interchangeably in the literature and therefore look at the child being separate from the parent and the family.

The assumption of the current study is that, when a mother chooses to parent in a particular way, she will create a particular environment in the family. The current study therefore hypothesises that autonomy-supportive and psychologically controlling parenting will be related to family environment dimensions.

According to DeGenova and Rice (2002) family environment has a major influence especially on children. DeGenova and Rice (2002:30) state:

The family is the chief socializing influence on children. In other words, the family is the principal transmitter of knowledge, values, attitudes, roles and habits from one generation to the next. Through word and example, the

family shapes a child's personality and instills modes of thought and ways of acting that become habitual.

Amoateng (1997b: 24) sees the family as a central economic, social and cultural development centre. It is thus within the family that the process of socialisation evolves. The process of socialisation is defined as,

...the transmission of conduct, roles, attitudes and values; the process whereby the individual becomes a member of a social group in the sense that he or she learns to conduct him or herself in accordance with the norms of the group; the process through which the child learns which conduct is acceptable and what the community expects of him or her.

According to De Witt and Booyesen (1999) the family becomes an agent of socialisation because from birth the family and the community emphasise the rules, values and roles to be learnt. In viewing family backgrounds, different family environments, situations and relationships can have differing effects on the members in the family, especially on children. Bigner (1998: 82-83) indicates that irrespective of the diversity of family forms or structure; for example single-parent families, male and female homosexuals-parent families, step families and nuclear families; there are certain characteristics which would need to be present in order for a healthy family environment to evolve and be maintained over time. These characteristics are as follows:

- effective interpersonal communication skills are practiced;
- everyone in the family feels respected and valued;
- everyone feels free to express different opinions;
- there is a commitment to a sense of family;
- responsible behaviour among members is promoted;
- there is a strong sense of what is valued in moral and spiritual beliefs; traditions and rituals are observed as a family group;
- the groups adapts in healthy ways in response to change;
- disagreements are expected but resolved in healthy ways;
- personal boundaries of members are maintained and respected.

There is also the unhealthy family environment, examples of which are: the alcoholic family environment, having perfectionist parents, the abusive family environment and the workaholic family environment (DeGenova and Rice, 2002). According to Bigner (1998: 75-81) there are certain characteristics present in unhealthy family environments. Communication in unhealthy families is difficult because family members communicate poorly or not at all, feelings are hidden and not expressed openly as family members fear being criticised, ignored or rejected for their feelings and thoughts. As a consequence of communication difficulties in the family environment, values, rules and morals are not explicitly indicated or stated, which may eventually lead to unreasonable expectations, distrust and difficulty in forming relationships. Criticism, sarcastic remarks, verbal, sexual and physical abuse occur in unhealthy families and result in disrespect and disrepute towards the self and towards family members. The sense of togetherness and family unity is constantly under threat because one or both of the parents have long working hours; groupings and alliances are formed between various family members. These little 'bonds' within the family are normally formed to manipulate or ostracise other family members. Children are protected from experiencing the consequences of their actions because parents believe that they are being kind and that children need not experience the harshness of irresponsible actions. This 'protection' of the child eventually leads to the child being developmentally delayed and hinders their personal growth. Unhealthy families are not easily adaptable due to the inflexible and unstable nature of the family environment.

There is a similarity between the description of the "inadequate family" provided by De Witt and Booyesen (1999: 27-30) and the unhealthy family. De Wit and Booyesen (1999: 27-30) believe that, within the inadequate family, there are certain essential characteristics which are absent in the functioning of the family. In the neglected

family, family members are inadequately provided for with regard to living conditions, hygiene, food and clothing; relationships are very often troubled and children are often emotionally ignored, mistrusted and uncared for. The family that lacks routine provides a picture where the household is smoothly run, but routine, physical grooming; habits of the family and discipline are flawed. Children are in many cases over-protected and lack the ability to be responsible. The rigid family is the “perfect” or “neat” family because this family looks good from the outside and family members are aware of their duties and strong principles. However, there may be no space for individual development as severity in upbringing, opportunities for exploration and liberation are limited or non-existent. The modern urban family often transfers family duties to the community and working together as a family has no special significance. Each family member “goes his or her own way and the family is without character”. Children are unguided and parents fail to transmit family norms and values resulting in the educational neglect of their children. There are constant tensions in the disharmonious family as family members have emotional outbursts with each other and individual family members are in conflict with themselves.

DeGenova and Rice (2002) state that family environment encourages, the development of either positive or negative self-esteem levels. In addition, “it influences everything that people are, want to become, or do” (p. 190). The results of a study conducted by Maker, Kemmelmeier and Peterson (1998) indicated that children who were exposed to parental violence experienced feelings of powerlessness and fear, which was related to lower self-esteem levels. In addition, women who were exposed to domestic violence in their childhood were more likely to become victims of violence in their adult relationships. This sets a possible cycle for other relationships to be formed in following generations. According to Moos & Moos (2002) families which were

supportive and organised had increased self-confidence, social competence and self-sufficiency, and had decreased anxiety, amongst children. Prevatt (2003) likewise found that negative family factors were more highly correlated with negative child outcomes, whereas positive family factors were more highly correlated with positive child outcomes. Family risk factors such as family stress, family conflict, parent psychopathology and low socio-economic status and poor parenting primarily accounted for the variance in externalising child behaviours. Alternately, family protective factors such as family cohesion, family social support and family moral-religious orientation and positive parenting primarily accounted for the variance in child adaptive behaviours. Parenting had a direct effect on child outcome, but was not a strong moderator of the relationship between risk and protection factors and child outcomes. The results of a study conducted by El-Sheikh and Buckhalt (2003) maintains that child-parent and family functioning can either provide protective factors or initiate susceptibility pathways for children who are exposed to a high-risk environment such as crime in a community.

As stated previously, choice of parenting results in a particular family environment. Evidence of this relationship is presented by Mandara and Murray (2002). They conducted a study to empirically identify different types of African American families and found there were three types of families by linking family environment and a particular parenting style. These researchers found the cohesive-authoritative family type to exhibit high quality family functioning and high child self-esteem. The conflictive-authoritarian type exhibited controlling and rigid discipline and placed high emphasis on achievement, while the defensive-neglectful type was predominantly headed by single mothers displaying chaotic family processes and low child self-

esteem. This study clearly shows the relationship between family environments and parental styles as associated to child well-being.

Families should act as protective forcers and enhancers of development especially for children living in high-risk environments and should aid to satisfy the needs of children and this way support a psychologically healthy child. Self-esteem and how satisfied an individual is with his or her life are indicators of how well the individual is. These indicators are also signs of an individual's personal functioning and psychological health.

2.4 SELF-ESTEEM AS AN INDICATOR OF PERSONAL FUNCTIONING

The literature abounds with research concerning self-esteem and well-being and to a larger extent self-esteem and well-being in the context of children in the family (Mistry, Vandewater, Huston & McLoyd, 2002). The focus of Western countries, such as countries in Europe and the United States of America (USA), is individualism rather than collectivism so self-esteem and life satisfaction become key variables when trying to assess psychological well-being. According to Rudy and Grusec (2006: 68) the difference between individualist and collectivist cultures is that collectivist cultures promote the inhibition of expressing own wants and needs and rather promote the satisfaction of the needs and wants of the group. Individualists promote self-reliance, self-interest and independence for the individual within the "context of positive relationships with others". Diener and Diener (1995: 653) state that self-esteem has a stronger predictive value in individualist cultures than in collectivist cultures because individualists are "taught to like themselves and doing so is a sign of mental adjustment". For collectivists, "feeling good about oneself may be a sign of maladjustment". In South Africa the majority of the population can be said to subscribe

to traditional African culture which is considered to be collectivist. In contrast the White and Coloured populations may be considered more individualist than the African population.

The concern is, therefore, if applicability of these variables would provide consistent results across countries and cultures, and if not, whether self-esteem and how satisfied people are with their lives would be unimportant (Rudy & Grusec, 2006). As South African research is minimal with regard to these issues, Westernised research becomes the basis for understanding psychological well-being of mothers and children. Self-esteem research stretches across developmental stages and is contextualised in many different personal, familial and societal circumstances. The focus of the current literature is on the self-esteem of mothers and preadolescent children within the family.

Self-esteem is the evaluative component of the self. Once children have an idea of the type of person that they have become, they tend to compare themselves with others as they mature. This is especially true for preadolescents and even mothers. Individuals would either state good or bad characteristics about themselves. These characteristics are evaluations of their self.

Colman defines self-esteem as; “one’s attitude towards one’s self or one’s opinion or evaluation of one’s self, which may be positive (favourable or high), neutral or negative (unfavourable or low)” (2001: 660). Statt (2003: 139) states that self-esteem is “how well a person likes themselves; how worthy he or she deems themselves to be”.

Self-esteem, therefore, is not only described as ‘good feelings’ or ‘bad feelings’, ‘feelings of worth’, but it is also described as ‘feelings of satisfaction’ and the application of oneself in a positive way with others and life and self-respect. According to Curry and Johnson (1992) self-esteem should be viewed beyond the simplistic descriptions of ‘feelings of good or bad’, which project a type of dichotomous

relationship with self-esteem being considered as either positive or negative. They believe that this approach may lead to stereotyping and that, in reality, most children and adults are somewhere between these two extremities, having “personal strengths and vulnerabilities” (1992: 4). Self-esteem, Curry and Johnson (1992) believe, is not an “isolated entity”. They support this by asserting,

It would be misleading to think of self-esteem as an isolated thing that you get...as if self-esteem is like a drug that can be given in a single booster shot. Instead self-esteem must be viewed as a life-long developmental process. How children feel and think about themselves, is integrally tied to their physical, social, moral, emotional, cognitive and personality development (p.5).

The relevance of the development of a positive self-esteem lies neither in conditional and unrealistic goal setting nor in ungrounded praising, but rather it lies in encouraging the development of responsible and prosocial behaviour patterns in individuals as well as mentally healthy adults. Self-esteem, therefore, is the active evaluative component of the self and self-concept while individuals are socialised into participatory members of a society or community. This description of self-esteem is supported by the description of self-esteem by Baron and Byrne (2003: 575) that “self-esteem is the self-evaluation made by each individual”. Ward (1996) believes that self-esteem is basic to all human experience or life and that if one is able to determine the degree or levels of self-esteem that an individual possesses, he or she would be possible to access, predict, control or enhance an individual’s life.

In essence positive self-esteem results in people feeling good about themselves. They are productive, effective and they feel capable because they know they are loved. A very high self-esteem can however, be problematic because people think only of themselves and do not consider others. According to Hawkins (2007: 10) a person with positive self-esteem is not a person who is “self-centred, acts superior, is a braggart or

pushing his/her own agenda”. This description by Hawkins is indicative of an individual who has narcissistic tendencies. Horton, Bleau and Drwecki (2006: 346) state that narcissism is defined as “a ‘pervasive pattern of grandiosity’ that is characterized by arrogant or haughty behaviors, feelings of entitlement and superiority, and a lack of empathy for or concern about others”. According to Hawkins (2007) and Coopersmith (1967), a psychologically-well individual should have an adequate level of self-esteem devoid of narcissism.

Low self-esteem has been linked to a lack of self-respect, motivation, having feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, the belief that one is not as good as others and the inability to reach personal potential causing pain, distress, breakdown, bad behaviour, relationship problems and even depression (Van Der Ross, 1993; De Witt and Booyesen, 1995; Hartley-Brewer, 1996). Low self-esteem is also known as ill-being or someone having an unhealthy self-image (Hawkins, 2007). Coopersmith (1967:160-161) states that low self-esteem in childhood are normally loners, because they are “not valued and sought by others, they prefer isolation and their environments provide limited opportunity for social interaction”. Furthermore, reports from children with low self-esteem indicated that children felt “awkward, uncomfortable in the presence of others; that they were less likely to be selected as friend by peers and were less likely to receive attention and concern from parents”. The results also show that children with high self-esteem tended to have “more frequent, positive and congenial experiences in their childhood”.

Because self-esteem is evaluative, researchers (Cheng & Furnham, 2004; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Harter, 1999; Ryan, Stiller & Lynch, 1994) have extensively used it as an indicator of psychological and emotional well-being of and between children and

adults. Furthermore, self-esteem has been linked to proximal factors such as family, parenting and school environments, as well as distal factors such as parental socio-economic status (Doyle & Markiewicz, 2005; Grolnick, 2003; Horton, Bleau and Drwecki, 2006). Self-esteem has also been related to child outcomes such as internalising problems for example eating disorders and externalising problems such as substance abuse (Donnellan, Trzesniewski, Robins, Moffitt & Caspi, 2005; Hawkins, 2007; Kee, Sim, Teoh, Tian & Ng, 2003). The current study only focuses on preadolescent self-esteem as being associated to maternal parenting practices and family environment.

2.4.1 Self-esteem as an indicator of child outcomes in association with family functioning

Small (1988) suggests that mothers with high self-esteem levels provided children with greater decision-making freedom and better communication, resulting in positive parenting and familial relationships. Research studies have shown that maternal warmth, companionship and support are important for child self-esteem and subsequent happiness (Barber & Thomas, 1986; Cheng & Furnham, 2004; Milevsky, Schlechter, Netter & Keehn, 2007; Ryan, Stiller & Lynch, 1994). Doyle, and Markiewicz (2005) conducted a longitudinal study relating three dimensions of parenting (psychological control, warmth, and behavioural control), marital conflict, and attachment style (anxiety and avoidance) to adjustment and found that marital conflict was associated with lower self-esteem, more externalizing symptoms, and lower academic achievement with all but the latter mediated by parental warmth. Parental psychological control was associated with increases in internalizing symptoms over time, an effect not mediated by attachment insecurity, which contributed independently. Parental warmth was associated with decreases in externalizing symptoms and increases in self-esteem

over time, the latter mediated by attachment security. Similarly, Horton, Bleau and Drwecki (2006: 346) found psychological control to be positively associated with narcissism scores from which trait self-esteem variance had been removed.

Verschueren and Marcoen (2002) examined the perceptions of the self and the attachment relationship to parents in aggressive and nonaggressive rejected children as compared to children with an average or popular sociometric status. The results indicate nonaggressive rejected children perceive themselves as less competent and worthy as a person than the more popular children, while aggressive rejected children did not report lower feelings of self-worth or competence, although they reported lower levels of social acceptance. Furthermore, rejected-nonaggressive children perceived the relationship with their father (but not their mother) as less secure than did the more popular children.

Similarly, Donnellan, Trzesniewski, Robins, Moffitt and Caspi (2005) related global self-esteem to externalising problems such as aggression, antisocial behaviour, and delinquency. There was a strong relation between low self-esteem and externalising problems. The relation was consistent for all reports, that is, self-reports, teachers' ratings, and parents' ratings, and for participants from different nationalities (United States and New Zealand) and age groups (adolescents and college students). Moreover, this relation held both cross-sectionally and longitudinally and after controlling for potential confounding variables such as supportive parenting, parent-child and peer relationships, achievement-test scores, socioeconomic status, and IQ. In addition, the effect of self-esteem on aggression was independent of narcissism. As low self-esteem has been related to externalising behaviours, it has also been associated with problematic parent-child relationships and family environments. Kee, Sim, Teoh, Tian

and Ng (2003) found that gang youths had lower self-esteem and higher levels of aggression than controls. Notable were the findings that gang youths reported a relative absence of parental abuse and indifference, and experienced less open communication and higher levels of over-control with their mothers, but not fathers.

Self-esteem has also been related to resilience in children living in poverty. Buckner, Mezzacappa and Beardslee (2003) conducted a study to establish the characteristics of resilient youth. They found that resilient youth, in comparison to non-resilient youth, had greater self-regulation skills and self-esteem as well as more active parental monitoring. The type of parenting was found to be closely linked to adjustment and psychological well-being. Milevsky, et al. (2007) examined the relationship between variations in adjustment as a function of maternal and paternal parenting styles. The results revealed that authoritative mothering was related to higher self-esteem and life satisfaction and to lower depression.

Similarly, Karavasilis, Doyle and Markiewicz (2003) investigated how parenting was related to mother attachment and adjustment in middle childhood and adolescence.

They found a positive relationship between three parenting dimensions such as high in warm involvement, psychological autonomy granting and behavioural monitoring and control and adjustment and secure attachment to the mother. The results of this study suggest that this type of parenting promotes the child's individuality, provides loving support and responsiveness and therefore assists children to have positive internal representations of their self. Furthermore, because children are securely attached, they are more likely to be compliant with parental requests even in the absence of the parent and therefore disciplinary encounters and close supervision are less necessary.

Fundamentally, when there was a failure to be warmly engaged and/or to provide

appropriate limits, the attachment figure was devalued and a defensive sense of self-worth evolved especially for children who had dismissing-avoidant attachment with their mothers.

Felson and Zielinski (1989) examined the relationship between child self-esteem and parental support for children aged 10 to 13 years over a one-year period. They found that children's self-esteem was significantly affected by parental support, but girls were more affected than boys. Only parental praise had a significant effect on the self-esteem of boys. These researchers also found that punishment had no effect on self-esteem suggesting possibly that punishment may not have been a negative evaluation from parents or the effect of the punishment depended on the type of punishment that was used. The results of the study also highlight the reciprocal and bidirectional nature of child self-esteem and parental support with each effect having equal magnitude. Thus, the application or style of parenting has an effect on the self-esteem of the child. Furthermore, parenting practice creates the familial environment in which the child develops.

Cooper, Holman and Braithwaite (1983) found that family cohesion had an important positive influence on the development of the child's self-esteem. Family conflict resulted in lower self-esteem levels for children. Furthermore, the structure of the family, that is families with one or two parents, did not have the most damaging effects on child self-esteem. This finding was similarly supported by Medvedova (2000); Raschke and Raschke (1979) and Segal-Engelchin and Wozner (2005). Similarly, in a study conducted with early adolescents, Medvedova (2000) found cohesion, expressiveness and a non-conflict atmosphere to be significantly related with self-

esteem. Furthermore, rules and organisations in the family were also positively and significantly related to self-esteem of children.

Empirically, the image of the self and its evaluative element, self-esteem, have eminent influences on individuals' lives, especially with regard to children's emotional well-being and adjustment to the family. Self-esteem, as an indicator of well-being, is also associated to how satisfied an individual is with his/her life.

2.4.2 Self-esteem and satisfaction with life

Satisfaction with life and life satisfaction are used interchangeably and can be defined as a “cognitive-judgemental process of one's life as a whole” and can equal happiness or unhappiness (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985: 71, 72; Pavot & Diener, 1993). Veenhoven (1991: 2) further defines happiness as “the degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of his life favourably”. Diener, et al. (1992) has found that an individual's satisfaction with his or her life increases self-esteem levels, global well-being and positive human functioning. Furthermore, Diener and Diener (1995) state that satisfaction with life is dependent on the self and is therefore strongly and significantly correlated with each other. The correlation between self-esteem and satisfaction with life was found in a cross-cultural study Diener and Diener (1995: 660, 661) conducted with college students in 31 nations. The results showed that self-esteem and life satisfaction were correlated across the entire sample and also in most nations, but this relationship was moderated by the individualism of the society because “how a person feels about him-or herself is more strongly correlated with life satisfaction when the individual is the focus of attention”. Additionally, collectivists may have a more prevailing negative focus as a result of being challenged by problems and social conflicts. The study showed that the associations of financial, family, and friend

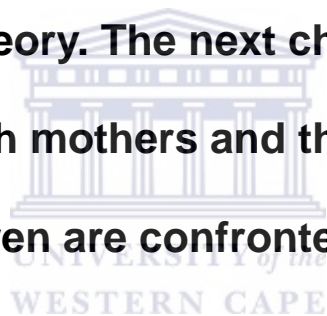
satisfactions with life satisfaction and self-esteem varied across nations. The researchers found that financial satisfaction was a stronger correlate of life satisfaction in poorer countries. Except for financial satisfaction, satisfaction ratings varied between slightly positive and fairly positive. How satisfied an individual is with his/her life is an added indicator, in addition to other affect indicators such as self-esteem, to rate an individual's overall psychological well-being. A South African study conducted by Maluka (2004) confirms that how satisfied a person is with his or her life is very strongly correlated with self-esteem.

According to Gilman and Huebner (2003: 195) most children and adolescents are satisfied with their lives and “view their lives positively”. In their review of life satisfaction studies they found inconsistencies for socio-economic status effects for child and adolescent life satisfaction, but found that small differences were inclined to favour higher SES children. Furthermore, financial resources were insignificant if children's basic needs were met.

2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter aimed to provide an understanding of the development of the self and subsequent self-esteem. Encapsulated within the development of the self and self-esteem, parenting practices and family environment are presented to understand the process of development of the self and self-esteem. As self-esteem is an evaluative component of the self, it

provides an indication of psychological well-being. Additionally, how satisfied an individual is with his or her life further provides an indication of psychological well-being. Also, empirical studies show the effects of the environment on self-esteem and the subsequent effects of the child's self-esteem resulting in externalising behaviours. These concepts and research findings were presented within the framework of Self-Determination theory. The next chapter explores the challenges which mothers and their preadolescent children are confronted with.



CHAPTER 3

THE CHALLENGES OF MOTHERING

PREADOLESCENTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As any mother knows, motherhood is a challenge and society does not make it any easier. Society includes the communities we live in, the work we do, the schools our children attend, the friends we have and the circumstances or environments in our homes. Each of these societal domains has many other factors which reflect back to people. In the home for example, there is the challenge of providing for the family, ensuring that the children's homework is completed, that they are fed and bathed, monitoring where children are when they are not at home and who they interact with and, most importantly, talking to and with the child. The home becomes the hub of many other little activities such as cooking, cleaning and paying accounts which are needed in order for the family and its individuals to function adequately. These individuals move from the home to schools and organisations and these school and organisational environments will have their own impacts. In other words, there are more possibilities of stressful events and challenges which can occur for parents and children in their daily lives. It is these outside stressors and challenges which can affect the relationship between the parent/mother and the child.

Another challenge of mothering is the unrealistic expectations that are set in which mothering has to occur. For example, there is the perception that married mothers provide emotionally happier and healthier children than single mothers or the

perception that mothers in low socio-economic environments are more challenged to physically and, therefore, emotionally too, provide for their children than mothers in high socio-economic environments. Thus at a broader level the process of mothering is comparatively discredited in the context of marital and socio-economic status levels.

This chapter highlights the challenges confronting mothers within which they address the challenges of mothering their preadolescent children as well as the developmental requirements of the phase of preadolescence. The challenges of mothering and the developmental needs of their preadolescent children are combined to look at the practical implications for South African mother-child relationships.

3.2 THE CHALLENGES OF MOTHERHOOD

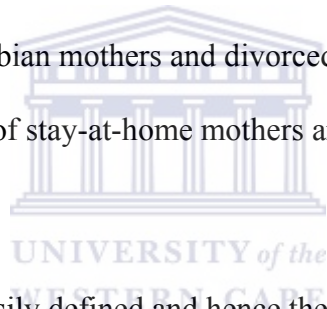
What is motherhood or mothering? The concept of motherhood is not easily defined. Mothers do not think about what it means to be a mother and most times have the approach of ‘just do it’ because it is a ‘normal way of life’. Walker (1995) states that mothers’ own perceptions of motherhood or mothering are embedded within what they are told about what motherhood is rather than their own experiences and perceptions as mothers. To simply say that ‘Mothering’ is a process of managing and caring for children is to forgo an explanation and understanding of the depth of the responsibility, dependency and emotional attachment between a mother and her child, making motherhood a multi-faceted phenomenon. Walker (1995: 424) believes that motherhood is such a “familiar institution” that often there is the failure to actually thoroughly define the concept. It is this weakness which results in an implied universalistic application in understanding motherhood. She asserts that motherhood incorporates three domains. These domains are motherhood as practice, discourse and social identity. Walker (1995) stresses that, although these three domains are present

for all mothers, they differ for mothers according to what they contain because history, society and family all play a systemic role in the formulation and maintenance of these dimensions. Thus, even though motherhood is about the physical and emotional care of and involvement with their children in practice, there is the added dimension of the dominant ideology of the “Good Mother” (p. 425) who forsakes herself for her children and in a sense becomes the perfect mother. The challenge of social identity remains, according to Walker (1995), because socialisation and societal dominant discourses tend to overwhelm the voice of the individual mother’s experiences.

Elvin-Nowak and Thomsson (2001) conducted a study with a group of heterogeneous working mothers. These mothers were asked to provide an understanding of motherhood and mothering in their daily lives. The researchers found that mothers’ interpretations of motherhood were socially constructed and were culturally and historically based. In essence Elvin-Nowak and Thomsson (2001: 425) found that mothers could understand their daily mothering practices in accordance with the needs of their children. Although the children were a priority, mothers stated that their own well-being increased their children’s well-being and, therefore, mothering should not be “at the expense of the woman as mother and worker outside of the home”.

Arendell (2000: 1194), as with Walker (1995), conducted a literature review of motherhood and mothering. The study found that motherhood is conceptualised, on the one hand, as a “universal practice” of nurturing, protecting and training and educating their children. In essence the universal practice of motherhood is not prescriptive because motherhood is learnt in the process of adapting and changing according to the child, thus highlighting the reciprocal relationship between the mother and the child. On the other hand, motherhood is “particularistic” because “cultural and economic

contexts” (p. 1195) direct how mothers respond to their children. For example, mothers who are married have a partner to economically assist in the survival of the family and raising the children and therefore do not have the role strain as experienced by single mothers. Mothers living in high socio-economic environments could have the resources and time to spend with their children. For mothers living in low socio-economic environments, the reality is low or no resources and, therefore, the physical survival of and providing for, the family is primary and emotional survival is often secondary. In addition to the *practice and particularistic ideologies* of comprehending motherhood, Arendell (2000: 1195) states that there are *deviancy discourses* which evaluate mothers against the norm of the dominant ideologies. For example, single mothers, mothers living in low socio-economic environments, especially mothers receiving government support, working mothers, lesbian mothers and divorced mothers are treated differently against the preferential norm of stay-at-home mothers and mothers rearing their children in a nuclear family.



Clearly, motherhood is not easily defined and hence there are divergent conceptualisations in comprehending motherhood and mothering. Mothers, as with the development and functioning of children, operate within a context and, therefore, the comprehension of this phenomenon of motherhood should be one of individualising mothers’ experiences and voices (Price, 2007). This individualisation or contextualisation of motherhood, according to Arendell (2000: 1202), would ensure a “more realistic and less normative portrayal of mother’s lives than those afforded by sweeping images”. In a very broad sense of understanding the concept of motherhood, a very Westernized approach is used. Motherhood is depicted as the most fulfilling experience women will have and the image of the mothers, as stated by Matlin (2000: 375), are normally,

...the idealized woman is probably white; between the ages of 20 and 35; she is heterosexual and married; her family income is comfortable and she is slender and radiant.

Furthermore, Woollett and Phoenix (1991:28) state that psychologists present a dichotomous perspective of motherhood. On the one hand psychologists (especially developmental psychologists) generally argue

...that mothers are the central figures in their children's lives, as carers, 'socializers' and providers of stimulating and sensitive environments, they are rarely considered as having an existence of their own or a perspective on what they do as mothers. Rather they appear as shadowy figures, managing from behind the scenes.

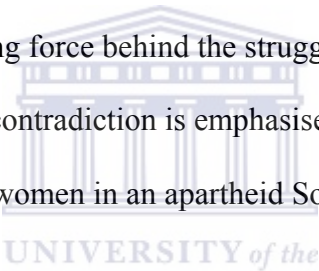
When having this perspective of motherhood, mothers are presented as applying 'good' mothering techniques, always considering their children's needs, which often excludes the mother's view of herself, her own needs or the family context in which she raises her children (Gerson, Alpert & Richardson, 1990; Munn, 1991). On the other hand, an approach by social psychologists is to focus more on how mothers manage the 'models' of motherhood in relation to their own identities and experiences as mothers. Woollett and Phoenix (1991a) believe that too little emphasis is placed on the mother's perspective of her experiences as a mother within the environment in which she and her child exists and too little understanding is achieved as to why one mother parents in one way and another mother parents in another way.

The reality of mothering as a practice for South African mothers could be quite different as South Africans have a diverse population which has evolved from over three decades of oppression, discrimination, inequality and domination from the system of apartheid. Thus, culturally and historically, mothering for many South African women is different for mothers because they have had a unique and unparalleled historical experience.

3.2.1 The history of South African mothers

A complete explanation and description of the events that took place during the period of Apartheid in South Africa would be impossible, therefore only the issues and factors pertaining to this study will be briefly highlighted and linked to the factors concerning mothers and their children.

Ames, 2002; Bernstein, 1985 and Posel, 1991, amongst others, explicitly and implicitly show that women and mothers have tenaciously endured the struggle to overcome their oppression. The discrimination of women and mothers encompassed all spheres of life that is, the legal, social and economic circumstances of their daily lives. The impact of apartheid left deeply entrenched scars of hurt, pain, anxiety and sometimes fears while, at the same time was the driving force behind the struggle of women against the oppression of apartheid. This contradiction is emphasised by Bernstein (1985: 6) in her explanation of the struggle of women in an apartheid South Africa.



Superficially the situation is a contradictory one: the extent of the oppression of women, legally, socially, in every way, can scarcely be over-emphasised; they are half the population, and of the half the black majority is bound by the most extreme and harsh conditions. Yet at the same time these most oppressed women reveal the capacity for defiance, a great power of endurance, abilities to survive and protect their families, to fight oppression with ever-increasing strength and consistency.

The apartheid government instituted control strategies in order to cater to the needs of “white supremacy” and “white economic prosperity” (Posel, 1981: 8). These control strategies included Pass Laws (1952), the Groups Areas Act, the Migrant Labour System and Influx Control. These strategies were implemented to ensure racial separatism and segregation. Subsequently, these control strategies ensured societal and economic deprivation. Black African men were compelled to leave their homes in the rural areas to work in the urban townships. The women, children, old and disabled

people were left in the reserves to subsist on small pieces of land in the Bantustans (Bernstein, 1985: 9). Black African men and women were afforded “resident rights” when they wanted to work in the urban areas and Black African women were employed as domestic workers and child minders (Posel, 1991: 75 & 76). Residency in urban communities was only allowed for seventy-two hours. If this law was transgressed, people were arrested. This meant that many people were left unemployed and urban family life was destroyed. Families could ill-afford the income loss because of their dependence on the meagre earnings of the breadwinner in the family. The arrests also meant that many women were left to head their households and the survival of the family was constantly threatened. Posel (1991: 125) concurs by stating that

The routine of imprisonment for pass-law offences also scarred urban family life, removing fathers (and mothers, once these laws were imposed on women) from their children and burdening mothers and wives heavily with sole financial and emotional responsibility for child care. The NAD frequently bemoaned the breakdown of parental discipline and family cohesion in the townships, and yet administered a pass system which imposed severe stresses on the urban African family.

In the Western Cape, the Groups Areas Act No. 41 forced families to live on the Cape Flats. These families included non-Europeans. All these laws, which formed the system of apartheid, led to the eventual breakdown and disintegration of husbands and wives, parents and children and general family life. Ginwala (1990:1) ascribes the oppression and discrimination of women due to the laws of apartheid by stating that

Nor has influx controls been the only area in which state policy controlled women’s lives after 1948. Laws such as the Population Registration Act, the Immorality Act, the Group Areas Act had immediate if differentiated repercussions for women of all races. In its concern with maintaining if not inventing racial and ethnic boundaries, apartheid came to be even more closely concerned with the control of the most intimate aspects of family life.

Bernstein (1985: 13) believes that the migrant labour system had an “adverse effect” on family life and social development because the men and women who had to be members of a community as husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, were absent for long periods of time. Furthermore,

While the population of South Africa, during the era of Apartheid were oppressed, women in particular experienced feelings of disempowerment, hopelessness and helplessness due to gender stereotyping in a patriarchal society. In being Black and a woman during Apartheid meant that women carried a double burden of oppression and discrimination.

Within the patriarchal South African society white women, too, were treated unequally. The assumption was that women had to care for the children, not men (Ames, 2002: 57). The patriarchal family functioning was reinforced by the Apartheid System on the principle that the very existence of women had to be controlled by their fathers, brothers, uncles and husbands. According to Bernstein (1985: 28) women were considered to be “legal minors” and as such were treated as property that men and the state could do with as they pleased. She affirms the fact that women were possessions because they “could not”

own property in their own right, enter into contracts without the aid of their male guardian, or act as guardians of their own children. They are virtually perpetual minors, regardless of their age or marital status, always subject to the authority of men.

Women had no say. Women were oppressed and discriminated against at all racial and cultural levels. Men, therefore, were responsible for making choices for the women in their households, while women had to be subservient and obedient to these decisions.

Apartheid reinforced and supplemented the oppression of women by not allowing women to work in the towns. While African men were part of the migrant labour system, African women had to remain in the reserves to care for their families. The

migrant labour system, therefore, led to the creation of women-headed households and caused severe chaos and disruption in the lives of South African women (Bernstein, 1985: 15). According to Ginwala (1990: 1) and Ames (2002: 18) the reserves had a profound effect on the lives of women as large numbers of women were confined to these “deteriorating rural environments” where they were dependent on the meagre money sent by their husbands for care of their homes, children and in many cases extended family members. Women were subsequently subjected to heading their homes, caring for their children, the elderly and the disabled. In living in the derelict rural environments of the reserves, women struggled to sustain themselves and their families. Women were forced to become independent, responsible and decision-makers. Women experienced the worst effects of poverty and were, thus, forced to access ‘forbidden’ areas to work. Women became resilient in the face of these multiple adversities.

Women had to acquire a permit or pass to work in the towns and could only be employed as domestic workers or in agriculture. Married women were especially discriminated against. Bernstein (1985: 40) states that the legal status of married women was very fragile during the era of Apartheid. This meant that women could lose their homes and children. A woman who was divorced could only remain within her home if she had not been guilty in the divorce suit, had gained legal custody of her children, had legal permission to remain in the town, if she could pay her rent and if her former husband was in agreement to leave the house. The oppressive circumstances of women meant that many women remained married to their husbands even though they were unhappy because they feared their husbands would divorce or desert them and that they would thus lose the few rights they had as married women.

Mothers of children, besides having the threat of having their legal status revoked, faced the pain and hardship of not having their children live with them. According to Bernstein (1985: 45-46), children were considered “illegal” within the system of Apartheid irrespective of their ages and therefore could not live with their mothers. The births of children were only registered if the children had been born in the townships and their names were sometimes placed on the permits. Unmarried mothers were not allowed to have their children’s names registered nor placed on their permits. If the permits expired, all “unqualified” people were arrested. While the men were at work, the women were arrested and the children were left alone, including very young children. The residential permit was often impossible to obtain when the mother was living illegally in an urban area. Women living in towns formed resistance groups against the regime. Their fight was, amongst many, to maintain the existence of their families, continue relationships with their husbands, have their children with them, who were most times living with extended family members in the reserves, and be allowed to work in the towns – fighting for their own existence and against the scourges of poverty, especially in the reserves. In many cases mothers were separated from their children and their possessions. Women were stubbornly determined to maintain their families despite their challenges with the government.

Women were the driving force behind the resistances to the system of Apartheid. Despite the reality of the challenges of living in the psychosocial conditions created by apartheid, women had the tenacity and fortitude to strive towards achieving humane living conditions. Their consistency and drive for freedom from oppression resulted in the release of Mandela in 1992 and it was in 1994 that their persistence resulted in the first fair and general election for all South Africans over the age of 18 years. The fruition of their struggles produced a democratic South Africa led by South Africa’s

first black president – President Mandela – favouring the human rights of all citizens of South Africa. Based on the elections of 1994 and the formation of a new government, South Africa’s first Constitution was adopted on 8 May and amended on 11 October 1996 by the Constitutional Assembly.

3.2.2 Marital status as a stereotype of mothering

Motherhood is socially constructed as the ideal and simplest path along which a woman, as a mother, will travel (Matlin, 2000; Phoenix & Woollett, 1991). Yet, mothers are socially devalued and held accountable if their children do not ‘turn out right’ (Phoenix & Wollett, 1991). According to Phoenix and Woollett (1991), childrearing and parenting are social constructions which are no concern of the public domain such as government structures and policy applications, but rather have to be dealt with in the private domain of the family. However, they believe that there is an “illusory” (p. 15) contradiction between these public and private domains of childrearing and parenting especially when mothers do not conform to the social construct of mothering and motherhood and become single mothers. The ‘ideal’ of child rearing and parenting becomes a public principle especially with regard to economic support, provision of care for children and the teaching of behaviours which are appropriate for the dominant ideology such as the socialization of the child. Although, at a government level, it is important that prescriptions are in place to prevent children from being abused and starved, a question is raised as to how far the ‘hand’ of government officials should extend. In a certain sense, the boundaries of private and public domains are crossed and confusion is raised because, although mothers are ‘encouraged’ to procreate on the one hand, on the other hand they are prescribed as to how to mother their children irrespective of culture and socio-

economic differences. In general, motherhood is projected as being the same experience for all mothers and mothers, therefore, are painted with society's 'one-colour paint brush' irrespective of individual experiences and structural differences in their environments.

Stereotypes of mothers, as well as the continued presentation of the dominant Westernised ideology concerning the more accepted 'ideal' mother, entrench and maintains the differences in perceptions and realities of motherhood resulting in feelings of guilt about 'bad' mothering for 'excluded' mothers (Ganong, 1995; Johnson, 2003). These 'excluded' mothers include single mothers which further include never married, divorced and widowed mothers. These stereotypes, in themselves, provide challenges to mothers, especially single mothers, as they compete with the implicit standard that is set by society.

3.2.2.1 Single versus married mothers

Literature, concerning the challenges provided by societal stereotyping especially with regard to the disparity between single and married mothers, shows that the 'normal' social construct of motherhood could result in negative interpretations of single mothers, employed mothers and young mothers especially since these family types are not considered to be the norm (Matlin, 2000; O'Barr, et. al., 1990; Phoenix & Woollett, 1995; Ribbens, 1994; Richardson, 1993). Married mothers are perceived as the 'standard' by which other mothers, for example never married, widowed or divorced mothers are rated against. Single mothers are considered to be deviant when they do have children without being married (Ganong, 1995; Johnson, 2003) and, therefore, create dysfunctional children and families.

In light of these stereotyped ‘standards’ which mothers have to attain, the reality is that single mothers are challenged psychosocially in comparison to their married counterparts. According to DeBord (1997), there are many parts to a woman’s sense of self. These are physical appearance, intimate relationships, sociability, intelligence, nurturance, job competency, adequacy as a provider, and morality. The degree of self-worth or self-esteem a woman will enjoy could be predicted by the fulfilment, or not, of these roles. The well-being of single mothers is especially a concern as they are prone to “task overload and role strain” and thus adopt a “survival role” providing housing and economic support rather than recreational and emotional nurturance (Carlson, 1992: 37; McKinney, 2002).

According to a study conducted by Price (2007: 25), participants stated that motherhood is difficult because it is “physically demanding, emotionally draining and an isolating experience”. The participants believed that, because motherhood was difficult, they experienced depression, stress, poor health, bad tempers and exhaustion. Price (2007) found that even though mothers experienced illnesses, they often just ignored their own illnesses in the process of caring for their children. Motherhood is difficult for any mother and therefore is increasingly difficult or challenging for single mothers. Studies conducted by Crosier, Butterworth and Rodgers (2007); Davies, Avison and McAlpine (1997); Targosz, et al. (2003); Wade and Cairney (2000) found that single rather than married mothers had lower self-esteem than married mothers and were more susceptible to depression. Davies, Avison and McAlpine (1997) found that the episodes of depression were, however, related to earlier childhood and adolescent adversities. Women whose childhoods had been free of adversities were more likely to report no or latter onset of depressive episodes. These women were more likely to be married mothers rather than single mothers. According to Afifi, Cox and Enns (2006),

never-married mothers and married mothers had similar mental health status and that separated/divorced mothers were more likely to experience psychiatric problems or disorders than never-married and married mothers.

Segal-Engelchin and Wozner (2005) have found that when women become single mothers by choice, they definitely have an increase in their quality of life as compared to their married and divorced counterparts. However, they are challenged in raising their children especially with regard to being sole providers financially, emotionally and socially; lack of financial support from the biological father and the possibility of becoming unemployed when the economy slows down. Although the participants in their study considered motherhood to provide extreme happiness, their experiences of motherhood encompassed loneliness and was an economic burden. Furthermore, quality of life of single mothers increased when their economic environments had improved and paternal involvement had increased.

Researchers have found that single mothers are at a greater disadvantage than their married counterparts (Ceballo & McLoyd, 2002; Franz, Lensche & Schmitz, 2003; Olson, Ceballo & Park, 2002; Whitehead & Holland, 2003). They are more likely to have fewer household resources, a lower income, to rent rather than own a house and to suffer unemployment, poverty and low self-esteem levels. Similarly, McLanahan and Booth (1989) confirm that single mothers are more likely to have high economic insecurity resulting from low earning capacity, lack of child support and insufficient and inadequate public benefits. Furthermore, the children of single mothers are more likely to be poor in adulthood and be single parents too.

Avison, Ali and Walters (2007) conducted a longitudinal survey with 502 married mothers and 518 single mothers to establish the variations in psychological distress

between these mothers with regard to exposure and vulnerability to stress and strain. They found that single mothers experienced higher levels of psychological distress than married mothers as a result of their higher exposure to stress and strain rather than any group differences in vulnerability to stressful experiences. There was, however, no evidence that single mothers were more vulnerable and reactive to stressors than married mothers. Thus, being married or single would not necessarily mean being psychologically distressed. It could, however, imply that marital status exposes mothers to different stressful and distressful environments and experiences.

Bigner (1998) emphasises that financial difficulties and poor economic conditions are especially experienced by single mothers. In most cases single mothers depend on the father paying child maintenance, which most times does not happen, as fathers are most times absent. Because single mothers are economically challenged, Segal-Engelchin and Wozner (2005) and Bigner (1998) point out that these circumstances may contribute significantly to the quality of life, social functioning and context of the mother-child relationship as single mothers can suffer from role strain and chronic fatigue. Bank, Forgatch, Patterson and Fetrow (1993); Florsheim, Tolan and Gorman-Smith (1998) and Segal-Engelchin and Wozner (2005) similarly found that socio-economically disadvantaged single mothers were more likely to be ineffective parents than their counterparts. Furthermore, single mothers, who themselves had antisocial tendencies, were more likely to place their older children, especially boys, at risk of having more antisocial qualities irrespective of their socio-economic status. In view of the fact that single mothers have role strain, they tend to have a more authoritarian parenting style and in many instances use psychological control to parent their children (Bigner, 1998). These practices and styles of parenting result in eventual conflictual relationships between mother and child, with subsequent externalizing behavioural

problems such as participating in gang activities and being involved in crime activities such as theft.

According to Florsheim, Tolan and Gorman-Smith (1998) children living in single-mother families were generally at a greater risk of having behaviour problems than children in two-parent families. Additionally, single-mother families functioned differently than two-parent families. Upon further investigation, these researchers found that single-mother families were less cohesive and ineffective in monitoring their children than two-parent families. However, cohesiveness and parental monitoring were not related to the occurrence of behaviour problems. Interestingly, lower levels of parent-child warmth were related to the occurrence of behaviour problems among boys in two-parent families but not among boys in single-mother families. This finding was based on the fact that children, who had behaviour problems, were further criticised, punished and emotionally shunned rather than warmly guided by family members. Thus Florsheim, Tolan and Gorman-Smith (1998: 1445) state that a *low risk* child could be raised in a single-mother family if the mother

- implements and maintains an effective disciplinary approach
- provides a structured family environment
- allows for some degree of autonomous functioning
- facilitates the development of supportive relationships with positive male family members

McKinney (2002) believes that married families provide more stable environments for children as compared to single parent homes because two parents can assist each other in the rearing of children. Shared parenting, he believes, may increase the likelihood of positive developmental outcomes rather than single-parent status. However, although married mothers have a spouse to share in child rearing and providing economically in

the home, marriages can have difficulties such as differences in workload in the home (Matlin, 2000) and differences in child rearing practices which could lead to marital discord and possibly low self-esteem levels of mothers. Subsequently, Jaffee, et al. (2003) found that fathers, who project anti-social behaviour could be more detrimental to the family environment, decreased marital satisfaction and child emotional adjustment. Specifically, Feldman et al. (1990) showed that mothers' satisfaction with the marriage was related to the overall functioning of the family, which included the emotional adjustment of the children. Furthermore, Jenkins, et al. (2005) found that when partners argue about children rather than other issues, children were more likely to have externalising behaviour problems. They also found the child's behaviour to predict marital conflict.

Thus, although research shows that single mothers are more prone to stress and strain than married mothers, it does not necessarily mean that single mothers would be more psychologically distressed than married mothers. Nor should it be assumed that single mothers rather than married mothers will raise problem children. Rather, environmental risk factors such as socio-economic status and support would aggravate risk-taking child behaviour. Weinraub and Wolf (1983) found that optimal mother-child interaction in single-parent families was predicted by fewer stressful life events, reduced social contact, increased parenting support and the hours of maternal employment. In two-parent families, optimal mother-child interaction was predicted by fewer stressful life events, satisfaction with emotional support and the availability of household help. Social contacts, household help and employment differentially predicted mother-child interactions in both single and two-parent families.

3.2.2.2 The challenge of socio-economic status

Socio-economic status (SES) is normally presented as either high or low. When people live in high socio-economic environments they have greater accessibility to resources such as health care and education; have higher earning potential; their children attend better schools; have higher education levels and have better employment opportunities. More importantly, their neighbourhoods are more secure and safe. The low socio-economic environments consist of neighbourhoods which are riddled with crime; low cost housing which in many instances offer only the bare minimum in terms of accommodation; parents are constantly anxious about the safety of their children, the enticement of participating in gang activities and substance abuse and slow delivery of services due to dependency on the provision of government services. People living in these environments are often unable to acquire the basic necessities, such as food, shelter, clothing, health care and safety.

A report provided by the Office of the Executive Deputy President and the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Poverty and Inequality (1998) defines poor people as: people being unable to attain a “minimal standard” of living; and the consequences of poverty are continuous ill health, demanding, and often dangerous work for a low income, no power to influence change, and high levels of anxiety and stress. Morris, Duncan and Rodrigues (2005:3) suggest that family economic conditions are important because “they enhance the material and social resources available to children and may improve family psychological processes, for example, parental emotional well-being and parenting”.

The descriptions of low and high socio-economic environments and people’s circumstances within them seem quite easy to delineate. However, defining and

measuring socio-economic status are not easy processes when trying to establish exactly which participants are classified as having low SES and which are classified as having high SES. Duncan and Magnuson (2001) state that family socio-economic status is “amorphous”, meaning that it is unstructured or fluid and therefore becomes difficult to measure and define. There are many contentions with regard to defining and measuring socio-economic status as the debate is constantly about which variables to use when measuring SES. The most common indicators for SES are parental education, occupational status and family or household income (Duncan & Magnuson, 2001; McLoyd, 1998; Twenge & Campbell, 2002).

According to Twenge and Campbell (2002: 59) SES can be quite difficult to define. In a study examining the relationship between self-esteem and socio-economic status, they state that socio-economic status can be defined as “any study measuring a respondent’s (or their parents’ or family’s) educational attainment, occupational status, income, or a composite of these is included in the definition of SES”. Twenge and Campbell (2002: 61) assert that the manner in which SES is measured may moderate the effect size as a result of relevance to the participants in a study. They contend that educational and occupational status, as SES indicators, would have more relevance for personal self-esteem rather than income as these indicators would be “better indicators of social status and importance”. In their study they found that SES was significantly positively related to self-esteem with a small effect size. This finding was more salient for young adults and middle aged participants rather than children, adolescents and retirement aged respondents. Education and occupational status rather than income showed larger correlations and effect sizes.

Higgs (2002: 7) states that socio-economic status can be defined as “a continuous index based on one or more variables applied at either an individual or higher level”.

Similarly, Barbarin and Richter (2001: 120); Bornstein, Hahn, Suwalsky and Haynes (2003); Mfenyana, et al. (2006) agree that the identification, development and measurement of socio-economic status have over time been extended to include various variables such as occupational status, education, income, material consumption, assets or wealth and family structure. In accordance with Higgs (2002), Barbarin and Richter (2001) believe that self-reported measures of socio-economic status are unreliable as reflected in past research studies measuring socio-economic status. As a result of self-reporting of socio-economic status being unreliable, Barbarin and Richter (2001: 117) used multiple indicators to reflect the household, rather than an individual, socio-economic status when they “evaluated the effects of economic status and community danger on the psychological functioning of South African preschool children”.

Thus, depending on the perspective taken to understand the concept of socio-economic status, the approach of measurement rather than the definition of socio-economic status clearly becomes the underlying factor in order to understand socio-economic status.

Furthermore, it seems that when using socio-economic status in a study, the researcher would first need to decide what the variables of choice would be before defining socio-economic status.

South Africa has a history of economic disparity due to apartheid. Geographically, South African citizens lived in areas which were demarcated according to the race they belonged to. Citizens could not enter the more advantaged areas. These advantaged areas clearly showed how economically affluent the citizens were, while citizens living in disadvantaged environments had dire experiences. Even today, thirteen years after

democracy, the demarcations are still evident and the economic disparities prevail. Thus, areas in which people live can become the first point of access when conducting research using SES because, in most cases, people living in disadvantaged areas would be exposed to low socio-economic circumstances and have different neighbourhood experiences to the advantaged socio-economic areas. For example, in the current study, mothers and children at eight schools were approached to participate in the study. The schools were identified by the previous apartheid demarcations of the areas and were in close proximity to each other, separated only by a railway line. Hence, on the one side of the railway line would be advantaged or high socio-economic areas and on the other side would be disadvantaged or low socio-economic areas (see Chapter 6).

Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, Klebanov and Sealand (1993: 353) confirm that neighbourhoods influence “behavior, attitudes, values, and opportunities” for inhabitants. The results of a study conducted by these researchers, examining the effects of neighbourhoods on child and adolescent outcomes, show that when controlling for family-level differences children in more advantaged neighbourhoods had more positive outcomes than children in less advantaged neighbourhoods. According to Brooks-Gunn, et al. (1993: 358), their results indicate that “income is a more potent predictor of outcomes than maternal education, which may have implications for the types of services provided to families for altering living standards”. Furthermore, living in a particular neighbourhood has both advantages and disadvantages for children. Neighbourhoods should be viewed as providing large disparities in differing and unequal resources and these inequalities should be corrected by means of a dual approach by government. Accordingly, these researchers point to the fact that equalities within and between neighbourhoods should evolve not only through “structural measures which would promote economic or racial residential

integration” but also through family orientated strategies which could result in the “provision of learning opportunities in the early childhood years and, perhaps, supervision and monitoring in the adolescent years”.

Although neighbourhood may not be a measured component of SES, in South Africa it is still important as an economic marker and as a point of entry into establishing the SES of participants in a study. Further exploration of SES, however, would need to take place in order to establish the SES of the family in which the child lives. The reason for further exploration could be due to differing SES in families in demarcated areas. For example, some families in low socio-economic neighbourhoods could be more affluent than their counterparts living in the same neighbourhoods or there could be families in high socio-economic neighbourhoods who may be less affluent than others living in the same neighbourhood.

The current study used household income as an indicator of measurement for SES.

Duncan and Magnuson (2001: 5) define household income as

The sum of income from all sources received by all members of the household over some time period, typically a calendar year or month. When combined with a measure of household wealth (see below), a household’s income measures its ability to provide its children with food, shelter, a quality home or childcare environment, and a safe and stimulating community setting.

Brooks-Gunn and Duncan (1997); Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, Klebanov and Sealander (1993) and Morris, Duncan and Rodrigues (2005) maintain that family or household income could be used as an indicator of socio-economic status. Researchers very easily combine the different indicators of SES such as educational and occupational status. Duncan and Magnuson (2001: 3) consider this process to be “dangerous” as the various indicators each have various, distinct and differing effects on parenting and child

outcomes. These researchers believe that until there is an understanding of the effects of each of the indicators, caution should be used when using a combination of these variables to measure SES. Household income is quite a volatile indicator for SES as parents' income increase as a child becomes older. However, Duncan and Magnuson (2001) state that "average patterns conceal a great deal of year-to-year volatility, making it important to measure economic resources during the particular childhood stage in which income-based SES influences are sought. Also Brooks-Gunn and Duncan (1997: 67-68) also state that

Family income has selective but, in some instances, quite substantial effects on child and adolescent well-being. Family income appears to be more strongly related to children's ability and achievement than to their emotional outcomes.

Evidently research studies debate about how to define and measure SES. What is apparent is that the choice of the components or indicators of SES should be explained and understood in the study being investigated. Furthermore, SES either proximally or distally has an effect on the well-being of families and individuals.

3.2.2.2.1 SES, well-being and the mother-child relationship

Low socio-economic status has been associated with lower self-esteem levels (Chua, 2003; Frisby & Crawford, 1995; Le Bruyns & Pauw, 2004), delayed or increased development of the child (Bornstein, et al., 2003; Deci & Ryan, 1985), dysfunctional families, ineffective parenting, negative parent-child interactions and child behavioural problems (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Rosenberg, Schooler & Schoenbach, 1989).

Trowbridge (1972) investigated the relationship between the self concept of elementary school children and their SES. She found that children living in low socio-economic

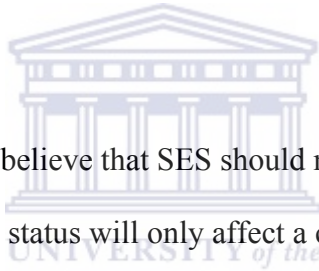
environments achieved higher self concept scores and SES was a significant predictive factor of child self-esteem as compared to age and sex. Rosenberg and Pearlin (1978) related social class, which is structured according to SES, to self-esteem levels. The results showed that the self-esteem of younger children was not associated to social class. SES may not be directly related to the child's self-esteem because SES adversely affects mother psychological well-being, thus affecting her parenting.

Maluka (2004) conducted a subjective well-being study in a disadvantaged community in South Africa. She found that, in spite of people experiencing socio-economic hardship and being disadvantaged in the community, they had high levels of self-esteem and were satisfied with their lives. Thus people living in a disadvantaged community were subjectively well.

Mayhew and Lempers (1998) conducted a study to establish the relation between parent financial strain, parenting, parent self-esteem and early to middle adolescent self-esteem. They found that financial strain was negatively related to both mother and father self-esteem. There were no direct effects of parental financial strain on adolescent self-esteem. Daughter rather than son self-esteem was susceptible to mother and father self-esteem, as well as father supportive parenting, while son self-esteem was susceptible to a reduction in supportive parenting both by fathers and mothers.

Mistry, Vandewater, Huston and McLoyd (2002) determined that family process critically mediated the effects of economic hardship on children's social adjustment in a low-income sample, many of whom were single mothers. Low levels of economic well-being and the perceptions of economic pressure affected parenting as a result of parental psychological ill-being. Distressed parents reported feeling ineffective and incapable of disciplining their children and additionally were observed to be less

affectionate to their children. Their children had behavioural problems and had less positive social behaviour. Thus economic hardship had an indirect effect on parenting behaviour, which subsequently affected their children's adjustment and well-being. This type of association results in a negative parenting cycle because the child's reaction to the parent causes the parent to become angry and react harsher to the child and the child's behaviour becomes more problematic. Similar results were found by Gutman, McLoyd and Tokoyawa (2005) and McLoyd (1990). Elvin-Nowak and Thomsson (2001) found that mothers were satisfied and happy when they were able to economically provide for their children's needs, which they felt resulted in their children being well and, when their children experienced well-being, they subsequently were happier and more satisfied and well. Thus a loop or cycle was formed between mother and child well-being.



Rosenberg and Pearlin (1978) believe that SES should not have a direct effect on children's self-esteem because status will only affect a child's self-esteem if he or she is appraised or judged as such. Bradley and Corwyn (2002) believe that the relationship between child socio-emotional functioning and SES is dependent on who the reporter of the information is. In other words, when parents or teachers, rather than children themselves, report on child well-being the results could be quite different. Additionally, this relationship is mediated by other factors such as parenting, family environment, peers, academic abilities and so on, but this relationship could also be moderated by factors such as self-esteem, social support, coping strategies, resilience and so on. What is clear is the fact the SES has a multiple effect on child development.

Socio-economic status has been associated with the mother-child relationship and subsequent child psychological well-being. The harsh effects of SES on mother well-being can be moderated when support is provided to the mother.

3.2.3 Support

In very basic terms, social support is the type of help or assistance people receive from other people, organisations and government institutions. According to Baron and Byrne (2003: 548), social support is the “physical and psychological comfort provided by one’s friends and family members”. Support is an inclusive term covering a wide range of interventions which vary along a number of components according to their target group such as mothers, toddlers and preadolescents; the professional background of service providers, for example, a social worker, childcare worker, public health nurse, psychologist; the point of reference of service providers, for example, therapeutic, child development, community development, youth work; the problems addressed, for example parenting problems, family conflict, child neglect, educational underachievement; the programme of activities, for example, home visits, pre-school facility, youth club, parenting course; and the service setting for example home-based, clinic-based or community-based. This mixture indicates that support is not a homogenous activity but a diverse range of interventions, which are sorely lacking and needed in many communities, especially communities which are at-risk, for families to function effectively.

Support can be instrumental, informational or emotional. Emotional support are the things that people do to make others feel loved and cared for, that increase an individual’s self-esteem such as encouraging and providing positive feedback.

Instrumental support refers to the tangible types of assistance people receive, for

example, help with housekeeping and caring for children or providing time and money. Informational support is offering help through providing information about a particular issue (Helgeson, 2003; Israel, 1985; Walter-Ginzburg, et al., 1999).

According to Matlin (2000) mothers do not receive the appreciation they deserve and the role of motherhood has low prestige in society. She emphasises that, in society, money, power and achievement are valued or esteemed, not the role of “taking care of children” (p. 376). Yet, in reality every single human being has been born from a woman’s body or more specifically, a mother. In reality motherhood has many negatives which, according to Matlin (2000), dominate in the early stages of motherhood. Some of the negatives of motherhood are expressed as tiredness due to lack of sleep; fathers help less than mothers expected and therefore mothers have the major, frequently all, the responsibility of child rearing; some mothers feel they are incompetent; husbands feel neglected due to the mothers sharing their attention and fathers very often cause their partners to experience guilt due to the mothers’ inadequacy as a romantic partner; mothers, in general, feel disappointed because they cannot match the “ideal mother” or “perfect mother”, the woman who is completely unselfish and perfect, as depicted by society and the media (p. 377).

Weinraub and Wolf (1983) found that single parent families were more socially isolated than married parents. They tended to work longer hours and received less emotional and parental support. Single parent families had less stable social networks and experienced more potentially stressful life changes than two-parent families.

Wethington and Kessler (1986) discovered social support had a stress-buffering effect when the individual perceived his or her network to be ready to provide aid and assistance if needed. Once individuals perceived their support networks to be organised

and prepared, they felt they could manage stressful life events and this directly promoted healthy adjustment. According to Voight, Hans and Bernstein (1998), when mothers had larger support networks, without conflict, there was an improvement in their adjustment in parenting their children. Maternal mothers (grandmothers) provided the most prominent support and this support was positively related to the quality of parenting behaviour, but was negatively related to the experience of parenting.

In a study conducted by Elvin-Nowak and Thomsson (2001), the psychological well-being of children was dependent on their mother's accessibility and involvement with them and therefore advanced the child's stability and emotional well-being. In addition, when the children were well, then mothers were increasingly satisfied and happy, and subsequently also well. The sense of satisfaction and happiness were especially true for mothers who had arranged caretaking of, and economic provision for, their children.

The results of a study conducted by Hashima and Amato (1994) revealed a significant interaction between perceived social support and household income with perceived social support being negatively associated with parents' reports of punitive behaviour, especially in low income households.

Sanni (2006: 9) stresses that it is important for government to thoroughly investigate the variations experienced by female-headed households if welfare and other social programmes are to be provided for these households. These investigations would ensure that the "right social services are provided for the right beneficiaries in the right locations".

The support a mother perceives, accesses and receives is important for her psychological well-being and this will subsequently result in a healthier mother-child relationship.

3.3 UNDERSTANDING PREADOLESCENTS

The period of preadolescence is encapsulated within the period of middle childhood development and is also known as late middle childhood or early adolescence.

According to Freud (1950), this period is a period of relative calm, also known as the period of latency, and therefore implies a period of silence with nothing much happening. Subsequently research approaches have been more directed towards early childhood and adolescent development. The result has been comparatively less research being directed towards middle childhood development.

Huston and Ripke (2006) believe that the period of middle childhood is the bridge to adolescence and adulthood. It is the period during which interventions can take place.

There is the sense of healing, strengthening and consolidation of the past developmental period so as to prepare for the next developmental periods of adolescence and adulthood. Huston and Ripke (2006: 7) state that the period of middle childhood is a “window of opportunity, as a period to grow by”. Furthermore, they believe that middle childhood is a neglected period in research because there are “hazards” in early childhood and adolescence and the focus is on lessening the hazards. Ultimately, they state

Because children...have increased cognitive capabilities and self-awareness without the strong pressures of adolescence, it may be a good time to maximize the potential for positive growth and to introduce supports and opportunities that help children along successful pathways to adulthood.

Additionally, “experiences in middle childhood can sustain, magnify or reverse the advantages or disadvantages that children acquire in the preschool years” (p.2).

Middle childhood starts when the child is aged 6 years and extends into puberty, which is normally at the age of 12 years. There are certain developmental tasks which the

child should attain at the end of this phase. These tasks are highlighted by Bigner (1998: 314), Erikson (1950) and Papalia, Olds and Feldman (2004: 348) as the following:

- Children need to feel industrious (in school and at home) and if they do not they would feel inferior;
- There is a need to feel competent;
- Positive interaction with peers;
- Learning and adapting skills learnt in the home towards others outside of the home;
- Building a healthy and appropriate attitude towards the self and others;
- Learning a gender role identity;
- Achieving personal independence and autonomy;
- Developing concepts and skills necessary for daily living;
- Developing conscience, morality and a scale of values;
- An emerging ability to take responsibility for personal actions and behaviour.

During the phase of middle childhood, the child matures cognitively and is therefore able to attempt any tasks with a sense of purpose if the child has successfully synthesised the previous stage of early childhood and industry (Erikson, 1950). As the child has evolved from a previous period of taking initiative and curiosity, there is now a sense of industry because the child has a need to practically apply and master the skills needed for adulthood. Bigner (1998: 315) defines a sense of industry as

The development of a positive attitude toward work and a mastery of the “tools”, or academic and social skills, that are learned appropriately at this time of the life span.

The type of task is not important as much as the ability to do it. Implicitly the child in middle childhood compares him/herself to peers of the same age group and successful completion of the task means a feeling of pride for the child. The child consciously and unconsciously wants to make an impression on the figures of authority in his/her life.

These authority figures are also known as the significant others such as parents, extended family members, teachers and peers who could have an influence on the child's life and behaviour. The significant others become the agents of socialisation assisting the child in the application of skills learnt in the home environment.

The child is very aware of others' opinions, whether they are positive or negative. The positive responses will aid the feelings of competence and result in a sense of psychological well-being because there is the feeling of worth. Negative responses will result in feelings of inferiority and feelings of being less worthy. Bigner (1998: 316) emphasises that a sense of inferiority is "a pervasive attitude of personal worthlessness". The sense of inferiority evolves because children compare themselves to others as a result of not being successful in the application of tasks and skills or they are not satisfied with their results. This sense of inferiority and industry is obviously based on their perceptions of the inner self and children use their evaluations of abilities and competencies or lack thereof as forms of validation for feeling worthy or not.

Baumrind (1997: 323) defines competence as "effective human functioning in attainment of desired and culturally valued goals". Thus, as with SDT (1985; 2000), which emphasises the satisfaction of the psychological needs, Baumrind (1997) suggests that competence is a motivation and states that children are not easily traumatized, but they "thrive on challenges and are motivated by a drive for competence" (p.323). Gaining competence in tasks results in feelings of self-worth and the self-confidence to continue and try new tasks and challenges. Once the child has successfully acquired a sense of competence, a "new" individual evolves - a person who takes responsibility, has increased independence, is self-regulated and is self-

controlled - in the sense of who the child is and where the child fits within the wider social environment.

Competence is not the only feature of middle childhood. Grolnick (2003) and Ryan and Deci (2000: 68) posit that every person has basic psychological needs which need to be satisfied. Competence is only one of them. The other two needs are autonomy which, in simple terms, is to make choices, and relatedness which is the same as a sense of belonging. Furthermore, they state that these psychological needs are “essential for facilitating optimal functioning of the natural propensities for growth and integration, as well as for constructive social development and personal well-being”. Thus the satisfaction of these psychological needs is the basis for integration and consolidation in middle childhood resulting in the subsequent abilities of self-regulation, self-control, independence and responsibility within a more positive sense of self-worth or personal well-being. For example, if children are provided with the structures and support to complete homework in the earlier years, they will eventually feel competent to take the responsibility of wanting to do the homework on their own rather than doing the homework because their parents or teachers want it completed. In other words, the child’s behaviour becomes self-determined because the child feels competent because of the choices that were made and the child’s personal well-being increases. At the same time, the child feels competent to apply these achievements in other settings such as making choices at school or with peers as well as in later stages of adolescence and adulthood.

When children make choices, they should be guided in making choices and the choices should be age appropriate. Additionally, children should also be aware of the consequences of the choices they make and that with consequences there are

responsibilities. For example, a child at the age of 12 years should not have the need to choose to drive a car at the age of 12. If the child has been informed by the parents about the inappropriateness about driving a car at the age of 12, the physical and emotional harm of driving a car at 12 and the fact that driving a car at the age of 12 is against the law, the child should have sufficient information to know that driving a car at age 12 would be wrong and possibly harmful. Also, the child would be aware that the consequences of engaging in any inappropriate behaviour would result in consequences such as causing an accident and harming or killing another person. This form of guidance should be provided by the parent repeatedly and consistently until the child has internalised the information.

The children who participated in the current study are between the ages 10 to 12 years, which places them in the period of late middle childhood or preadolescence. Because preadolescence is towards the end of middle childhood, there is the assumption that the acquisition of skills and the application of abilities have almost 'settled in'. Madhere (1991: 57) conducted a study with African-American preadolescents and encountered preadolescents to be "sophisticated enough to distinguish between their zest for fun and the need to be mature, between parental closeness and discipline, between academic satisfaction and teacher stimulation and between self-worth and emotional stress/distress". Preadolescents are therefore able to verbalise what they need and want to be happy and satisfied, as well as evaluate their selves.

Thus, between these ages and if their psychological needs have been met, children would be competent to try and apply themselves to the different tasks or responsibilities in life. They are much more inclined to self-regulate their behaviour, have more self control and make choices. During the transition of preadolescence, success is dependent

on positive decisions and associations because children take on positive roles, associate with positive peers, and learn to effectively deal with problems. Engagement in risk-taking behaviour such as substance abuse and crime could result from developmental changes and a greater amount of unsupervised time. Children will eventually either thrive as adults or continue risky behaviour. The attitudes, behaviours, and habits developed during the preteen years will shape these children as adults, even more so than will the behaviours they engage in during their teen years (Bigner, 1998; Huston & Ripke, 2006). Thus the preteen years are extremely important to prepare the child for adolescence. If children have successfully acquired the necessary ‘fulfilments’ or satisfaction of the psychological needs, they should be psychologically well to deal with the ‘storm and stress’ of adolescence.

3.3.1 Parenting preadolescents

Each stage of development brings its own challenges for parenting children. Discipline and control are very important for parents as they strive to socialise their children and enable them to be well-adjusted in society. Preadolescence can be challenging because it is an in-between phase of development. Children are cognitively more matured and therefore tend to question authority. They refuse to be treated as ‘babies’ because they strive to be separate individuals to parents. Parents are forced to change and adapt the way in which they interact with their children. Morvitz and Motta (1992) discovered that the self-esteem of children in this phase of development was more influenced by parental acceptance rather than by mother self-esteem status.

Baumrind (1997) believes that character and competence are two positive goals of positive parenting. She defines character as “what it takes to will the good, and

competence as “what it takes to do good well” (p. 323). When parents use positive approaches in raising their children, Baumrind states that they should do the following:

- Hands-on helping by parents in the presence of the child;
- Family solidarity in which habits of hospitality, compassion and generosity are extended to the larger community;
- Guided participation in community projects;
- Direct training in role-taking;
- Use of induction and reasoning;
- Observation of loved adults who manifest consistency between their beliefs, their self-perceptions and their actions;
- Moral compassion and courage.

Numerous studies and literature (Baumrind, 1997; Bosacki, 2003; Grolnick, 2003; Robila and Krishnakumar, 2006; Shek, 2006; Soenens, 2006) associate mother well-being and parent behavioural patterns with child well-being, adjustment and healthy appropriate behavioural outcomes. For example, Raschke and Raschke (1979) found that family structure and marital status were not related to child self-concept scores, but higher self-concept scores were related to higher levels of family conflict. Stolz, Barber and Olsen (2005) found that when parents were effortful in monitoring, setting and enforcing limits and provided structure for their children, there was notably a decrease in fighting, destruction of property and other antisocial behaviours. Stolz, Barber and Olsen (2005) further explored mothering and fathering with regard to being supportive, psychologically controlling and controlling behaviour towards their children. The results show that mothers', rather than fathers', behavioural control is relatively more important in explaining sons' antisocial behaviour. In other words when mothers knew who their sons' friends were and where their sons spent their time and money, their sons were less likely to engage in substance use and theft. In addition, children described supportive parents as “parent smiling at them, parent likes doing activities

with them and parents making them feel better” and supportive parents was the “firm foundation” which children used to positively interact with others (p. 1087). Fathers’, rather than mothers’, support dominated in explaining the child’s social initiative to act prosocially. Bronstein, et al. (1996) similarly found supportive, aware parenting to increase academic, social and psychological adjustment for preadolescents, while parental inattentiveness and harsh control caused a decline in adjustment over time when they conducted a longitudinal study for preadolescents.

Similarly, Galambos, Barker and Almeida (2003) conducted a longitudinal study to examine the influence of parental behaviours, such as behavioural control, support and psychological control, and deviant peers on trajectories of externalizing and internalizing problems in early adolescence. The results indicate that when parents have firm behavioural control, the externalizing problems of their children would be lessened even though they had deviant peers. Children with deviant peers, whose parents had lower levels of behavioural control, tended to have higher levels of internalizing problems. Loukas, Paulos and Robinson (2005) specifically conducted a study with mothers and children and found maternal psychological control to be positively associated with overt aggression for boys and for older girls.

Because children are more matured during preadolescence, there is an assumption that parents should start severing the ties between them and their children. The reasons are often because children should be more independent, responsible and start making some of their own choices. Medvedova (2000) discovered that there is a weakening of emotional attachment to parents as children increase in age. There is also a decrease in family self-esteem and parental control. However, in early adolescence, a close emotional relationship with parents still remains an important factor in maintaining

stable and positive personal self-esteem. These are important developmental milestones for children. The problem is that in the process of physically separating, parents in many cases start severing the emotional ties as well. Parent-child attachment bonds should continuously be nurtured without being controlling. Bosmans, Braet, Van Leeuwen and Beyers (2006) found that attachment towards parents mediated between negative control and problem behaviour in preadolescents. Furthermore, the link between parenting and problem behaviour was strong for preadolescents but not for later adolescence and the link between attachment and parenting was equally important across preadolescence and late adolescence. Thus, parental behaviour is important for preadolescent behavioural outcomes, adjustment and well-being.

3.4 THE CHALLENGES FOR MOTHERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Based on previous international studies, mother self-esteem can be quite challenged due to factors such as whether a mother is married or single, living in a high or low socio-economic environment and support. Mothering preadolescents can additionally challenge mother self-esteem as there is less dependency of the preadolescent on the mother and the relationship is one of co-regulation.

As South African research is limited with regard to mother-child well-being, specifically for preadolescent children, this section provides information about the challenging contextual factors prevalent for mothers as well as the protective rights of children in South Africa.

According to the 2006 General Household Survey (Statistics South Africa, 2007) people living in low socio-economic environments were challenged in the following way:

- The percentage of households that lived in informal structures, commonly referred to as shacks, was 12.7% in 2002, rose to 15.9% in 2005 and declined slightly to 14.5% in 2006. Provinces such as Limpopo and Eastern Cape have proportionately fewer households living in informal shacks, compared with provinces such as Western Cape and Gauteng. The percentage of households living in informal dwellings was on the increase in Free State, Northern Cape and North West.
- In 2006 16.6% of Black African headed-households lived in dwellings with six rooms or more, whereas 32.7% of households headed by other population groups lived in such houses.
- According to the GHS, the unemployment rate declined from 30.5% in July 2003 to 27.5% in July 2005 and increased slightly to 28.6% in 2006. The vast majority of persons that were not employed relied on financial assistance from persons within their household (76.7% in 2002, 76.8% in 2004 and 77.5% in 2006). An additional 14%-17% each year relied on assistance from persons outside their household. Many households in low socio-economic environments were dependent on social grants (85%), disability grants and old age pensions. These grants were especially financially beneficial in households in which unemployment prevailed and thus became a form of financial support for households.

Female-headed households continue to experience more challenges as compared to male-headed households even though 51% of the South African population is female.

According to the 2006 General Household Survey (Statistics South Africa, 2007)

- Gender differences were pronounced with 8.6% of men aged 20 years and above having no formal education as compared to 12.6% of women.
- Over the period 2002 to 2006, female-headed households tended to have a larger percentage of adults who reported that they often or always went hungry than male-headed households.
- Over the period 2002 to 2006, the percentage of children that went hungry was substantially higher in female-headed households than in male-headed households. For example, in 2006 in 3.4% of female-headed households, children went hungry as against 1.6% in male-headed households.
- However, over the period 2002 to 2006, and reflecting the national average, the percentages of children that went hungry declined – particularly in female-headed households.

In general, the main indicators of poverty showed improvement during the period 2002 to 2006. The General Household Survey (Statistics South Africa, 2007) showed an

improvement in education, health, employment, access to services and facilities such as water, electricity and sanitation which contributed to an increase in improvement of living circumstances. The reality is that women continue to be marginalised and single mothers, especially living in low socio-economic environments, are challenged. In addition to their economic challenges, the state is currently in the process of ratifying a new Children's Act for the protection of children. The question of the one-colour paintbrush arises once again. Children need protection because they are vulnerable and marginalised, but care needs to be taken when a government makes decisions for a minority group with major social ramifications for the majority group. This we saw with apartheid.

3.5 CONCLUSION

While motherhood and mothering are challenging, preadolescence additionally poses challenges for mothers as children during this phase of development are better able to verbalise how they feel, what they want and if they are satisfied or not with their circumstances. An added factor is the mothers' socio-economic status and support she receives which could be positive or negative and could have an influence on the child's psychological well-being, either directly or indirectly.

This chapter intended to provide the daily challenges which women face as mothers in differing contexts. Furthermore, the chapter highlighted the historically unique socio-political circumstances of mothers in South Africa as they strove to maintain the unity of

their families in their struggles of degradation, separatism and disempowerment. What this chapter has shown is that South Africa, as a nation, should guard against losing its children to the misperceptions of a perfect global society by the policies they set for children.



CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The central focus of this study was to depict, at two levels of socio-economic status (SES), single and married mother-child relationships, particularly with regard to self-esteem and autonomy-supportive versus psychologically controlling parenting. The theory of Self-Determination (see Chapter 2) was used to provide a conceptual understanding of the mother-child relationship.

Although this study may seem predictive in the selection of variables, it should be noted that these variables have been constructed, examined and dissected through international studies as discussed in the previous chapters. The international data for the variables of this study have been attained through cross-cultural research conducted in both Western and Eastern countries. These variables have not been included in South African research and therefore the applicability to South African mothers and children becomes questionable. It cannot be assumed that the findings of international studies will be consistent, generalisable or universal in a South African environment, which is unique and unparalleled with regard to its history and diverse inhabitants. South African researchers would subsequently have to conduct their own research in order to participate in cross-cultural and universal debates. This study was therefore a pursuit of mother-child debates guided by the following questions:

- What is the nature and the strength of the relationship between the self-esteem of the mother and that of the child in South Africa?
- Is this relationship significantly different for single mothers compared to married mothers?

- What are the effects of psychosocial factors, such as socio-economic status, family environment and satisfaction with life on the self-esteem for single and married mothers and their children in South Africa?
- How do family background, support and the significant other person in the child's life impact on the mother-child relationship?
- How do mothers understand the relationship between them and their children?
- Do married and single mothers, in South Africa, use more autonomy-supportive or more psychologically controlling maternal parenting practices when interacting with their children?

These research questions guided the methodology for the study which, according to Leedy (1993: 121), is “an operational framework within which the facts are placed so that their meaning may be seen more clearly”. The research questions not only directed a quantitative design, but because a more in-depth perspective was needed to provide the “how” of the relationship between mother and child, a qualitative perspective was added. Thus, the methodological framework of this study had a mixed methods design and influenced the proceedings of the research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2006).

4.2 A MIXED METHODS (MM) RESEARCH DESIGN

A mixed methods design consists of a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998, p. 17-18) drew a distinction between “monomethod studies” and “mixed method studies”. They stated that monomethod studies are “studies conducted by ‘purists’ working exclusively within one of the predominant paradigms”, which are either quantitative or qualitative. Mixed method studies, on the other hand, they believed, are studies which combine the two approaches “into the research methodology of a single multiphased study”. The term *mixed methods* is defined by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007, p. 5) as

A research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture

of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone.

Furthermore, Tashakkori and Creswell (2007:4) asserted that mixed methods research is in a process of development and therefore should be broadly defined as”

Research in which the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or a program of inquiry.

By broadly and simply defining mixed methods research, the concept becomes flexible and malleable within the set frameworks. Thus, new and innovative research studies, with regard to why and how mixed methods are used, can be accommodated. The question arises which paradigm(s) mixed methodologists would use.

4.2.1 A Pragmatic Approach

Creswell and Plano Clark (2007: 21) equated the terms *paradigm* and *world view*.

These terms simply mean how people see the world, which in turn, creates their belief systems. Researchers embrace their world views, which are beliefs, when conducting research. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007: 21) held the opinion that this is very important as inquiries in research are guided by these beliefs and become the “philosophy deeply rooted in our personal experiences, our culture and our history.

They may change during our lives and be shaped by recent experiences and new thoughts”. Hence, by implication, “change” creates an image of flexibility and malleability of beliefs and this is where the mixed methods approach can be found, between the quantitative and qualitative world views or paradigms. As the mixed

methods research practice is a relatively new approach, its supporters were often questioned with scepticism about the paradigm.

Quantitative and qualitative purists do not encourage a blending, merging or mixing of their paradigms with each other as these paradigms are incompatible (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Greene & Caracelli, 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Morgan, 2007: 48; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

The mixed methodologists state that the purists encourage mono-methods and therefore advance an *incompatibility thesis*. The purists believe that each of their paradigms offer the best possible understanding and approach for conducting research. For example Table 4.1 shows some differences between quantitative and qualitative paradigms.

Table 4.1: The differences between quantitative and qualitative research

Quantitative	Qualitative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positivist stance • Inquiry is objective and a “top-down” approach • Findings are deductive, reflected in numbers and are generalisable and context-free 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructivist or Interpretivist stance • Inquiry is subjective and a “bottom-up” approach • Findings are inductive, reflected in deep, rich words and are context-bound

Quantitative purists adopt an objective positivistic stance whereas qualitative purists believe that the manner in which people subjectively construct and interpret their worlds is more appropriate as they provide depth and breadth to a study.

Oppositionally, qualitative purists believe that it is not necessary to generalise their findings as the context of the study is what it is all about. However, research has become more complex and therefore different methods are needed to address issues in the social world.

Mixed methods research is not an alternative to using a mono-method such as either

using purely a quantitative or qualitative design. Neither is the choice of using a mixed methods design always superior. According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), mixed methods research should be seen as being the mid-point between qualitative and quantitative research - the point of blending and integrating. The decision for using a specific research strategy should be founded on the basis of the research questions and the methods which would be utilised to answer the questions. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004: 14-15) believe that “researchers and research methodologists” should move beyond a “quantitative *versus* a qualitative” argument and should rather decide “when and how they should be mixed or combined in their research studies”. Thus, the practicalities of the design need to be considered and a shift in mindset needs to happen. According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004: 16) and Morgan (2007: 48) a “pragmatic and balanced or pluralist position” would be a plausible resolution.

Pragmatism is thus offered as the philosophical assumption for mixed methods research and uses the approach of “what works” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998:12) based on “shared meanings” and “joint action” (Morgan, 2007: 67). The central focus of a pragmatic approach is “not the abstract pursuit of knowledge through “inquiry”, but rather the attempt to gain knowledge in the pursuit of desired ends” (Morgan, 2007: 69-70):

A pragmatic approach reminds us that our values and our politics are always a part of who we are and how we act. In the end, these aspects of our world views are at least as important as our beliefs about metaphysical issues, and a pragmatic approach would redirect our attention to investigating the factors that have the most impact on what we choose to study and how we choose to do so.

Pragmatism therefore offers a reciprocal approach between quantitative and qualitative paradigms. Morgan (2007: 71) succinctly identified 3 key issues in clarifying an understanding of a pragmatic approach. Table 4.2 provides these differences between

pragmatic, qualitative and quantitative approaches. Firstly, a pragmatic approach would rely on “abductive reasoning which moves back and forth between deductive and inductive reasoning”. Morgan (2007:71) further explained that this would mean first “converting observation into theories and then assessing the theories through action”. Abduction would further imply a process of inquiry between qualitative and quantitative findings. For example, the quantitative results of this study would provide a priori understanding of the relationship between mothers and children, while the results of the qualitative section would show how mothers interpret their relationships with their children within the different contexts of their relationships. According to Morgan (2007:71), abduction would mean moving back and forth between the two separate qualitative and quantitative components in a mixed methods study as “connection points” are sought by the researcher to answer the research questions which were posed to guide the study.

Secondly, Morgan (2007: 72) affirmed that the relationship between the researcher and the research process is not purely subjective or objective. Doing this would provide an “artificial summary” as to be “completely objective” or “completely subjective” is almost impossible. He therefore suggested an approach of intersubjectivity where the pragmatist would accept that there is a “single real world” which could be interpreted in different ways. This would mean that a “reflexive orientation” would produce knowledge that is created “through lines of action points to the joint actions or projects that different people or groups can accomplish together”. Accordingly, in this study, the completion of the questionnaires by the mothers and children meant that the researcher was objectively viewing the completion of the tasks or the research process. During the interviews, the participants subjectively provided their meaning and ensured that the research questions about the mother-child relationships could be studied. Knowledge

concerning the mother-child relationship was achieved through separate processes of action to answer the main question, which could be considered as the “joint action” - according to Morgan (2007). Interpretation, based on integration of findings of the research process, becomes the joining point for the current study.

A third key issue of pragmatism is, what Morgan (2007) calls, the transferability of the results. Quantitative researchers most often have the concern that they would need to be able to generalise their results to the wider population. For qualitative researchers the results are specific to the context within which the data had been collected. The pragmatist would investigate the possibilities of transferring the results or findings to other settings. Thus the pragmatist would ask what, how and why the knowledge could be used in other new settings or contexts.

Table 2
A Pragmatic Alternative to the Key Issues in Social Science Research Methodology

	Qualitative Approach	Quantitative Approach	Pragmatic Approach
Connection of theory and data	Induction	Deduction	Abduction
Relationship to research process	Subjectivity	Objectivity	Intersubjectivity
Inference from data	Context	Generality	Transferability

Morgan (2007) provides a distinction between a qualitative, quantitative, and pragmatic approach (as shown in Table 2).

Ultimately, the pragmatic approach to research is not about ignoring the pure quantitative and qualitative approaches to research; rather, the pragmatist moves back and forth between the two approaches ensuring that the best possible answer is found for conducting the study. There are, however, different ways of conducting mixed methods research and thus results in different mixed methods designs.

4.2.2 Different Mixed Methods Designs

According to Hanson, et al. (2005), a particular mixed methods design will be selected as a result of the rationale for choosing it. In other words, there are reasons and purposes for the decided choice of mixing. Hanson, et al. (2005: 226) conducted an analysis of studies in counselling psychology, which had used mixed methods designs, and they found that the rationale for the researchers' decisions was based on the following:

- For the purpose of “complementarity”, researchers would “use the results from one method to elaborate on results from the other method”;
- In the process of development, the “results from one method [would] help [to] develop or inform the other method”;
- The results from a particular method would be “recast” to “questions or results from the other method”, which researchers used for “initiation” purposes;
- The results from methods were also used to “extend the breadth or range of inquiry by using different method for different inquiry components” and this researchers used for the purposes of “expansion”.
- Researchers, who used mixed methods in their investigations to improve their understanding o their research problem, “converge numeric trends from quantitative data and specific details from qualitative data”;
- They “identify variables/constructs that may be measured subsequently through the use of existing instruments or the development of new ones”;
- Researchers “obtain statistical, quantitative data and results from a sample of a population and use them to identify individuals who may expand on the results through qualitative data and results”;
- Mixed methods researchers “convey the needs of individuals or groups of individuals who are marginalized or underrepresented”.

Thus, the rationales and purposes subsequently result in the different methods of mixing. The process of mixing is dependent on and varies according to the timing, weighting and mixing (Creswell, 2003; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007; Greene and Caracelli, 2003; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Morgan, 2007; Tashakkori &

Teddlie, 2003; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2006) the quantitative and qualitative components in a study. *Timing* is related to the point at which the quantitative and qualitative components are used. In other words, when the components are used becomes important. For example, a researcher may first decide to qualitatively collect data by using interviews, in order to construct an instrument which would measure data. The researcher would then implement the instrument to a larger sample of participants to obtain statistical relationships between variables. *Weighting* refers to the order and priority the researcher places on the use of the quantitative and qualitative components. As with the previous example, the research questions may direct the researcher to place more emphasis on the qualitative component to construct the instrument. The researcher may use a process of statistically testing the instrument to measure the variables as follow-on to the construction of the instrument. However, the process of testing may have lesser emphasis, as a quantitative component, than the qualitative component previously used. The follow-on procedure is normally known as the sequential method of mixed methods research and the researcher may place emphasis on either the quantitative or qualitative components with either one having a major or minor priority (unequal priority) in the study. However, these components may be weighted equally, with the researcher placing equal emphasis on both. This is known as concurrent studies with the researcher valuing both quantitative and qualitative components as inputs to the research problem. Priority is therefore equal for both components. *Mixing* is the point at which integration of the components would occur. In other words, a researcher may decide to join the two components during the phase of discussing the findings. The researcher would have the quantitative and qualitative components separate during sampling, data collection and analysis processes, and would integrate at discussion to show how the two components converge, inform or

support each other. Thus the researcher would use the two components to show how they compare or contrast in order to answer the research questions.

The processes of timing, weighting and mixing occur within the context of the theoretical lens which the researcher decides to use. Hanson, et al. (2005: 226) use the term “theoretical lens” as an “umbrella term that may be distinguished from broader epistemologies [such as] objectivism or subjectivism, from narrower methodologies [such as] experimental research and from, narrower still, methods [such as] random sampling or interviews”. Researchers, ultimately and initially, conduct their research within the implicit theories, experiences, cultures, beliefs and assumptions which they bring to the study. Based on the research questions of the study, researchers may decide, on the one hand at the initial stage of the study, to use their implicit theoretical lens such as postpositivism or constructivism, which may not necessarily be applied towards social change. This implicit theoretical lens becomes the explicit paradigmatic basis of conducting the study. On the other hand, researchers may decide to propose and apply an explicit advocacy lens such as feminism which could ultimately result in social change. According to Hanson, et al. (2005: 206), “the outcome of this decision informs and influences the methodology and the methods used in the study, as well as the use of the study’s findings”.

Subsequently, the construction of the research questions and the choice of the theoretical lens used result in the different ways of applying, prioritising and mixing the quantitative and qualitative components of the study. According to the mixed methodologists (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Greene & Caracelli, 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Morgan, 2007; Tashakkori, & Teddlie, 2003), there are basically six designs for conducting mix methods research. The six designs

include three sequential and three concurrent designs. The sequential designs consist of explanatory, exploratory and transformative designs, while the concurrent designs include triangulation, nested and transformative designs. They are represented in figures 4.1 and 4.2



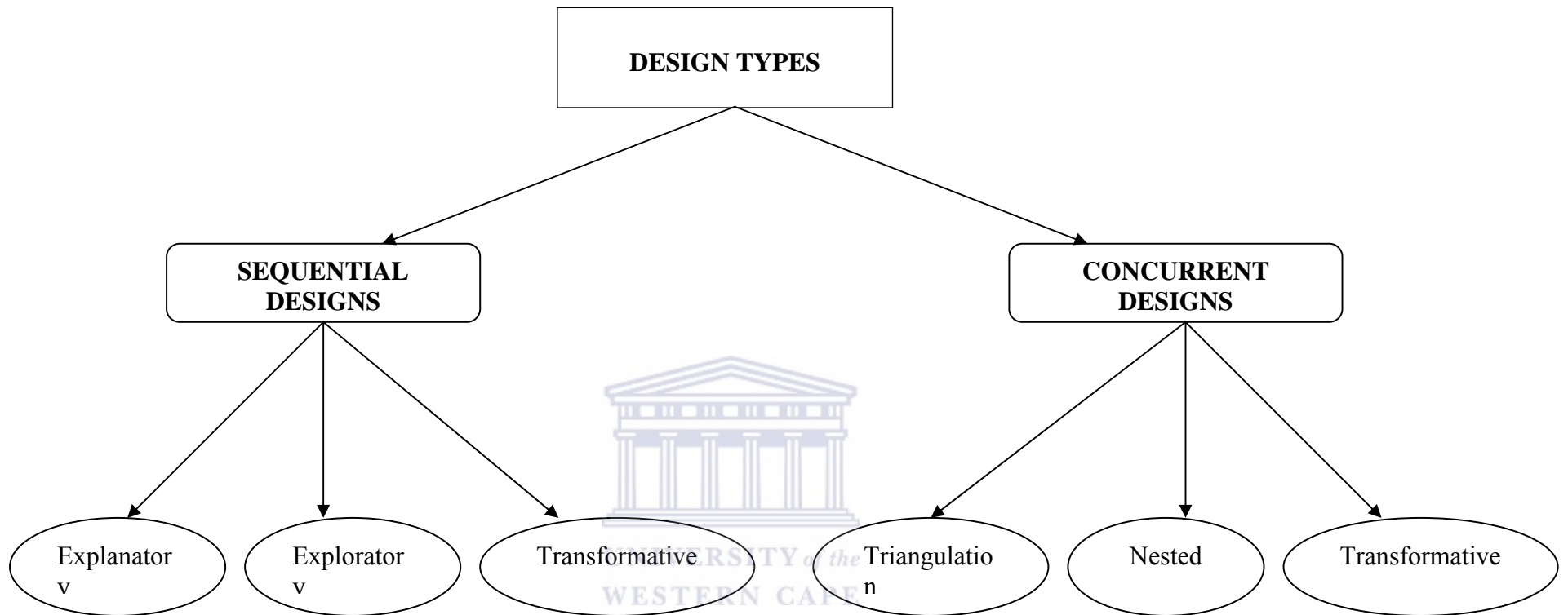


Figure 4.1: Sequential and Concurrent Designs

4.2.2.1 Sequential Designs

Explanatory and exploratory sequential designs do not use an explicit advocacy lens.

In sequential explanatory designs the quantitative component has priority and is implemented first. Quantitative data are collected and analysed followed by the qualitative component which has a lesser emphasis. The qualitative data are used to enhance the quantitative data. Integration is at the data interpretation or discussion phase. The sequential explanatory designs are used to “[explain] relationships and/or study findings, especially when they are unexpected” (Hanson, et al., 2005: 229).

In sequential exploratory designs qualitative data are collected and analysed first. This process is followed by quantitative data collection and analysis. The quantitative component has a lesser emphasis, resulting in the components having unequal priority in the study. The quantitative data are used to enhance the qualitative data. Integration is at the data interpretation or discussion phase. The sequential exploratory design explores relationships “when study variables are not known, refining and testing an emerging theory, developing new psychological test/ assessment instruments based on an initial qualitative analysis and generalizing qualitative findings to a specific population” (Hanson, et al., 2005: 229).

The sequential transformative design is different to the previous two sequential designs. The transformative design uses an explicit advocacy lens and is manifested in the problem statement, research questions and the implications of action and change. The design is sequential and unequal in priority, with one component followed by another and is dependent on the priority provided by the researcher based on the needs and preferences of the researcher and the study. Integration is at the data interpretation or discussion phase. Hanson, et al. (2005: 229) states that the sequential

transformative “are useful for giving voice to diverse or alternative perspectives, advocating for research participants and better understanding a phenomenon that may be changing as a result of being studied”.

4.2.2.2 Concurrent Designs

In concurrent designs data are collected and analysed at the same time. The triangulation and nested designs do not apply an advocacy lens, but the concurrent transformative design applies an advocacy lens.

In the concurrent triangulation design the quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analysed at the same time and the researcher therefore gives equal priority to both components. These types of designs are usually used to discuss the extent to which the data converges and are useful for “attempting to confirm, cross-validate and corroborate study findings” (Hanson, et al., 2005: 229).

The concurrent nested or embedded design gives unequal priority in the application of the quantitative and qualitative components. The component which is nested or embedded usually has less priority and used mainly to “answer different questions or a different set of questions”. Data analysis results in a transformation of data and integrations occur during the data analysis stage. According to Hanson, et al. (2005: 229) concurrent nested designs are “... useful for gaining a broader perspective on the topic at hand and for studying different groups, or levels, within a single study”.

In using a concurrent transformative design the application of an advocacy lens is evident in the problem statement, research questions and the implications of action and change. The two data forms are collected at the same time with priority being unequal in some cases, while in other cases priority may be equal. If the data is

transformed, integration will occur at the data analysis stage. On the other hand, data analysis will be separate and integration can occur at the interpretation stage. As with sequential transformative designs, the concurrent transformative designs are useful for “giving voice to diverse or alternative perspectives, advocating for research participants and better understanding a phenomenon that may be changing as a result of being studied” (Hanson, et al., 2005: 229).

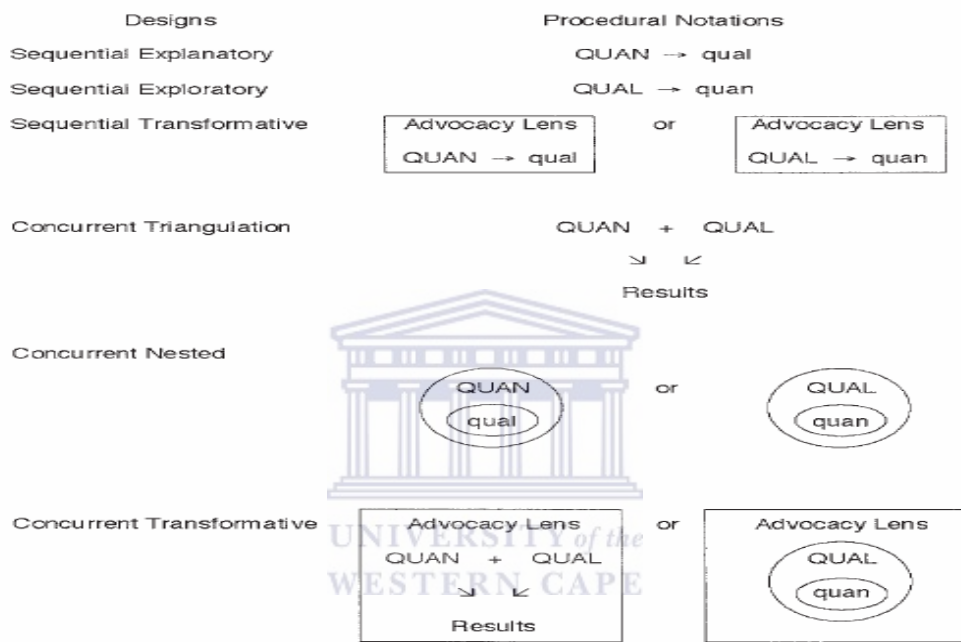


Figure 4.2: An illustration of different mixed method designs (Hanson et al., 2005)

4.2.3 Strengths and Weaknesses of Using a Mixed Methods Approach

As with any design, there are strengths and weaknesses in using the mixed methods design. It enables researchers to combine analytical, interpretive, deductive, exploratory and experimental approaches. These approaches and methods substantiate one another to verify validity. Although not exhaustive in their presentation, mixed methodologists such as Creswell (2003); Creswell and Plano Clark (2007); Greene

and Caracelli (2003); Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) and Morgan (2007) state the following strengths in using a mixed method approach:

- Pictures, words and numbers are used to add meaning to each other. For example, it may not be adequate to only provide statistical data about crime levels in the country without adding people's words as a way of showing how people experience crime.
- Researchers can test theories effectively by formulating grounds for relevance and verification.
- The researcher is provided the freedom to draw conclusions and find relations between different variables.
- The use of quantitative and qualitative methods provides more insights and understanding that can be missed if only one method is used.

The following weaknesses are identified:

- Conducting a mixed methods research can be difficult for a single researcher to manage due to the quantity of work especially in concurrent study designs. Research teams may be used instead of a single individual.
- Mixed method research may be time consuming and costly.
- The researcher must know both qualitative and quantitative as a multiple method, approach and understanding are needed to mix the data.
- Mixed methods research is, in a sense, still fairly new to the research arena and there are difficulties which need to be further clarified. These include how quantitative data can be qualitatively analysed; paradigm mixing and interpretation of conflicting results.

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN OF THE CURRENT STUDY

The current study uses a sequential explanatory design with priority given to the quantitative component followed by a smaller qualitative component in order to explain the relationship between the mother and the child. The rationale or purpose of the study was, from a broad perspective, to assess and compare the psychological well-being of single and married mothers and their children. At the same time, by

using a narrower frame of reference, assessments were considered within the context of specific psychosocial factors such as family environment and background, how satisfied mothers were with their lives, socio-economic status and support which related either positively or negatively to the self-esteem levels of both married and single mothers and the self-esteem of their children. Thus, as a result of the sequential design with 2 phases , the study had two methodological phases because well-being and motherhood needed to be viewed as external, based on assessments or measurements, and internal, based on perceptions and feelings, phenomena.

Phase 1 The main purpose of phase 1 was to empirically compare the relationship between single and married mother-child relationships in both higher and lower socio-economic environments, empirically measuring self-esteem, satisfaction with life, family environment, autonomously-supportive and psychologically controlling parenting practices. Phase 1 had quantitative instruments, strategies and analytical techniques.

Phase 2 Phase 2 used a phenomenological approach. According to Leedy andOrmrod (2001: 153) “A phenomenological study is a study that attempts to understand people’s perceptions, perspectives and understandings of a particular situation”. *Mothering* children aged 10 to 12 years is a unique, personal and different experience from mothering children in other developmental age groups such as early childhood and adolescence. Phase 2 therefore attempts to capture mothers’ perceptions of who they are in the context of the challenges they bring to and have in the relationship with their children. Phase 2 had qualitative

instruments, strategies and techniques.

Phases 1 and 2 are integrated in the discussion chapter to present a more complete picture of the well-being of mothers and their children.

4.3.1 Location of Study

The study not only draws a comparison between married and single mother-child relationships, but also mother-child relationships within low and higher socio-economic areas. Children attending schools in the Northern Suburbs of the Western Cape as well as their mothers were identified to participate in the study. The schools in the Northern Suburbs were classified as having higher socio-economic status for two reasons. The first is the previous classification during the Apartheid era and the second is due to the higher school fees that parents are paying to have their children attend the school. The lower socio-economic group is identified as children attending *previously disadvantaged* schools. These schools are neighbours to the more advantaged schools and are part of the larger Cape Flats formed during apartheid by means of racial separation and segregation. The purpose of this study is not to explore the full implications of the apartheid laws governing people in the Western Cape during the era of apartheid.

The Group Areas Act No. 41 (1950) forcibly removed people from their homes to relocate to 'unacceptable' and overcrowded areas known as townships. These townships together formed the Cape Flats. The Cape Flats includes areas such as Heideveld, Elsies River, Matroosfontein, Manenberg, Bonteheuwel, Guguletu, Mitchell's Plain and Langa. The apartheid government ensured that the schools were under resourced or in many instances had no resources at all. During apartheid the

race of children attending these schools was only non-white because of the laws of separation and segregation. No Blacks were allowed to attend schools in the advantaged areas according the Group Areas Act No. 41 of 1950, which had identified areas according to race. In 1994, South Africa saw the dawn of multiracial democracy and the first black president, Nelson Mandela, was elected. Due to democracy, the laws separating people along racial lines were removed and parents could send their children to whatever school they chose, but at a cost. As white parents could afford to maintain their children at the better more advantaged schools and in a sense ensure separatism, the school fees at these advantaged schools, as compared to the school fees paid at schools on the Cape Flats, were high.

The schools in these Cape Flats areas are classified as previously disadvantaged, while the neighbouring schools are classified as previously advantaged. Currently, school fees at the advantaged schools range from R1500.00 to more than R3000.00 per annum. At the disadvantaged schools, fees range from R100.00 to R300.00 per annum. Advantaged and disadvantaged schools which were neighbouring schools were identified. There were four schools in each group identified thus accumulatively resulting in eight schools from which the sample was drawn. The schools had either English or Afrikaans as the language of instruction.

4.3.2 Participants

Permission to conduct the study was sought and granted by the Senate Higher Degrees Committee at the University of the Western Cape, the Western Cape Education Department, principals and educators at the identified schools (n=8). The research questions required that children and their mothers participated in the study. Specific criteria were stipulated for participants to be included in the study. The

criteria were the participation of only the biological mothers and their children in the study. Biological mothers were the individuals who had given birth to their children and should thus have had an assumed established pre-natal nine-month (or somewhat shorter) relationship with their children. The biological mothers and their children had to reside within the area of the school. Biological mothers had to be aged between 25 and 50 years of age. The children were between 10 and 12 years and should have been cared for at least 5 years by their biological mothers.

4.3.2.1 Quantitative Sampling

Children were self-selectively sampled at schools in order for them and their mothers to participate in the study. A list of all children between the ages of 10 and 12 years was used as the sampling frame to access the children. Consent forms for mothers were sent home, with the children, for mothers to complete. Mothers were informed about the purpose of the study; criteria for their participation were stipulated; mothers were informed about their rights to voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity, as participants in the study. The procedural design of the study was explained to the mothers and they were asked for their and their children's voluntary participation in the study. As there were two parts to the study, mothers agreed to voluntarily participate in the first part but not necessarily in the second part. Mothers could only participate in the second part of the study if they had agreed to participate in the first part of the study and thus if they agreed, they provided their contact details in case they were identified to participate in the interviews. The mothers also provided permission for their children to participate in the study. The child's permission to participate in the study was sought at the start of the data collection process.

Three thousand two hundred and fifty-nine (3259) consent forms were sent home with the children for mothers to complete. This total was apportioned as follows: 1530 at the disadvantaged schools and 1729 at the advantaged schools. The return rate of the consent forms was 29% and 16% for the advantaged and disadvantaged schools, respectively. The total return rate was 23.2% (that is a fraction of 755/3259 mothers who had returned consent forms, for all 8 schools). However, upon sorting the consent forms only 245/755 (32.5%) mother-child dyads agreed to voluntarily participate in the study; 72.7% mothers were married while 27.3% were single; 68% of mothers lived in higher socio-economic environments while 32% had a lower socio-economic setting. The final sample that participated in the study was 7% of the total population of mothers and children. The implications of this relatively small sample are discussed as limitations of the study in Chapter 7.

4.3.2.2 Qualitative Sampling

A total of 77 out of 245 mothers agreed to participate in the second part of the study. They provided their contact details for voluntary participation. Only 20 mothers, who included 10 mothers from advantaged schools and 10 mothers from disadvantaged schools, were required to participate in the second phase of the study. This sample is more than adequate according to Morse (1994) in qualitative phenomenological studies. After 20 mothers had been purposively sampled and voluntarily agreed to participate in the interview sessions, only 19 mothers participated. Mothers could only participate upon the completion and submission of their questionnaires. There were set criteria to purposively identify the sample of mothers. Mothers were purposively sampled so that a heterogeneous group could participate in the study. The criteria to participate included marital status of the mother, meaning mothers had to be married,

divorced, never married or living together with their partners. Mothers were purposively sampled according to their own age and the ages of their children. In other words, as far as possible, a mother and child of each age category was sampled. The gender and grade of the child were also sampling criteria.

4.4 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGY

The data were collected by means of questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaires (Appendices C and D) were used to collect quantitative data, while interviews (Appendix E) were used to collect qualitative data. As English and Afrikaans were the languages of instruction at the schools, the English instruments were translated into Afrikaans by a professional translator. The instruments were then translated back from Afrikaans to English.

4.4.1 Quantitative Measurements

Single and married mothers completed questionnaires with regard to biographical data, self-esteem, satisfaction with life and family environment. Their children were asked to complete questionnaires in order to establish their levels of self-esteem, their satisfaction with their lives, their impressions of their family environment and their perception of their mothers in the context of being autonomy-supportive or psychologically controlling. The questionnaires were theoretically located in Self-Determination theory and more specifically in the theory of psychofortology (Fortology) because the current study, in a very broad sense, evaluates the psychological well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000) of individuals, in this case single and married mothers as well as their children. The concepts of autonomy-supportive parenting and psychologically controlling parenting are grounded in Self-

Determination theory (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989). Thus, the participants were empirically assessed by means of the following instruments:

4.4.1.1 Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI):

The SEI was developed to assess a person's ability to evaluate his or her self.

According to Coopersmith (2002: 1) "the SEI was designed to measure evaluative attitudes toward the self in social, academic, family and personal areas of experience".

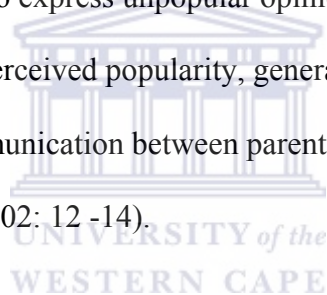
The scale is a self-administered questionnaire which can be used with participants aged eight to adults. There are three different forms which can be used to measure self-esteem. These are the School Form, School Short Form and the Adult Form. The School Form has fifty-eight items, while the School Short Form and the Adult Form have 25 items. The School Form and the School Short Form were designed to be used with children aged eight to fifteen years, while the Adult Form was designed to be used with participants aged sixteen to adulthood. The School Short Form and the Adult Form were chosen for the current study to measure the levels of self-esteem of mothers and children. SEI requests participants to complete twenty-five items to which participants have to respond with either "Like Me" or "Unlike Me". Items included were "Things usually don't bother me"; "I give in easily"; "I have a low opinion of myself" and "Most people are better liked than me". A scoring key for each Form was used to attain a total raw score of each participant. The total raw score was multiplied by four (4) to attain a Total Self Score out of 100. The results for both mothers and children were easily comparable. Coopersmith (2002: 8) suggests that the interpretation of the results should be done with caution, but there are guidelines for the interpretation of the results. High scores achieved on the SEI corresponded to high self-esteem and low scores indicate low self-esteem. In order to explain the position

of an individual's self-esteem levels as compared with others in a group, the scores are interpreted as the upper quartile being considered as high self-esteem, the lower quartile as low self-esteem and the interquartile is considered as medium self-esteem.

Research conducted across gender and socio-economic status found that both reliability and validity of the SEI were considered adequate. *Reliability*: Internal consistency ranged from .81 to .92 and split-half reliability ranged from .87 to .90.

Although there was insufficient data for the short form, one study achieved coefficients of .74 for males and .71 for females (Coopersmith, 2002: 12 -14).

Validity: Construct, concurrent and predictive validity were found to be significantly related to reading, intelligence tests, "creativity, academic achievement, resistance to group pressures, willingness to express unpopular opinion, perceptual constancy, perceived reciprocal liking, perceived popularity, general and test anxiety, selection of difficult tasks, effective communication between parents and youth and family adjustment" (Coopersmith, 2002: 12 -14).



4.4.1.2 The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985)

The Satisfaction with Life Scale is a self-reported assessment developed to assess satisfaction with the respondent's life as a whole. The SWLS is a short, 5-item instrument designed to measure global cognitive judgments of one's life. The scale takes about one minute to complete and is in the public domain. The SWLS has been scored on a 7-point Likert scale with ranging from extremely dissatisfied to extremely satisfied. Examples of some of the items are "I am satisfied with life" and "The conditions of my life are excellent". The SWLS has been shown to have favourable psychometric properties, test-retest reliability of .82 and an alpha-reliability of .87.

Scores on the SWLS correlate moderately to highly with other measures of subjective well-being, and correlate predictably with specific personality characteristics. The SWLS is suited for use with different age groups (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985) and has been previously used in a South African context (Wissing, et al., 1999).

4.4.1.3 Family Environment Scale (3rd ed.) (Moos & Moos 2002):

The Family Environment Scale (FES) is a self-administered test that assesses the social climate of all types of families and is “composed of 10 subscales that measure the actual, preferred and expected social environment of families”. The subscales “assess three underlying sets of dimensions”: relationship, personal growth and system maintenance (see Figure 2.1: 42). Pretorius (1991) provides evidence of standardisation for this scale in South Africa. There are three types of forms which can be used. These are the Real Form (Form R), the Ideal Form (Form I) and the Expectations Form (Form E). The Form R was used for the current study. Form R “helps people to describe their current family as they perceive it” (p. 2). There are 90 items to which participants have to respond with either “True” or “False”. Examples of some items were “Family members really help and support one another”; “We fight a lot in our family”; “Family members often keep their feelings to themselves” and “Rules are pretty inflexible in our household”. The scale is scored by means of a scoring key to achieve a raw score. The raw score is then converted to a standard score by using a standard score conversion table.

Reliability: internal consistency reliability estimates for the Form R subscales range from .61 to .78; Intercorrelations among the 10 subscales range from -.53 to .45. Test-retest reliabilities for the Form R subscales for 2-month, 3-month, and 12-month intervals range from .52 to .91. **Validity:** The face and content validity of the

instrument are supported by clear statements about family situations that relate to subscale domains. Evidence of construct validity is presented in the manual (Moos & Moos, 2002) through comparative descriptions of distressed and normal family samples; comparisons of parent responses with those of their adolescent children; descriptions of responses by families with two to six or more members; and descriptions of families with a single parent, of minority families, and of older families. Additional validity evidence is provided in the manual through summaries of references to approximately 150 additional research studies.

4.4.1.4 Demographic Questionnaire

The demographic questionnaire for the present study was created from a household survey questionnaire developed by the Institute of Child and Family Development, with the assistance of Amoateng (1997a), as well as the Census (2001). The questionnaire included biographical data and socio-economic status indicators of the mothers. Household income was indexed for socio-economic status. Participants had to rate a single item for household income. These responses were structured according to the census (2001). They were as follows:

28. What is the monthly household income? (In other words, how much money comes into the home for the month after tax?)			
None	R1 – R200	R201 – R500	R501 – R1 000
	R1 001 – R1 500	R1 501 – R2 500	R2 501 – R3 500
	R3 501 – R4 500	R4 501 – R6 000	R6 001 – R8 000
	R8 001 – R11 000	R11 001 – R16 000	
R16 001 – R30 000	R30 001 or more	No response	

4.4.1.5 Perceptions of Parents Scale (POPS)

The POPS provides an indication of the optimal parenting context by children (Grolnick, Deci & Ryan, 1997). It appraises children's perceptions of the degree to which their parents are involved and autonomy-supportive in their lives. The scale was first used by Grolnick, Ryan and Deci (1991). It has 22 items, 11 mother items and the same number of items for fathers. The items form autonomy-supportive and involvement subscales for both mothers and fathers. Children as young as 8 years old are able to answer the questionnaire and responses are provided on the questionnaire. Only the mother items were chosen for the current study. An example of an item is

- a. My mother **never has enough time** to talk to me.
- b. My mother **usually doesn't have enough time** to talk to me.
- c. My mother **sometimes has enough time** to talk to me.
- d. My mother **always has enough time** to talk to me.

The children were asked to circle the letter which closely resembled their mother. The reliability for the mother autonomy support subscale ranged between .67 and .70, while for the mother involvement subscale the internal consistency was .58 and .66 (Grolnick, Ryan & Deci, 1991).

4.4.1.6 Parental Psychological Control (Barber, 1996)

Mothers' use of psychological control was reported by children. Barber's (1996) eight-item scale, which was a revised version of the Children's Report of Parental Behaviour Inventory (CRPBI; Schaefer, 1965), was used in the study. The Cronbach's alpha was .83 for mothers. Children were asked to describe their mothers by

responding choosing responses on a 3-point Likert scale with “not like her” being 1; “somewhat like her” being 2 and “a lot like her” being 3. Examples of items included:

My Mother is a person who ...

is always trying to change how I feel or think about things.

A lot like her (3) Somewhat like her (2) Not like her (1)

changes the subject whenever I have something to say.

A lot like her (3) Somewhat like her (2) Not like her (1)

The children were asked to circle their response.

4.4.2 Qualitative measurement

To assess mothers’ perceptions and feelings in the second phase of the study, mothers were interviewed by means of face-to face open-ended semi-structured interviews.

The themes which were formulated included motherhood, support, family background and the significant other in the child’s life. These themes formed an interview schedule used during the interviews.

4.4.2.1 Pilot Study

Two pilot studies were conducted in order to measure the reliability of the scales, amend any challenges the items in the scale may present to the participants, check the process of data collection and the time taken for the administration of the questionnaires. A second pilot study was conducted to test the changes made to the questionnaires and thus to re-check the reliability alphas of the scales which had low reliability scores.

4.4.2.2 Pilot sample

Once permission had been granted by the Western Cape Education Department, the principals at two schools in the identified areas were approached to be part of the pilot study. Sixty consent forms were sent to mothers to grant permission for the mothers and their children to participate in the study. Forty-six mother-child dyads agreed to voluntarily participate in the study. However, the final pilot sample was 27 mother-child dyads who voluntarily participated in the study. The principals at both schools appointed co-ordinators, who were educators at the school, to assist in the study processes. The pilot sample demographics are presented as follows:

4.4.2.2.1 Participants in pilot study 1

Children

Children were aged 10 (41.3%), 11 (30.4%) and 12 (28.3%) years. They were in grades 4 (32.6%), 5 (37%), 6 (28.3%) and 7 (2.2%). Fifty-two percent (52%) of children attended the school in the lower socio-economic environment, while 48% attended the school in the higher socio-economic environment. The gender of the children was divided into 28.3% males and 71.7% females.

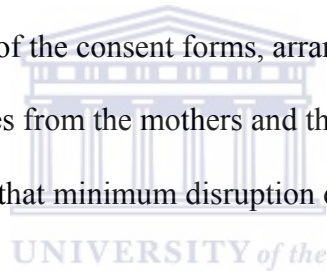
Mothers

Mothers were aged 25-30 (3.7%), 31-35 (33.3%), 36-40 (44.4%) and older than 40 years (18.5%). The marital status of the mothers were distributed according to 55.6% being married, 3.7% were widowed, 11.1% were divorced and 29.6% had never married. The majority of mothers (69.2%) had education levels of grade 11 to 12, followed by 19.2% for grades 8 to 10, 7.7% with grades 4 to 7 and 3.8% with grades 0 to 3. Forty-one percent (41%) had a tertiary education. The category of race was

spread amongst Coloured (48.1%), Black African (25.9%), White (22.2%) and Indian/Asian (3.7%). According to the mothers the language spoken at home was Afrikaans (40.7%), English (29.6%) and Xhosa (29.6%). Household size was 1 to 4 in 46.2% of the households and 5 to 9 in 53.8% of the remaining households. The majority of the mothers (61.5%) were fully employed, while 19.2% were unemployed. Mothers who were neither fully employed nor unemployed worked less than 20 hours per week (11.5%) and more than 20 hours per week (7.7%).

4.4.2.3 Pilot data collection process

Once permission had been granted to conduct the study, by the various stakeholders, a co-ordinator was appointed by the principals. The appointed co-ordinators were responsible for the collection of the consent forms, arranging of the venues, the collection of the questionnaires from the mothers and the general arrangements during the data collection process so that minimum disruption occurred at the school.



Consent forms were issued to the children for the mothers to complete. The consent forms explained the purpose for conducting the study. Mothers were assured that their and their children's ethical rights would be protected and that they could withdraw from the study at any time during the data collection process. Mothers could participate during the first phase of the study, which was the completion of the questionnaires, but they could decide if they wanted to participate in the second phase as well, which entailed participating in the interview sessions. If the mothers chose to participate in both phases of the study, they had to provide contact numbers and once again they were assured of their confidentiality rights. Mothers were asked to provide consent for their children to participate in the study. Children provided their own

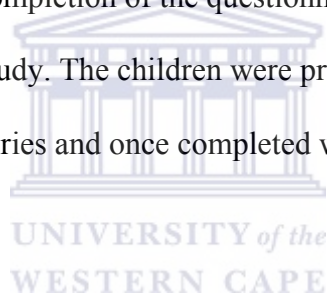
consent to participate in the study on separate consent forms, which were issued before the data collection process.

As soon as the consent forms had been returned to school, they were collected from the co-ordinators and separated according to the phase requirements of the study. The co-ordinators were contacted to arrange suitable venues, dates and times for the administration of the questionnaires. When all the arrangements were set, co-ordinators were told which children would be participating in the study and were asked to divide the groups of children into twenty children per group.

The sessions were conducted in a spare classroom or in the library at the school. An explanation of research and the study were the starting points of the sessions. Children were told about their ethical rights, which included anonymity, confidentiality, voluntary participation and their right to withdraw from the study at any time and not participate in the study. All the ethical terms were explained to the children so that they clearly understood what their rights were as participants in the research study. Upon their voluntary agreement to participate in the study, the children were subsequently provided with the assent forms, which were read to them and they had to complete if they agreed to voluntarily participate in the study. They were told how to complete the assent form and were asked to choose a “funny” name such as *Britney Spears*, *Spiderman*, or any other name which they felt they wanted to choose. The children enjoyed choosing a person which they wanted to be. The funny name was used as a means of identification to pair with the mothers’ questionnaires. The funny name was written on the envelop as well as on the mothers’ questionnaires. The children were informed that as the study was looking for information about the relationship between them and their mothers, their mothers would also need to

complete a questionnaire. Thus, they were required to take the questionnaires in envelopes home to their mothers. Once their mothers had completed the questionnaires, they had to seal the envelopes and return it to the co-ordinator. The children were specifically told that their mothers' confidentiality had to be protected so it was very important that the envelopes were sealed to that no other person could read the questionnaires. They were told that the researcher would return after a week to collect their mothers' questionnaires.

The next step was to ask the children to write about the relationship between them and their mother. The children were specifically told not to write about how their mothers looked, but about how they felt about her. This step was used to place the children in a frame of reference for the completion of the questionnaires. The data of this step were not used as part of the study. The children were provided with two to three minutes to write their little stories and once completed were ready to complete the questionnaires.



Each scale was explained and each item was read by the researcher. Children, especially the older children who could answer the items independently, were encouraged and told to ask questions they may have had. As the children were completing the writing their stories and the completion of the questionnaires, it was interesting to observe how learners were covering their work so that the other learners could not see what they were writing. The children were informed that there were no correct or incorrect answers to the items and were persuaded to complete the items as quickly as they could. Children living in lower socio-economic environments tended to struggle more with completing the items than the children living in higher socio-economic environments. Field notes were written down about the changes which

needed to be made with regard to the challenging items in the questionnaires. When the children had completed the questionnaires, they were reminded about encouraging their mothers to complete the questionnaires and that they had to return the questionnaires a week later. The process of data collection for the children lasted about 30 to 45 minutes. They were very well disciplined and enjoyed the sessions. The children returned to their classrooms.

The co-ordinators at the schools were contacted a week later to collect the mothers' questionnaires. As not all the questionnaires were returned, the co-ordinators were contacted for three consecutive weeks in order to establish if any other questionnaires had been returned. The final participating sample was 27/46 mother-child dyads.

4.4.2.4 Results and changes after the pilot study 1

The data of the questionnaires were entered, coded, cleaned and analysed by means of the Statistical Package in the Social Sciences (SPSS), which was used to describe the characteristics of the pilot sample. The results of the reliability of the scale are provided in the following table:

Table 4.2: Reliability of Questionnaires for pilot 1

	CSEI	POPS	FES	SWLS
Alphas Pilot 1 for children	.255	.240	.664	.481
Alphas for mothers	.712		.661	.896

The results show that the Cronbach's alphas were very low for CSEI and the POPS of the scales administered to the children. The Cronbach's alpha for the Family

Environment Scale was expected and considered adequate as indicated by past research studies. The reliability of the scales of the mothers was acceptable. The field notes were used to adjust some items of the scales with regard to challenging words. The mothers also tended to highlight aspects on the questionnaires which they had found challenging. The children indicated that the Family Environment Scale (90 items) was too long. Thus, 7 subscales instead of 10 were used for the main study. The challenging items clearly showed the subscales which the children had difficulty with. These were the *Intellectual-Cultural Orientation and Active-Recreational Orientation* subscales. The *Moral-Religious Emphasis* subscale was also excluded as the items focussed on one religion rather than the diverse religions of the mothers and children. The 25- item version of the self-esteem questionnaire was used to replace the 56-item questionnaire which had been used in the pilot study. The Perception of Parents Scale (POPS) only provided information for the autonomy-supportive maternal parenting practices. At this point, it was decided to conduct a second pilot to re-check the changed items and the reliability of some of the scales and to include the Psychological Control questionnaire.

4.2.2.5 Participants in pilot study 2

A second pilot study was conducted after the changes were made to the questionnaires. A 'new' group of participants were accessed at two other schools. Mothers were excluded from the second pilot study. There were 30 children who participated in the study. Children were aged 10 (26.7%), 11 (43.3%) and 12 (30%) years. They were in grades 4 (16.7%), 5 (66.7%), 6 (28.3%) and 7 (16.7%). The gender of the children was divided into 40% males and 60% females. The children, who voluntarily participated in the second pilot sample, were at a school in a lower

socio-economic environment because the children, who had participated in pilot study 1, were the most challenged with the items in the questionnaires. The same data collection process was followed as that in pilot study 1. The children were asked which items they had found challenging at the end of the session and these were noted.

Table 4.3: Reliability of Children Questionnaires for pilot 2

	CSEI	POPS	SWLS	Control
Alphas Pilot 2	.354	.269	.560	.678

The results show that there were slight improvements with the alphas. The reliability alpha for the Psychological Control questionnaire was adequate and accepted.

Changes were once again effected to the questionnaires as preparation for the main study. These few changes included changes to the items in the questionnaires for the mothers. The low alpha levels of both pilots 1 and 2 are a limitation to the study and have implications for the interpretation of the findings. The implications for the study are discussed as limitations in Chapter 7.

4.4.3 DATA COLLECTION OF MAIN STUDY

4.4.3.1 Phase 1: Quantitative component

Principals were approached to conduct research at eight schools. Permission was granted and co-ordinators were selected. The co-ordinators were either an educator or a secretary at the school. As with the pilot study, their roles were explained and they agreed to participate in the process. The principals asked for minimal disruption to the school timetable and therefore, three trained honours students in the Psychology

Department at the University of the Western Cape, were appointed as research assistants to assist in the data collection process.

The co-ordinators arranged convenient times, venues and dates for the data collection sessions with the children. The same data collection process was followed as that of the pilot study. When the children had completed the questionnaires, they were provided with questionnaires in envelopes to take home for their mothers to complete. The co-ordinators were responsible to collect the questionnaires as they were returned by the children. These questionnaires were collected by the researcher and follow-ups lasted for three weeks. After these three weeks had passed, the consent forms were re-evaluated to purposively sample mothers for the interview sessions.

4.4.3.2 Phase 2: Qualitative component

When the mothers had been purposively sampled, they were telephonically contacted to ask their voluntary participation in the second phase of the study. After the mothers had agreed to participate in an interview, appropriate dates and times were arranged. As mothers were only available at particular times, they chose to have the interviews in their homes or at school. Two mothers living in low socio-economic environments and one mother living in a higher socio-economic environment, asked for the interview session to be conducted in the car outside their homes. The reason for having the interviews in the car, was that space was very limited in their homes. One mother lived in a Wendy house (a wooden structure built on the backyard of another's property, with or without amenities), while another mother lived in a flat in a very dilapidated building.

At the beginning of the interview sessions, the participants were explained about the study and the importance of the second phase to add to the information of the

questionnaires they had completed. The participants were assured about confidentiality, anonymity and were told that they could end the sessions at any time if they were not comfortable with the interview sessions. They could also choose not to answer any questions with which they were not comfortable. Upon permission from the participants, the interview sessions were recorded with a digital voice recorder and an MP4 player/recorder. A trained research assistant was used as a scribe during the interviews. The interview sessions lasted about 30 to 45 minutes.

The participants were debriefed after the interview sessions. They were provided with telephone numbers of organisations which could be accessed for assistance with various difficulties. The participants were afforded an opportunity to ask questions.

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Within the design of a mixed methods approach, the data analysis process entailed both a quantitative process and a qualitative process.

4.5.1 Phase 1: Quantitative analysis

As scales were used in the measurement of the various variables, the scoring process of each scale was hand scored and is presented as follows:

The Family Environment Scale:

A scoring key was provided in the FES manual. The items were arranged so that each column represented a specific subscale. The responses of participants were counted, with regard to their responses on the scoring key, in order to determine the raw score (R/S) of participants. The R/S was converted to a standard score (S/S) by using the table presented in the FES manual. Standard scores above the 50th percentile were

considered to be high in a particular subscale, while 49 and below were considered to be low.

The Satisfaction With Life Scale

The participants were provided with a 7-point Likert scale from which they had to choose to respond to items in the SWLS. The responses were totalled for each participant. The acquired score was placed in categories according to the following:

- 35 – 31 Extremely satisfied
- 26 – 30 Satisfied
- 21 – 25 Slightly satisfied
- 20 Neutral
- 15 - 19 Slightly dissatisfied
- 10 – 14 Dissatisfied
- 00 – 09 Extremely Dissatisfied

The Coppersmith Self-Esteem Inventory

A scoring key was provided in the manual. The responses of the participants were counted and added as indicated in the scoring key. The total raw score was multiplied by 4 to attain a score out of 100. Scores in the upper percentiles (75 - 100) were considered to be high self-esteem levels, inter percentiles (26 - 74) were medium self-esteem levels and lower percentiles (0 - 25) were low self-esteem levels.

The Perception Of Parents Scale

The items, **1, 4, 7, 9 and 10** were scored on a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 being low and 4 being high. The items, **2, 3, 5, 6, 8 and 11**, were reverse scored on a scale of 4 to 1. The subscales of Mother Involvement, **1, 3, 5, 9 and 11**, and Mother Autonomy-Support, **2, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10**, were computed by averaging all the items within the given subscale for each participant. Mothers were considered involved and supportive

when children scored 3 and 4 on the POPS. The subscale of autonomy-support was used and not mother involvement.

Parenting Psychological Control

The participants were presented with a 3-point Likert scale from which they had to choose a response which was most like their mothers. Scores were totalled for each participant. Higher scores (12-24) indicated that children perceived their mothers to be psychologically controlling, while lower scores (0-11) indicated that mothers were not psychologically controlling.

Socio-economic Status

Socio-economic status was indexed by household income. The mean was used as a gauge for low and high socio-economic status groups. The responses were divided accordingly. Household income had a mean = 8.2. All response which were below response 8 that is 0-7 were categorised as low SES and those above 8 that is 8+ were categorised as high SES. The average household income was identified as between R3 501 – R4 500. This average was not necessarily a true reflection of household socio-economic status. Also there were many more participants having higher household income levels than those participants who did not, which could have resulted in this average.

The data for all the questionnaires were entered, coded, cleaned and analysed by means of the Statistical Package in the Social Sciences (SPSS) to provide information in terms of percentages, frequencies, means, standard deviation, Chi-square and correlations, which were used to describe the characteristics of the sample, to determine the significance of the nature of relationships and to test the hypotheses.

The Chi-square test and the Pearson correlation were used to establish relationships or associations between the variables based on the nature and characteristics of the variables. A statistical procedure of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to test whether three or more groups are significantly different. A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to create a model as a predictive explanation for child self-esteem.

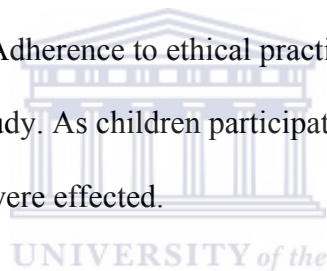
4.5.2 Phase 2: Qualitative analysis

The nineteen interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The data were analysed by the following process described by Moustakas (1994: 120/121): The complete transcriptions of each respondent was (1) read within the framework of the research questions, aims and qualitative research instrument of the study; next (2) every expression relevant to the experiences and perceptions of motherhood, support, family background and the significant other was listed and preliminarily grouped; then (3) “reduction and elimination” followed as unnecessary information was discarded; (4) “clustering and thematizing” of the essential statements followed. Thus the feelings, opinions, perceptions and experiences of both single and married mothers were clustered according to devised thematic labels. According to Moustakas (1994: 121) “the clustered and labelled constituents are the core themes of the experience”. At this point (5) a validation check was conducted with the essential elements and the themes were checked against the complete transcription of the respondent to establish if the respondent explicitly stated the information. What followed were respective processes of (6) pattern matching and (7) explanation building, by recognizing relationships between the responses of the respondents, thus developing a “composite

description of the meanings and essences of the [perceptions and] experiences, representing the group as a whole” (Moustakas, 1994: 121).

4.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

When research is conducted there is the transference of information from the participants to the researcher. A trusting relationship occurs between the researcher and the participant. The relationship of trust is dependent on the researcher protecting the confidentiality and anonymity of the participant, as well as allowing the participant the freedom of choice, privacy; devoid of pressure. Schenk and Williamson (2005) state that when children and youth are involved in a study extra ethical precaution should be utilised as children are more vulnerable than adults and can easily be abused or hurt. Adherence to ethical practices was effected with all the participants throughout the study. As children participated in the study special care was ensured that their rights were effected.



Permission was granted by the Senate for Higher Degrees at the University of the Western Cape and the Western Cape Education Department. A meeting was arranged with the principals at the identified schools to conduct the study with the mothers and their children. The proposal was presented to the various stakeholders and schools had to decide if they wanted to be part of the study. No names of schools or participants were used in the study. During the analysis phase, schools were identified by means of letters such as A, B, C and so on.

Consent forms (Appendices A and B) were issued to parents by the school. The consent forms provided the necessary contact details for mothers who wanted more information about the study. Once the mothers had agreed to their and their children's

participation in the study, the school management decided when and where the data collection process could occur.

Children provided consent on the day of data collection. Thus even though permission had been granted for the children to participate in the study, the children could decide if they wanted to participate or not in the study. The consent form was read to the children, the aims of the study were explained, upon which the terms of confidentiality, anonymity, research, choice and the right to privacy were clarified to the children. They were also told that they could leave the study at any time if they did not want to participate in the study. At this point, the children were provided the opportunity to exercise their rights and there were two children who did so.

The various stakeholders and participants will receive the necessary feedback of the results of the study upon the completion of the thesis. The Western Cape Education Department will receive a copy of the thesis; the principals at the various schools will receive a condensed report with the main findings and if possible parents will be informed via a school meeting with regard to the findings of the study. Pamphlets concerning the results will be issued to parents at these meetings.

4.7 CONCLUSION

The chapter provided the methodological design of the study. A mixed methods design was utilised in order to provide a rich representation of the phenomenon of the mother-child relationship within the developmental phase of middle childhood but

more specifically with preadolescent children. More specifically, the design is a sequential explanatory design prioritising the quantitative phase followed by the qualitative phase. The chapter provides information with regard to the various stages of the research process such as sampling, data collection and data analysis. The results of the pilot studies revealed that the alpha coefficients for the CSEI and POPS were relatively low. The implications of this finding are discussed as a limitation in Chapter 7. The following two chapters (5 and 6) provide the results of the quantitative and qualitative data analyses respectively.

CHAPTER 5

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The following chapter contains statistical findings of the mother-child dyad. The current chapter is divided into four sections: *Section 1* presents the demographic data with regarding participants and thus provides insight into the type of sample participating in the study; *Section 2* provides information about the personal functioning, that is self-esteem and satisfaction with life, of mothers and children within low and high socio-economic environments; *Section 3* presents information regarding family functioning of single and married mother-child dyads in low and high socio-economic environments. Family functioning includes the family environment and maternal parenting practices; *Section 4* connects personal functioning to family functioning within low and high socio-economic environments. While section 1 only displays descriptive statistics about the sample, section 2 to 4 present information concerning frequencies, correlational and comparative relationships between the various dependent and independent variables in the study. The chapter concludes by assessing the strongest predictors of child self-esteem.

The following is a guide to abbreviations used in the analysis of the data:

Abbreviation	Term
TM	Total mothers
MM	Married Mothers
SM	Single Mothers
MHSES	Mothers High Socio-Economic Status
MLSES	Mothers Low Socio-Economic Status
TC	Total Children
CMM	Children of Married Mothers
CSM	Children of Single Mothers
CHSES	Children with High Socio-economic Status
CLSES	Children with Low Socio-economic Status
SES	Socio-economic Status
SE	Self-esteem
SWL	Satisfaction With Life

5.2 SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS

The data were analysed for 245 mothers and 245 children. Of the mother participants 178 (72.7%) were married mothers, while 67 (27.3%) were single mothers. According to the socio-economic status of the mothers, 64 (32.2%) lived in low socio-economic environments and 135 (67.8%) lived in high socio-economic environments. The discrepancy between the participation rates (N=245 for mothers and N=199 for mother socio-economic status) is accounted for by the missing data of household income (19%), which was indexed for socio-economic status. Eighty-seven (35.5%) male and 158 (64.5%) female children participated in total in the study. Children of married mothers were divided into 64 (36%) males and 114 (64%) females, while children of single mothers were 23 (34.3%) males and 44 (65.7%) females respectively. Mothers living in high socio-economic environments had 48 (35.6%) male children and 87 (64.4%) female children, while mothers living in low socio-

economic environments had 22 (34.4%) male children and 42 (65.6%) female children.

5.2.1 Demographical data for mothers and children

Demographical data for mothers and children included: age, gender, education level for mothers, grade level for children, race/ethnicity, language and marital status of mothers.

5.2.1.1 Age distribution of mothers and children

Age frequencies for total mothers (TM), married mothers (MM) and single mothers (SM), mothers living in higher (MHSES) and lower (MLSES) socio-economic environments

Table 5.1 shows the age categories and distributions for all mothers (245), married mothers (178), single mothers (67), mothers living in higher socio-economic environments (135) and mothers living in lower socio-economic environments (64).

Table 5.1: Mothers' age as a function of marital status and SES

Age Categories	TM		MM		SM		MHSES		MLSES	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
25-29	13	5.3	7	3.9	6	9	3	2.2	6	9.4
30-34	60	24.5	38	21.3	22	32.8	29	21.5	20	31.3
35-39	90	36.7	66	37.1	24	35.8	55	40.7	23	35.9
40-44	47	19.2	41	23	6	9	30	22.2	6	9.4
45-49	34	13.9	26	14.6	8	11.9	17	12.6	9	14.1
>49	1	4	-	-	1	1.5	1	.7	-	-
Total	245	100	178	100	67	100	135	100	64	100

The majority of mothers were in their 30's (30 – 39 years), while 13/245 (5.3%) mothers were in the category of 25-29 years. 66/178 (37.1%) married mothers were aged 35-39 years. This was the largest group while the smallest group was 7/178

(3.9%) for age 25 to 29 years. The age category for single mothers was similar to that of all mothers with the majority between 30-39 years. There were 24/67 (35.8%) single mothers in the category of 35-39 years with 22/67 (32.8%) single mothers being in the category of 30-34 years.

Without taking into account the one mother older than 49, we find a significant association between age and being married or not (Chi-square (4) = 10.30, $p < .05$). Relatively more married mothers belong to the older age groups and relatively more single mothers to the younger age groups.

For mothers living in high socio-economic environments (HSES), 55/135 (40.7%) accounted for the largest age group in the category of 35-39 years and 1/135 (.7%) was a mother older than 49 years. The majority of mothers living in low socio-economic environments (LSES) were between the ages of 30 and 39 years with 23/64 (35.9%) and 20/64 (31.3%) being in the age categories of 35-39 years and 30-34 years respectively. Table 5.1 clearly identifies that the mother aged older than 49 years was single living in a high socio-economic environment. Omitting the oldest mother, we find also a significant association between age and SES (Chi-square (4) = 10.85, $p < .05$). Relatively many more low SES mothers belong to the two youngest groups of mothers.

Age and Gender frequencies for total children (TC), children of married mothers (CMM) and children of single mothers (CSM), children of mothers living in higher (CHSES) and lower socio-economic environments (CLSES)

Children aged 10 to 12 years participated in the study. Table 5.2 illustrates the ages for children of the total mothers, married mothers, single mothers, mothers living in higher and lower socio-economic environments.

Table 5.2: Children’s age and gender as a function of mothers’ marital status and SES

Age Categories	CTM		CMM		CSM		CHSES		CLSES	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
10	84	34.3	62	34.8	22	32.8	46	34.1	22	34.4
11	88	35.9	60	33.7	28	41.8	46	34.1	22	34.4
12	73	29.8	56	31.5	17	25.4	43	31.9	20	31.3
Total	245	100	178	100	67	100	135	100	64	100
Gender Categories										
Male	87	35.5	64	36	23	34.3	48	35.6	22	34.4
Female	158	64.5	114	64	44	65.7	87	64.4	42	65.6
Total	245	100	178	100	67	100	135	100	64	100

All age categories were similarly distributed except for children of single mothers. Twenty-eight out of sixty-seven (41.8%) children were aged 11 years resulting in the largest number of children for this category. The smallest group was 17/67 (25.4%) being children aged 12 years. There were more female than male children across all groups with approximately 65% being female and 35% being male. This was consistent for all groups. Gender was distributed across age and the results were as follows: 31% male and 36.1% female children aged 10 years; 43.7% male and 31.6% female 11 year olds and 25.3% males and 47.1% female 12 year old children.

5.2.1.2 Educational level

Educational level of total mothers, married mothers, single mothers, mothers living in higher socio-economic environments and mothers living in lower socio-economic environments

The distribution of mothers' education levels is reported in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Mothers' educational level as a function of their marital status and their SES

Education levels	TM		MM		SM		High SES Mothers		Low SES Mothers	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Primary Schooling	18	7.6	12	6.9	6	9.4	1	.8	11	17.5
Some secondary	45	19.0	32	18.5	13	20.3	13	9.9	19	30.2
Std/Grade 12	126	53.2	93	53.8	33	51.6	80	61.1	29	46.0
University /Tech	48	20.3	36	20.8	12	18.8	37	28.2	4	6.3
Total	237	100	173	100	64	100	131	100	63	100

The mothers' educational level is significantly related to their SES (Chi-square (3) = 41.10, $p < 0.001$). As could be expected and as shown in Table 5.3 the educational level of low SES mothers is in general much lower than that of high SES mothers.

Grade level of total children, children of married mothers, single mothers, children of mothers living in higher and lower socio-economic environments

The grade categories are displayed in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Children's grade level as a function of their mothers' marital status and SES level

Grade	Total Group		Married Mothers		Single Mothers		High SES Mothers		Low SES Mothers	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Grade 4	82	33.5	61	34.3	21	31.3	45	33.3	23	35.9
Grade 5	72	29.4	53	29.8	19	28.4	43	31.9	17	26.6
Grade 6	91	37.1	64	36.0	27	40.3	47	34.8	24	37.5
Total	245	100	178	100	67	100	135	100	64	100

The majority of the children were in grade 6. This finding was consistent across all groups with children of single mothers being the largest group (40.3%). The children in grade 5 were the smallest groups. There was an almost equal distribution of children across the grades for higher socio-economic environments. In lower socio-economic environments there were similar findings for grades 4 and 6.

5.2.1.3.1 Marital status, Race and Language

Marital status, race and language of TM, MM, SM, MHSES and MLSES

Table 5.5 presents the findings for mothers' marital status, race and language for married and single mothers and mothers living in high and low socio-economic environments.



Table 5.5: Mothers' marital status, race and language for married and single mothers and mothers living in high and low socio-economic environments

	Total Group		Married Mothers		Single Mothers		High SES Mothers		Low SES Mothers	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
MARITAL STATUS										
Married	172	70.2	172	96.6	-	-	107	79.3	36	56.3
Never Married	18	7.3	-	-	18	26.9	5	3.7	7	10.9
Widowed	5	2.0	-	-	5	7.5	-	-	2	3.1
Divorced	43	17.6	-	-	43	64.2	22	16.3	15	23.4
Separated	1	.4	-	-	1	1.5	-	-	1	1.6
Living Together	6	2.4	6	3.4	-	-	1	.7	3	4.7
Total	245	100	178	100	67	100	135	100	64	100
RACE	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Coloured	136	56.7	98	56.0	38	58.5	68	50.7	43	67.2
Black African	16	6.7	10	5.7	6	9.2	6	4.5	6	9.4
White	82	34.2	61	34.9	21	32.3	55	41.0	15	23.4
Asian	5	2.1	5	2.9	-	-	4	3.0	-	-
Other	1	.4	1	.6	-	-	1	.7	-	-
Total	240	100	175	100	65	100	134	100	64	100
LANGUAGE	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
English	130	53.3	95	53.7	35	52.2	78	57.8	29	45.3
Afrikaans	99	40.6	72	40.7	27	40.3	52	38.5	29	45.3
Xhosa	15	6.1	10	5.6	5	7.5	5	3.7	6	9.4
Total	244	100	177	100	650	100	134	100	64	100

Of the married mothers the majority (172/178 or 96.6%) represented intact families, while for single mothers, the category of divorce 43/67 (64.2%) was the highest.

When comparing mothers living in high and low socio-economic environments, the results showed that divorce was higher for mothers living in low socio-economic environments than for mothers with high SES (23.4% versus 16.3%). Seventy-nine percent (79.3%) of the high SES mothers were married versus 56.3% of the low SES mothers.

More coloureds (56.7%) than any other race group participated in the study. The category of whites (34.2%) was second to the category of Coloureds. The category of “other” was indicated by a mother stating that she was a “South African”. There were more English than Afrikaans speaking mothers in the study (53.3% versus 40.6%).

Language of total children, children of married and single mothers and children of mothers in high and low socio-economic environments

Children had either English or Afrikaans as a first language based on their language of instruction at the school. Table 5.6 presents the distribution of language for the children.

Table 5.6: Children’s first language as a function of the marital status and the SES level of their mothers

	Total Group		Married Mothers		Single Mothers		High SES Mothers		Low SES Mothers	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
English	161	65.7	116	65.2	45	67.2	89	65.9	48	75
Afrikaans	84	34.3	62	34.8	22	32.8	46	34.1	16	25
Total	245	100	178	100	67	100	135	100	64	100

There were more English than Afrikaans speaking children for all groups, who participated in the study. Children living in low socio-economic environments were more English speaking (75%) than Afrikaans speaking (25%). The corresponding percentages in the High SES group are 65.9% and 34.1% respectively.

5.3 SECTION 2: PERSONAL FUNCTIONING

Personal functioning has been indicated by determining the levels of self-esteem and satisfaction with life of both mothers and children. The Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory was used to measure self-esteem (SE) of mothers and children, while the Satisfaction with Life Scale was used to measure satisfaction with life (SWL) of mothers and children. This section not only tests the hypotheses for the study, but also

provides and tests prevalence rates for both mothers and children across marital status and socio-economic environments.

5.3.1 Self-esteem of mothers and children

Hypothesis 1:

Mother self-esteem will be significantly related child self-esteem across marital status and socio-economic environments.

The prevalence of self-esteem levels of total mothers and children, married mothers and children, single mothers and children, mothers and children living in higher and lower socio-economic environments

Table 5.7 and Figure 5.1 display the prevalence rates of mothers' and children's self-esteem (high; medium; low) according to marital status of the mothers and the socio-economic environments within which the mother and child lives. Scores in the upper percentiles were considered to be high self-esteem levels, inter percentiles were medium self-esteem levels and lower percentiles were low self-esteem levels.

Table 5.7: Frequency of mothers and children with high, medium and low levels of self-esteem in the total group and in the four subgroups.

	TM		MM		SM		MHSES		MLSES	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Mothers' self-esteem										
High	108	44.8	83	47.2	25	38.5	72	53.7	20	32.3
Medium	123	51	85	48.3	38	58.5	60	44.8	35	56.5
Low	10	4.1	8	4.5	2	3.1	2	1.5	7	11.3
Total	241	100	176	100	65	100	134	100	62	100
Children's self-esteem										
High	43	17.6	33	18.5	10	14.9	30	22.2	7	10.9
Medium	198	80.8	141	79.2	57	85.1	104	77	55	85.9
Low	4	1.6	4	2.2	-	-	1	0.7	2	3.1
	245	100	178	100	67	100	135	100	64	100

The majority of mothers and children had medium to high self-esteem levels across the different groups. There were no (0%) children of single mothers with low self-esteem levels. However, 11.3% of mothers living in low socio-economic environments had low self-esteem.

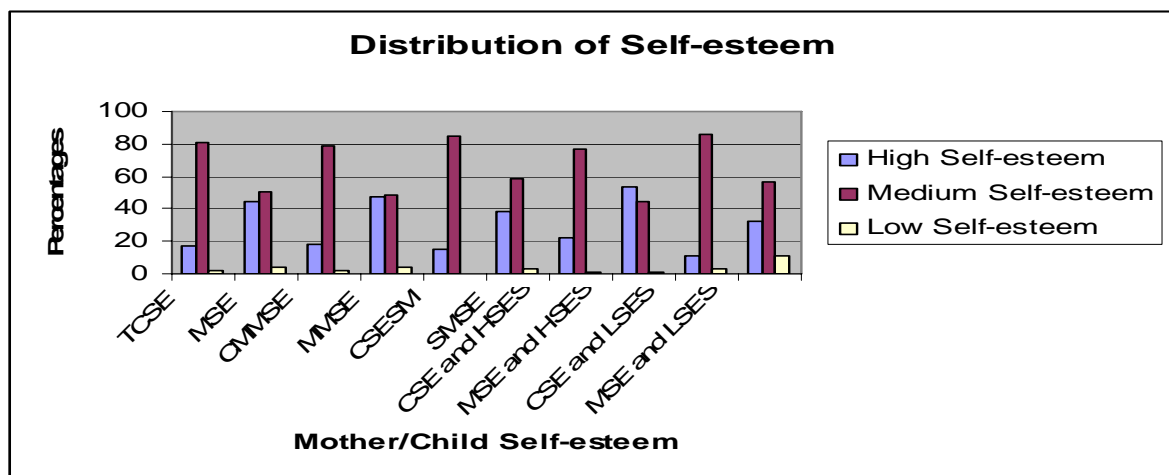


Figure 5.1: The prevalence rates of mothers and child self-esteem across the groups.

The relationship between mother and child self-esteem

Table 5.8 shows the correlation between mothers' and children's self-esteem for the total group and for the four subgroups.

Table 5.8: Correlations between mothers' and children's self-esteem

Total Group N=241	Married Mothers N=176	Single Mothers N=65	High SES Mothers N=134	Low SES Mothers N=62
.14*	.13	.16	.20*	-.02

p<0.05

A significant positive relationship was found between self-esteem of mothers and children in the total group and in the group of high SES mothers. The correlation is also positive but not significant for married and for single mothers. A zero-correlation was found in the group of low SES mothers.

Mean level of mothers' and children's self-esteem as a function of mothers' marital status and SES level



Table 5.9 shows the means and SD for mothers' and children's self-esteem as a function of mothers' marital status and SES level. The bottom part of the table provides the statistical evidence for main effects and interaction effects. An effect size was calculated to explain the strength of the association between the variables, thus representing the proportion of variance of the dependent variables that is explained by the independent variables. Two dependent variables were used: mother self-esteem and child self-esteem. The independent variables were marital status and socio-economic status.

Table 5.9: Mean level of mothers' and children's self-esteem as a function of mothers' marital status and SES level

	Low SES Mothers		High SES Mothers		Total	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Mothers' Self-Esteem						
Married Mothers	62.42	20.85	72.30	17.18	69.73	18.64
Single Mothers	56.83	21.30	72.00	17.31	64.72	20.60
Total	60.26	21.03	72.24	17.14	68.45	19.23
Children's Self-Esteem						
Married Mothers	54.74	16.51	63.63	15.07	61.32	15.89
Single Mothers	59.00	13.36	60.62	15.17	59.84	14.20
Total	56.39	15.39	63.04	15.08	60.94	15.46
	Dependent Variable	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	
SES	Self-esteem for mothers	1	15.87	0.00	0.08	
	Self-esteem for Children	1	4.14	0.04	0.02	
Marital status	Self-esteem for mothers	1	0.88	0.35	0.00	
	Self-esteem for Children	1	0.06	0.81	0.00	
SES * Marital status (interaction)	Self-esteem for mothers	1	0.71	0.40	0.00	
	Self-esteem for Children	1	1.99	0.16	0.01	

In the bottom part of Table 5.9 there is a significant main effect of mothers' SES on mothers' self-esteem and on their children's self-esteem: the self-esteem of mothers and their children is significantly lower in the low than in the high SES group. The differences are significant but the effect-size is rather small.

There are no significant differences for marital status nor for the interaction of marital status and SES level.

5.3.2 Mother and child satisfaction with life

Hypothesis 2:

Mothers' and children's satisfaction with life will be significantly related to their self-esteem across marital status and socio-economic environments.

The prevalence of satisfaction with life of total mothers and children, married mothers and children, single mothers and children, mothers and children living in higher and lower socio-economic environments

Life satisfaction was measured using a 7-point Likert Scale ranging from extremely satisfied to extremely dissatisfied. Table 10 show the frequency of each of the seven points for mothers and children (for the total group and for each of the four subgroups).

Table 5.10: Frequency of each of the seven degrees of satisfaction points for mothers and children (for the total group and for each of the four subgroups)

Satisfaction with Life	extremely satisfied		slightly satisfied		slightly dissatisfied		neutral		Dissatisfied		extremely dissatisfied			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
	Married Mothers N=176	35	19.9	70	39.8	30	17	10	5.7	18	10.2	9	5.1	4
Single Mothers N=67	8	11.9	14	20.9	17	25	4	6	13	19.4	6	9	5	7.5
Total (N=243)	43	17.7	84	34.6	47	19.3	14	5.8	31	12.8	15	6.2	9	3.7
HSESM N=135	24	17.8	54	40	28	20	4	3	13	9.6	7	5.2	5	3.7
LSESM N=63	9	14.3	13	20.6	10	15.9	7	11.1	14	22.2	6	9.5	4	6.3
TCSWL N=245	57	23.3	82	33.5	58	23.7	5	2.0	32	13.1	5	2.0	6	2.4
CMMSWL N=178	41	23	61	34.3	41	23	5	2.8	24	13.5	3	1.7	3	1.7
CSMSWL N=67	16	23.9	21	31.3	17	25.4	-	-	8	11.9	2	3.0	3	4.5
CHSESSL N=135	34	25.2	44	32.6	34	25.2	1	.7	19	14.1	3	2.2	-	-
CLSESSL N=64	16	25.0	25	39.1	14	21.9	3	4.7	4	6.3	1	1.6	1	1.6

Generally, mothers were more satisfied than dissatisfied with their lives: 40% married mothers and mothers living in higher socio-economic environments were satisfied with their lives. The findings for the children were similar to that of their mothers. The children were generally more satisfied than dissatisfied with their lives.

The relationship between mother satisfaction with life and mother self-esteem

Hypothesis 2 was tested for mother’s satisfaction with life and mother’s self-esteem.

These results are presented in Table 5.11.

Table 5.11: Correlations between mothers’ life satisfaction and self-esteem

Total Group N=241	Married Mothers N=176	Single Mothers N=65	High SES Mothers N=134	Low SES Motherse N=62
.48*	.44**	.56**	.58**	.41**

p<0.01

There were significant positive relationships found between mothers’ life satisfaction and mothers’ self-esteem. Mothers who were single ($r = .56, p < .01$) and mothers living in higher socio-economic environments ($r = .58, p < .01$) had stronger correlations between their self-esteem scores and how satisfied they were with their lives.

Mothers’ satisfaction with life and self-esteem as a function of marital status and SES level

Table 5.12 provides the mean scores for life satisfaction and self-esteem for the total group of mothers as well as for the subgroups of mothers. The second part shows the Anova-results (main- and interaction effects of marital status and SES). An effect size was calculated to explain the strength of the association between the variables, thus representing the proportion of variance of the dependent variables that is explained by

the independent variables. Mother satisfaction with life and self-esteem were used as the dependent variables. The independent variables were marital status and socio-economic status.

Table 5.12: Mean scores and SD for life satisfaction and self-esteem for the total group of mothers and for the subgroups of mothers

	Low SES		High SES		Total	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Life Satisfaction						
Married Mothers	23.24	6.56	25.81	6.55	25.14	6.63
Single Mothers	18.96	7.18	22.15	6.83	20.62	7.12
Total Group	21.58	7.07	25.10	6.74	23.98	7.02
Self-esteem						
Married Mothers	62.42	20.85	72.30	17.18	69.73	18.64
Single Mothers	56.83	21.30	72.00	17.31	64.72	20.60
Total Group	60.26	21.03	72.24	17.14	68.45	19.23
Results of Analysis of Variance						
	Dependent Variable	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	
SES	Life Satisfaction	1	6.46	0.01	0.03	
	Self-esteem	1	15.87	0.00	0.08	
Marital Status	Life Satisfaction	1	12.23	0.00	0.06	
	Self-esteem	1	0.88	0.35	0.00	
SES * Marital Status (interaction)	Life Satisfaction	1	0.08	0.78	0.00	
	Self-esteem	1	0.71	0.40	0.00	

There was no statistically significant difference between married and single mothers and mothers living in high and low socio-economic environments on combined self-esteem and satisfaction with life: ($F(1, 172) = 1.39, p = .13$; Pillai's Trace = .15; partial eta squared = .15). When the results for the two dependent variables were considered separately, there were no significant interaction-effects of SES and marital status (See bottom part of Table 5.12). The main effect of Marital Status on Self-

esteem was also not significant ($F(1, 172) = 0.88, p=0.35$). Married mothers scored higher ($M=69.73$) than single mothers ($M=64.72$) but the difference was not significant.

The three other main effects were statistically significant; using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .01, High SES mothers scored significantly higher than low SES mothers for life satisfaction ($F(1, 192) = 6.46, p= .01$, partial eta squared = .03) and for self-esteem ($F(1, 192) = 15.87, p= .00$, partial eta squared = .08). Married mothers scored significantly higher for life satisfaction than single mothers do ($F(1, 192) = 12.23, p=.00$, partial eta squared = .06).

The relationship between children’s satisfaction with life and self-esteem

Hypothesis 2 was tested for children’s satisfaction with life and self-esteem. The results are presented in Table 5.13.

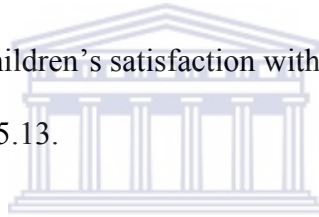


Table 5.13: Correlations between children’s life satisfaction and self-esteem

Total Group N=245	Children with Married Mothers N=178	Children with Single Mothers N=67	Children with High SES Mothers N=135	Children with Low LSES Mothers N=64
.44**	.46**	.42**	.41**	.53**

**p<0.01

Similar to the results of the mothers as shown in Table 5.11, children’s self-esteem scores were significant and positively related to how satisfied they were with their lives. There was a stronger correlation ($r = .53, p < .01$) found for children living in lower socio-economic environments as compared to the other groups.

Based on further hypothesis testing, neither mothers’ satisfaction with life nor mothers’ self-esteem scores were significantly related to children’s satisfaction with life for most of the groups except for married mothers (see Table 13bis). A significant positive relationship was found between married mothers’ self-esteem and children’s

satisfaction with life ($r = .15, p < .05$) suggesting that when children have high satisfaction with life scores, married mothers experienced higher levels of self-esteem.

Table 5.13bis: Intercorrelations between mothers' and children's scores for self-esteem (S.E.) and satisfaction with life (SWL)

Children	Mothers	Total Group	Married Mothers	Single Mothers	High SES Mothers	Low SES Mothers
SWL	SWL	.10	.13	-.15	.05	.18
SWL	S.E.	.10	.15*	-.04	.16	-.06
S.E.	S.E.	.14*	.13	.16	.20*	-.02
S.E.	SWL	.10	.10	.00	.06	-.00

* $p < 0.05$

Children's satisfaction with life and self-esteem as a function of their mothers' marital status and socio-economic level

Table 5.14 presents the mean scores for life satisfaction and self-esteem for the total group of children and for the subgroups of children. The second part shows the Anova-results (main- and interaction effects of marital status and SES). An effect size was calculated to explain the strength of the association between the variables, thus representing the proportion of variance of the dependent variables that is explained by the independent variables.

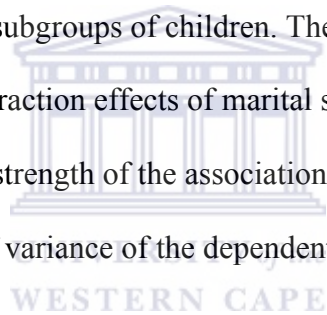


Table 5.14: Children’s Mean scores and SD for life satisfaction and self-esteem as a function of mothers’ marital status and SES level

	Low SES Mothers		High SES Mothers		Total	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Children’s Life Satisfaction						
Married Mothers	25.66	4.48	26.43	5.63	26.23	5.35
Single Mothers	27.00	6.98	24.58	6.65	25.74	6.85
Total Group	26.18	5.56	26.07	5.86	26.10	5.75
Children’s Self-esteem						
Married Mothers	54.74	16.51	63.63	15.07	61.32	15.89
Single Mothers	59.00	13.36	60.62	15.17	59.84	14.20
Total Group	56.39	15.39	63.04	15.08	60.94	15.46
Results of Analysis of Variance						
	Dependent Variable	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	
SES	Life Satisfaction	1	0.71	0.40	0.00	
	Self-esteem	1	4.14	0.04	0.02	
Marital Status	Life Satisfaction	1	0.07	0.80	0.00	
	Self-esteem	1	0.06	0.81	0.00	
SES * Marital Status (interaction)	Life Satisfaction	1	2.66	0.10	0.01	
	Self-esteem	1	1.99	0.16	0.01	

In the bottom part of Table 5.14, only one significant effect was found. Children of mothers living in low socio-economic environments reported significantly lower self-esteem levels ($M=56.39$, $SD=15.39$) than children of mothers living in high socio-economic environments ($M=63.04$, $SD=15.08$): $F(1, 172) = 4.14$, $p = 0.04$.

Although the interaction-effect is not significant for Self-esteem, Table 5.14 shows that there was a larger mean difference between reported self-esteem levels by children of married mothers in low socio-economic environments ($M=54.74$, $SD=16.51$) than reported self-esteem levels of children of married mothers living in

high socio-economic environments ($M=63.63$, $SD=15.07$). For children with a single mother this difference was not found (59.00 versus 60.62).

In summary, the majority of mothers and children had medium to high self-esteem levels, with the majority of mothers and children being satisfied with their lives. Mothers and children living in low socio-economic environments reported lower levels of self-esteem. Mother and child self-esteem levels were significantly positively related implying that when mother self-esteem increased, child self-esteem tended to increase as well. Mothers' and children's self-esteem levels were significantly positively related to their satisfaction with life. Single mothers living in lower socio-economic environments reported lower levels of satisfaction with life.

5.4. SECTION 3: FAMILY FUNCTIONING

Family functioning is denoted by family environment and mother parenting practices. Family environment was measured by the Family Environment Scale and mother parental practices were measured by the Perception of Parents Scale and Parental Psychological Control. Family environment consisted of the following variables: Cohesion (Coh), Conflict (Conf), Organisation (Org), Academic Achievement (AO), Control (Contr), Independence (Indep) and Expressiveness (Express). Maternal parenting practices consisted of Mother Autonomy Support (MAS) and Psychological Control (PsyContr). Socio-economic status (SES) is also included in this section. This section presents the frequency distribution and comparison of the variables for both mothers and children across marital status and socio-economic environments.

5.4.1 Socio-economic Status

The distribution of socio-economic status (high and low socio-economic status) of the families of married and single mothers is shown in Table 5.15 and Figure 5.3.

Table 5.15: Marital status and SES

SES	Mothers		Married Mothers		Single Mothers	
	N=199	%	N=147	%	N=52	%
Low	64	32.2	39	26.5	25	48.1
High	135	67.8	108	73.5	27	51.9

The majority (67.8%) of the mothers who participated in the study lived in higher socio-economic environments. There were 108/147 (73.5%) married mothers living in higher socio-economic environments. The number of single mothers living in lower socio-economic environments (48.1%) was very similar to that of single mothers living in higher socio-economic environments (51.9%).

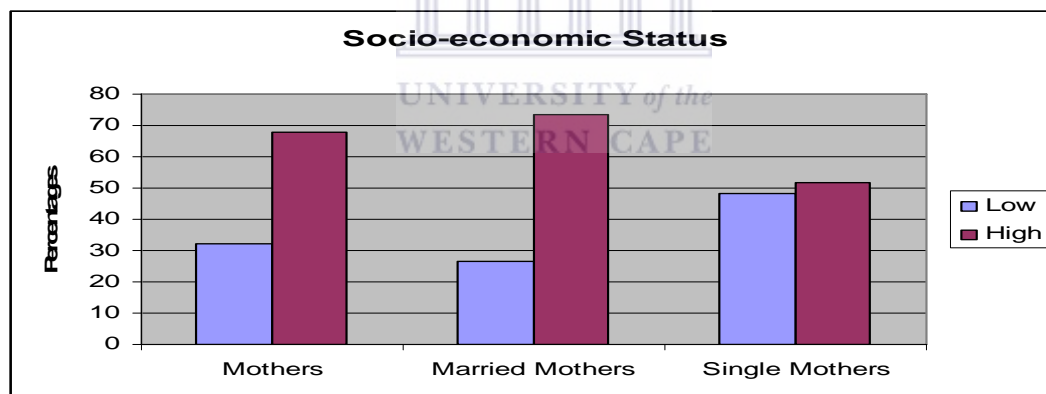


Figure 5.3: Distribution of socio-economic status

5.4.2. Family Environment

Mother-child perceptions of family environment

The frequency distribution of family environment, as perceived by mothers and children (high vs. low) across socio-economic status and married and single mother groups, is presented in Table 5.16 and graphically in Figure 5.3

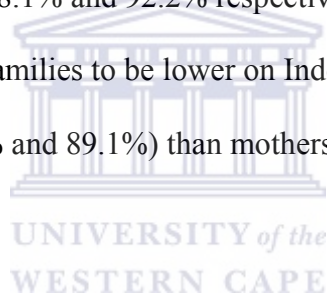
Household income was used as the index for SES. An explanation is provided in the data analysis section of Chapter 4.



Table 5.16: The frequencies of mothers and children scoring high or low for the family environment scales

		Mothers		Children		Married Mothers		Child		Single Mothers		Child		High SES Mothers		Child		Low SES Mothers		Child	
		N=	%	N=	%	N=	%	N=	%	N=	%	N=	%	N=	%	N=	%	N=	%	N=	%
		245		245		178		178		67		67		135		135		64		64	
Cohesion	Low	74	30.2	90	36.7	50	28.1	64	36	24	35.8	26	38.8	28	20.7	43	31.9	31	48.4	23	35.9
	High	171	69.8	155	63.3	128	71.9	114	64	43	64.2	41	61.2	107	79.3	92	68.1	33	51.6	41	64.1
Expressiveness	Low	121	49.4	212	86.5	85	47.8	153	86	36	53.7	59	88.1	50	37	111	82.2	44	68.8	59	92.2
	High	124	50.6	33	13.5	93	52.2	25	14	31	46.3	8	11.9	85	63	24	17.8	20	31.2	5	7.8
Conflict	Low	182	74.3	168	68.6	133	74.7	123	69.1	49	73.1	45	67.2	36	73.3	98	72.6	45	70.3	41	64.1
	High	63	25.7	77	31.4	44	25.3	55	30.9	18	26.9	22	32.8	99	26.7	37	27.4	19	29.7	23	35.9
Organization	Low	63	25.7	72	29.4	44	24.7	46	25.8	19	28.4	26	38.8	33	24.4	36	26.7	18	28.1	19	29.7
	High	182	74.3	173	70.6	133	75.3	132	74.2	48	71.6	41	61.2	102	75.6	99	73.3	46	71.9	45	70.3
Academ. Achiev.	Low	75	30.6	76	31	51	28.7	57	32	24	35.8	19	28.4	39	28.9	38	28.1	20	31.2	21	32.8
	High	170	69.4	169	69	127	71.3	121	68	43	64.2	48	71.6	96	71.1	97	71.9	44	68.8	43	67.2
Control	Low	77	31.4	71	29	53	29.8	47	26.4	24	35.8	24	35.8	36	26.7	37	27.4	23	35.9	21	32.8
	High	168	68.6	174	71	125	70.2	131	73.6	43	64.2	43	64.2	99	73.3	98	72.4	41	64.1	43	67.2
Independence	Low	171	69.8	212	86.5	127	71.3	155	87.1	44	65.7	57	85.1	93	68.9	114	84.4	45	70.3	57	89.1
	High	74	30.2	33	13.5	51	28.7	23	12.9	23	34.3	10	14.9	42	31.1	21	15.6	19	29.7	7	10.9

The results show that mothers and children are almost similar in their perceptions of their family environments with regard to Cohesion, Conflict, Organisation, Achievement Orientation and Control in spite of marital and socio-economic status. Mothers and children generally reported that families were more Cohesive, had less Conflict, were more Organised, more Achievement Orientated and had more Control. There was a marked difference in their perceptions of Expressiveness and Independence. Children perceived their families to be low on Expressiveness (86.5%, 86%, 88.1%, 82.2% and 92.2%), while mothers perceived their families to be higher on Expressiveness. Children of single mothers and of mothers living in low socio-economic environments, especially, perceived their family environments to be low on Expressiveness. These were 88.1% and 92.2% respectively. Although both mothers and children perceived their families to be lower on Independence, more children (86.5%, 87.1%, 85.1%, 84.4% and 89.1%) than mothers perceived their families to be low on Independence.



5.4.2.1 Intercorrelations between mothers' and children's perception of the family environment

Table 5.17 presents the corresponding correlations.

Table 5.17: Correlations between mothers' and children's perception of the family environment

Family Environment Scales	Total Group N=245	Married Mothers N=178	Single Mothers N=67	High SES Mothers N=135	Low SES Mothers N=64
Cohesion	.05	.19*	.01	.09	.09
Expressiveness	.02	-.09	.02	-.10	-.02
Conflict	.16*	.19*	.08	.17	.14
Organisation	.18**	.23**	.05	.22**	-.03
AO	-.00	.04	-.08	.06	-.21
Control	.05	.05	.07	.11	.07
Independence	.08	.09	.06	.12	-.11

* p < .05** p < .01

Mothers' and children's perceptions of family environment were positively significantly related for Conflict ($r = .16, p < .05$) and Organisation ($r = .18, p < .01$) suggesting that the more mothers perceived organisation and conflict in the home, so too would their children. For married mothers and their children, significant positive relationships were found for Cohesion ($r = .19, p < .05$), Conflict ($r = .19, p < .05$) and Organisation ($r = .23, p < .01$) suggesting that married mothers' perceptions of the family environment were positively related to their children's perceptions of the family environment. The only other significant relationship was found for mothers and children in high socio-economic environments with regard to organisation ($r = .22, p < .01$). Although no other significant relationships were found for single mothers and their children and mothers living in low socio-economic environments and their children for family environment, the relationship tended to be in a more negative direction especially for Achievement Orientation, Expressiveness, Independence and Organisation suggesting that these mother-child relationships had different perceptions of the family environment.

The scores of mothers and children for each of the Family Environment-subscales as a function of marital status and SES level will be discussed. For each subscale the mean scores and the results of the 2 x 2 Anova's (for mothers and children) are presented. Effect size was calculated to explain the strength of the association between the variables, thus representing the proportion of variance of the dependent variables that is explained by the independent variables. Only significant effects will be discussed.

5.4.2.2. Family environment: Cohesion (Coh)

Table 5.18 shows the data and the statistical results for Cohesion.

Table 5.18: Mothers' and children's scores for cohesion as a function of marital status (MS) and SES

Cohesion	Low SES		High SES		Total	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Married Mothers (MM)	46.61	15.55	54.56	11.49	52.49	13.09
Single Mothers (SM)	49.54	14.31	53.23	16.26	51.46	15.31
Total	47.74	15.03	54.30	12.50	52.22	13.66
Children of MM	50.11	12.66	52.05	10.41	51.54	11.03
Children of SM	51.00	11.58	48.65	16.68	49.78	14.36
Total	50.45	12.17	51.39	11.89	51.09	11.95
SES	Dependent Variable	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	
SES	Cohesion for mothers	1	6.54	0.01	0.03	
	Child Cohesion	1	0.01	0.92	0.00	
MS	Cohesion for mothers	1	0.13	0.72	0.00	
	Child Cohesion	1	0.38	0.54	0.00	
SES * MS	Cohesion for mothers	1	0.88	0.35	0.00	
	Child Cohesion	1	1.11	0.29	0.01	

For cohesion only a significant main effect of SES for mothers was found. High SES mothers score significantly higher than low SES mothers. See Table 5.18.

5.4.2.3. Family environment: Expressiveness (Express)

Table 5.19 presents the data and the statistical results for Expressiveness.

Table 5.19: Mothers' and children's scores for expressiveness as a function of marital status and SES

Expressiveness	Low SES		High SES		Total	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Married Mothers	42.27	11.73	51.42	10.82	49.02	11.74
Single Mothers	44.82	13.94	53.6	9.12	49.49	12.32
Total	43.22	12.54	51.84	10.51	49.14	11.85
Children of MM	39.79	10.26	39.19	13.71	39.35	12.87
Children of SM	35.92	14.87	36.77	14.56	36.36	14.56
Total	38.29	12.28	38.72	13.85	38.59	13.35
	Dependent Variable	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	
SES	Expressiveness for mothers	1	24.18	0.00	0.11	
	Child Expressiveness	1	0.00	0.95	0.00	
MS	Expressiveness for mothers	1	0.58	0.45	0.00	
	Child Expressiveness	1	1.91	0.17	0.01	
SES * MS	Expressiveness for mothers	1	0.02	0.89	0.00	
	Child Expressiveness	1	0.10	0.75	0.00	

Also for expressiveness only a significant main effect of SES for mothers was found. Again, high SES mothers score significantly higher than low SES mothers (see Table 5.19).

5.4.2.4 Family environment: Conflict

For conflict as perceived by mothers and children no significant main effects of marital status or SES, neither significant interactions were found (see Table 5.20).

Table 5.20: Mothers' and children's scores for conflict as a function of marital status and SES

	Low SES		High SES		Total	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Conflict						
Married Mothers	49.19	10.51	46.3	10.34	47.06	10.43
Single Mother s	45.86	10.00	47.44	11.68	46.7	10.84
Total	47.95	10.37	46.52	10.58	46.97	10.50
Children of MM	49.34	8.56	46.56	9.71	47.28	9.48
Children of SM	48.21	10.76	49.15	11.06	48.70	10.81
Total	48.90	9.40	47.06	10.00	47.64	9.83
	Dependent Variable	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	
SES	Conflict for mothers	1	0.38	0.54	0.00	
	Child Conflict	1	0.30	0.58	0.00	
MS	Conflict for mothers	1	0.03	0.86	0.00	
	Child Conflict	1	0.19	0.66	0.00	
SES * MS	Conflict for mothers	1	0.57	0.45	0.00	
	Child Conflict	1	1.25	0.27	0.01	

5.4.2.5. Family environment: Organisation (Org)

Table 5.21 shows the mothers' and their children's mean scores for family organisation as a function of their marital status and SES.

Table 5.21: Mothers' and children's scores for family organisation as a function of marital status and SES

Family Organisation	Low SES		High SES		Total	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Married Mothers	54.21	10.38	56.95	10.93	56.24	10.82
Single Mothers	55.92	8.86	55.00	9.50	55.44	9.12
Total	54.87	9.78	56.57	10.67	56.04	10.40
Children of MM	55.13	6.90	56.00	8.94	55.77	8.44
Children of SM	55.08	9.14	51.85	11.21	53.40	10.30
Total	55.11	7.77	55.19	9.52	55.17	8.98

	Dependent Variable	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
SES	Organisation for mothers	1	0.27	0.61	0.00
	Child Organisation	1	0.61	0.44	0.00
MS	Organisation for mothers	1	0.00	0.94	0.00
	Child Organisation	1	1.91	0.17	0.01
SES * MS	Organisation for mothers	1	1.07	0.30	0.01
	Child Organisation	1	1.82	0.18	0.01

There were no statistically significant differences as a function of socio-economic status or marital status, neither for mothers nor for their children.

5.4.2.6. Family environment: Achievement Orientation (AO)

Table 5.22 shows the mothers' and their children's mean scores for achievement orientation as a function of their marital status and SES.

Table 5.22: Mothers' and children's scores for achievement orientation as a function of marital status and SES

Achievement Orientation	Low SES		High SES		Total	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Married Mothers	53.13	7.86	53.41	7.89	53.04	7.73
Single Mothers	50.83	8.81	54.08	8.84	52.52	8.89
Total	52.24	8.25	53.54	8.05	53.13	8.11
Children of MM	53.13	7.86	53.41	7.89	53.34	7.85
Children of SM	50.83	8.81	54.08	8.84	52.52	8.89
Total	52.24	8.25	53.54	8.05	53.13	8.11
	Dependent Variable	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	
SES	AO for mothers	1	1.62	0.20	0.01	
	Child AO	1	0.93	0.34	0.00	
MS	AO for mothers	1	0.35	0.56	0.00	
	Child AO	1	0.13	0.72	0.00	
SES * MS	AO for mothers	1	1.15	0.28	0.01	
	Child AO	1	0.09	0.76	0.00	

There were no statistically significant differences as a function of socio-economic status or marital status, neither for mothers nor for their children.

5.4.2.7. Family environment: Control

Table 5.23 shows the mothers' and their children's mean scores for control as a function of their marital status and SES.

Table 5.23: Mothers' and children's scores for control as a function of marital status and SES

	Low SES		High SES		Total	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Control						
Married Mothers	54.05	7.60	55.45	8.65	55.09	8.39
Single Mothers	53.38	10.21	57.58	7.67	55.56	9.14
Total	53.79	8.63	55.87	8.48	55.21	8.56
Children of MM	56.89	8.02	56.41	8.14	56.53	8.08
Children of SM	53.92	6.53	56.46	8.18	55.24	7.47
Total Mean Score	55.74	7.56	56.42	8.12	56.20	7.93

	Dependent Variable	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
SES	Control for mothers	1	3.72	0.06	0.02
	Child Control	1	0.58	0.45	0.00
MS	Control for mothers	1	0.25	0.62	0.00
	Child Control	1	1.17	0.28	0.01
SES * MS	Control for mothers	1	0.93	0.34	0.00
	Child Control	1	1.26	0.26	0.01

For the variable Family Control, a marginally significant effect ($p < .06$) of mothers' socio-economic status on control for mothers was found. The mean score is higher for high SES mothers (55.87 versus 53.79).

5.4.2.8. Family environment: Independence (Indep)

Table 5.24 shows the mothers' and their children's mean scores for Independence as a function of their marital status and SES.

Table 5.24: Mothers' and children's scores for independence as a function of marital status and SES

	Low SES		High SES		Total	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Independence						
Married Mothers	41.21	12.58	42.11	10.11	41.88	10.77
Single Mothers	41.33	11.55	46.23	10.78	43.88	11.31
Total	41.26	12.10	42.91	10.33	42.39	10.92
Children of MM	39.87	13.05	42.29	14.48	41.66	14.12
Children of SM	38.96	13.82	45.12	14.26	42.16	14.25
Total	39.52	13.25	42.84	14.43	41.79	14.12
	Dependent Variable	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	
SES	Independence for mothers	1	2.45	0.12	0.01	
	Child Independence	1	3.19	0.08	0.02	
MS	Independence for mothers	1	1.31	0.25	0.01	
	Child Independence	1	0.16	0.69	0.00	
SES * MS	Independence for mothers	1	1.16	0.28	0.01	
	Child Independence	1	0.61	0.44	0.00	

A marginally significant effect ($p < .08$) of mothers' socio-economic status on children's perception of family independence was found. The mean score is higher for children with a high SES mother (42.84 versus 39.52).

5.4.2 Maternal Parenting Practices

Autonomy-supportive parenting was formulated by Grolnick and Ryan (1989) which is the parents' (mothers') ability to be supportive, involved and providing structure in the process of parenting children without being controlling.

Controlling parenting is defined as "control attempts that intrude into the psychological and emotional development of the child (e.g. thinking processes, self-expression, emotions and attachment to parents)" (Barber, 1996: 3296).

Table 5.25 lists the relative frequency of children who rate their mother as high or low for autonomy support.

Table 5.25: Relative frequency of children’s perception of mothers’ autonomy support (MAS) as high or low

Variables		Total N=245		Children of MM N=178		Children of SM N=67		High SES Children N=135		Low SES Children N=64	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Mothers’ Autonomy Support	Low	86	35.1	62	34.8	24	35.8	49	36.3	20	31.3
	High	159	64.9	116	65.2	43	64.2	86	63.7	44	68.7

The high and low subgroups were defined in chapter 4.

The results show that mothers were more autonomy-supportive (64.9%). These findings were consistent across marital and socio-economic status.

Table 5.26: Perception of Maternal parenting practices: Autonomy-support

Table 5.26 provides the mean scores for children’s perception of their mothers as being involved and autonomy-supportive. The bottom part of Table 5.26 gives the statistical results of two 2 X 2 Anova’s with mothers’ marital status and SES as predictors and children’s perception of their mother’s autonomy support as criterion measures. Effect sizes were calculated to explain the strength of the association between the variables, thus representing the proportion of variance of the dependent variables that is explained by the independent variables.

Table 5.26: Children's perception of mother's autonomy support (MAS) as a function of mothers' marital status and SES

Mothers' AUTONOMY SUPPORT	Low SES		High SES		Total	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Married	2.68	0.62	2.68	0.62	2.68	0.62
Single	2.92	0.50	2.65	0.75	2.78	0.65
Total	2.77	0.58	2.67	0.65	2.70	0.63

	Dependent Variable	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
SES	Perception of MI	1	0.83	0.36	0.004
	Perception of MAS	1	1.61	0.21	0.008
MS	Perception MI	1	1.52	0.22	0.008
	Perception of MAS	1	0.97	0.33	0.005
SES * MS	Perception of MI	1	0.27	0.61	0.001
	Perception of MAS	1	1.42	0.23	0.007

As can be seen in Table 5.26, no significant main effects of marital status or SES nor an interaction effect on children's perception of their mothers' degree of involvement and autonomy support were found.

Table 5.27 lists the relative frequency of children who rate their mother as high or low for psychological control. The high and low subgroups were defined in chapter 4.

Table 5.27: Relative frequency of children's perception of mother's psychological control as high or low

Variables		Total		Children of MM		Children of SM		High SES Children		Low SES Children	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Psychological Control	Low	132	53.9	99	55.6	33	49.3	77	57	33	51.6
	High	113	46.1	79	44.4	34	50.7	58	43	31	48.4

The findings in Table 5.27 indicate that relatively more children (53.9%) perceive their mothers to be low on psychological control. However there was no significant

difference between children of married mothers and single mothers with regard to perception of mothers' psychological controlling parenting practices. Similarly, there was no significant difference with regard to mothers' SES for psychologically controlling parenting practices.

Table 5.28 presents the mean scores for children's perception of their mother's degree of being psychologically controlling. The bottom part of Table 5.28 provides the statistical results of a 2 X 2 Anova with mothers' marital status and SES as predictors and children's perception of their mother's psychological control as criterion measures. Effect sizes were calculated to explain the strength of the association between the variables, thus representing the proportion of variance of the dependent variables that is explained by the independent variables.



Table 5.28: Children’s perception of mother’s psychological control as a function of mothers’ marital status and SES

		Low SES		High SES		Total	
Psychological Control		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Married Mothers		12.39	4.41	11.91	3.38	12.03	3.66
Single Mothers		11.96	3.01	12.00	3.31	11.98	3.14
Total		12.23	3.91	11.93	3.35	12.02	3.53
			df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	
SES	Psychological Control		1	0.14	0.71	0.001	
MS	Psychological Control		1	0.08	0.78	0.000	
SES * MS	Psychological Control		1	0.19	0.66	0.001	

Also for children’s perception of mothers’ psychological control, no significant main or interaction effects of SES and marital status were found.

In summary, mothers and children were similar in how they perceived the family environment. Mother and child similarities only extended to cohesion, conflict, achievement orientation, organisation and control. Mother and child perceptions of the family differed for independence and expressiveness. Families were more inclined to be cohesive, had less conflict, were more organized, more achievement orientated, had more control and were less independent. SES, but not marital status had significant main effects on the cohesiveness and expressiveness in the family. This finding meant that families in higher SES environments were more cohesive, as perceived by both mothers and children, and more expressive, as perceived by the children. Children perceived their mothers to be more autonomy-supportive and less

psychologically controlling. Mothers of children living in higher socio-economic environments were the least psychologically controlling.

5.5 SECTION 4: THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PERSONAL FUNCTIONING and FAMILY FUNCTIONING

This section presents the various relationships between personal functioning and family functioning. In other words, mother and child self-esteem and satisfaction with life as related to family environment and maternal parenting practices.

5.5.1 Socio-economic status and self-esteem

Hypothesis 3:

Mother and child self-esteem will positively relate to socio-economic status for both single and married mothers.

The relationship between socio-economic status and mother-child self-esteem

Hypotheses 3 was tested and presented in Table 5.29. The hypotheses proposed that an association between socio-economic status and self-esteem of both mothers and children. A Pearson correlation was conducted to establish the relationship between the proposed variables.

Table 5.29 presents the relationships between child self-esteem and SES and mother self-esteem and SES.

Table 5.29: Correlations between mother and child self-esteem and SES

Mother self-esteem and Socio-economic status N=245	Child self-esteem and Socio-economic status N=245	Married Mother self-esteem and socio-economic status N=178	Child self-esteem of MM and socio-economic status N=178	Single Mother self-esteem and socio-economic status N=68	Child self-esteem SM and socio-economic status N=68
.29**	.20**	.25	.25*	.37**	.07

*p<0.05

**p<0.01

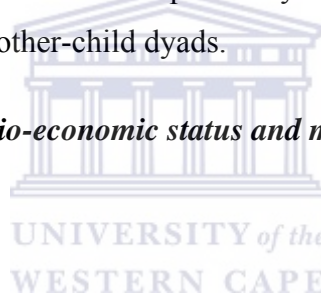
Significant positive relationships were found between socio-economic status and self-esteem for mothers, ($r = .29$, $p < .01$) and children, ($r = .20$, $p < .01$). The relationship was significant for children of married mothers, ($r = .25$, $p < .05$) and for single mothers, ($r = .37$, $p < .01$). The findings suggest that high socio-economic environments were associated with high self-esteem levels for single, but not married mothers (although in this group the correlation is also .25 with $N=178$) - and for children of married mothers, but not for children of single mothers.

5.5.2 Socio-economic status and satisfaction with life

Hypothesis 4:

Mother and child satisfaction with life will positively relate to socio-economic status for both single and married mother-child dyads.

The relationship between socio-economic status and mother-child satisfaction with life



Hypotheses 4 was tested and presented in Table 5.30. The hypotheses proposed that there will be an association between socio-economic status and satisfaction with life of both mothers and children. A Pearson correlation was conducted to establish the relationship between the proposed variables.

Table 30 shows the relationships between mother satisfaction with life and SES and child satisfaction with life and SES.

Table 5.30: Mother-child satisfaction with life and SES

Mother swls and Socio-economic status N=199	Child swls and Socio-economic status N=199	Married Mother swls and socio-economic status N=147	Child swls of MM and socio-economic status N=147	Single Mother swls and socio-economic status N=52	Child swls SM and socio-economic status N=52
-.101	-.011	-.136	.046	.195	-.151

The results show that there were no significant relationships found between mother and child satisfaction with life and socio-economic status.

5.5.3 Family Environment and Personal Functioning

Hypothesis 5:

Family environment: Cohesion, Expressiveness, Organisation, Academic

Achievement, Control and Independence will positively correlate with Mother and child Personal Functioning [self-esteem and satisfaction with life] but Conflict will negatively correlate with Mother and child Personal Functioning [self-esteem and satisfaction with life] and this is also so for the subgroups of marital status (Hypothesis 5a) and socio-economic status (Hypothesis 5b).

5.5.3.1 Cohesion, self-esteem and satisfaction with life

Hypothesis 5 for the subscale of cohesion in the family environment was tested and presented in Table 5.31. The hypothesis proposes that there will be a positive association between perceptions of cohesion in the family and self-esteem and satisfaction with life scores of both mothers and children across marital status and socio-economic status. Pearson correlations were calculated to establish the relationship between the proposed variables in the different subgroups.

Table 5.31: Correlations of cohesion with self-esteem and satisfaction with life

	N	Cohesion and Self-Esteem	Cohesion and Satisfaction with Life
Mother	241	.53**	.02
Child	241	.30**	.36**
Married Mother	176	.52**	.02
Child of MM	176	.28**	.36**
Single Mother	65	.56**	.51**
Child of SM	65	.37**	.35**
MHSES	134	.47**	.45**
CMHSES	134	.37**	.35**
MLSES	62	.55**	-.02
CMLSES	62	.10	.15

**p<0.01

*p<0.05

There was a significant positive relationship between cohesion and self-esteem levels of mothers, ($r = .53$, $p < .01$) and children, ($r = .30$, $p < .01$). The relationship was also significant for married mothers, ($r = .52$, $p < .01$) and their children, ($r = .28$, $p < .01$); single mothers, ($r = .56$, $p < .01$) and their children, ($r = .37$, $p < .01$); mothers living in high socio-economic environments, ($r = .47$, $p < .01$) and their children, ($r = .37$, $p < .01$); mothers living in low socio-economic environments, ($r = .55$, $p < .01$), but not for their children. The findings suggest that in general, more cohesion in the home environment was associated with mothers and children having higher self-esteem levels.

A significant positive association was found between cohesion and satisfaction with life for children, ($r = .36$, $p < .01$); children of married mothers, ($r = .36$, $p < .01$); single mothers, ($r = .51$, $p < .01$), and their children, ($r = .35$, $p < .01$) and mothers, ($r = .45$, $p < .01$) and children, ($r = .35$, $p < .01$) living in high socio-economic environments. The findings suggest that, in general, more cohesion in the family is associated with higher levels of satisfaction with life for single mothers and mothers living in high socio-economic environments. Children, apart from children of mothers

living in low socio-economic environments, were inclined to have higher satisfaction with life levels when they perceived the family to be more cohesive.

5.5.3.2.1 Expressiveness, self-esteem and satisfaction with life

Hypothesis 5 for the subscale of expressiveness in the family environment was tested and presented in Table 5.32. The hypothesis proposes that perceptions of expressiveness in the family will be positively correlated with self-esteem and satisfaction with life, both for mothers and children across marital status and socio-economic status. Pearson correlations were calculated to establish the relationship between the proposed variables.

Table 5.32: Correlations of expressiveness with self-esteem and satisfaction with life

	N	Expressiveness and Self-Esteem	Expressiveness and Satisfaction with Life
Mother	241	.40**	.013
Child	241	-.08	-.08
Married Mother	176	.38**	.01
Child of MM	176	-.07	-.01
Single Mother	65	.46**	.32**
Child of SM	65	-.01	-.22
MHSES	134	.43**	.30**
CMHSES	134	-.04	.02
MLSES	62	.31**	.05
CMLSES	62	-.15	-.29*

**p<0.01 *p<0.05

The results in Table 5.32 show that perceptions of expressiveness in the family was significantly positively associated with mothers' self-esteem, ($r = .40$, $p < .01$); married mothers, ($r = .38$, $p < .01$); single mothers, ($r = .46$, $p < .01$); mothers living in high socio-economic environments, ($r = .43$, $p < .01$) and mothers living in low socio-economic environments, ($r = .31$, $p < .01$). The findings suggest that the more expressive the family environment, the more mothers were inclined to have higher self-esteem levels. This was however, not the case with children's perceptions of

expressiveness in the family and their self-esteem levels as there were no significant relationships found.

Expressiveness was significantly positively related to satisfaction with life for single mothers, ($r = .32, p < .01$); mothers living in high socio-economic environments, ($r = .30, p < .01$) but significantly negatively for children of mothers living in low socio-economic environments, ($r = -.29, p < .05$).

5.5.3.3 Organisation, self-esteem and satisfaction with life

Hypothesis 5 for the subscale of organisation in the family environment was tested and presented in Table 5.33. The hypothesis proposes that organisation in the family will be positively correlated with self-esteem and satisfaction with life scores of both mothers and children across marital status and socio-economic status. Pearson correlations were calculated to establish the relationship between the proposed variables.

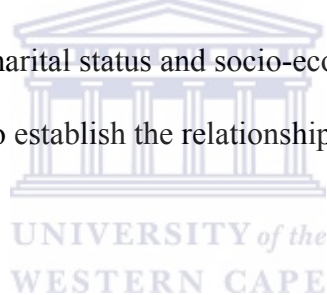


Table 5.33: Correlations of organisation with self-esteem and satisfaction with life

	N	Organisation and Self-Esteem	Organisation and Satisfaction with life
Mother	241	.33**	.02
Child	241	.21**	.17**
Married Mother	176	.33**	.02
Child of MM	176	.24**	.17*
Single Mother	65	.33**	.20
Child of SM	65	.13	.16
MHSES	134	.31**	.33**
CMHSES	134	.21*	.10
MLSES	62	.33**	-.03
CMLSES	62	.28*	.17

**p<0.01

*p<0.05

There was a significant positive relationship between organisation in the family and self-esteem in all subgroups, except for the children of single mothers (see Table

5.33). The findings suggest that more organisation in the family was associated with higher self-esteem levels.

A significant positive relationship was found between organisation in the family and satisfaction with life for children, ($r = .17, p < .01$); children of married mothers, ($r = .17, p < .05$) and mothers, ($r = .33, p < .01$) living in high socio-economic environments.

5.5.3.4 Achievement Orientation, self-esteem and satisfaction with life

Hypothesis 5 for the subscale of achievement orientation in the family environment was tested and presented in Table 5.34. The hypothesis proposes that perceptions of achievement orientation in the family will be positively associated with self-esteem and satisfaction with life scores of both mothers and children across marital status and socio-economic status. Pearson correlations were calculated to establish the relationship between the proposed variables.

Table 5.34: Correlations of achievement orientation with self-esteem and satisfaction with life

	N	Achievement Orientation and Self-Esteem	Achievement Orientation and Satisfaction with life
Mother	241	.06	.00
Child	241	.05	.16*
Married Mother	176	.01	-.002
Child of MM	176	.03	.16*
Single Mother	65	.16	.20
Child of SM	65	.11	.16
MHSES	134	.05	.02
CMHSES	134	.04	.08
MLSES	62	.06	.10
CMLSES	62	-.01	.17

** $p < 0.01$

* $p < 0.05$

There were no significant relationships found between achievement orientation in the family and self-esteem levels of mothers and children. Only for the total group of

children ($r = .16, p < .05$) and for children of married mothers ($r = .16, p < .05$) the perceived achievement orientation in the family was positively correlated with life satisfaction.

5.5.3.5.1 Independence, self-esteem and satisfaction with life

Hypothesis 5 for the subscale of independence in the family environment was tested and presented in Table 5.35. The hypothesis proposes that perceptions of independence in the family will be positively associated with self-esteem and satisfaction with life scores of both mothers and children across marital status and socio-economic status.

Table 5.35: Correlations of independence with self-esteem and satisfaction with life

	N	Independence and Self-Esteem	Independence and Satisfaction with Life
Mother	241	.32**	.05
Child	241	.0	.02
Married Mother	176	.29**	.07
Child of MM	176	.01	.03
Single Mother	65	.42**	.27*
Child of SM	65	-.05	.004
MHSES	134	.28**	.03
CMHSES	134	.04	.002
MLSES	62	.38**	.03
CMLSES	62	-.02	-.24

** $p < 0.01$

* $p < 0.05$

Table 5.35 shows that independence was significantly positively related to the self-esteem levels of mothers, ($r = .32, p < .01$); married mothers, ($r = .29, p < .01$); single mothers, ($r = .42, p < .01$); mothers living in high socio-economic environments, ($r = .28, p < .01$) and mothers living in low socio-economic environments, ($r = .38, p < .01$). Only in the group of single mothers, Independence was significantly positively related to satisfaction with life: ($r = .27, p < .05$).

5.5.3.6 Control, self-esteem and satisfaction with life

Hypothesis 5 for the subscale of control in the family environment was tested and presented in Table 5.36. The hypothesis proposes that there will be a positively association between perceptions of control in the family and self-esteem and satisfaction with life scores of both mothers and children across marital status and socio-economic status.

Table 5.36: Correlations of control with self-esteem and satisfaction with life

	N	Control and Self-Esteem	Control and Satisfaction with Life
Mother	241	-.09	.02
Child	241	-.09	-.009
Married Mother	176	-.07	.03
Child of MM	176	-.07	-.02
Single Mother	65	-.14	-.10
Child of SM	65	-.17	.01
MHSES	134	-.11	-.06
CMHSES	134	-.20*	-.08
MLSES	62	-.14	.16
CMLSES	62	.07	.04

**p<0.01

*p<0.05

Table 5.36 shows that control in the family is significantly negatively related with the self-esteem levels only for children of mothers living in high socio-economic environments: ($r = -.20, p < .05$). There were no further significant relationships found for the relationship between control and self-esteem levels.

Control was not associated with how satisfied mothers and children were with their lives. The findings suggest that more control in the home was associated with lower self-esteem levels for children of mothers living in high socio-economic environments.

5.5.3.7 Conflict, self-esteem and satisfaction with life

Hypothesis 5 for the subscale of conflict in the family environment was tested and presented in Table 5.37. The hypothesis proposes that perceptions of conflict in the family will be negatively correlated with self-esteem and satisfaction with life scores of both mothers and children across marital status and socio-economic status.

Table 5.37: Correlations of conflict with self-esteem and satisfaction with life

	N	Conflict and Self-Esteem	Conflict and Satisfaction with Life
Mother	241	-.41**	-.05
Child	241	-.30**	-.24**
Married Mother	176	-.42**	-.06
Child of MM	176	-.30**	-.22**
Single Mother	65	-.39**	-.32**
Child of SM	65	-.30**	-.27*
MHSES	134	-.36**	-.36**
CMHSES	134	-.36**	-.28**
MLSES	62	-.55**	-.06
CMLSES	62	-.25**	-.28*

**p<0.01

*p<0.05

As predicted, the results in Table 5.38 show that conflict in the home is significantly negatively related to self-esteem in all subgroups. The findings suggest that more conflict in the home was associated with lowered self-esteem scores for both mothers and children.

5.5.3 Also with life satisfaction, all significant correlations were negative. No significant correlation was found for the total group of mothers, for married mothers and for children with a low SES mother.

Parenting practices, self-esteem and satisfaction with life

Hypothesis 6:

Children's perceptions of maternal autonomy-supportive parenting practices will positively relate to their self-esteem and satisfaction with life across marital and socio-economic status.

Table 5.38 shows the corresponding Pearson correlations.

Table 5.38: Correlations of children's perception of mothers' autonomy-supportive parenting practices and involvement with children's self-esteem and satisfaction with life

Groups	N	Mother Autonomy-Supportive parenting and Self-Esteem	Mother Autonomy-Supportive parenting and Satisfaction with Life
Child	245	.22**	.07
Child of MM	178	.21**	-.01
Child of SM	68	.26*	.24
CMHSES	135	.26**	.11
CMLSES	64	.25*	.11

**p<0.01

*p<0.05

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As expected, a significant positive relationship was found in all subgroups of children between Mother Autonomy-Support (MAS) parenting practices and child self-esteem scores.

Children's satisfaction with life was however unrelated with their perception of their mothers' autonomy-supportive parenting style.

No other significant relationships were found.

Hypothesis 7:

Children's perceptions of psychologically controlling parenting maternal practices will negatively relate to their self-esteem and satisfaction with life across marital and socio-economic status.

Table 5.39 presents the corresponding correlations.

Table 5.39: Correlations of children's perception of maternal psychological control with their self-esteem and satisfaction with life

Groups	N	Maternal Psychological Control and Self-Esteem	Maternal Psychological Control and Satisfaction with Life
Child	245	-.28**	-.20**
Child of MM	178	-.26**	-.07
Child of SM	68	-.36**	-.50**
CMHSES	135	-.42**	-.31**
CMLSES	64	-.28*	-.19

**p<0.01

*p<0.05

In line with hypothesis 7, the correlation between children's perceptions of their mothers' Psychological Control and their self-esteem scores were significantly negative in all groups of children.

Children's perceptions of their mothers' psychological control were also negatively related to their satisfaction with their lives. This correlation was however not significant for children of married mothers and for children with a low SES-mother.

The hypothesis holds true for self-esteem scores of all children across marital and socio-economic status. The hypothesis also holds true for the satisfaction with life for the total group of children and more specifically for children of single mothers and children of mothers living in high socio-economic environments.

Hypothesis 8:

Family environment: Cohesion, Expressiveness, Organisation, Academic

Achievement, Control and Independence will positively correlate with maternal autonomy-supportive parenting practices but Conflict will negatively correlate with maternal psychological controlling parenting practices and this is also so for the subgroups of marital status (Hypothesis 8a) and socio-economic status (Hypothesis 8b).

Table 5.40 presents the correlations between family environment and MI, MAS and psychological control.

Table 5.40: Correlations between family environment and parenting

Family Environment Scales	MAS	Psychological Control
Cohesion	.24**	-.23**
Expressiveness	.03	.02
Conflict	-.33**	.40**
Organisation	.18**	-.17**
AO	.10	.15*
Control	-.27**	.13
Independence	.03	-.16*

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Mother Autonomy-support was positively significantly related to Cohesion ($r = .24$, $p < .01$) and Organisation ($r = .18$, $p < .01$), but negatively associated with Conflict ($r = -.33$, $p < .01$) and Control ($r = -.27$, $p < .01$). Psychological Control was positively significantly related to Conflict ($r = .40$, $p < .01$) and Achievement Orientation ($r = .15$, $p < .05$), but negatively associated with Cohesion ($r = -.23$, $p < .01$), Organisation ($r = -.17$, $p < .01$) and Independence ($r = -.16$, $p < .05$).

5.6 PREDICTING EFFECTS FOR CHILD SELF-ESTEEM

A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to examine the individual and collective contributions of Socio-economic status, Mother Autonomy-Support, Mother Psychological Control, Family Environment: Cohesion, Conflict and Organisation and child satisfaction with life as independent variables on child self-esteem as a dependent variable. The regression analysis was conducted to *firstly*, establish which independent variable was the strongest predictor on child self-esteem and *secondly*, to test the statistical significance of the model in order to predict the amount of variance in child self-esteem.

The variables were entered according to the assumption of the model in Figure 1.1 (Chapter 1). The underlying assumption was that mother self-esteem and SES would be related to parenting practices and family environment. The latter was presumed to predict how satisfied a child was with his or her life and thus predict child self-esteem. A composite matrix of the variables showed that cohesion, organisation and conflict were the strongest predictors of child self-esteem.

Table: 5. 41: Regression analysis predicting child self-esteem

Model for child self-esteem	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	B	SE B	β		
Step 1					
Socio-economic status	6.66	2.33	.20	2.86	.01
Step 2					
Mother self-esteem	.10	.06	.12	1.64	.10
Step 3					
Mother Autonomy-Support	3.47	1.72	.14	2.02	.05
Mother Psychological Control	-1.35	.31	-.31	-4.40	.00
Step 4					
Cohesion	.10	.11	.08	.91	.37
Organisation	-.18	.13	-.11	-1.36	.18
Conflict	.14	.13	.08	1.06	.29
Step 5					
Satisfaction with Life	1.07	.17	.40	6.33	.00

Note $\Delta R^2=.04$ for step 1; $\Delta R^2=.04$ for step 2; $\Delta R^2=.18$ for step 3; $\Delta R^2=.20$ for step 4; $\Delta R^2=.34$ for step 5
 * $p<.001$

In the first step of the model, socio-economic status was entered into the model predicting child self-esteem. Mother-self-esteem was entered in the second step of the model predicting child self-esteem. In the third step children's perceptions of mother involvement, autonomy-supportive and psychologically controlling parenting were added as a group of independent variables representing parenting practices predicting child self-esteem. Family environment: cohesion, organisation and conflict were added as a group of variables predicting child self-esteem in the fourth step of the model. In the fifth step of the model, child satisfaction with life was added as a predictor of child self-esteem.

The results indicated that socio-economic status remained a significant predictor of child self-esteem ($\beta = .20, p < .001$). Even after controlling for mother SES, mother self-esteem was not a significant predictor of child self-esteem. Both autonomy-supportive ($\beta = .14, p < .001$) and psychologically controlling parenting ($\beta = -.31, p < .001$) were significant predictors of child self-esteem. The maternal parenting practices accounted for 18% of child self-esteem, which was an additional 14% after controlling for mother SES and mother self-esteem. Maternal autonomy-supportive parenting ceased to be a significant predictor of child self-esteem after family environment: cohesion, organisation and conflict were added. Maternal psychologically controlling parenting practices remained a significant negative predictor of child self-esteem. The family environment variables did not significantly predict child self-esteem. In the final step of the model, child satisfaction with life ($\beta = .40, p < .001$) accounted for an additional 14% of the variance in child self-esteem. The final model accounted for 34% of the variance in child self-esteem scores, $F(9, 186) = 12.09; p < .001; \Delta R^2 = .34$.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The main findings of the analysis show that there were relatively more mothers and children with medium to high self-esteem scores. The majority of mothers and children were also more satisfied with their lives. Socio-economic status was related to both mother and child self-esteem. Mothers' and children's perceptions of their families were similar except with regard to Expressiveness and Independence. Mother Autonomy-supportive parenting was positively associated with child self-esteem, while Psychological Control was negatively associated with child self-esteem. The results of the hierarchical regression analysis indicate that SES, child satisfaction with

life and psychologically controlling maternal parenting practices were the strongest predictors of child self-esteem. While SES and satisfaction with life were positive predictors of child self-esteem, psychologically controlling maternal parenting was a negative predictor of child self-esteem.

The findings should be interpreted with a measure of caution as there are limitations to the study which are addressed in Chapter 7. The following chapter presents the results of the qualitative component of the study. The results of the current chapter and the next chapter are integrated and discussed in chapter



CHAPTER 6

QUALITATIVE RESULTS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The current chapter is the second phase to the mixed methods design of the study. As the previous chapter provided an examination of relationship building between the mothers and their preadolescent children, the current chapter provides an exploration of mothers' experiences, understanding and feelings with regard to their perceptions of motherhood, the process of mothering and the strengths and weaknesses of the mother-child relationships within the contexts of family background and support.

Included in the analysis, are the mothers' perceptions of the child's relationship with a significant other. The significant other includes any other person who may be responsible for the care and discipline of the child in the absence of the mother. This person would include a father, grandparent, other family members or a helper. The main purpose of this chapter is to provide a rich understanding of the mother-child relationship for married and single mothers living in high and low socio-economic environments with preadolescent children as a support to the findings in the previous chapter.

6.2 PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

Daisy: Divorced Mother; Low SES; High self-esteem; Slightly satisfied with life

Child: Female; age 10; extremely satisfied with life; medium self-esteem

Family environment: High mother involvement; High autonomy-support; Low psychological control; High cohesion; Low expressiveness; Low conflict; Low independence; High achievement orientation; High organisation; Low control

Buttercup: Married Mother; Low SES; High self-esteem; Extremely satisfied with life

Child: Female; age 10; slightly satisfied with life; medium self-esteem

Family environment: High mother involvement; High autonomy-support; Low psychological control; Low cohesion; Low expressiveness; Low conflict; Low independence; Low achievement orientation; High organisation; High control

Crazy Frog: Married Mother; High SES; High self-esteem; Slightly satisfied with life

Child: Male; age 10; satisfied with life; medium self-esteem

Family environment: High mother involvement; Low autonomy-support; Low psychological control; Low cohesion; Low expressiveness; Low conflict; Low independence; High achievement orientation; Low organisation; Low control

Fairy: Never Married Mother; High SES; High self-esteem; Satisfied with life

Child: Female; age 11; satisfied with life; medium self-esteem

Family environment: High mother involvement; High autonomy-support; Low psychological control; Low cohesion; Low expressiveness; Low conflict; Low independence; High achievement orientation; Low organisation; High control

Spike: Divorced Mother; Low SES; Medium self-esteem; Extremely satisfied with life

Child: Male; age 12; slightly satisfied with life; medium self-esteem

Family environment: High mother involvement; High autonomy-support; High psychological control; Low cohesion; Low expressiveness; High conflict; Low independence; High achievement orientation; High organisation; Low control

Skateboard: Married Mother; High SES; High self-esteem; Extremely satisfied with life

Child: Male; age 12; slightly satisfied with life; high self-esteem

Family environment: High mother involvement; High autonomy-support; Low psychological control; Low cohesion; Low expressiveness; Low conflict; Low independence; Low achievement orientation; High organisation; High control

50 Cent: Married Mother; High SES; Medium self-esteem; Satisfied with life

Child: Female; age 10; extremely satisfied with life; medium self-esteem

Family environment: High mother involvement; Low autonomy-support; High psychological control; High cohesion; Low expressiveness; Low conflict; Low independence; High achievement orientation; High organisation; High control

Batman: Divorced Mother; High SES; Medium self-esteem; Dissatisfied with life

Child: Male; age 12; slightly satisfied with life; medium self-esteem

Family environment: High mother involvement; High autonomy-support; High psychological control; Low cohesion; Low expressiveness; Low conflict; High independence; Low achievement orientation; Low organisation; Low control

Maggie: Married Mother; High SES; High self-esteem; Extremely satisfied with life

Child: Female; age 12; satisfied with life; high self-esteem

Family environment: High mother involvement; High autonomy-support; Low psychological control; High cohesion; Low expressiveness; Low conflict; Low independence; Low achievement orientation; High organisation; Low control

Jackie-Chan: Married Mother; Low SES; Medium self-esteem; Slightly dissatisfied with life

Child: Male; age 10; satisfied with life; medium self-esteem

Family environment: High mother involvement; Low autonomy-support; High psychological control; High cohesion; Low expressiveness; High conflict; Low independence; High achievement orientation; High organisation; High control

John Cena: Married Mother; High SES; Medium self-esteem; Satisfied with life

Child: Male; age 10; slightly dissatisfied with life; medium self-esteem

Family environment: High mother involvement; High autonomy-support; Low psychological control; High cohesion; Low expressiveness; Low conflict; Low independence; Low achievement orientation; High organisation; Low control

Sadny Wayne: Married Mother; High SES; Medium self-esteem; dissatisfied with life

Child: Female; age 10; slightly satisfied with life; medium self-esteem

Family environment: High mother involvement; Low autonomy-support; High psychological control; High cohesion; Low expressiveness; High conflict; Low independence; High achievement orientation; High organisation; High control

Britney: Divorced Mother; Low SES; Medium self-esteem; Extremely dissatisfied with life

Child: Female; age 10; satisfied with life; medium self-esteem

Family environment: Low mother involvement; High autonomy-support; Low psychological control; High cohesion; Low expressiveness; Low conflict; Low independence; High achievement orientation; High organisation; High control

Jane: Never Married Mother; High SES; Slightly dissatisfied with life

Child: Female; age 10; satisfied with life; medium self-esteem

Family environment: High mother involvement; High autonomy-support; Low psychological control; Low cohesion; High expressiveness; Low conflict; Low independence; High achievement orientation; Low organisation; Low control

Sapphire: Cohabiting Mother; Low SES; Medium self-esteem; Slightly dissatisfied with life

Child: Female; age 10; slightly satisfied with life; medium self-esteem

Family environment: High mother involvement; High autonomy-support; Low psychological control; Low cohesion; Low expressiveness; Low conflict; Low independence; High achievement orientation; Low organisation; Low control

Baby Girl: Divorced Mother; Low SES; Medium self-esteem; neutral

Child: Female; age 12; slightly dissatisfied with life; medium self-esteem

Family environment: High mother involvement; High autonomy-support; Low psychological control; Low cohesion; Low expressiveness; Low conflict; High independence; High achievement orientation; Low organisation; High control

Beyonce1: Married Mother; Low SES; High self-esteem; Extremely satisfied with life

Child: Female; age 11; slightly satisfied with life; medium self-esteem

Family environment: High mother involvement; High autonomy-support; Low psychological control; High cohesion; Low expressiveness; High conflict; Low independence; High achievement orientation; High organisation; Low control

Chicken: Married Mother; Low SES; High self-esteem; Slightly satisfied with life

Child: Male; age 10; neutral; medium self-esteem

Family environment: High mother involvement; Low autonomy-support; High psychological control; High cohesion; Low expressiveness; Low conflict; Low independence; High achievement orientation; High organisation; High control

JayZ: Married Mother; Low SES; High self-esteem; Satisfied with life

Child: Male; age 12; slightly satisfied with life; medium self-esteem

Family environment: High mother involvement; Low autonomy-support; Low psychological control; High cohesion; Low expressiveness; Low conflict; High independence; High achievement orientation; High organisation; High control

6.3 THEMES



Common themes emerged

6.3.1 Motherhood and Mothering

- Defining motherhood
- Motherhood as real
- Motherhood as perfect

6.3.2 Mother-preadolescent relationship

- Challenges and Happy experiences

- Strengths and Weaknesses
- Early Childhood and preadolescence
- Changes to the mother-child relationship
- Mothers future expectations

6.3.3 Family of origin

- Factors in the family of origin
- Relationship with own mother
- A comparison
- Changed view of mother



6.3.4 Support

- Type of support
- Ideal or not

6.3.5 The Significant Other

- Type of discipline and caring
- Mothers' perceptions of the relationship
- Influence of significant other

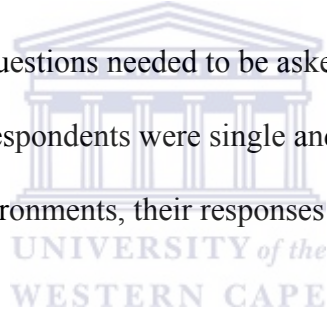
The themes and sub-themes are further presented as they evolved in the analysis.

6.3.1 MOTHERHOOD AND MOTHERING

The mothers were asked to use words to describe motherhood, but more specifically what they thought motherhood meant and what being a mother meant. It seemed that the respondents struggled to answer this particular question as they would sigh as a first response to the question. Mothers also seemed somewhat nervous by the question as they would laugh nervously at the beginning of the question. One mother in particular responded,

It's rare to hear a question like that. (Skateboard: MMHSES)

The mothers living in low socio-economic environments tended to have difficulty in using words to describe the term motherhood and would therefore needed to be prompted by cue words and questions needed to be asked in some instance in a different way. Although the respondents were single and married and were from different socio-economic environments, their responses were quite similar.



Defining motherhood

In providing a definition of motherhood mothers agreed that being a mother was about loving and caring unconditionally for their children; being supportive and not expecting anything in return. A mother essentially needed to be approachable which included warmth and friendliness so that the child would have the freedom to speak about anything,

I love being a mother...to care and to love and to be there for my children...be very supportive. (Jackie Chan: MMLSES)

Someone who cares unconditionally for their child...someone who looks after their child unconditionally...someone who provides for their child unconditionally...not expecting anything back from the child. (Fairy: SMHSES)

To always let her know she can come and talk to you about anything. She shouldn't feel like you going to bite her head off and get cross at her. (Daisy: SMLSES)

The majority of mothers provided a more traditional and biological perspective of their understanding of motherhood. This traditional and biological perspective was more in line with the biological mother as carer and nurturer. However, one mother provided an explanation of motherhood in the context of an extended family, where mothering did not necessarily mean that the mother was a biological mother, but that any woman could take on the role of a mother. She stated:

A mother is anyone who knows a child, anyone who can care for a child who can give a child that love, that support...because there are mothers who never had children before but still that is a mother (Skateboard: MMHSES)

The term motherhood was not only described in terms of feelings and behaving in a particular way towards the child, but being a mother also meant personal sacrifice in the process of satisfying the child's needs; being available all the time and the sense of losing the self for another, as well as a sense of personal fulfillment. Motherhood was explained in abstract terms as indicated below.

If I think what my life is like now and what it could've been like without children, obviously it's easier without kids, but that fulfilling feeling...to me a woman could feel a bit empty without even knowing it when she doesn't have kids. When you have kids you just have this piece of you that's filled. The piece that you probably cannot explain. (50 Cent: MMHSES)

You must be willing to sacrifice a lot of yourself, your time, in fact, everything about you for your children. (John Cena: MMHSES)

And you must be there twenty - four seven for your children. If you want good results I think a mother must put in all the effort. (Maggie: MMHSES)

You always put your children first...her needs come before yours. (Daisy: SMLSES)

Mothers especially mothers who had more than one child thought that motherhood was a continuous process of learning to be a mother and, in a sense, learning to know their children. Motherhood and the practice of mothering are enhanced by the resilience to do 'it' in the face of inexperience, incompetence and possible ignorance about caring for another. However, at the same time, in the process of their own

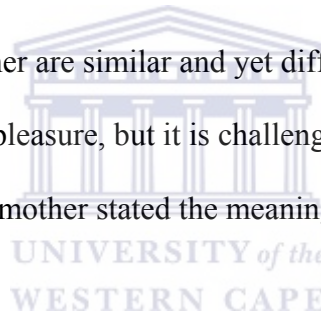
learning mothers felt that motherhood was also a process of teaching their children, acting as role models, trainers, guiders and teachers. Mothering should, therefore, be flexible, changeable and in a sense directed by the child. Unmistakably, there is no prescriptive way of mothering the ‘right way’, but that the mother-child relationship is a bi-directional and reciprocal relationship for mothers who had preadolescent children,

Well there are a lot of things that you still learn as you go along...obviously, and with three children, the first one is not the second one and the second one, both of them are not the last one...they are different. (Baby Girl: SMLSSES)

Teaching them, guiding them, a role model. (Maggie: MMHSES)

Every day is a different day. Today your child is up on cloud nine and tomorrow the child is down on the ground and what do you do. So you are there then you pick your child up and you try to put him back onto that cloud again. So you are mothering basically according to how the day goes. (Crazy Frog: MMHSES)

Clearly, perceptions of a mother are similar and yet different. Undoubtedly, being a mother is a joy and at most a pleasure, but it is challenging and especially when there are financial difficulties. One mother stated the meaning of motherhood in the following way:



Ek kan dit nie eintlik beskryf nie...dit is hard om `n ma te wees. Tye is dit maklik. Tye is dit hard. Maar soos dit nou die afgelope jare gegaan het vir my was dit baie hard. (Saphire: MMLSSES)

English translation: I can't actually describe it...it is difficult to be a mother. At times it is easy. At times it is difficult. But as it has been the past years for me it has been very difficult.

In explaining and describing motherhood, the participants were asked if there was a real and a perfect mother. The responses were unanimous that there were no perfect mothers, but that there were real mothers and these mothers were perceived as “normal” mothers. The mothers provided an explanation of their perceived differences between real and perfect mothers. Interestingly, mothers could state what

a perfect mother was and compare their understanding of perfect mothers to that of real mothers.

Motherhood as real

A real mother would love, teach, guide and spend time with the child. The real mother understands and disciplines her child and raises the child with a conscience and feelings of empathy, considering the feelings of others and being kind to others.

Mothers noted the following about the real mother:

A real mother is a flexible mother...someone who understands, I'm not saying you should let the child be loose, but at least you discuss...sit down with the child and if you are having a problem with what the child is doing you let the child know so that at least he/she knows that by so doing I am not making my mother feel comfortable...I'm disturbing my mother...so I'm not suppose to do this. You guide the child. (Skateboard: MMHSES)

[Teach the child about] what is wrong, what is right...there will be discipline and sometimes she [the mother] won't be able to please that child at all times but you're just being a mother...who does things even though it may hurt the child, but that's just for their own good. (Britney Spears: SMLSES)

Mothers implied that raising children as a real mother was not prescriptive and it depended largely on how the mother feels the child should be raised at a particular time and by implication it is all about trying your best as a mother on a daily basis.

It's how you feel things should be done as a mother and you feel you have done your best as a mother...you do as much as you can as a mother at this time and in this place...you try to lead your child on the right path and you teach her what is wrong and right. (Daisy: SMLSES)

You only try your very best to give to your children...what you think is right and to do what's right for them. (Batman: SMHSES)

The real mother tries her best according to what she thinks is right. Being a real mother cannot be boxed and neatly packaged, again presenting mothering as amorphous.

Motherhood as perfect

The participants thought that a perfect mother was illusory and more like a dream. As it is everyone's wish to be a perfect mother, participants felt that perfect mothers just did not exist. In the opinion of the participants, perfect mothers do not make mistakes when they raise their children, do not get angry with their children nor do they learn anything from their children and other mothers. Perfect mothers would inevitably be unhappy and have unhappy relationships with their children in their quest to please their children. According to the participants, the child would ultimately suffer as the perfect mother would want to please the child all the time and therefore would not be able to say "No" to the child. The perfect mother just did not exist:

There isn't a perfect mother because we also make mistakes and we learn by it. We have to set an example for them to follow...if there were perfect mothers there would be perfect children. And we don't see perfect children unfortunately. (50 Cent: MMHSES)

Perfect? Perfect you mustn't have faults then. And that is impossible...Ja [Yes] that is impossible. (Maggie: MMHSES)

'n Ma raak ook kwaad vir die kinders as hulle miskien stout is maar ons is daar om hulle reg te help en vir hulle te wys die regte dinge in die lewe...En sy [perfect mother] is ook nooit kwaad vir die kind nie...die kind is ook reg, sy is reg...alles wat sy doen is nie verkeerd in niemand se oë nie, want sy is perfek. (Beyonce 1: MMLSES)

English translation: A mother also gets angry at the children if they are perhaps naughty but we are there to help them and to show them the right/proper things in life...and she is never angry at the child...the child is also right, she is right...everything which she does is never wrong in no person's view because she is perfect.

I think the child and the mother won't have a real relationship. (Jackie Chan: MMLSES)

[A perfect mother] will drive herself so much to be the parent that she always forget about herself and if you are unhappy, you gonna make yourself unhappy if you try to be the perfect mother...and if you are an unhappy person, you can't be a good mother (John Cena: MMHSES).

[Perfect mothers] go out of [their] way just to please that child and to do whatever [they] can in [their] power to do for that child...and therefore agree to everything. (Britney Spears: SMLSES)

'n Perfekte ma is seker nou uit die kind se oogpunt uit. Mammie sal altyd vir alles ja sê. (JayZ: MMLSES)

English translation: A perfect mother is probably in the child's view Mommy will always say yes to everything.

You can be real but perfect no...because there's no one who is perfect. If you go to being perfect then there are things the child would want to do and this would be an obstacle to the child because you would want it to be perfect. You won't let the child to be him or herself. (Skateboard: MMHSES)

Motherhood is very real and perfection as a mother does not exist. In describing motherhood, the participants were able to provide a very broad and sometimes generic description of what a mother is and does. In general, for all mothers, motherhood was about caring, nurturing and warmth; being there for the child and being able to adapt to accommodate the child. The following theme addresses, not only the similarities and the differences, but also challenges and happy experiences in the mother - preadolescent relationship.

6.3.2 MOTHER-PREADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIP

The mother-preadolescent relationship, like any other relationship, has ups and downs. These ups and downs were captured in terms of challenges and difficulties; happy experiences and strengths and weaknesses. The mothers were asked to compare their relationship with their children during preadolescence to that of the age group 0-6 years, which is the phase of early childhood development. Participants stated what the differences and similarities were between these two phases in terms of mothering. Mothers were also asked if they wanted the relationship between them and their children to be any different.

Challenges and happy experiences

Mother-child relationships can be both challenging and happy at the same time. While motherhood can be a joy, the child matures, becomes a social being and thus the child is more prone to external influences such as teachers and peers. In this way the

mother-child relationship can become challenging because the child no longer easily accepts the mothers values, morals and rules as sole propriety.

Challenges

The mother-preadolescent relationship was a challenge for different reasons. Single mothers had different challenges to married mothers, just as mothers in low socio-economic environments had differences with mothers living in high socio-economic environments. Mothers provided similar challenges which they found when raising the child during preadolescence. The challenges they found were with disciplining and raising a preadolescent child; being unable to say “no” when the child asked something that the mother did not agree with; societal influences on the child; own time away from the children; the responsibilities of household tasks and the child’s behaviour. The fact that preadolescence was on the brink of adolescence, puberty and teens, tended to be an anxiety-provoking time for mothers. Preadolescence was perceived as an in-between stage where parents felt they should still decide for the child, but at the same time the child needed to take responsibility as well as have some choices too. Also mothers start realising that the child is a ‘separate’ individual, as an own person. This in itself becomes a challenge because children want their rights and individualism acknowledged. Preadolescents *want* to make choices and start being little adults because they are ‘big’. In this process of wanting to be separate and making choices, children will make mistakes or create disappointments for their parents. These disappointments and mistakes are the challenges in the mother-preadolescent relationship. In some cases the challenges can damper the pleasures of being a mother.

In today’s society, there’s such a lot of things that come in your children’s way and you must be very careful how you handle those situations and especially

with my child, he's a very curious child, he wants to know a lot of things, and sometimes I don't know how to answer those. (John Cena: MMHSES)

Difficulty is just that, say if you say something they always want to better. If you say 'wash the dishes' then they'll say 'not now, later on', things like that. So that is actually difficult because you want to satisfy them but you also don't want to do it because they need to do it. And it's difficult asking them and then also you don't want to accept a "no". They need to do work, but you don't know how to get them to do it. (Baby Girl: SMLSSES)

Kyk `n ma raak ook moeg. Ek is heeldag in die huis in en ek moet vir alles sorg. Hulle [die kinders in die huis] probleme is ook op my...maar ek moet dit dra want ek is hulle ma maar baie mense sien dit nie raak dat ons as Mammies wil ook ons se vryheid hê...vryheid van spraak, of as ek miskeien wil uitgaan en...maar ek kan nie, want ek moet nou wag vir die kinders om uit die skool uit te kom. [Toe sien dat] dat hulle kos het op die tafel, hulle klere moet na gesien word, daar is nie vir my eintlik vrye tyd nie. Dis waarom is dit vir my party kere vir my ook `n bietjie druk maar ek moet maar dra. (Beyonce 1: MMLSSES)

English translation: Look, a mother also get's tired. I am at home all day and I must care for everything. Their problems are also on me...but I have to carry it because I am their mother but many people do not recognise that we as Mommies also want our freedom...freedom of speech, or if I want to go out and ...but I can't because I must wait for the children to come home from school. See that they have food on the table, their clothes must be seen to, there isn't free time for me. That is why it is sometimes a little pressurising, but I must carry.

Dealing with a ten-year-old, is not always easy. They're starting to establish their own personality and they are starting to develop their own personality and of course they like to go out on their own cause they don't want to be with you which is good, I encourage that. I like that she do her thing, I allow her that. I don't always agree with her, but I allow her that. I think it's good for her self-esteem to be able to say how she feels. (Buttercup: MMLSSES)

Probleme? Jy't aldag probleme ja, veral by die skool. Ek kry `n oproep, hy het nou vir die week nog nie huiswerk gedoen nie en...jy voel so frustrated. Die probleem is...ons kommunikeer maar hy is mos nou agterom...en hy sal vir my sê nee dit is gedoen...en dan moet ek hoor nee dit is nie gedoen nie en...Uitdaging...Alle moeders voel maar so jou kind is vir jou `n uitdaging van geboorte af en jy is aanhou by hulle. (JayZ: MMLSSES)

English translation: Problems? You have problems daily, yes, especially at school. I received a telephone call, he has not done any homework for the week and...you feel frustrated. The problem is ... we communicate but he is deceitful...and he'll tell me he has done his homework...and then I must hear it is not done and...Challenge...All mothers feel like that that your child is a challenge since being born and you are consistently with them.

The difficulties outweigh the greatness of being a mother. When your child actually disappoints you, then what can you do. You can only teach that child to come back and be...what you expect of them. You can't maybe down that child for doing anything because a child learns from their mistakes. And if a child doesn't make mistakes then it's not a child. You can't be disappointed in your child, you can be disappointed in their actions or in what they have done but not in your child. Because the actions of that child is what has brought that disappointment. Because it's not the child itself. (Crazy Frog: MMHSES)

Saying no to a child is very difficult and telling them you can't go there, you can't do that. In a way you are deciding for them, well you do know why but they don't understand it. (Spike: SMLSES)

The challenge for the single mother-preadolescent relationship was the fact they had to raise their children on their own and often without *any* support. Single mothers stated that they were lonely, felt disheartened, frustrated, burdened and in a sense thought they were failing their children by raising the children on their own. Finances, in most cases it would be the family or household income, was a major challenge as single mothers had to be sole providers. The burden of caring for children rested with the mother. When there was no support, it was especially difficult to have alone time.

My difficulties is most definitely raising him alone on my own and not getting the support that I need and that sometimes I feel that I'm failing her, and sometimes I feel discouraged because I'm not able to go out of my way to do things for them but I want to or give them things that they need...just being alone sometimes. Being alone with them. (Britney Spears: SMLSES)

It was difficult at first because I was so young...finances which is the biggest difficulty...having my child having to deal with not having a father around all the time is the other difficulty...sometimes you are bound...sometimes you want to be free but you can't because you have a responsibility...sometimes it can get on your nerves, but I just take it as it comes. (Fairy: SMHSES)

It's (motherhood) difficult. (Daisy: SMLSES)

When single mothers had support, the challenge was trying to maintain the mother-child relationship. As the single mother in an extended family household, the challenge is trying to maintain the voice of authority and mothering consistently without other family members cutting in when a child is disciplined. Although the single mothers valued the support of the extended family members, they still wanted to take responsibility for their children.

It can be...The whole motherhood thing, seeing that there is no father also. It's only myself and my mother and then inside it's my aunt and uncle. So basically, the four of us, we raise them. Ok, so that's a challenge. (Baby Girl: SMLSES)

Mothers living in low socio-economic environments experienced the mother-child relationship as a challenge due to financial strain. Finances were especially a problem when mothers were trying to not only provide for their children, but also something extra. These participants were from low socio-economic environments and were either married or cohabiting.

I want to give them things that they need. (Britney Spears: SMLSES)

Geld, want kyk ek werk nie, ek is maar op 'n disability. Ek kan nie vir hulle...ek het drie kinders en kan nie vir hulle twee, hulle pa spoil vir hulle maar ook wanneer hy wil. (Saphire: MMLSES)

English translation: Money, because look I am not working, I receive a disability [grant]. I can't...I have three children and can't for the two of them, their father spoils them but also when he wants to.

Although the majority of mothers felt that the mother-child relationship was a challenge, there were mothers who felt differently. Two mothers felt that there were no challenges or difficulties in the relationship with their children.

There's nothing, I don't think that there is nothing difficult about being a mother, you must have the energy. And to be there for your child whether there is difficulties or it's smooth, you must just be there for them. (Maggie: MMHSES)

Presently none (challenges or difficulties) (Skateboard: MMHSES).

Although the challenges experienced in the mother-preadolescent relationship were different for married and single mothers and mothers in low and high socio-economic environments, happy experiences were similar for all mothers.

Happy experiences

Mothers described the happy experiences with their children as fun time spent with the child, giving birth to the child, the child's obedience and thoughtfulness,

When my son was born, because I never thought that I was gonna have him because I lost two children before him. (John Cena: MMHSES)

Just the fact that I'm raising him is a joy in itself. (Batman: SMHSES)

We are open, we talk...when they starting to chat. Maybe when you go out, maybe once a month...or take them to movies. (Baby Girl: SMLSES)

When we do things together, when we laugh and I make jokes and they laugh, when we some places and we just having fun. (Britney Spears: SMLSES)

Sy is nie ongehoorsaam nie. Sy sal altyd vir my help in die huis in en as ons grappies maak maak ons grappies. (Beyonce I: MMLSES)

English translation: She is not disobedient. She will always help me at home and when we make jokes we make jokes.

The happy times is easy because I've got a very happy child. She loves writing little notes for me...then I find it in my bag or under my pillow. Come home late at night and she'd opened your bed for you, that makes you feel like you are worth something to somebody. She really makes you feel that you are everything to her. (Buttercup: MMLSES)

Ai so baie...as ons sit en tv kyk en cuddle op of net hier wees en...Lekker by mekaar te wees...Ja of hulle sal my dan drink-goedjies maak. (JayZ: MMLSES)

English translation: Oh such a lot...when we sit and watch tv and cuddle or just being here...with each other...Yes or when they make me drinks.

Mothers based their perceptions of happy experiences in the mother-child relationship on instances when their child was happy, mixing with other children and achieving.

When their children were happy, the mothers were happy.

Happy days especially when you see your child is blending in with a child...Jane...is a very inward child she's not a very outgoing kind of person so I take her on outings to let her relax...Cause being at home, we're a quite kind of family...we love listening to music. (Jane: SMHSES)

O (laughs). Look even that when your child makes you happy or he is happy then a parent can also only be happy for that child. (Crazy Frog: MMHSES)

Very happy when my daughter memorized the Koran and she finished eighteen. It is very difficult to do the Koran and she told me she's now reached eighteen, I was very proud. (Maggie: MMHSES)

The participants felt that having children was a joy and a pleasure as they felt less lonely at times. The mere interaction with their children brought joy and happiness to the mothers. In the case of happy experiences with their children, mothers felt that these happy experiences surpassed the challenges of mothering.

That's a difficult one. Well I think part of being a mother should be to have the kids around you, like enjoy them. They take the loneliness away and they take the dreary part of being you away because they bring laughter into your life. (Spike: SMLSES)

Always happy...I think I love my kids very much...being a mother is great...If I had a chance I would not go to work...spend most of my time with my kids...seeing each and every side of them...they can relate much more to me than with the father. (Skateboard: MMHSES)

I love being a mother...lots of smiles and laughter and outweighs the difficult times...definitely. (Fairy: SMHSES)

The mother-preadolescent relationship consisted of challenges and happy experiences and these were similar and different for different mother-child contexts. As with any relationship, there are strengths and weaknesses, and these strengths and weaknesses could maintain the relationship or cause a breakdown in the relationship.

Strengths and weaknesses

The strength of the relationship was based on an understanding between the mother and the preadolescent and thus being able to communicate. Understanding and communication in the relationship were also indications that the child was obedient. For mothers in low socio-economic environments, obedience was equal to children staying indoors and not playing outside because they lived in high-risk community environments. So the concern for the child's safety was vital. The strengths of the relationship also highlight that the relationship is one of reciprocity based on openness, sharing, empathy, togetherness, belonging and loving.

And times when I was down and out she used to come to me and say 'Mommy I love you' and she would hold me and you know kiss me and say 'are you alright Mommy, I'm here for you', like that. Without me telling her there is something wrong. (Maggie: MMHSES)

I'll describe it as fairly good. Cause I love her as my daughter, she loves me back as her mom, but we are also friends. We talk about stuff, we tease about stuff, we joke about stuff. (Jane: SMHSES)

We are very close in a way that, I understand him where other people don't. I've got two children, my one child is loved by everybody, because he's the easy child. But this one, no. So the fact that he is misunderstood by a lot of

people, brings the two of us closer, because I understand him. (John Cena: MMHSES)

The strength of the relationship is that we understand each other. (Britney Spears: SMLSES)

We have an open relationship. We don't hide things from one another. (Sadny Wayne: MMHSES)

He's got to have that sternness [from the parent] but also loving because he hugs you all day long...He's always looking for a hug and kiss and so on. (50 Cent: MMHSES)

We do things together, we go everywhere together, we do not go anywhere without our children ... a very strong bond there. (Buttercup: MMLSES)

As ek nou praat met hom en so sal hy luister. (Jay Z: MMLSES)

English translation: If I speak to him he will listen.

My kinders is in die skiem waar ons bly ne, hulle is nie buite nie. Hulle is in die huis. So ek kan nie nog sê hulle luister nie vir my. (Sapphire: MMLSES)

English translation: My children are in the flats where we stay. They are not outside. They are indoors. So I can't say they don't listen to me.

The strength of the relationship was indicated by the achievements and successes of the child especially the achievements and successes relating to school. For mothers living in low socio-economic environments, success at school was very important.

She's a very good learner at school she always does great and that's what makes me proud of her. (Britney Spears: SMLSES)

Weaknesses

The mothers experienced weaknesses in the mother-preadolescent relationship due to disobedience, laziness and moodiness by the child, which were also related to discipline problems. The fact that the child was disobedient, lazy and moody meant that the mothers and their children had many fights and conflict. Mothers also became anxious and felt helpless because their children were maturing and nearing adolescence.

There will be days when we're at each other's throat and I tell him the two of us are like husband and wife...He can be disobedient at times to me, towards me.

And there's times when he's been spoken to and then he doesn't do and then I on the other hand need to shout a little bit louder...and when it eventually goes through then he jumps up and then stomps on the floor and runs to his room and close the door with a big bang. (Crazy Frog: MMHSES)

John Cena is a very stubborn child. He is a very temperamental. He can get up, you don't know how he's gonna be. He can be joyful and the next day he is temperamental and you don't know how to handle him. And also the fact that, we fight a lot, I can say that we do fight a lot because of the fact that he is a temperamental child. (John Cena: MMHSES)

Well the weaknesses that sometimes she makes me so angry and sometimes I think this child is growing up too fast and I can't handle it and I don't know what to do and sometimes I just feel hopeless (Britney Spears: SMLSES)

Weaknesses? Her laziness... You have to scold a lot... And they ask you why cause she don't want to do it, but then they still don't understand why they need to do it. (Baby Girl: SMLSES)

Mothers felt that not spending enough time with their children tended to weaken the relationship between them and their children. One mother was a stay-at-home mom, but nevertheless felt that she was not spending enough time with her children. The participants considered a weakness to be in what their children communicated to them and how they *intended* responding to the child. Thus, mothers were anxious about problems they predicted their children to present to them and would not know how to respond.

I think probably not spending enough time with them. Even though I am at home, I think because you are at home you just find these things to do, so when they do come, on often occasions, you leave it, later, or not now. (50 Cent: MMHSES)

The weakness of it is maybe she won't feel comfortable with things like maybe boyfriends or things that's going on at that stage now, talking about things like that. But we do talk, still. (Baby Girl: SMLSES)

One mother felt that the relationship between her and her child had both strengths and weaknesses. On the one hand she considered factors in her life as just too difficult for her as a parent, as outside factors tended to influence how she felt and therefore affect the relationship between her and her child. On the other hand, her child would be

thoughtful and take care of her. Her child becomes the strength of their relationship and seems to lessen the negative impact of the factors in their relationship:

Sometimes it feels difficult and it feels like I want to give up but then he's again there for me. So he actually supports...he looks after me too. Like when I am not feeling well he will make supper for me. (Batman: SMHSES)

Mothers enjoyed the strengths in the relationship such as understanding and communication because they encouraged rapport. No relationship is perfect. The weaknesses in the mother-preadolescent relationship were based on the negative qualities of the child. Mothers reflected both positively and negatively, upon how their dependent children were striving towards independence.

Early childhood and preadolescence

The respondents were asked to think back to the time when their children had been between the ages of 0 to 6 years. The mothers were to compare their child aged 10 to 12 years to the time when their child was aged 0 to 6 years. The responses illustrate that the age group of 0 to 6 is one of dependency by the child. During this period the child sleeps, eats and plays. The mother provides most of the caregiving. It is a period where most mothers bond with their child and the mother is the only person in the child's world. Mothers would be able to feel hurt when the child had been hurt. Other mothers may not bond easily with their child and find the first bonding very difficult. In many cases there were environmental factors which affected the bonding process in the mother-child relationship. As mothers said,

But it was very difficult at first, I wasn't bonding with him. We had a lot of problems with his father and with his father's mother and I felt like I couldn't bond properly then. But right now it's going much better. (Batman: SMLSES)

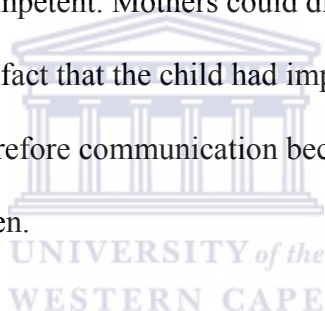
It is a whole lot different in the sense of from 0-6 she was just a baby...if she get hurt, it's like I would get hurt. Some of the other children have done something to her it's like it been done to me. (Sadney-Wayne: MMHSES)

It is difficult because the 0-6 stage they are like very dependent on you. (Spike: SMLSES)

Mothers also realised with the development of the child, there eventually had to be a stage of *letting go* especially when the child entered crèche or preschool. The letting go process could be especially difficult for some mothers and found the process quite painful,

She had gone into her crèche at first I learnt to let go...It's difficult, you know, you always want to cry with the child, all mothers are like that. (Jane: SMHSES)

In retrospect, mothers agreed that the child and therefore the relationship had changed. Mothers, who agreed that the change had been positive, stated that the child was more independent and competent. Mothers could discuss issues with the child in a more collaborative way; the fact that the child had improved understanding made the relationship easier and therefore communication became easier between mothers and their preadolescent children.



I tried to make her strong in that sense that she must stand on her own two feet...not feel incompetent, stand up for her own rights. Like if something is bothering [her], open to come to me and ask for help or tell me that she doesn't know that. (Sadney Wayne: SMHSES)

I'm just more proud of her. I love her more...As the years go by, she has become very mature for her age now which made me more proud of her... Yes the relationship has improved. (Maggie: MMHSES)

It is different because she is older...much better. She understands better... When she was younger it was more me telling her what to do and how to do it. Now that she is older we discuss how we going to do things. (Buttercup: MMLSES)

Ons was mos maar al die tyd bymekaar, ons was close...woelige ene, kleintjies is mos maar altyd woelig...hoe ouer hy raak mos nou hoe rustiger raak hy...Maar ons was altyd na aan mekaar...`n mens moet aanhou praat...Verbeter ja want hy is mos nou ouer, hy luister nou. (JayZ: MMLSES)

English translation: We were always together, we were close...restless one, children are always restless...he is becoming more peaceful the older he's getting...But we were always attached to each other...a person must continue talking...Improved yes because he is now older, he listens now.

Is nog altyd dieselfde...Hulle raak mos nou daai ouderdom...Is `n bietjie beter want sy kan mos nou kommunikeer. Kyk daai tyd kon sy mos nou nie

kommunikeer nie. So nou, sy sê vir my as iets vir haar pla...want ek praat openlik met my kinders. Daar word nie dinge weggesteek nie. (Saphire: MMLSES)

English translation: It's still the same...They are now getting that age...It has improved because she can communicate now. Look at that time she couldn't communicate. So now, she tells me if something is bothering her...because I speak openly to my children. Things are not hidden away.

Mothers, who felt that the relationship had deteriorated after the age group of 0 to 6 years, perceived their child's attitudes and behaviours as the changes which had occurred. Suddenly, there is an independent child who does not listen when he or she is told to do something and this affects the relationship between the mother and the child, because the mother perceives this behaviour to be one of disobedience. Mothers also felt that the child had become more distant because other influences started playing a role in changing the child and the child stated that he or she is 'not a baby'. The difficulties which mothers experienced in the relationship with the child were also due to negative influences such as television, as well as their discomfort to communicate with the child about important life issues. The deterioration of the relationship meant that mothers had to adapt their parenting to suit the changes within the child and the relationship.

It's different in like, at crèche or here and between the school, he really changed...His attitude, his behaviour, his manners, now he really changed a lot...It is worse than what it was. (Jackie Chan: MMLSES)

The relationship was actually better then because she was smaller...she is moving into a teenager time and there's some things that I don't know how to talk to her about it and when she was actually smaller I could talk and teach her, but now it's different. It's difficult now...she's still dependent on me. I wouldn't say she is becoming more independent. She is an independent child. I would rather say that she is just doing things...if she don't want to do it...she don't listen to me like she use to that's why I say it's difficult because of the change. She's getting older and she is following her own mind...She's actually more close to my Mom...She wouldn't speak to me about things that she maybe speak to my Mom about. (Britney Spears: SMLSES)

It is very different...he slept with me in the same bed because he didn't want to leave me until he was about eight, nine years old so we were very close. But then somehow he had to go to his father every second weekend and then he [the father] put things in his [the child] head and then he comes back and then he is distant towards me. (Batman: SMHSES)

It is difficult because 0 to 6 stage they are like very dependent on you. So you can like do things for them that you can't do now because they will say 'I'm not a baby', and I can think for myself and decide. So it's two very different phases actually. But I think that we get along very well because...I could cuddle him then and I can't do it anymore. So that brings something else in the relationship...I think what makes it work is that you actually have to grow with your child...so you can't be that mothering a baby anymore, you've got to change with your child...in order to give him what he needs because if you give your child the care that he doesn't need he tends to push you away. So you actually have to give them what they want or what they need. Not what you want to give them. (Spike: SMLSES)

We used to get on well...O it's changed big time. I mean with the influences of the outside world and of course the things from the tv and things that happens at school and...you can't shut them off from that stuff. They need to know from that stuff although they [other people] tell you 'don't let the children watch anything than thirteen'. But if they watch it on the tv or they go out of the front door, it's basically the same thing...you'll find somebody walking up in the road swearing big time and the same thing that was made on the tv program that is a little bit of action...It's a way of life, so you can't hide from your children. Sooner or later they are going to find it out somewhere, whether it is in the home, a friend's home or at school or out by the front door. (Crazy Frog: MMHSES)

There was one mother who felt that there were no real changes which had evolved.

The child continued to be the same in both phases of development and therefore the mothers perceived their relationship to be the same. The slight difference was that it seemed that the child had 'awoken' and matured.

Sy was 'n baie stil baba...vandat sy gebore was het sy baie geslaap...ek kan nie 'n dag onthou wat sy miskien stout gewees het nie...en so het sy opgegroeï, baie stil, eenkant...Sy het nou omgekrap in die huis in en 'n baba doen mos daai as hulle kruip...sy was nie dat ek nou kan sê dat sy vir my moeg gemaak het want sy was altyd rustig...Daar is eintlik 'n change want sy raak nou groot. Maar nou nie dat ek kan sê dat sy het baie verander het nie, sy het net 'n bietjie wakker geskrik laat sy nou vir my vrae vra...maar sy is nog altyd daai stil kind. (Beyone1: MMLSES)

English translation: She was a very quiet baby...since birth she would sleep a lot, I can't remember a day when she had been naughty...and that is how she grew up, very quiet, onside...She would scratch around at home and a baby does that when she crawls...she wasn't that I can say she tired me because she was always peaceful...there is actually a change because she is getting big. But not that I can say she has changed a lot, she woke up a little that she now asks me questions...but she is always that quiet child.

Changes to the mother-child relationship

After discussing the mother-child relationship, mothers were asked if they would have wanted the relationship to be different between them and their child. Their responses were mixed as the majority said *no*; others said *yes* and a few said *maybe*. The mothers who said *no* to changes in the relationship with their child perceived the child to present challenges and therefore the mother enjoyed a challenge. Furthermore, mothers felt that the relationship was at a “good point” and mother and preadolescent were doing well:

No we're at a good point in our lives, although sometimes she is very sensitive...little things upset her, petty things, which sometimes is unnecessary ...No I wouldn't want much to change because she's been a good average normal kind of child. (Jane: SMHSES)

No I like the relationship...he puts such a lot of challenges for me and I like it. (John Cena: MMHSES)

I'm actually quite happy the way they are now because they're doing well at school and they are not kids, they fight with each other, they won't fight with other kids outside the house. They got a good group of friends, whether it's...the friends they've chosen, although they different, they Moslems, Christians, Blacks and White, the friends they have chosen are friends that I love. All of them have chosen a group of friends that I like. So I think that in a way that shows that they would go with kids similar to what they are. (50 Cent: MMHSES)

The mothers who wanted some sort of change in the relationship felt that the child lacked understanding, the mother needed to change in order for the relationship to improve and mothers wanted a more obedient and communicative child.

I want things to be different. I want my son to understand, that when I talk...if I'm trying to teach him...because he understands me we might be having a better relationship. (Jackie Chan: MMLSES)

Ja [Yes]...I would like myself to just change a bit...ask God to help me to help myself so that I can just be open...I don't have that courage and just to be open with her and speak to her. I talk to her about a lot of stuff...but there's some things that I don't tell her. (Britney Spears: SMLSES)

Maybe if he could open up a bit I think it would be fantastic...because sometimes 'I don't know what you're thinking, I don't know what you need, you got to tell me, you got to talk to me'...he will just sit there and he'll smile

and I would say 'what you want' and he'll say 'you'll figure it out'. (Spike: SMLSES)

Maybe just a little bit of obedience. But with time and patience we will get there. (Crazy Frog: MMHSES)

Mothers' future expectations

All parents have hopes and dreams for their future adult children, but at the same time they have fears. The mothers stated that they would definitely like their children to be independent, successful and responsible as adults. Their children also needed to decide for themselves what type of career path they wanted to follow and the mothers would be supportive of the decisions the child made. Mothers living in low socio-economic environments were of the opinion that their children needed to complete their schooling and achieve what they could not as mothers.

I hope that she'd become what she'd like to be...all of us must have ambition. We have goals in our life and I hope and pray...I'll be able to assist her and support her even financially and otherwise. (Jane: SMHSES)

I see her as a very successful...very responsible adult. (Maggie: MMHSES)

God willing he will turn out a perfect adult. Not perfect but as me as parent...I always ask him what are your ambition in life and he say he want to work and he want to buy a better house...but he must see to it that he complete school go and study and get a better life...but the future is for you. (Jackie Chan: MMLSES)

That she become more independent, that she can think for herself and that she will be able to make her own decisions. And that she will come and talk to me, we can talk about it and if I can't help her then there'll always be someone with some advice. (Sadny Wayne: MMHSES)

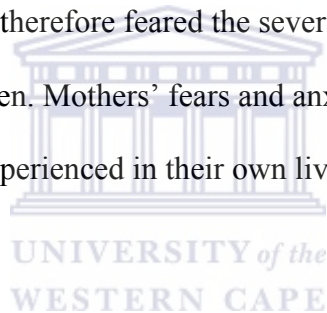
I want him to be the best that he can be. I'm trying to do that because I couldn't make much of my life because I fell pregnant when I was very young. But I want him to build himself up and have a good job. (Batman: SMHSES)

My man het matriek, ek het nie matriek gemaak nie en my skoonpa het hom laat weet hy [skoonpa] het 'n polis as hy [JayZ] verder gaan...Ek wil hê hy moet verder gaan omdat ons as ouers nou nie verder kan gaan leer het nie...Soos hy nou verder studier...vooruitstrewend...Suksesvol, mens voel so vir jou kind. (JayZ: MMLSES)

English translation: My husband has matric, I did not make matric and my father-in-law has told him that he has a policy if he wants to study further...I want him to go further because we as parents can't study further...As he studies further...progressive...Successful, a person feels like that for your child.

Well I would just like to see him with his two feet firmly on the ground. Knowing which way he wants to go, not the way I want him to go but the way he wants to go and stand behind him one hundred percent. (Crazy Frog: MMHSES)

When mothers spoke about their fears for their children, they feared for their children's security, lives, involvement with the wrong crowd, indulging in substances and girl children becoming involved with boys when they were too young. These fears of physically losing the child were expressed predominantly by mothers living in low socio-economic environments because of the high crime rates in the neighbourhoods. Also, substance use and abuse was a secondary fear expressed by the mothers. Mothers in high socio-economic environments were more concerned about their children being emotionally hurt, indulging in substances and subsequently losing touch with the child. Mothers therefore feared the severing of the emotional ties between them and their children. Mothers' fears and anxieties were expressed because of events they had heard or experienced in their own lives or within the extended family and neighbourhood.



My fears for him...I just feel if I don't constantly keep my hand on him he most definitely will fall into the wrong hands. (Jackie Chan: MMLSES)

My fears for her is that maybe she'll get into boys at an early age...my hopes for her is just be a better person than I am and my dreams for her is to just succeed in life. But my biggest fear is for her just to...maybe when she goes to high school and all that, getting involved with boys...I don't know how I would handle it. (Britney Spears: SMLSES)

I think every mother's fear is that their child is going to do drugs and things like that but I am trying to raise him so that he don't have to go through that. (Batman: SMHSES)

Sy nie moet seer kry in die lewe nie...veral die dinge wat nou gebeur, die kinders wat wegraak...dis waarom ek hou maar vir haar in die huis in...ek sal nie lyk dat daai wat met die ander kinders gebeur wat so wegraak of verkrag word, moet met haar gebeur nie...ek weet hoe sy is...sy is baie sensitief. (Beyonce1: MMLSES)

English translation: She musn't get hurt in life...especially the things that are happening now; the child who are disappearing...that is why I keep her indoors...I would not like those things that are happening to the other children who are disappearing or raped, must not happen to her...I know how she is...she is very sensitive.

My fear is that she trusting...she have not been exposed to a lot of hurt. She is very trusting of people and I'm afraid for her because of her trusting nature, that she will get hurt by trusting the wrong people. (Sadny Wayne: MMHSES)

Daar is altyd 'n vrees. Enige iets kan met jou kind gebeur...die tyd is so kort...Mens het altyd daai vrees dat iets kan gebeur met jou kind. (JayZ: MMLSES)

English translation: There is always a fear. Anything can happen to your child...the time is so short...a person always has that fear that something can happen to your child.

Elke dag is daar vrese...Nou die een gaan nou hier om winkel toe en ek stress nou al gaan hy safe hier kom...Ja, dit is elke dag...en hier wat ons bly, enige ding gebeur so gou...hulle [kinders] was nog nooit alleen, ek is altyd saam. (Saphire: MMLSES)

English translation: Every day there are fears...now the one goes around to the shop and I stress whether he will come here safely...Yes that is everyday...and here where we stay, anything happens so quickly...they have never been alone, I am always with.

My fears number one, my child is growing up, he is turning thirteen, he's a teenager...that my child could take on bad habits and do stuff that I don't want him to do...They growing up and I'm gonna loose touch with them...And you know the saying you know what your child is doing with you but you don't know what he is doing outside. It scares me because not only can stuff happen to him but he can also do stuff to other people. (Crazy Frog: MMHSES)

Thus the preadolescent stage presents its own challenges to mothers as they try to maintain a communicative and happy relationship with their children. The challenge is raising and socialising children within challenging social environments.

6.3.3 FAMILY OF ORIGIN

The family of origin has a profound effect in either a positive or a negative way for individual adults in the family. There are particular traits or characteristics such as time spent, traditions in the family or loving parenting practices, which will remain from the childhood years and these characteristics are often transmitted from the parent to the child. In some instances, there will be effortful attempts to change certain characteristics especially when there have been bad or negative experiences such as neglect, violence or alcohol abuse in the home of origin. The theme of family of origin reveals the profound experiences and perceptions of the mothers, which have

had an influence on their current relationships with their children. More specifically, this theme illustrates and compares the relationship with their mothers to that of their preadolescent children. Mothers realised how much their own mothers had sacrificed in being mothers and especially working mothers.

The factors in the family of origin

Mothers were able to identify the factors in their families of origin which had influenced them in some way. These were identified as either negative or positive. The positive experiences were identified as a loving, caring and supportive relationship with a father or mother or grandparent. Monitoring and, in some instances, being protective were seen as general characteristics of being mothers, which had been passed on from the family of origin. Admittedly, monitoring may not be perceived by all mothers as positive. In this instance, monitoring becomes over protection and controlling. Mothers knew that they must monitor their children, but they were aware of monitoring evolving into negative controlling patterns especially when they compared their own parenting practices to that of other parents. The mothers stated that the positive experiences were transmitted to the children by means of the interaction they had with their children.

My ouma en my oupa en hulle het vir my groot gemaak dat ek moet altyd omgee vir my kind. Ek moet altyd daar wees vir my kind. (Beyonce1: MMLSES)

English translation: My grandmother and grandfather and them raised me that I must always care for my child. I must always be there for my child.

Well, it sort of goes from your parents onto you onto your child. And even though I don't tell her, she knows what I expect from her. (Jane: SMHSES)

With my mother, yes... Yes it is similar. I try to be there for them the way my mother was with me. I try to give it over to them, cause I learnt a lot from my mother. (Maggie: MMHSES)

I think my father had a very calming influence there with his parenting style...expose the situation with his calming and that I think had an impact on

my parenting...So I think that had a big influence on all of us. (Buttercup: MMLSES)

I am as protective of my child, but I think any mother is...It's part of monitoring...but then again my kids got a lot of friends that can do anything they want to do and go in where they want...their parents don't need to know where they are...that's the only way that I can say that I'm sort of like that, although I wasn't really allowed to go anywhere much...I don't know if you can say it's protection, but...I want to know where they are and with who they are and how long they going to be and I want to know what people are going to be there...in that way I'm very protective of them...so that is the only thing that I can say that I have picked from my mother but I think that is a general thing. (50 Cent: MMHSES)

The negative experiences within the family of origin also seemed to have a profound effect as with the positive experiences. The difference was that the mothers would try to improve their current relationships with their children or try to totally change the relationship with their children so that did not have the same relationship they had had with their own parents. Mothers were of the opinion that they wanted to be more understanding of their children, doing more for their children, providing emotional support and more attention to their children. Mothers wanted to improve communication with their children more so than that which they had received from their families of origin. Mothers wanted to 'be there' for their children more so than their own parents had been. Also, they wanted to be more approachable than their own parents and voiced that their children should not fear them as a parent. In a sense they wanted to provide an environment of belonging, which they did not have especially in homes in low socio-economic environments.

Where alcohol abuse and violence had been present in the family of origin, the participants stated that they ensured that their children did not experience the same negative environment as they had been exposed to. In this negative environment, in retrospect, the participant had become nervous and reticent as she became older. All mothers wanted to give their children 'things' which they never had when growing up. For mothers in low socio-economic environments the 'things' were mainly

material as well as healthy relationship qualities such as understanding, communication and a sense of belongingness, while for mothers living in high socio-economic environments it was more important to improve the relationship qualities with their child as compared to the familial relationships in the family of origin:

When I was a child I usually felt that maybe I don't belong here, maybe I'm not their real daughter. The way they treat me and my sister is different. (Jackie Chan: MMLSES)

I'm giving to him that I never had. Not just material things, the fact that I am giving emotionally of myself, I never had that. That I'm doing a lot of things for him, I never had that. Understanding, there was never understanding in my family relationship. (Batman: SMHSES)

I'm gonna tell you now about hard working, my mom, my mom was always hard working and she was always there but I never really got the attention that I wanted and the attention that I needed. That's what I am thinking of that time and still what I'm thinking now. And now I give that attention to my child, I work hard, there somehow that I don't do as much as I want to or give her the attention that she really needs. Now I'm afraid that that's gonna turn out like my mom was with me. My child is gonna turn out like I am. (Britney Spear: SMLSES)

Maybe have a better communication. I would say so yes. Because that is at the end of the day all that we want. You need to speak freely to your child. (Baby Girl: SMLSES)

You do hear with friends and stuff, you know how they couldn't go there and they couldn't do that... The negative influence is that you wanted to...that you could experiment or experience, I think you could do that, and I would like my children to knowing that if something is bad you shouldn't do it but not being told or...not being told that you can't, that you absolutely can't. But they got to know the difference between right and wrong and they know that they mustn't do that part. (Spike: SMLSES)

Baie negatief. Ek het 'n pa gehad wat gedrink het en...in die huis, veral naweke. As hy nou Saterdag uitgaan en daai vrees...hy kom nou terug en hy het 'n doppie in. Jy het nie eers vriende huistoe gebring nie want jy dink jy weet nie in watter toestand hy is nie...partykeer...dan is hulle mos daai wild ene...en dan voel ek net ek wil nie so 'n lewe hê nie. Soos ek as kind gevoel het, bang vir my pa. Imagine, jy is bang vir jou pa. Of jy wil na vriende toe gaan en jy kom terug, dan staan en wag hy al met die belt. Ek wil nie hê die kinders moet vir my vrees nie of bang wees vir my nie. Ek meen jy moet vrymoedig wees vir jou ouers. Ek het net gevoel raas en skel is mos nou onnodig. Ek wil net daai comfort hê, ek kan na mammie of na daddy toe gaan. Ek was altyd die senuwee agtige een. En um, ek het nie daai self-confidence gehad nie. Ek het altyd...ek sit in die geselskap maar ek sal nie my opinie lig nie. Vir my was dit altyd 'wie wil nou na my luister' of voor mense praat. Ek is te skaam. (JayZ: MMLSES)

English translation: Very negative. I had a father who use to drink and...at home especially weekends. If he goes out Saturdays and that fear...he returns and he has drunk alcohol. You could never bring friends home because you think you don't know what...he is...sometimes...then they are those wild ones. And then I feel that I don't want such a life...As I felt as a child, scared of my

Dad. Imagine, you are scared of your Dad. Or you want to go to friends and you return, then he stands and waits for you with a belt. I don't want the children to fear me or be scared of me. I mean you must have the courage to be outspoken with your parents. I just felt raging and scolding is unnecessary. I only want the comfort that I can go to mommy or to daddy. I was always the nervous one. And um, I did not have that self-confidence. I always...I would sit in a conversation, but I would not give my opinion. For me it was always 'who would listen to me' or speak in front of people. I am too shy.

The maternal mother played a major role in the families of origin. This role was either protective, like a shield, or unprotective.

Relationship with own mother

The maternal mother, rather than the maternal father in the family of origin, in most instances had a very strong influence on the mothers participating in the study. In retrospect, the relationship with the mothers in the family of origin were considered to be positive and the mothers were considered to be a friend, supportive, an ally, good communicators and there were feelings of being protected and respected. Being disciplined in the family of origin was seen as positive and good. The mothers also at times acted as a buffer when the father abused alcohol in the home and had the potential to be violent. Some mother-child relationships improved as they became older or became mothers themselves,

My mom has always been my friend...And she was the supportive one if my dad had to be 'anti' she'd be for it...in covering. But she's always been supportive and she'd be the wife to my dad first and then she'll 'ag never mind this we'll fix it somehow' or 'lets get it done, I don't need to tell your dad', but not in a sense of anything negative. (Jane: SMHSES)

Open. I can always go talk to my mother. I could not always...my mother's got a friend-daughter relationship with us. (Sadny Wayne: MMHSES)

She was very protective and I was very secure in my parent's relationship...I couldn't really speak to them though because we were always the 'child'. I still won't speak back to her in a rude way...I'm just giving her respect back...she doesn't speak down to me, she doesn't criticize. The only time she ever told me 'no, I'm not allowing you to do this', was when I was seeing a certain boy, one that was much older than me and she said no you not going to see him anymore, which was a good thing...which I'm trying too teach my daughter...I think it strengthened after I became married. Because there was more in common when it came to kids and her being able to help. (50 Cent: MMHSES)

Well my mother used to tell me to do the things I'm supposed to do. There were no other influences like the small ones...doing chores which they do now. I'm actually trying to get through to them that they first do chores and then move on...my relationship with her, the interaction has affected my relationship with my child. (Baby Girl: SMLSES)

I always had a good relationship with my mother...obviously got to love her...you know teenage years, but nothing drastic. (Buttercup: MMLSES)

Ons was baie close. Omdat sy altyd die enigste een was wat jy met kan gesels...Omdat ons nooit geweet het in watter mood Daddy is nie nou wil jy nie waag nie. Al die kinders is baie close met haar. Met haar kan ons enige iets bespreek het. (JayZ: MMLSES)

English translation: We were very close. Because she was always the only one with whom you talk...because we never knew in which mood Daddy was so we wouldn't dare. All the children are very close with her. We could speak with her about anything.

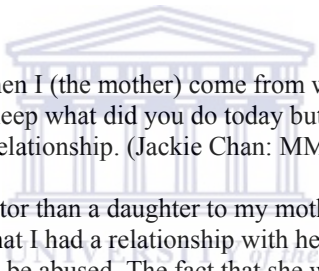
She's my friend. She has been my friend all my life...Very good...we've always got on. We obviously have our differences, we argue, and we can talk like to sisters on the phone, we've just got a fabulous relationship...my mother worked while we were small. I think I was in high school when she stopped working. And by that time I didn't have a mother anymore. By that time she became a friend. (Spike: SMLSES)

We were very close. She'd got an engina heart, and then in standard nine I had to leave school to help her, to look after her, so I never finished matric. And that was very sad for me...I was just happy that I had looked after my mother and we grew very close. And through my mother I learned a lot. I became very matured at a young age...You know that is why my children think I am a control freak but afterwards they realized it's not like that, it's for their own good. (Maggie: MMHSES)

Ek het nie eintlik by my ma groot geraak nie. Ek het by my ouma groot geraak. Ek het gedink my ma is my tante, en ek het my pa geken, maar ek het nie by hom gebly nie...hy het net so ingekom by my ouma. My oupa het nie eintlik toegelaat dat hy daar kom nie, net wanneer my oupa nou weg is dan sal hy miskien net so inkom...vinnig inkom. Maar ek ken hom nie eintlik regtig nie...ook nie my ma nie. Ek het heelyd by ouma gebly, tot ek getrou het. Maar my ma het agterna na my toe gekom. Sy is 'n baie lieflike vrou tjie. Ek weet nie eintlik die agtergrond...wat daar aangegaan het nie, hoekom ons nie by haar gebly het nie. My ouma is baie geheimsinnig...ek het baie streng groot geraak want my oupa was 'n priester gewees en wat hy gesê het moet ons net gedoen het en klaar, daar was nie dat ons 'n sê gehad het in die huis in. Nee ek het nooit 'n ma gehad nie. Dit het my net meer lief gemaak vir my kinders. Ek het altyd gesê ek wil die beste vir hulle hê. (Beyonce1: MMLSES)

English translation: I did not grow up by my mother. I grew up by my grandmother. I thought my mother was my aunty, and I knew my father, but I never stayed with him...he came in by my grandmother. My grandfather did not actually allow him to visit, just when my grandfather was away then he would maybe visit...quickly visit. But I don't really know him...also not my mother. I stayed the whole time with grandmother, until I got married. My mother came afterwards to me. She is a lovely woman. I don't know the background...what happenend, why we didn't stay with her. My grandmother is very secretive...I was raised very strictly because my grandfather was a priest and what he said we just had to do and finish, there wasn't that we had a say in the house. No I never had a mother. It only made me love my children more. I always said that want the best for them.

The negative experiences with maternal mothers were expressed as mothers who had allowed abuse, provided little or no attention and care to their children and thus had no emotional connection to their children. There seemed to be a sense of anger that their mothers had to work all the time and raise many children. There appeared to be no emotional ties because of the anger at the maternal mother working. This was especially in families with large family sizes. In the family of origin where the mother had been physically abused, the daughter was very angry with the mother for allowing it and letting her children see her being abused. The exposure to this type of negative environment in the family of origin not only affected the mother-daughter relationship, but also encouraged the daughter not to be the type of person her mother was that is to be *humble and submissive*, rather than *strong*.



It was just like that when I (the mother) come from work you must be washed, dressed already, eat, sleep what did you do today but...we never had like a mother and daughter relationship. (Jackie Chan: MMLSES)

I was more of a protector than a daughter to my mother...she was an abused wife and I never felt that I had a relationship with her because I despise the fact that she was willing to be abused. The fact that she was willing to let her children see her being abused. I won't say...I wouldn't put it say as I say I despised her...I never had respect for her as a person because she was so humble and submissive...That actually made me a very strong person. I swore I'll never be that person. (John Cena: MMHSES)

My Mom was there...and I knew I had a mom. She was working hard at times to put a roof over our head and stuff like that but she was more into my other sister...I would say really that she didn't really care much about me and my younger brother. So I think maybe that's still...I've been walking with it for years now and I can't forget it but I'm trying to be a good Mom to my child. (Britney Spears: SMLSES)

We weren't very close. It's not like that my mother didn't want to be close because she's got seven children so she had to raise all seven children...The second eldest...she had to help with the other children and so she didn't really get to me. (Batman: SMHSES)

As kind kan ek nou nie sê...want my ma het eintlik gewerk waar ek eintlik meeste van die tyd in die hospitaal was...kan jy sê wat my ma nou die nege jaar by die huis is dat ek...nou rêrig kontak het met mekaar. Ja, is net ons praat nie, soos ons nou gesels, ek en my ma het nie daai nie...ons sal gesels oor ander goeters maar ek...persoonlike goed van my...ek kan nie...ek weet nie hoekom nie, maar ek kan dit net nie met my ma deel nie. Ek kan met iemand anders personal goed gaan praat. Ek kan nie met my ma nie. (Saphire: MMLSES)

English translation: As a child I can't say...because my mother actually worked where I spent most of the time in hospital...you can say now that my mother is at home for the past nine years that I...really have contact with each other. Yes it's just we don't talk, not like we are speaking [to each other], my mother and I do not have that...we will talk about other things but my...personal things of mine...I can't...I don't know why, but I cannot share it with my mother. I can speak to someone else about personal things, I can't with my mother.

When I was growing up we had a relationship that wasn't a very, very good one but it was there and the support was there when you needed it. I moved away from my mother twelve years ago and we couldn't ask for a better relationship. I can talk to my mother about anything. (Crazy Frog: MMHSES)

A comparison

The mothers could see similarities and differences between their relationships with their preadolescents and those relationships they had had with their own mothers. The mother-preadolescent relationship had in many ways improved as compared to the mother-child relationship in the family of origin. For one single mother living with her parents, she could not seem to separate her relationship with her mother to that of her relationship with her child. There was the sense of her child being the mother's child that they all had to abide by the mothers' rules.

She was basically there just to support my dad and us as well, she loved us all, obviously...she is the housewife that would look after us, everything would be ready on time, the way dad want it. I didn't move out of the house so easily...otherwise my mom is just a passive person, as long as you obey and abide she will not get upset with anybody and in that way I suppose my child sees it, we're all mom's children. (Jane: SMHSES)

The similarities between the mother-child relationships were perceived as compatibility, communicative, sameness in behaviours and mothering,

Yes there are [similarities]. I would say between my life with my mother and between my life with my daughter now...It's much more compatible, sometimes if it does get difficult then I would just rethink what is it what my mother would have done, if something like that would happen. So it definitely have influence from her side. (Sadny Wayne: MMHSES)

My mom was a very loving and caring person and she used to try very hard that everybody could get what they need and things like that. So I think that I'm also trying to do that but I am going a bit over board...I know it. (Batman: SMHSES)

Ja dit is dieselfde. Ons kan darem gesels en dit het 'n positiewe uitwerking gehad op my met my kind. Hy sal vir my kom sê as iets 'n secret is, niemand mag weet nie maar hy kom vir my kom vertel. (JayZ; MMLSES)

English translation: Yes it is the same. We can at least talk and it has had a positive influence on me with my child. He will tell me if something is a secret, no one should know but he will tell me.

There were definite differences in the relationships. The mothers felt their relationships with their children were different to the relationships they had with their own mother. As mothers, they ensured that their children would not have the same negative experiences, whether emotional or physical, as they had had when they were growing up:

I don't think that because I know how I was brought up and I said to myself that one day when I have children I'm gonna see to that they don't go through what I went through. It's different...I'm gonna try and do different so that my child can feel secure. (Jackie Chan: MMLSES)

Because my mother was an abused woman, she was forever depressed, she didn't take care of herself. She was...not neat and tidy, but the way she used to dress was also shabby, she was never positive about doing things with us...maybe because she was afraid of her husband. When we out for the day you don't know what you gonna get when we come back. So we all just used to stay at home, whereas now I want my children to know everything and I take...I would look into the papers to see what is happening over the weekend and I would say Daddy and Mommy is home also so I can spend a lot of time with them in developing them as people so that they don't turn out the children that we were. (John Cena: MMHSES)

She was too protective as she got older. She should have been more stern...I speak to my kids all the time about everything. So there was no real communication. I knew that I was loved and so on, but there wasn't really communication. (50 Cent: MMHSES)

Very different, in that I think I'm a more liberal mother, I'm not of the old school. [My mother would say] 'I'm the mother, you do as I say, you don't get to discuss things'. She was the apology parent. I try to be a little bit of both, you can't always be a friend, you do have to assert yourself and the parent. I've may be very different in that I try to be more of the type parent that my father was. (Buttercup: MMLSES)

Dit wat ek met my ma gehad het is 'n groot verskil...sy het in die hospitaal gewerk...Stikland [Hospitaal] het baie van haar tyd gevat en ek is elke dag by my kinders...As ons uitgaan dan gaan ons uit. Al loop ons net, ons is saam. Wat ons ook al doen, doen ons saam. As my ma af gewees het [van die werk], daar was min tyd [vir ons om saam te wees] want dan het sy gerush. (Saphire: MMLSES)

English translation: That which I had with my mother is a big difference...she worked in a hospital...Stikland [Hospital] too much of her time and I am every day with my children...If we go out then we go out. Even if we only walk, we are

together. Whatever we do we do together. If my mother was off [from work], there was a little time [for us to be together] then she rushed.

Yes it is different. I couldn't speak to my mother about anything...when you did mention that word then you were being too big for your boots and things like that. But life comparing my relationship with my children is...one just have to take it day by day and you know when the children are starting to throw the questions at you just be prepared to answer. And if you can't answer say to them look you are going to get back to that conversation again. But just don't write it off. If they not gonna get the answer by me then they are not going to ask you. And how would I feel if they come to you. (Crazy Frog: MMHSES)

Mothers could identify the similarities and differences between the relationships they had with their preadolescents to their relationship with their own mothers. The participants realised, after giving birth to their first child that motherhood was challenging.

Changed view of mother

Normally, when mothers have children they tend to understand the relationship they had with their own mothers in the family of origin. On the one hand the mothers may feel that the relationship was more inclined to be positive, if it had previously been negative. Primarily, mothers were able to understand why their mothers were the way they had been. Mothers could understand that their own mothers had to work because of economic reasons. Raising children was difficult and more so when mothers had more than two children in the family so that all the children could be managed and controlled; being busy as mother did not mean that she did not love any less, but it was all about sacrificing. The mothers in a sense were able to forgive their own mothers when they, themselves, became mothers and understood how challenging mothering had been and was. Interestingly, mothers were able to identify how they thought they should have been mothered and where their own mothers had 'gone wrong' in the process of mothering,

Yes. I could say to myself you know I understand when Mommy used to be around. And now I understand why Mommy used to say that and want you to act in that way because if she would have said to me 'you know one of these days you are gonna see for yourself what it is to have children' then I would think 'what is this woman talking about...when I get my children I'm not gonna hit my children, I'm not gonna do this, I'm not gonna do that, I just not gonna treat my children the way they treated me' but at the end of the day the way she was treating us or teaching us was the only way that she knew. You learn....you can either take it as a positive or you can take it as a negative. Because if you wouldn't have done that I would have now never known how to deal with that particular situation at that particular time and you can only get that perspective once you become a mother. (Crazy Frog: MMHSES)

Yes, it did change. It is positive. We've spoke about what happened in my childhood and we worked it out. Well at the moment I can say it was more a matter of forgiving and understanding. I did let go a lot...of a lot of feelings and the way I used to look at her...I let go of it and it changed our relationship as much we can now see each other everyday without me having that feeling of "I don't want to be with you, you don't put me in a positive mood or I can't take you today" That has not been anymore...For the last three years now. (John Cena: MMHSES)

I can see now it's not easy, it's difficult. I can see now it was, especially for her, maybe it was more difficult because she had a lot of children, but all of the children was not staying with her at that time...when I grew up to be like ten years old, that's the only time that I moved here to her because I was staying with my sister the whole time. Since I was small and she was working. Yes I could say it has changed because she is old, she is seventy years old and she still blames herself for not being there and for not doing things that she was supposed to do and I guess that...she's feeling good now. And she is trying to make it up to me by giving my child that attention and in a way I think she spoils her and she's always, looking out for her. (Britney Spears: SMLSES)

She was the protector. Because she wouldn't criticize, she wouldn't...there wasn't really encouragement to do better...I'm not saying that she was a bad mother...she was a good mother but she was too...she wants to keep you...she was protecting you from the world not allowing you to explore...and to help you and to guide in that way. So I would say that she could have guided a bit more, all of us, although she was strict she wasn't guiding...she was saying no and that would be it, my dad at least. My Mommy wasn't a loving, huggy mother and so on, but we always knew that she would always just be there for us. So we were secure in that so that was security enough for all of us I think. And she really is just there for all of them no matter what they've done, she just has always been there for them. (50 Cent: MMHSES)

Yes I do. I can see what she had to go through for all of us. Difficult sometimes and she had seven and I only have two. Now can you imagine what she had to go through and I still live with her. My Mom lives in front yes. She still have all the children except my oldest brother. And she looks after my children. Yes I talk to her all the time. She knows everything about me. (Batman: SMHSES)

`n Ma wees is `n baie harde werk. Ek het net gevoel, ek meen as my ma nie so opgeoffer het nie en gewerk het nie, ek meen wat sou van ons geword het...Ek meen alles in jou lewe is net jou gesin. Vriende en goedjies moet jy nou ver weg sit solank. (JayZ: MMLSES)

English translation: To be a mother is hard work. I just felt, I mean if my mother hadn't sacrificed and worked, I mean what would have happened to us...Everything in your life is just your family. Friends and things must be placed far away for now.

Today my relationship with my mother is getting better because she is living with me. Now we talk a lot. (Jackie Chan: MMLSES).

On the other hand, there may be no change at all in their perceptions of the relationships with their mothers.

No, it hasn't, I always had respect. I've never disrespected my parents, my mother or my dad. As we were growing up we were always taught, either this or that or if I disagreed with anything I'd not say so in order not to upset anybody (Jane: SMHSES).

Not quite. I mean she is still the same person. She gets on my nerves sometimes when she tells me 'but...you musn't do this'. And I say 'ok, hey but this is my view'. There are times that we do have a bit of a difference of opinion with the kids. (Spike: SMLSES)

The participants had improved understanding of their own mothers and essentially appreciated the sacrifices which had been made. Mothers understood why and how they mothered their own children. Their mothers were in many instances their support in raising their children.



6.3.4 SUPPORT

The process of raising children is difficult, can be complicated, complex and is non-prescriptive. There is no real guide as to what is the best possible way to parent. At times it appears to be a process of fumbling in the dark and a course of trial and error. However, when support is present, raising children becomes much easier. Support is identified by physical support, which includes financial, material or babysitting. Support can also be emotional, which can just be someone who is willing to listen and provide advice. The support received was mainly from the husbands if mothers were married, extended family members such as a sibling or an aunt, a friend or a neighbour.

Type of support

Single mothers, living on their own, especially found support challenging as frequently they have no physical or emotional support from family members or the child's father. There was a friend who could be accessed for support, but the support was more emotional.

I don't get any...like when I went through the divorce with my husband. I didn't get any support from my sisters or I didn't feel free to go and speak to them and tell them about the situation because we were never close and it's like nobody cares about nobody's situation and nobody cares about nobody's thoughts and I couldn't even go to my Mom because at that time she was staying with me but it's like she didn't have any words of comfort and I didn't go to any family members but I had a friend, which I could talk to and she was very understanding and she gave me the support that I needed. And she was there whenever I phoned, whenever I felt down then she would like come through and we would maybe go out. It's been three, four years now...No...Sometimes I feel like I need support yes. (Britney Spears: SMLSES)

But, there were single mothers who had support, even though they were living on their own or had a parent, most times a mother, who lived in their homes. The participants' mothers played a major role in helping with the children. Advice for raising the children, providing care in the absence of the mother and money were much needed assistance. Support also came from a boyfriend, siblings, friends and from the children's biological father. The members in the extended family played a key role in supporting single mothers.

Well my mother lives with me and she is very protective, physically, with my kids. She'll talk more now to me about children, something that she has never done before when I was young as such. She'll talk to me now, still not very openly but she will talk about, our views are so different...Yes I can count on her...she looked after my children, she lived here so she basically took care of them. She's a spoiler, but I think most grandmothers probably are. I can depend on her in that way. (50 Cent: MMHSES)

My mother actually does a lot for me and my children. If I don't have I can always go to her. And I've got a boyfriend who is very caring also. He really cares about them and their father support them but I don't get much from him. And my friends also, so now and then...Yes, his father gives him financial support but very little. I've got two sisters and they are very over us...if you work she looks after your child. (Batman: SMHSES)

Well, at the moment it's only myself that's working. Ok, the father, not her father as such but, he doesn't support at all. He's not here, he doesn't come. He hasn't seen them for a year...But at the end of the day there is a lot of people

that come, they give...if I can't they there for them. In a sense that they give money, they talk to her. (Baby Girl: SMLSES)

One single mother living within the family of origin had the support of both her parents to raise her child. The support was both physical and emotional, but the difference to the other single mothers was that there seemed to be a sense of enmeshment or taking over by the parents in raising the child.

Well, the father doesn't contribute but he's there, she knows him. I'm not keeping her away from him or anything like that and I work and yes I pay an amount of boarding towards my parents for living there and, my mom is there to bring her to school in a way that I don't have to contribute even with petrol...so far I have managed to pay her school fees out of my own and in that way and yes her father does phone sometimes then I tell him but the help never comes you know...if there is anything short or I require some money for a certain thing that I need to do for my child or for myself that I need to do for my child's education my parents were always there (Jane: SMHSES).

Mothers, who were married, provided a paradox with regard to identifying the person most likely to provide support. As married mothers the assumption is that the husband would be the person offering both physical and emotional support. For certain mothers this was true. While in these instances, husbands played the most supportive role, the maternal mother, the extended family members and friends added to the supportive network. Neighbours were not easily accessed as a support for mothers.

The only support that I get is from my husband. Financially he supports us...otherwise other people don't really support...so I don't have support of any one else, only my husband and for me, it's a lot. (Jackie Chan: MMLSES)

Finance, obviously from my husband. I'm not working, I'm at home mother. When we do want to have time for ourselves I will send the boys over to my friends. I can say as far as that is concerned they are there for me. If I want to have an evening out or just go away for the weekend with my husband, I can send them, now to my mother, and not just to my friends. I'm a very independent person so I won't say from community, much neighbours, I try to do my own thing as much as I can. (John Cena: MMHSES)

Completely from my husband's side. He would make him short to provide for them. My parents also are...totally there for them. When it doesn't go well at home financially and then I would go and then she [maternal mother] would make provision for me. So I've got their support too. I don't worry with the neighbors. I just go in the house...some of them also went through some difficult times and we would talk about it and then each one of us will give one another advice. (Sadny Wayne: MMHSES)

Net van my man af...Hy is al een wat nog geld inbring. Ek het nie eintlik...my familie is mos nie eintlik by my nie. Ek sien hulle baie min, is net sy susters en sy broers, my man se familie wat nou hier kom. Hulle is baie close aan mekaar...kyk as daar miskien iets gebeur, maak nou net 'n voorbeeld, sê maar miskien ek het 'n problem met my seun, dan sal ek vir haar [man se suster] bel, dan sal sy nou praat met hom, as my man nou nie hier is nie. Maar as my man nou uitvind, dan sit hy daar en my seun sit hier, dan is dit man-to-man talk...enige tyd. Hulle is eintlik vier, persone [wat my ondersteun]. (Beyonce1: MMLSES)

English translation: Just from my husband...He is the only one who brings in money. I don't actually have...my family is not actually with me. I see very little of them, it's just his sisters and his brothers, my husband's family who visit. They are very close...if something happens, for example let's say I have a problem with my son, then I will call her [husband's sister], then she will speak with him, if my husband is not here. But if my husband finds out, then he sits there and my son sits here, then it is a man-to man talk...anytime. They are actually four people who support me.

I've got a very close family. My mom is always there to help. My husband is always there, taking care of the kids. They've got that kind of security in that there is always a family member that can take care of them. And if I need to go we've got friends who would always be there for you...we live in a very close community...we've got friends who've been living here for generations. So all the children know each other, they know the grandparents the great grandparents...so our neighbours are close, so we don't have a problem. (Buttercup: MMLSES)

My man...Ek het 'n aunty van hulle...partykeer gaan dit maar nou broekskeur...is nie nog van vra nie, sy bel net en sê die geld is in die bankrekening. (JayZ: MMLSES)

English translation: My husband...I have an aunt of them...sometimes it is really tough...we don't have to ask, she just calls and says the money has been paid into the bank account.

Yes...My husband's there. Although my parents are very far away... I can speak to my mother and what you call chat-support. There's support also at school where I find that I can go to my son's teacher and they will listen...just to suggest to me what I can do. I got a friend, a very good friend that I can phone day or night. She is very much like a sister to me...together we will discuss it. (Crazy Frog: MMHSES)

However, there were married mothers who turned to a friend or a sibling when needing physical support. The role of the husband was more emotional than physical.

'n Vriendin...Nee [geen ondersteuning]...finansieel niks...Nee emosioneel niks...ek kan nie met hom praat nie...Ja ons woon saam...hy sorg vir ons maar moenie...hy is complicated, hy is so...Jy kan met hom praat, is nie dat jy nie met hom kan praat nie...en as dit kom by geld sake, dan kan jy nie met hom praat nie. Wat hy vir jou bring [moet jy anvaar]...Nee daar is nou eintlik niemand wat ek op kan staatmaak nie. (Saphire: MMLSES)

English translation: A friend...No [support]...financially nothing...No emotionally nothing...I can't speak with him...Yes we a living together...he cares for us but don't...he is complicated, he is like that...You can speak to him,

it's not that you can't speak to him...and it concerns money issues, then you can't speak to him. What he brings to you [you have to accept]...No there is actually no one that I can depend on.

From my eldest sister in Australia...She always make the time, you know Eid, our Christmas, then she would send money down for the children to sort out their Christmas clothing...she will send money in my account. So she makes it much easier for me. Emotional side, my husband. (Maggie: MMHSES)

Ideal or not

The mothers were asked if they perceived the support they received to be ideal or not.

The mothers who agreed that the support was ideal stated that when they needed support it was always available, which meant that the mothers were able to have time to spend with themselves.

Sometimes, if you were to speak about lack of support...I think everybody would say money. But in a sense also, if I don't have I don't have to worry, I can phone to have this or can we do this and things like that. Then they will come and will sit down and we will see to it. (Baby Girl: SMLSES)

It does...If my niece can't make it then there is someone to fall back on...there is always someone who can like fall in when someone else can't make it or to help with anything. But I can't complain cause I do get a hell a lot of support. I know there are mothers that struggle and work their butts off when they come home. I mean I don't have to worry. (Spike: SMLSES)

The first person that I would actually turn to is my husband. And then we would talk about it and we would see what is what and how we as parents can deal with it. And if we can't then we would go to our church leaders and see what advice they have. (Crazy Frog: MMHSES)

There were, however, mothers who perceived their supportive network not to be ideal. The mothers felt that they needed support, especially financially for mothers living in low socio-economic environments. Husbands or partners needed to become involved in the physical caring of the children such as bathing, feeding and homework. Mothers, who received support, felt that their parenting was being undermined, especially if the support was from the grandmother.

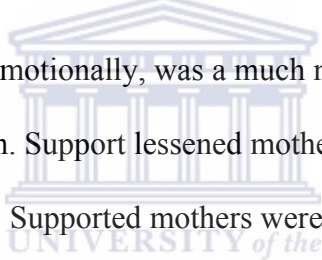
We make it work sometimes but not all the time. But I would like it if I could get help somewhere else, would most probably be a help...for me I don't like people giving...I don't like handouts. I usually don't ask if I don't have, I

just...go without it. I won't go next door or go to my friends and ask because for me asking them and tomorrow they come again and they ask me and then our relationship won't be the same because I'm a mother and like my husband always say you don't ask people.(Jackie Chan: MMLSES)

My husband...he's a good husband, he supports us, he sees to us, he provides us with everything that we need and he is a very loving father. But he is not supportive in physically helping, so he doesn't really support in that way. But with the kids he does, he is the driver for them as well, to do the best, to get the best and to always do well and...you know he guides them in that way...so he is a good role model. So I would say that I've got support emotionally and...not so much physical, as in bathing, whatever...picking up, you know the normal stuff but when it comes to...well I'm the one who helps them with the homework. (50 Cent: MMHSES)

I have to come home, clean the house, make supper or bath my daughter and then it feels like everything is way too much. I'm very moody when I get home sometimes. Then I try not to be edgy and things like that. But I don't have time for myself...I really can't go out or anything. So it's just home, work, home work...and sometimes it builds up. (Batman: SMHSES)

I've always had a babysitter if I need one. It doesn't work for me in some way in that you feel that you're...as a parent has been undermined. And you...you give instructions then you feel that your authority as a parent has been undermined. That happens in some ways, yes. (Buttercup: MMLSES)



Support, both physically and emotionally, was a much needed resource by all mothers for the daily raising of children. Support lessened mothers' frustrations and they were able to spend more alone time. Supported mothers were happier mothers with happier children. Lack and minimal support clearly illustrated the prevailing leisure gap between mothers' and fathers' responsibilities in parenting within the married mother-preadolescent families. As preadolescents matured, they became more social beings interacting with others.

6.3.5 THE SIGNIFICANT OTHER

A child is never raised in total isolation to others. The mother is not the only role player in the child's life. There may be a grandparent, father, other family member, neighbour, parent's friend or a teacher who may be seen as another significant role player in the child's life.

The mothers were asked to identify a possible significant other in the preadolescent's life, who may have an influence on the child. The significant other was also someone who the mother could depend on to care for the child in the absence of the mother. The mothers agreed that in most cases the significant other was the child's biological father, a helper in the home and the grandparents. The maternal mother was seen as the most capable and trustworthy person.

When I'm not available, most of the times they'll be by my mother. After school she takes care of them she is the most trustworthy, the most capable person to take care of them. (Sadny Wayne: MMHSES)

I would look at my mother as the carer. As the one that looks for love and hugging and if they need to eat and if they ill they would go to my mother. Homework, discipline, that would probably be my husband...that's if I'm not there. That would be it cause she would not be the disciplinarian at all. My husband will be. If I take the two of them out of the picture...if I took my mother out of the picture it would be me doing both. Both caregiver and the disciplinarian. (50 Cent: MMHSES)

The auntie that works for me, Aunty Gertie. I don't want to call her a maid because she is part of the family, she is with me...she is more like family now. She is here but she let them put their dirty washing in the basket, she let them make up their beds. I told her she must not spoil them they must work as well. (Maggie: MMHSES)

My man... en my ma kom baie op. Hulle gaan vakansies na haar toe. (JayZ: MMLSES)

English translation: My husband...and my mother visits a lot. They go to her holiday time.

Hulle het 'n goeie verhouding, is nou net hulle kan nie met hom praat soos hulle met my praat nie. (Saphire: MMLSES)

English translation: They have a good relationship, it's just that they can't speak with him as they speak with me.

Type of discipline and caring

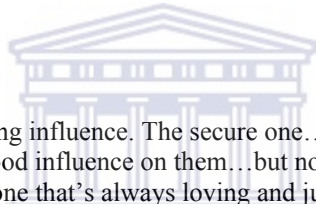
The mothers provided their perceptions of the caring and discipline that occurred between the significant other and the child. Mothers were happy with the caring and discipline from the significant other. For married mothers the significant other was their husbands. They expressed their satisfaction as

He takes excellent care of them...he is a lot more strict than what I am when it comes to discipline in that he tells you what to do and he sticks by it. You know where I will still compromise. He is strict with them but he has an excellent relationship with them (Buttercup: MMLSES).

The thing with my mother, after they get home from my Mommy, it's like they are quite handy at home and my mother would ask do this or do that and when I come home then my mother would say 'I can always depend on your two girls' (Sadny Wayne: MMHSES).

I wouldn't make as if I don't understand what's going on, just for them to bond with their Daddy without me. Caring will be spending time with them, having conversations about what is going on in their life. He'll know the moment he walks into the house something is wrong, they had a fight...So he will be the buffer between us and he will sort them out and then I will tell him listen this is the way I feel about it...the caring, discipline...Mostly grounding or taking privileges away. He will take things away that they are absolutely crazy about for like a week or two, it depends on what they did. How severe he needs to discipline them...It's very seldom that he will take the belt to them. He will talk and say listen this is your first warning and after that will be the grounding and then, I suppose he will take the belt with them (John Cena: MMHSES).

But, mothers were also ambivalent about the discipline from the grandmother as a significant other,



She would be the loving influence. The secure one...the person providing the care. That will be a good influence on them...but not only that because the kids can't only have someone that's always loving and just doing whatever they want to and...it's not good for them, they need to know their boundaries because they want to know 'I want to go there or I want to' and she might just say 'yes it's fine'. She wasn't like that with me but she would be like that them, it's ok. Whereas I would want to know the where's and the where for and the why's and the who's and so on...if I'd choose, I would rather choose my husband because he is more like me than my mom...we've got certain rules and...She might just...not worry with them and leave them whereas we see to it that they do (50 Cent: MMHSES).

The significant other, in the case of the biological father, was stricter than the mother and provided more discipline. At times, different approaches to disciplining the children provided friction between the mother and the father as the mothers felt that the fathers tended to be too harsh at times and shouted at the children. Biological fathers also spent time with their children and participated in the caring of the children.

Hy is streng met hulle, hy is lief vir hulle. Maar hy is die strenger as ek. Hy sê altyd hy sal raas en skree, hy praat nie twee keer nie. 'As jy nie wil luister nie, dan tik ek jou'. Partykeer dink ek hy is bietjie te erg...[ek sal sê] los hulle, maar

hy sê net 'as jy 'n kind uitlos, dan volgende keer dan gaan hulle dit net weer doen' (JayZ: MMLSES).

English translation: He is strict with them, he loves them. But he is stricter than me. He always says he'll rage and shout, he does not speak twice. 'If you don't want to listen, then I'll spank you'. Sometimes I think he goes a little overboard...[I will say] leave them, but he just says 'if you leave a child, then next time they'll just do it again'.

There is sometimes that he is not behaving appropriately and I will tell him that I don't think he has done that right. I think if you've got a feud with me, don't take it out on them. Mainly if him and me got a feud, he may get angry and he would then shout at them and I would say 'why do you shout at them, they didn't ask for it. If you angry be angry at me but don't be angry with them'. Because he shout at them, then they cry. So I would say, sometimes there is good but sometimes it seems he's got certain manners that I don't like (Sadny Waynes: MMHSES).

That [discipline] is now an area that really needs to be worked on because I say yes and daddy say no. When I say no then Daddy say yes. So there is always friction...Like when it comes to serious things then we work with each other and we do it to the best of our ability. I don't have a problem with that [child's relationship with significant other]. It can be better. Anybody's relationship can be better. It needs working on, but it will take time and patience and all the other things that go with it, discipline and it will go back to a stage where you want it to be. Where you...they can talk to me about anything...but then one must also remember there must a line also be drawn because then you become friends and then that is when the manipulation starts (Crazy Frog: MMHSES).

The children of single mothers were raised in the same way as they had been raised.

At times they were happy with the care and discipline, while other times not.

My mother she will actually hit him but it's not like that she wants to hit him it's just I don't hit him. My Mom says time and again he needs discipline. And if I can't do it then my mommy...then she will (Batman: SMHSES).

My child has been brought up the same way...it's like incorporating the next generation in the same household. My mom and dad is always there to see to it that she finishes up her projects that she has at school...by the time I get there my mom and my dad had already sorted that. They'd go out of there way to leave their shopping, go here quickly even though they're not so young anymore and in that way they were very supportive...on the discipline side, she is a very level-headed child, she doesn't need to be shouted around. We don't shout at home...Yes, I am ok with the fact that my parents provide the caring and discipline when I am not around. The type of discipline and everything that is in place for her (Jane: SMHSES).

One mother was not very happy with the type of care that her child received when she went to one of the significant others in the child's life because of the danger in the area if she was sent to the shop.

As hulle na haar kyk, nee...hulle sal vir haar winkel toe stuur wat ek nou weer nie sal doen nie...en sy al nou buitekant wees...daai plekke waar hulle bly is nie eintlik so veilig nie...hier is baie stil, daar is dit 'n bietjie deurmekaar. Nou ek is bang...dis waarom ek nie vir haar so baie na hulle toe stuur nie...sy vloek nie eintlik nie...ons leer ons se kinders...hulle sal nie eintlik sommer 'n vloekwoord sê nie, want hulle word geleer hulle mag nie vloek. Nee sy is gedisciplineerd, want sy sal vir hulle weer regsê. Sy sal vir hulle leer (Beyonce1: MMLSES).

English translation: If they look after her, no...they will send her to the chop which I won't do...and she will be outside...those places where they stay are not actually very safe...it's very quiet here but there it is a little disorderly. Now I am scared...that is why I do not send her such a lot to them...she does not actually swear...we teach our children...they will not actually use a swear word, because they get taught they should not swear. No she is disciplined because she will set them straight. She will teach them.

Mothers' perceptions of the relationship

The way in which mothers perceived the relationship between the significant other and the child showed that they were happy with the relationship and appreciative of the significant other for playing a role in the child's life. The mothers could also compare their relationship with the child to the child's relationship with the significant other. Mothers perceived the relationship not to be too different, as there seemed to be an implicit agreement as to how to manage the child. Although the mothers were mainly happy with the relationships, the mothers perceived the relationships as negatively as well.

Seeing...in just by the way...watching him with the kids bonding...My children are lucky, they've got an awesome father. They've got a very good relationship (Buttercup: MMLSES).

I feel at times that 'thank you mom, thank you dad, you did the right thing'. Cause in a situation where she'd require something or to do something or to speak to somebody about certain stuff, my mom and my dad...we're probably on the same wavelength, and they'd step in...in a way that they know I would like. Because we're always considerate towards one another and my mom knows my moods and I know their and ideas...it never clash. Come to think of, since she was born we never clashed about my child (Jane: SMHSES).

Yes, he is very involved...I appreciate it, it is positive. Sometimes yes [feel negative about the relationship] Sometimes I would feel that maybe he is too harsh. I will ground them for a week and he will go up to three weeks and I think that is too harsh. It depends also on what they did then I won't say I think you too harsh in front of them I wait for us to be alone then I would speak to him (John Cena: MMHSES).

They have a good relationship with their father, they can open their mouths, they can ask for anything, they get it. Negative...sometimes behaving towards them if he is angry with me or something. I would like that from him to change (Sadny Wayne: MMHSES).

Not really differences...yes I try to keep it within the same context. No discipline differences...also just the fact that they were going along with that. But at the end of the day they still do it. You need to go on and on and on about it but they there. They do what they supposed to do...Yes, the grandmother would be a significant other and a good influence...And those things will be instilled with her... I don't think she would take over cause I was also raised like that...You do what the elder tells you to do and...So if you don't do what you supposed to do then it's wrong. So I'm actually also trying to tell her how to teach her or them what she taught me. And she is right here to say if it's right or wrong...if there is differences we will talk about it and things like that. But at the end of the day you sort your differences out (Baby Girl: SMLSES).

Similar because we both want what is the best for him we love him and we would do anything that we can for him to better his life. But the difference is I am more strict and harder with him than what my husband is with him. Husband tends to be very lenient. He likes to bend the rules (Crazy Frog: MMHSES).

Yes. Ok with the discipline and caring and in line with how I do things...Both positive and negative influence on Maggie, because they moan, they're at each other's throats all the time but they love each other. She has a great influence on Maggie. Maggie is more obedient to her. She will say to me 'Mommy I'm coming now, I'm busy quickly', but when she calls Maggie she will leave everything (Maggie: MMHSES).

There were relationships which the mothers perceived as different to the relationships they had with their children. The mothers were of the opinion that the relationship between the child and the significant other was not very strong.

No, I would say mine is quite different from my husband's one. From my mother's way I would say it's more or less, not hundred percent the same, but more or less...some days they [husband and children] have a good relationship (Sadny Wayne: MMHSES).

My mother is very firm with him. Yes, very much [it is different from my relationship with him]...my Mommy will look after him and so but she is not very...I don't know...there is not that bond kind of a thing...So there is something different...But my Mommy is firm with him and she will be there for him if she have to...His father only sees him every second weekend and there was a time when I heard he is hitting him...So I told him, I phoned him to tell him that he is not the one raising the child I am...if I say something...he mustn't change it. I think that I am the one who must discipline the child (Batman: SMHSES).

I've haven't been in the relationship for that long. I've known his family for about nine years. But we've only been together for about like six months...he and my kids are only getting to know each other...He's beginning to care for them and be there for them and if they need something done they can actually go...They still get on...Spike finds it more difficult because he is already in his teenage stage so he finds it difficult to relate to a man (Spike: SMLSES).

I would say different because I'm here, I'm every day here. He's not here every day. I need her to trust me more. I need her to confide in me. I am not saying that she must not think of him or she mustn't maybe phone him and talk to him about things that she don't want to talk to me about but the thing is I'm here I'm not gonna go away, he's gone...our relationship is actually different, sometimes I would get upset, shout at her, maybe she didn't do something that I asked her to do or when I had just come back from work and maybe I had a bad day at work and would take it out on her or what he didn't do. He was always the same, it doesn't matter what problems he had he was always the same. His relationship with her was always the same and mine isn't (Britney Spears: SMLSES).

Influence of significant other upon the child

Mothers were asked if they perceived the relationship between the child and the significant other to be influential on the child and if so, was it in a positive or negative way. Mothers mainly perceived the relationship to be a good or positive influence for the future of their children.

Yes it is. My children look at me ...because I'm a female. With their father they will be more blunt, more outspoken. Whereas with me they will put jam over my mouth and then come out what they want to. My husband is a very positive person. He has a way of looking at things, he's very optimistic... where I will see the doom and gloom in everything, he will lighten it ...I think that positivity of him they will carry out through and also the fact that he teaches them to turn up for themselves, not necessarily with their fists, but the way of convincing or talking to people or the way you handle the person (John Cena: MMHSES).

I would say yes, cause there's always times she would talk about him. She would talk about the good times ...there was an incident...I don't know something happened and then she said she needed to talk to him, she wouldn't talk to me...he has a good influence in her life and they have a good relationship (Britney Spears: SMLSES).

I would say excellent. They came home and he put her to bed... they have a very good relationship, communication wise and all of that. His influence on her, also is positive Yes, sometimes when she wants something and there is no money then she gets upset, but that is little things, material things that she wants. But other than that...after a while she would come to him apologise for her behaviour (Maggie: MMHSES).

Although there were positive influences in the relationships, mothers felt the influences could also be negative for the child. Mothers, who were divorced from the child's biological father, perceived the relationship to be especially negative in its influence on the child.

Yes, but there is ... I actually told his father that I don't want to fight anymore because and every time we must go to court...I try my very best to give him the things that he needs and he wants. So it's not like I'm a bad mother or anything. And then I told Batman to tell him 'tell your father I don't want to fight with him anymore, we gonna go through all this, you the one who is going to get hurt'. And then I saw that he left it. He's not pushing for that anymore....I don't go to his father much. He actually phones, yes sometimes to ask if Batman can come to him and things like that but I won't phone him. I don't want to talk to him cause every time I talk to him then it just ends up in a fight, so I prefer not to. He's married and he has another child. He said she's fine. He said she is very nice with him and I respect that he has another family and if they ask if he can go on a holiday with them then I try to do it. (Batman: SMHSES)

Hy het, maar dan is daar tye wat hy ...negatief is...ja. Veral as hy wil reg wees en hy is...en dan as hy verkeerd is en die kinders is reg...dan wil hy nie wys nie [dat hy verkeerd is nie]. (Saphire: MMLSES)

English translation: He has, but then there are times that he...is negative...yes. Especially when he wants to be right and he is...and then if he is wrong and the children are right...then he does not want to show that he is wrong.

I think we get along very well. It's just that their father is such a difficult person they...I feel that even though he does not have the patience at times for the kids for he sees so little of them... I mean the children are getting bigger now. She is the kind of child who speaks without thinking. And that I think might be to his advantage but her not because she can end up making trouble because she did it perhaps unintentionally. But they are just innocent. As adults, you know what, it's going to have exactly the same impact on them as it had on his children from his first marriage... those children wanted nothing to do with him because of the kind of person he is and because of how he used them. And he is the kind of person, he can't take...Competitive...No spike does not talk about his father...he was seven years old and I think he could see what was going on and...he could understand. (Spike: SMLSES)

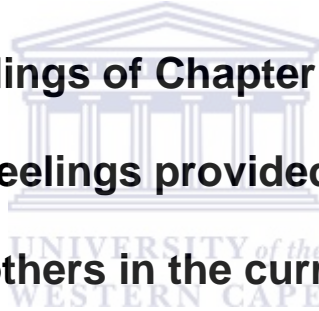
6.4 CONCLUSION

Even though preadolescence provides its own challenges to mothers as their children begin to enter adolescence, mothers feel that motherhood is a personal sacrifice and a joy. Being a single mother was an additional challenge and the challenge increased when mothers were living in low socio-economic environments. The differences between single and married mothers and low and high socio-economic status mothers were clear when mothers spoke about the challenges in the relationships with their children. However, mothers were similar in their descriptions of the happy experiences and more positive aspects in their relationships with their children.

Mothers could identify the influences from the family of origin and the relationships they had had with their own mothers on the relationships they had with their own children. It was only once they had become mothers that they understood the challenges of mothering.

Clearly, mothers still have the larger share of the responsibility of parenting and raising their children. The leisure gap prevails. Support for mothers should be a necessity not a want or dream. Support can increase the rapport between mothers and their preadolescents and thus ease the challenges for subsequent phases of development.

The following chapter, Chapter 7, integrates the statistical findings of Chapter 5 with the rich perceptions and feelings provided by the interviews with the mothers in the current chapter.



CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The application of two phases, within the mixed methods design, allowed for the integration at this stage of the study. The quantitative phase of the study was complemented by the qualitative phase. The complete sequential explanatory design of the study compensated for the weaknesses and complemented the strengths of each phase in the design to answer one question: What is the nature of the relationship between mothers and preadolescents?

This chapter discusses the results of the study. The focus is on the mother-preadolescent relationship; the influence of marital status and socio-economic status and perceptions of mothers' relationships with their preadolescents.

7.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE FINDINGS

The results of the study suggest that mothers and their preadolescent children may be similar in their perceptions of themselves and their families. The majority of mothers and preadolescents have medium to high self-esteem and are relatively more satisfied than dissatisfied with their lives. Furthermore, these mothers and their preadolescent children lived in family environments which had high cohesion, organisation, achievement orientation and control and had low conflict. Furthermore, the study suggests that preadolescents with medium to high self-esteem have mothers who seem to use more autonomy-supportive rather than psychologically controlling maternal parenting practices regardless of the mothers' marital status and socio-economic

status. In general terms, this sample of mothers and preadolescents create a portrayal of not only psychological well-being of the mothers and children, but also their positive interactive familial relationships with each other. These findings are supported by the verbalizations of mothers' real life daily experiences of raising their preadolescent children. Some of the findings of the present study are consistent with both national and international studies, but the uniqueness of the South African context is illustrated in the inconsistent findings with international studies.

7.3 MOTHERS AND PREADOLESCENTS: PERSONAL FUNCTIONING

Low self-esteem has been linked to a lack of self-respect, motivation, having feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, the belief that one is not as good as others and the inability to reach personal potential causing pain, distress, breakdown, bad behaviour, relationship problems and even depression (Van Der Ross, 1993; De Witt & Booyesen, 1995; Hartley-Brewer, 1996). Furthermore, low self-esteem has also been equated with ill-being or someone having an unhealthy self-image (Hawkins, 2007). People who feel good about themselves, who are productive, effective and feel competent, know they are loved and accepted tend to have high self-esteem. The fact that the majority of mothers have high self-esteem and are satisfied with their lives could suggest that they are psychologically well. Their wellness, in turn, may be related to the way they define motherhood.

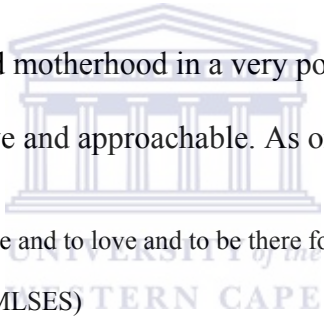
Motherhood is such an old and "familiar institution" that we fail to take the time to actually describe or define and therefore understand it (Elvin-Nowak & Thomsson, 2001; Walker, 1995:424). Even mothers, themselves, struggle to actually define and describe what they do. In the current study, mothers were uncomfortable and

surprised when they were asked to describe the term motherhood. As one mother responded,

It's rare to hear a question like that. (Skateboard: MMHSES)

Describing what one does is important in order to understand why and how phenomena evolve, what roles people take on, what is necessary and what requires changing. In personally trying to understand phenomena, people will refrain from applying universalistic principles to contextual phenomena and therefore try to understand the phenomena within the context of which they occur. In describing phenomena, individual feelings, perceptions and opinions are expressed and these expressions provide insight to the well- or ill-being state of the individual.

Mothers defined and described motherhood in a very positive way. They consider mothers to be warm, supportive and approachable. As one mother confirms,



I love being a mother...to care and to love and to be there for my children...be very supportive. (Jackie Chan: MMLSES)

By mothers demonstrating their positive understanding of motherhood in the current study, they also provided insight into the fact that, although motherhood was non-prescriptive and a daily challenge, mothers had the resilience to do 'it' in the face of inexperience, incompetence and possible ignorance about caring for another.

Furthermore, in the process of their own daily learning, mothers felt that motherhood was also a process of teaching their children, acting as role models, trainers, guides and teachers. The mothers in the current study considered motherhood to be flexible, changeable and, in a sense, directed by the child and therefore the mothers were adaptable.

I was 17 years old then I fell pregnant and I didn't think that I could do it but I had to...I wouldn't change it for the world. (Batman: SMHSES)

Every day is a different day. Today your child is up on cloud nine and tomorrow the child is down on the ground and what do you do. So you are there then you pick your child up and you try to put him back onto that cloud again. So you are mothering basically according to how the day goes. (Crazy Frog: MMHSES)

These findings were, to some extent, similar to that of studies conducted by Arendell (2000); Elvin-Nowak and Thomsson (2001); Price (2007) and Walker (1995), indicating that mothers' perceptions of motherhood can be based upon how well they feel. Their findings suggest that when mothers are psychologically well, their children may also be well.

Besides the resilience of mothers and their active 'do it' approach, they were also realists taking a practical approach to challenges. Mothers stated that raising children as a real mother was not prescriptive and it depended largely upon how the mothers felt their children should be raised at a particular time and just doing their best as mothers on a daily basis according to what they thought were right.

It's how you feel things should be done as a mother and you feel you have done your best as a mother...you do as much as you can as a mother at this time and in this place...you try to lead your child on the right path and you teach her what is wrong and right. (Daisy: SMLSES)

You only try your very best to give to your children...what you think is right and to do what's right for them. (Batman: SMHSES)

Thus the positive realistic way of viewing motherhood, as well as portraying mothers as resilient and active doers, provide a "more realistic and less normative portrayal of mother's lives than those afforded by sweeping images" such as Westernised depictions, as stated by Arendell (2000: 1202). The realistic portrayal of motherhood accepts the imperfections in life and does not set standards against which children should be raised. The positive approach to motherhood provides an understanding for the medium to high self-esteem of their preadolescent children.

7.3.1 Mother and child psychological well-being

In the current study, mother psychological well-being is only partly associated with preadolescent psychological well-being. In other words, only mother self-esteem is associated with child self-esteem, but not how satisfied mothers and children were with their lives. Interestingly, the assumption of the study was that, because mother and child self-esteem was positively significantly related, added to which the majority of mothers' and children were more satisfied with their lives, mothers and children's satisfaction with life would be related. The results indicated differently. Even though mother and child self-esteem was significantly related to how satisfied they were with their lives, the latter was not associated with how satisfied their children's satisfaction with life. Furthermore, mother self-esteem was not a predictor of child self-esteem after accounting for SES in the analysis. This finding suggests that mother self-esteem did not predict child self-esteem.

These findings of mother-preadolescent well-being seemed to be supported by the verbalizations of the mothers with regard to how they perceived the mother-preadolescent relationship. Realistically, the relationship had weaknesses such as disobedience, laziness and moodiness of the child. However, there were also strengths. These strengths, bonding, understanding and communication were verbalised as

And times when I was down and out she used to come to me and say 'Mommy I love you' and she would hold me and you know kiss me and say 'are you alright Mommy, I'm here for you', like that. Without me telling her there is something wrong. (Maggie: MMHSES)

He's got to have that sternness [from the parent] but also loving because he hugs you all day long...He's always looking for a hug and kiss and so on. (50 Cent: MMHSES)

These findings can be understood within the framework of Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2004: 8-9; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Van Steenkiste, 2005) which posits that humans have “natural, innate and constructive tendencies to develop an ever more elaborated and unified sense of self” (Deci & Ryan, 2004: 5; Van Steenkiste, 2005). Furthermore, individuals are naturally curious, and children more so and are therefore motivated to develop towards their fullest potential. Thus, preadolescents tend to strive towards a unified sense of self. Additionally, the environment plays a role of either being enhancing or hindering towards the development of the individual.

7.3.2 Single versus married mother-child well-being

There was no significant difference found between the single and married mother self-esteem. The findings suggest that being married or single had no significant effect on mothers' self-esteem levels nor the self-esteem levels of their children. However, although not significant, single mothers living in low socio-economic environments reported the lowest scores for how satisfied they were with their lives.

These findings, of South African single and married mothers, were different to previous research studies which indicate significant differences between single and married mothers' self-esteem levels with single mothers having low self-esteem levels (Crosier, Butterworth & Rodgers, 2007; Davies, Avison and McAlpine, 1997; Targosz, et al., 2003; Wade & Cairney, 2000). According to Avison, Ali and Walters (2007) when single mothers experienced psychological distress, it was purely due to their circumstances and not necessarily due to their marital status. South Africa has a unique socio-political history of mothers fighting for the very existence of their families and being forced to be heads of households (Bernstein, 1985; Posel, 1991).

The fact that mothers have tenaciously endured the struggle to overcome their oppression encompassing the legal, social and economic circumstances of their daily lives and enduring the pain, anxiety and often fears of apartheid (Ames, 2002; Bernstein, 1985; Posel, 1991, amongst others), demonstrates that mothers in South Africa have been, and are, resilient, tenacious and are psychologically well when confronted with adversity and/or challenges. Another reason why single mothers have high self-esteem could be due to the choice of being single as this could have an increase on the quality of life of mothers. Segal-Engelchin and Wozner (2005) have found that when women become single mothers by choice, they definitely have an increase in their quality of life as compared to their married and divorced counterparts. Although the participants, in their study, considered motherhood to provide extreme happiness, their experiences of motherhood encompassed loneliness and was an economic burden. Furthermore, quality of life of single mothers increased when their economic environments had improved and paternal involvement had increased.



Married mothers scored significantly higher for life satisfaction than single mothers in the current study. Single mothers' lower levels of satisfaction with their lives may be due to lack of emotional and financial support (Elvin-Nowak & Thomsson, 2001; Weinraub & Wolf, 1983). Studies show that when mothers have support they are more likely to be psychologically well because support has a stress-buffering effect and has a direct positive influence on their children's adjustment (Voight, Hans & Bernstein, 1998; Wethington & Kessler, 1986). Maternal mothers (grandmothers) provided the most prominent support. This finding was confirmed by the majority of mothers when they were asked about the support they received. Most of the mothers reported that they received support from their own mothers. One mother in particular

received minimal support, except from a friend, and although she had medium self-esteem, she was extremely dissatisfied with her life,

I don't get any...like when I went through the divorce with my husband. I didn't get any support from my sisters or I didn't feel free to go and speak to them and tell them about the situation because we were never close and it's like nobody cares about nobody's situation and nobody cares about nobody's thoughts and I couldn't even go to my Mom because at that time she was staying with me but it's like she didn't have any words of comfort and I didn't go to any family members but I had a friend, which I could talk to and she was very understanding and she gave me the support that I needed. And she was there whenever I phoned, whenever I felt down then she would like come through and we would maybe go out. Sometimes I feel like I need support yes.
(Britney Spears: SMLSES)

Married mothers were inclined to have a network of support which consisted of a husband, parent/s, friends, siblings, extended family member and sometimes neighbours. Most mothers stated that they were happy with the support they were receiving, thus confirming previous findings.

Similar to the findings of Diener, et al., (1992); Diener and Diener, (1995); Maluka, (2004) the current study found self-esteem and satisfaction with life to be significantly positively correlated. This finding was for both mothers and children suggesting that when mothers and children were satisfied with their lives, they also tended to have high self-esteem. Furthermore, this finding was consistent regardless of SES and marital status.

7.3.3 Socio-economic status (SES) and mother-child well-being

Socio-economic status was more associated with mother self-esteem and child self-esteem than mothers' marital status. Although the majority of mothers had high self-esteem, a significant main effect of mothers' SES on mothers' and children's self-esteem was found with significantly lower self-esteem levels for mothers and children in the low than in the high SES group. Furthermore, socio-economic status was

significantly and positively associated with mother and child self-esteem, suggesting that, when socio-economic status was high, mothers and children had higher self-esteem levels. SES was also associated with how satisfied mothers and children were with their lives suggesting that socio-economic status had an effect on how satisfied mothers and children were with their lives. Mothers living in high socio-economic environments were inclined to more satisfied with their lives than mothers living in low socio-economic environments.

In the current study, socio-economic status has an effect on self-esteem of mothers and children and especially has an effect on mothers and children living in low socio-economic environments as they reported significantly lower levels of self-esteem.

Furthermore, mothers in low socio-economic environments reported being less satisfied with their lives. This finding is consistent with findings of Twenge and Campbell (2002). Studies associating socio-economic status, self-esteem, satisfaction and general psychological well-being are inconclusive. For example Maluka's South African study (2004) shows that, in spite of people experiencing socio-economic hardship and being disadvantaged in the community, they had high levels of self-esteem and were satisfied with their lives. Similarly, Trowbridge (1972) found that children living in low socio-economic environments had higher self-esteem.

Rosenberg and Pearlin (1978) found child self-esteem to be unrelated to social class/SES. Mayhew and Lempers (1998) found financial strain to be directly related to mother and father self-esteem, but did not directly affect the children's self-esteem. The reasons for the inconsistencies could be due to the choice of variable/s as indices for measuring SES. On the one hand, Barbarin and Richter (2001); Higgs (2002) and Twenge and Campbell (2002) present support for using multiple variables as indices for SES. On the other hand, Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, Klebanov and Sealand (1993);

Duncan and Magnuson (2001) and Morris, Duncan and Rodrigues (2005) believe that household or family income can be used as an index for SES and has been related to well-being, especially self-esteem. The studies highlight that the associations between indices and well-being could be due to the value which people place on them, which could be due to culture.

The effect of SES may be quite strong because mothers in South Africa possibly place an emphasis on household income. Money is tangible and can carve many paths. For example, you need money to buy food, pay for education, and buy clothes and so on. The reality in South Africa is that many people, women especially, have lower education levels, low paying employment opportunities, sometimes lack of spousal financial support and inadequate and insufficient social support (2006 General Household Survey, 2007; McLanahan & Booth, 1989). Being a single mother in a low socio-economic environment presents a great challenge to mothers and children as there is the added burden of being the sole provider in the family.

When mothers, in the current study, were asked about the challenges they faced in raising their preadolescents and about the type of support they would prefer, financial challenges, things they would have liked to buy for their children, but were unable to, and financial support, were consistently stated,

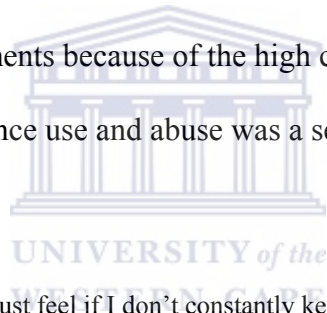
It was difficult at first because I was so young...finances which is the biggest difficulty. (Fairy: SMHSES)

I want to give them things that they need. (Britney Spears: SMLSES)

Geld, want kyk ek werk nie, ek is maar op 'n disability. Ek kan nie vir hulle...ek het drie kinders en kan nie vir hulle twee, hulle pa spoil vir hulle maar ook wanneer hy wil. (Saphire: MMLSES)

English translation: Money, because look I am not working, I receive a disability [grant]. I can't...I have three children and can't for the two of them, their father spoils them but also when he wants to.

Another challenge for mothers with preadolescents was their fears with regard to their children and this was directly linked to their SES. Hence, challenges experienced by HSES and LSES mothers were presented quite differently. Mothers in high socio-economic environments were more concerned about their children being emotionally hurt, indulging in substances and subsequently losing touch with the child. Mothers therefore feared the severing of the emotional ties between them and their children. When mothers, living in low socio-economic environments, spoke about their fears for their children, they feared for their children's security, lives, involvement with the wrong crowd, indulging in substances and girl children becoming involved with boys when they were too young and subsequently having a baby while a teenager. These fears of physically losing the child were expressed predominantly by mothers living in low socio-economic environments because of the high crime rates in the neighbourhoods. Also, substance use and abuse was a secondary fear expressed by all the mothers.



My fears for him...I just feel if I don't constantly keep my hand on him he most definitely will fall into the wrong hands. (Jackie Chan: MMLSES)

My fears for her is that maybe she'll get into boys at an early age...my hopes for her is just be a better person than I am and my dreams for her is to just succeed in life. But my biggest fear is for her just to...maybe when she goes to high school and all that, getting involved with boys...I don't know how I would handle it. (Britney Spears: SMLSES)

I think every mother's fear is that their child is going to do drugs and things like that but I am trying to raise him so that he don't have to go through that. (Batman: SMHSES)

Elke dag is daar vrese...Nou die een gaan nou hier om winkel toe en ek stress nou al gaan hy safe hier kom...Ja, dit is elke dag...en hier wat ons bly, enige ding gebeur so gou...hulle [kinders] was nog nooit alleen, ek is altyd saam. (Saphire: MMLSES)

English translation: Every day there are fears...now the one goes around to the shop and I stress whether he will come here safely...Yes that is everyday...and here where we stay, anything happens so quickly...they have never been alone, I am always with.

My fears number one, my child is growing up, he is turning thirteen, he's a teenager...that my child could take on bad habits and do stuff that I don't want

him to do...They growing up and I'm gonna loose touch with them...And you know the saying you know what your child is doing with you but you don't know what he is doing outside. It scares me because not only can stuff happen to him but he can also do stuff to other people. (Crazy Frog: MMHSES)

Accordingly, SES as context provides different reasons for how and why mothers interact with their children.

7.4 MOTHERS AND PREADOLESCENTS: FAMILIAL INTERACTION

As will be presented, the literature leans very strongly towards contextualizing child psychological well-being. The previous section mainly discussed mother psychological well-being in the context of marital status and SES. This section places mother and preadolescent psychological well-being within an interactive familial relationship and provides the possible reasons for preadolescent psychological well-being.

7.4.1 Maternal parenting practices

Autonomy-supportive parenting, formulated by Grolnick and Ryan (1989), can be described as the parents' (mothers') ability to be warm, caring, supportive, involved and providing structure in the process of parenting children without being controlling. It is a very positive way of parenting and has been linked to adjustment, high self-esteem and general psychological well-being of children. Supportive parenting is also similar, but more practically descriptive of Baumrind's (1966, 1967, 1978, 1991) authoritative parenting style.

The findings of the current study reflect preadolescents' perceptions of their mothers as being autonomy-supportive. Mothers used relatively more autonomy-supportive maternal parenting practices regardless of their marital or socio-economic status. The findings suggest that, regardless of the mothers' marital status, or socio-economic

status, the children perceived their mothers to be autonomy-supportive. Furthermore, a significant positive relationship was found in all subgroups of children between Mother Autonomy-Supportive (MAS) parenting practices and child self-esteem scores. Children's satisfaction with life was, however, unrelated with their perception of their mothers' autonomy-supportive parenting practice.

The findings provide a wholesome perspective of the parenting occurring with this particular group of preadolescents as indicated by Gray and Steinberg (1999); Grolnick, (2003); Grolnick, Deci and Ryan (1997). Their mothers tend to be perceived as warm, caring and approachable as well as supportive. The findings suggest that the more mothers allowed children to take responsibility for and initiate their own actions rather than being coerced, forced or pressurised to do something and solve problems (Grolnick, 2003; Grolnick, Deci & Ryan, 1997); voice an opinion and have a choice in family matters which are age appropriate; encourage "self-initiation", acknowledge the child's perspective and feelings and minimise the use of controls; involved, acting as a resource to their children and taking an interest in the child's activities, the higher their children's self-esteem was. They spend more time with their children and know more about what their children are doing in their daily lives and therefore apply monitoring principles (Kurdek & Fine, 1994; Pettit, et al., 2001) and provide structure to their children (Grolnick, 2003). The outcome for children is increased self-esteem levels. These findings are also consistent with Self-Determination Theory (SDT) which emphasises the role of the environment and a particular practice of parenting, autonomy-supportive, that enables the child to be self-regulated and enhance the child's well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2004: 8-9; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Van Steenkiste, 2005).

However, some studies suggest that single parenting and parenting in low socio-economic environments are more inclined to be harsh and punitive (Florsheim, Tolan & Gorman-Smith, 1998; Gutman, McLoyd & Tokoyawa, 2005; Mayhew & Lempers, 1998; McLoyd, 1990; Mistry, Vandewater, Huston & McLoyd, 2002). The current study found that there was no significant difference between low and high SES for mothers' parenting practices. This finding suggests that South African mothers may be inclined to positive mothering approaches with their preadolescent children, regardless of SES. This finding indicates that there may be similar cultural values and practices that influence mothers in different SES groups.

Preadolescents reported that their mothers used less psychological control when parenting. As predicted, the correlation between children's perceptions of their mothers' Psychological Control and their self-esteem scores were significantly negative in all groups of children. Children's perceptions of their mothers' psychological control were also negatively related to how satisfied they were with their lives. This correlation was significant for children of single mothers and children of mothers living in high socio-economic environments. The findings suggest that higher psychologically controlling maternal practices may result in low self-esteem and dissatisfaction with life for children.

The findings for psychological control were similar to previous studies of psychological control effects (Barber, 1996; Bean, Bush, McKenry & Wilson, 2003; Doyle & Markiewicz, 2005; Loukas, Paulos & Robinson, 2005; Olsen, 2005; Stolz, Barber & Olsen 2005; Soenens, 2006; Van Steenkiste, Zhou, Lens & Soenens, 2005). These studies show that psychological control may be related to internalizing and externalizing problems in children such as lowered self-esteem levels, higher drop-out

rates at school, maladaptive learning attitudes and ill-being. According to SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985) controlling events are experienced “as pressure to think, feel or behave in specified ways”. Psychologically controlling parenting has more of a negative approach to raising children and has been described in terms of being inhibitive, intrusive, guilt and shame-inducing, possessiveness, over-protectiveness, nagging, negative evaluation, strictness and punishment (Schaefer, 1959, 1965; Soenens, 2006). Psychological control intrudes upon the self, resulting in the person feeling less secure and positive and would therefore decrease the person’s self-esteem.

In this study, psychological control was low with more autonomy-supportive parenting practices. Studies have shown that applying behavioural control has more well-being effects than psychological control (Barber, 1996; Stolz, Barber & Olsen, 2005; Galambos, Barker & Almeida, 2003). Behavioural control includes structure, monitoring, limits, boundaries and parameters, which is also part of autonomy-supportive parenting practices and is a guide for appropriate behaviour (Soenens, 2006). These factors are important for socialization and adjustment and will result in a decrease in fighting, destruction of property and other antisocial behaviours.

This study also considered verbalisations of mothers’ relationships with their preadolescent children. Single mothers reported that they felt challenged with regard to support, finances, being single, lonely, felt disheartened, frustrated, burdened and in a sense thought they were failing their children by raising the children on their own. Married mothers tended to report challenges in terms of the child’s behaviour. Marital status and SES were intertwined in how mothers perceived the relationships with their children and presented different challenges. Mothers reported that the relationship

was weakened by the child's disobedience, laziness and moodiness and strengthened by understanding and communication:

He can be disobedient at times to me, towards me. And there's times when he's been spoken to and then he doesn't do and then I on the other hand need to shout a little bit louder...and when it eventually goes through then he jumps up and then stomps on the floor and runs to his room and close the door with a big bang. (Crazy Frog: MMHSES)

Weaknesses? Her laziness...You have to scold a lot...And they ask you why cause she don't want to do it, but then they still don't understand why they need to do it. (Baby Girl: SMLSES)

The strength of the relationship is that we understand each other. (Britney Spears: SMLSES)

We have an open relationship. We don't hide things from one another. (Sadny Wayne: MMHSES)

The mother-child relationship was understood in the contexts of marital status and SES and showed that regardless of these factors there are realities to relationships, that is, being both positive and negative. Asked whether they would want to change the relationship, the majority of the mothers said "no" while a few felt that understanding, obedience and communication could be improved. On the whole, mothers were positively realistic about their relationships with their preadolescents.

7.4.2 Family environment

The results show that mothers and children are almost similar in their perceptions of their family environments with regard to Cohesion, Conflict, Organisation, Achievement Orientation and Control in spite of mothers being married or single and living in high or low socio-economic environments. Mothers and children generally reported that families were more Cohesive, had less Conflict, were more Organised, more Achievement Orientated and had more Control. However, Mothers' and childrens' perceptions of Expressiveness and Independence tended to be different. Children perceived their families to be low on Expressiveness, while mothers

perceived their families to be higher on Expressiveness. Children of single mothers and of mothers living in low socio-economic environments, especially, perceived their family environments to be low on Expressiveness. Although both mothers and children perceived their families to be low on Independence, more children than mothers perceived their families to be low on Independence.

The perceptions of family environment were as positive as the parenting practices used. Additionally, mothers and preadolescents had similar perceptions about the family environment suggesting that their perceptions were associated. A similar finding with regard to mother-child perceptions about the family environment was found by Mahabeer (1993). These perceptions suggest may indicate that mother and preadolescents may be positively attached, emotionally involved, close and connected at this developmental stage.

One interesting finding of this study is the difference in perceptions of expressiveness in this study. Children reported that their family environments have less expressiveness, defined as to which family members can act openly and express their feelings (Moos & Moos, 2002). Mothers reported differently and contend that there is high expressiveness in the family. In this study, children reported that they found the family to be united but without expression. Expression can be verbalisations of feelings and physical expressions such as hugs and kisses. There are many reasons why children may feel a lack of expressiveness in the family. For example, other family members may not be expressive towards each other or the child could be directly not receiving hugs and kisses or the child is not allowed to provide their opinions in the home. Regardless, the perception prevails that the child perceives a lack of expressiveness in the home. Expressiveness is the physical manifestation of

love, connectedness and subsequent belonging. When children mature, parents assume that they do not need to physically show their children how much they are loved because there is the assumption that children know that they are naturally loved and accepted. The danger, in terms of SDT, is that the child's psychological need for relatedness is not satisfied and the child will try and find it somewhere else to satisfy that need. Similarly, a child who is not allowed to be expressive such as having an opinion could end up with low self-esteem, feelings of incompetence and inadequacy and therefore find expression somewhere else such as becoming part of a gang.

This study is one of the first to associate SDT parenting practices in relation to family environment. A previous study found positive parenting styles were associated with positive family environments and higher child self-esteem levels (Mandara & Murray, 2002). The current study found that autonomy-supportive parenting practices to be positively related to cohesive and organised families, but negatively related to conflictual and controlling families. Psychologically controlling parenting practices were positively related to conflict and achievement orientation, but negatively associated with cohesion, organisation and independence. As predicted, positive parenting practices created positive family environments and vice versa for negative parenting practices. Thus, in terms of the current study, the more autonomy-supportive mothers were, the more cohesive and organised and less conflictual preadolescents perceived their families to be.

7.4.2.1 Family environment and psychological well-being

The current study predicted that family environment would be related to the self-esteem and life satisfaction of the preadolescent. The results indicated that self-esteem was positively significantly related to cohesion, organisation and independence.

Control and conflict were significantly negatively related to self-esteem. The findings suggest that when family environments were more cohesive, organised and independent mothers and preadolescents were more inclined to have higher self-esteem levels. Mothers and preadolescents had lower self-esteem when family environments had more conflict and control. Cohesion, achievement orientation and independence were related to how satisfied mothers and children were with their lives especially for children in high socio-economic environments (achievement orientation) and for single mothers (independence). Expressiveness was significantly positively related to mothers' life satisfaction for single mothers, mothers living in high socio-economic environments, and children of mothers living in low socio-economic environments. A significant positive relationship was found between organisation in the family and satisfaction with life for children, children of married mothers and mothers living in high socio-economic environments.

These findings suggest that the more positive family environments were related to psychological well-being for both mothers and preadolescents. The findings are consistent with previous studies (Bigner, 1998; DeGenova & Rice, 2002; Maker, Kemmelmeier & Peterson, 1998; Moos & Moos, 2002; Prevatt, 2003).

Socio-economic status had a significant main effect on cohesion and expressiveness, with high SES mothers scoring significantly higher than low SES mothers. The findings suggest that families in higher socio-economic environments were more cohesive and expressive than in families living in low socio-economic environments specifically for mothers, but not for children. In the context of SDT, this finding is important as a person's psychological need of relatedness needs to be satisfied (Deci & Ryan, 2004: 8-9; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Van Steenkiste, 2005).

Relatedness or a sense of belonging creates the picture of a familial interaction of unity, cohesion and expressiveness. It is a human need to belong either to someone, something or somewhere. People need to feel connected and thus would want to care for and be cared by others. The need for relatedness encompasses the need to experience love, warmth and affection and therefore acceptance (Grolnick, 2003). Low SES families are more prone to stress and anxiety (A report provided by the Office of the Executive Deputy President and the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Poverty and Inequality, 1998; El-Sheikh & Buckhalt, 2003; Morris, Duncan & Rodrigues, 2005; Prevatt, 2003) and therefore use reactive negative parenting practices which create conflict in the home. High SES families have the opposite process and therefore would have more family cohesion and expressiveness.

The reflections of mothers' families of origin and their relationships with their mothers alluded to the positive experiences of mothers with their own mothers being transferred to their children. If there were conflictual family environments, mothers acted as buffers for their children and therefore enhanced well-being and adjustment of the child.

Well, it sort of goes from your parents onto you onto your child. And even though I don't tell her, she knows what I expect from her. (Jane: SMHSES)

With my mother, yes... Yes it is similar. I try to be there for them the way my mother was with me. I try to give it over to them, cause I learnt a lot from my mother. (Maggie: MMHSES)

Baie negatief. Ek het 'n pa gehad wat gedrink het en...in die huis, veral naweke. As hy nou Saterdag uitgaan en daai vrees...hy kom nou terug en hy het 'n doppie in. Jy het nie eers vriende huis toe gebring nie want jy dink jy weet nie in watter toestand hy is nie...partykeer...dan is hulle mos daai wild ene...en dan voel ek net ek wil nie so 'n lewe hê nie. Soos ek as kind gevoel het, bang vir my pa. Imagine, jy is bang vir jou pa. Of jy wil na vriende toe gaan en jy kom terug, dan staan en wag hy al met die belt. (JayZ: MMLSES)

English translation: Very negative. I had a father who use to drink and...at home especially weekends. If he goes out Saturdays and that fear...he returns and he has drunk alcohol. You could never bring friends home because you think you don't know what...he is...sometimes...then they are those wild ones. And then I feel that I don't want such a life...As I felt as a child, scared of my

Dad. Imagine, you are scared of your Dad. Or you want to go to friends and you return, then he stands and waits for you with a belt.

In retrospect, mothers felt that as children they wanted to feel a sense of belonging, being loved and receiving attention.

When I was a child I usually felt that maybe I don't belong here, maybe I'm not their real daughter. The way they treat me and my sister is different. (Jackie Chan: MMLSES)

I'm gonna tell you now about hard working, my mom, my mom was always hard working and she was always there but I never really got the attention that I wanted and the attention that I needed. That's what I am thinking of that time and still what I'm thinking now. And now I give that attention to my child, I work hard, there somehow that I don't do as much as I want to or give her the attention that she really needs. Now I'm afraid that that's gonna turn out like my mom was with me. My child is gonna turn out like I am. (Britney Spear: SMLSES)

Because mothers found these factors of belonging and attention to be lacking in their past relationships in their families, they felt they needed to do so much more for their own children and in a sense create a positive relationship with their children.

7.5 THE EFFECTS ON CHILD SELF-ESTEEM

The current study predicted child self-esteem is influenced by maternal: SES, self-esteem, parenting practices and family environment, as well as child satisfaction with life. The assumption of the study was that SES affects mothers and children. Because of the self-esteem levels of the mothers, they tended to parent a particular way, which subsequently creates a family environment resulting in child self-esteem and subsequent satisfaction with life. SES, psychological control and child satisfaction with life were the strongest predictors of child self-esteem with SES remaining a significant predictor of child self-esteem. The final model accounted for 34% of the variance in child self-esteem scores.

The findings suggest that SES may be a strong predictor of preadolescent self-esteem. Rosenberg and Pearlin (1978) believe that SES should not have a direct effect on

children's self-esteem because children's self-esteem levels are dependent on the judgement or appraisal offered by others in the child's environment. Hence, if children are judged according to what they have or do not have, and these are important familial values, the child may possibly have a low self-esteem. According to Twenge and Campbell (2002), children's SES is attained through the parents' SES, and therefore, as the source of SES, this may moderate the effect of SES on child self-esteem. As with other studies, the effect of SES on child self-esteem is possibly mediated by parenting practices and family environment (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; El-Sheikh & Buckhalt, 2003; McLoyd, 1998). Thus, as discussed previously with regard to the influence of SES on child self-esteem, parents may parent a particular way such as supportive parenting, punitive or controlling parenting and these may result in high or low self-esteem for children (Gutman, McLoyd & Tokoyawa, 2005; Mayhew & Lempers, 1998; McLoyd, 1990; Mistry, Vandewater, Huston & McLoyd, 2002). This could be the reason why the parenting component accounted for 18% of the variance for child self-esteem with psychological control being the most significant predictor (Barber, 1996; Bean, Bush, McKenry, & Wilson, 2003; Van Steenkiste, Zhou, Lens & Soenens, 2005; Soenens, 2006). During preadolescence parents are more inclined to speak more to their children in the process of discipline. However, in the process of discipline, parents could be psychologically controlling as they use methods such as love withdrawal, nagging, guilt or shaming to attain appropriate behaviour and this negatively affects the child's self-esteem.

The strongest positive predictor for preadolescent self-esteem was how satisfied children were with their lives which accounted for 14% of the model's 34% variance of preadolescent self-esteem. According to Gilman and Huebner (2003: 195) most children and adolescents are satisfied with their lives and "view their lives positively".

In their review of life satisfaction studies they found inconsistencies for socio-economic status effects for child and adolescent life satisfaction, but found that small differences were inclined to favour higher SES children. Furthermore, financial resources were insignificant if children's basic needs were met. Studies have found strong correlations between self-esteem and satisfaction with life (as discussed previously). At this point it is not clear what the causal relationship is. However, in line with SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2004: 8-9; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Van Steenkiste, 2005), if a person's basic psychological needs are met, they would have a more integrated self and therefore function optimally and thus be satisfied with their lives.

The significant other, as reported by the mothers, could have a role to play in accounting for the added influences on child self-esteem besides the current variance. Mothers, especially married mothers, reported the father, grandparents, or other family members to have very positive influences in the child's life and with regard to the child's behaviour.

My husband is a very positive person. He's very optimistic... where I will see the doom and gloom in everything, he will lighten it ...I think that positivity of him they will carry out through and also the fact that he teaches them to turn up for themselves, not necessarily with their fists, but the way of convincing or talking to people or the way you handle the person (John Cena: MMHSES).

I would say excellent. They came home and he put her to bed... they have a very good relationship, communication wise and all of that. His influence on her, also is positive (Maggie: MMHSES).

As discussed previously support plays a major role for mother psychological well-being. When the support is in the form of the significant other, such as the grandmother for the majority of mothers and the father for the married mothers, it may add to the child's psychological well-being too.

7.6 LIMITATIONS

There were several limitations to the current study. The research design was a one-time mixed method study that produced a ‘snap-shot’ profile of mother-preadolescent relationships. This type of correlational and cross-sectional design does not permit one to draw conclusions about cause and effect relationships between different variables. Specific limitations were as follows:

7.6.1 Sampling

At the proposal level, the aim was to follow a process of random sample selection. However, as a result of the low return rate of questionnaires at the pilot stage and due to time constraints, a self-selected sampling process was used. A limitation of this is reduced generalisability of the findings. Most of the participants in the study reported medium to high self-esteem scores on self-esteem. It is possible that more mothers and children with high self-esteem than those with low self-esteem may have felt motivated to participate in the study. This could have resulted in a biased sample with high functioning families participating in the study with the majority of participants having high self-esteem and satisfaction with life levels.

7.6.2 Instruments

While the research instruments were adapted to the South African context, ideally, South African instruments would have been preferred to the current American instruments which were used in the study to collect the data. The changes were applied to the questionnaires upon the completion of each pilot study. The findings of the study need to be treated with caution as the instruments: CSEI and POPS showed low internal consistency. The findings may not have high reliability value. South African research should, to a certain extent, focus on the design of valid standardised

instruments to apply to its diverse population, especially with regard to the measurement of children's well-being.

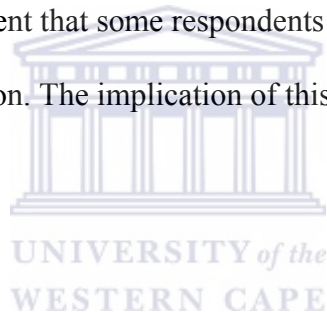
7.6.3 Data collection

The process of data collection was a challenge as mothers preferred to have the questionnaires sent home to complete as many was more convenient for them. This raises the questions about the reliability of the self-reports as the questions could have been answered by any family members of the children.

7.6.4 Missing data

There were some missing data in the low socio-economic groups pertaining to items dealing with SES. It was evident that some respondents in the low SES group did not feel free to disclose information. The implication of this is a possible distortion of SES.

7.6.5 Generalisability



While the findings of this study have limited generalisability, it is hoped that the study indicates possible ways of improving future studies.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 CONCLUSION

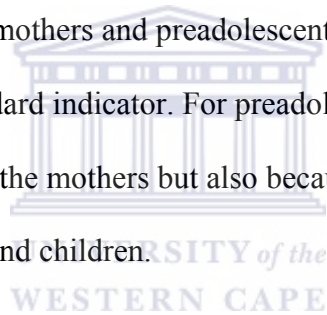
This study aimed to understand the relationship between single and married mother-preadolescent relationships within low and high socio-economic environments. The primary purpose was to assess the psychological well-being of mothers and preadolescents by measuring self-esteem and satisfaction with life.

The objectives of the study were therefore to:

- Investigate the extent to which single and married mothers' self-esteem are related to the self-esteem of their preadolescent children;
- Examine and compare the strength of the relationship between socio-economic status, satisfaction with life, and single and married mothers' self-esteem;
- Examine and compare the strength of the relationship between socio-economic status, satisfaction with life, and the self-esteem of preadolescent children of single and married mothers;
- Determine the extent of the relationship between family environment of single and married mothers and the self-esteem levels of their children;
- Ascertain the relationship between family environment and autonomy-supportive maternal parenting practices;
- Ascertain the extent of the relationship between family environment and psychological controlling maternal parenting practices;
- Examine the extent to which maternal autonomy-supportive parenting practices is related to the self-esteem levels of their children;
- Examine the extent to which maternal psychologically controlling parenting practices is related to the self-esteem levels of their children;
- Assess which of the variables: mother's self-esteem, SES, autonomy-supportive and psychologically controlling parenting practices and family environment are the most significant predictors of the child's self-esteem;

- Explore and compare how single and married mothers perceive motherhood and mothering in the context of family background, support and the significant other in the lives of their preadolescents;
- Explain single and married mothers' perceptions of the role of the significant other.

In the context of the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) framework, the study found some interesting results with regards to mothers and their preadolescents. Evidently, self-esteem was associated with the environment (mothers and parenting practices) to provide enhancing, rather than hindering, patterns of development of the self. With regard to psychological well-being for mothers and preadolescents, no significant differences between being married or single mothers were found. However, consistent with other studies, socio-economic status (SES) played an inconclusive role in the psychological well-being for mothers and preadolescents. This may be due to the fact that SES may not have a standard indicator. For preadolescents, SES was significant because SES was reported by the mothers but also because it is transferred via the interaction between mothers and children.



The findings of this study suggest that children's perceptions of their families' functioning differs to that of their mothers with regard to expressiveness as children believe that their families function with low expressiveness. This finding can have important implications for how children are allowed to express themselves and how family members express themselves towards each other.

Preadolescence may be considered to be a stage of difficulty as co-regulation of behaviour sets in and children want more freedom to make decisions and parents continue to exert behavioural control, mothers nevertheless verbalised that they felt very positive about their relationships with their preadolescents. They considered support to be important, in particular financial support, in raising their children.

Support was received from the significant other, which in most cases were a spouse and maternal grandmother. They felt that their children had both positive and negative relationships with the significant other (father and maternal grandmother).

The study hopefully has shown the need for more studies on African families. Given the diversity of cultural beliefs, traditions and values, future studies may need to consider the complex mix of possible influences on familial functioning in South Africa.

8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the limitations of the present study, one cannot make definitive recommendations. However, the findings suggest the following:

Socio-economic status and support

- The results of the study suggest that there is a need to improve financial support to low income families especially those headed by single mothers. Studies including this one, suggest that mother and child well-being may be enhanced with improved SES.
- This study used household income as an index for socio-economic status (SES) and found that mother and child well-being increased with an increase in SES. Currently, the State is in the process of implementing a social security grant and parents receive a meagre child support grant. While the State has good intentions for implementing these grants, households should be monitored to ensure that people do not live below the bread line.

- Although generally all women are considered to be marginalised, single mothers need extra financial and emotional support in order to meet the challenges of motherhood.

Research

- Due to the limitations of the current study, further research should focus on using instruments with a high internal consistency; accessing a more representative sample of families in low socio-economic environments and single parent families, as well as using a different method of collecting data such as a more controlled environment with the researcher possibly collecting survey data at the home of the participants.
- As South Africa has limited research regarding family functioning and because there is such cultural diversity within and between families, a strong focus should be on research with regard to family functioning in different cultural groups. Future studies may want to focus on:
 - fathers with similar relationship variables;
 - different developmental age groups of children;
 - variables such as marital interaction, academic interaction, peer relations, other parenting domains, child competence and self-regulatory behaviour patterns;
 - more randomised samples of participants with control group

The study hopefully has shown the need for more studies on African families.

Given the diversity of cultural beliefs, traditions and values, future studies may

need to consider the complex mix of possible influences on familial functioning in South Africa.



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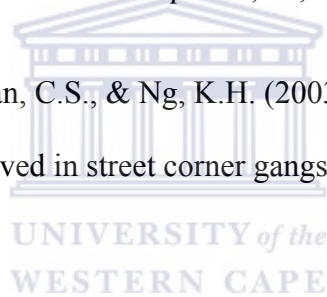
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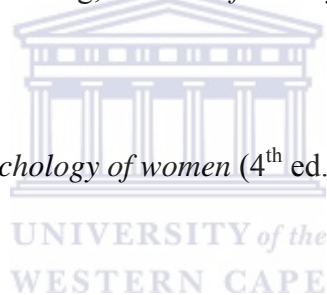
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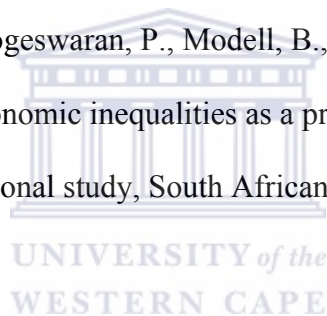
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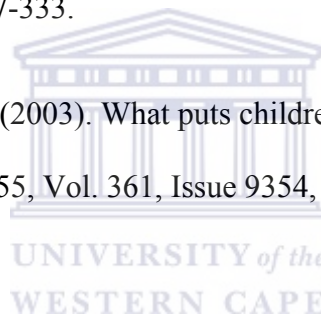
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APPENDIX A

Informed consent form

Dear Mothers

My name is Nicolette Roman and I am a Doctoral student in the Psychology Department at the University of the Western Cape. Currently, I am conducting a study to explore the relationship between **biological mothers and their children** between the ages of **10 and 12 years** in South Africa. Understandably, this topic may be very sensitive. Thus you and your child's participation is entirely voluntary. The main purpose of the study is to understand the relationship specifically at the age group of age 10 to 12 years. Thus there is no right or wrong answers when participating in the study.

If you are willing to participate in this study, we would be very appreciative if **both** biological mothers and their children would participate in this study. We would like both boys and girls to participate. The study is divided into 2 parts. You may **choose** to (1) participate in the completion of the questionnaires only or (2) participate in both the completion of the questionnaires and an interview.

The study will be conducted by means of **(1)** questionnaires and **(2)** interviews. Children will complete a questionnaire in a suitable time at school. We shall ensure that your child's school programme has minimum disruptions. Assistance will be provided to children who may have difficulties in completing the questionnaires. A questionnaire will be sent home in an envelope, with your child, to be completed by you in the comfort of your home. We ask that after a week you return the completed questionnaire in the sealed envelope to school. If you have any difficulties in completing the questionnaire, you may contact me at **082 877 66 91 or 592 4670**.

A second part of the study entails face-to-face interviews which will be conducted with mothers **only**. The questions will be asked about your experience about motherhood and the type of support you receive. If you are willing to participate, a suitable time and venue will be arranged at your convenience. Notification of interviews will be done in advance.

Remember you and your child's participation is **entirely voluntary** and you and your child have the right to decline **at any time** to participate. While the study requires both mothers and children to participate in the study, children may only participate if permission is granted. Remember **ALL** information which is provided by you and your child is **strictly confidential** as numbers and false names, rather than real names, will be used on the questionnaires and in the interviews for the purpose of data analysis. There will be no way for you or your child to be identified as participants in the study. In this way all participants remain **anonymous**.

If you are the **biological mother and living in the area of the school**:

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:

- 1(a) I understand and agree to participate in the questionnaires of the study (sign please).....
- 1 (b) I understand and agree to participate in *both* the questionnaires and the interviews of the study (sign please).....and I may be contacted at.....to arrange for an interview.
- 1 (c) I would not like to participate *at all* in the study.
- 2 (a) I agree that my child.....in grade.....can participate in the study.
- 2 (b) I would not like my child to participate in the study.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and to complete the form. Your and your child's participation would be deeply appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Nicky Roman

Researcher

Professor K. Mwaba

Supervisor



UNIVERSITY *of the*
WESTERN CAPE

APPENDIX B

2006

Dear Children

My name is Nicky Roman. I am a student researcher at the University of the Western Cape. My work is to find out information about things. Your school and some other schools were chosen to find out some information. I am very interested to know more about mothers and their children; how children aged 10 to 12 years feel about themselves and about their relationship with their mothers.

But, I need your permission to ask you certain questions. Remember all the information which you tell me is **confidential**, in other words, no one else will know who you are and what you said when you answer the questions. You will be **ANONYMOUS**. You can choose not to take part in the study and we can end your taking part at any time.

If you would or would not like to take part in the study, you may complete and sign this form.

My name is _____

I am in Grade: _____.

I want to take part in the study.

I do not want to take part in the study.

Are you a boy or a girl? _____

What is your age? _____

What is your teacher's name? _____

Sign:.....

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

NICKY ROMAN

Researcher (UWC)

Professor K. Mwaba

Supervisor (UWC)

APPENDIX C

FAMILY ENVIRONMENT SCALE

1. Family members really help and support one another. **TRUE/FALSE**
2. Family members often keep their feelings to themselves. **TRUE/FALSE**
3. We fight a lot in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
4. We don't do things on our own very often in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
5. We feel it is important to be the best at whatever you do. **TRUE/FALSE**
6. Activities in our family are pretty carefully planned. **TRUE/FALSE**
7. Family members are rarely ordered around. **TRUE/FALSE**
8. We often seem to be wasting time at home. **TRUE/FALSE**
9. We say anything we want to at home. **TRUE/FALSE**
10. Family members rarely become openly angry at home. **TRUE/FALSE**
11. In our family, we are strongly encouraged to be independent. **TRUE/FALSE**
12. Getting ahead in life is very important in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
13. We are generally very neat and orderly. **TRUE/FALSE**
14. There are very few rules to follow in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
15. We put a lot of energy into what we do at home. **TRUE/FALSE**
16. It's hard to "blow off steam" at home without upsetting somebody. **TRUE/FALSE**
17. Family members sometimes get so angry they throw things. **TRUE/FALSE**
18. We think things out for ourselves in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
19. How much money a person makes is not very important to us. **TRUE/FALSE**
20. It's often hard to find things when you need them in our household. **TRUE/FALSE**
21. There is one family member who makes most of the decisions. **TRUE/FALSE**
22. There is a feeling of togetherness in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
23. We tell each other about our personal problems. **TRUE/FALSE**
24. Family members hardly ever lose their tempers. **TRUE/FALSE**
25. We come and go as we want to in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
26. We believe in competition and "may the best man win". **TRUE/FALSE**
27. Being on time is very important in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**

28. There are set ways of doing things at home. **TRUE/FALSE**
29. We rarely volunteer when something has to be done at home. **TRUE/FALSE**
30. If we feel like doing something on the spur of the moment we often just pick up and go.

TRUE/FALSE

31. Family members often criticize each other. **TRUE/FALSE**
32. There is very little privacy (time alone) in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
33. We always try hard to do things just a little better the next time. **TRUE/FALSE**
34. People change their minds often in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
35. There is a strong emphasis on following rules in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
36. Family members really back each other up. **TRUE/FALSE**
37. Someone usually gets upset if you complain in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
38. Family members sometimes hit each other. **TRUE/FALSE**
39. Family members almost always depend on themselves when a problem comes up.

TRUE/FALSE

40. Family members rarely worry about job promotions, school marks, etc. **TRUE/FALSE**
41. Family members make sure their rooms are neat. **TRUE/FALSE**
42. Everyone has an equal say in family decisions. **TRUE/FALSE**
43. There is very little group spirit in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
44. Money and paying bills (accounts) is openly talked about in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
45. If there's a disagreement in our family, we try hard to smooth things over and keep the peace. **TRUE/FALSE**
46. Family members strongly encourage each other to stand up for their rights. **TRUE/FALSE**
47. In our family we don't try that hard to succeed. **TRUE/FALSE**
48. Each person's duties are clearly defined in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
49. We can do whatever we want to in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
50. We really get along well with each other. **TRUE/FALSE**
51. We are usually careful about what we say to each other. **TRUE/FALSE**
52. Family members often try to one-up or out-do each other. **TRUE/FALSE**
53. It's hard to be by yourself without hurting someone's feelings in our household.

TRUE/FALSE

54. “Work before play” is the rule in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
55. Money is not handled very carefully in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
56. Rules are pretty inflexible in our household. **TRUE/FALSE**
57. There is plenty of time and attention for everyone in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
58. There are a lot of spontaneous discussions in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
59. In our family, we believe you don’t ever get anywhere by raising your voice.
TRUE/FALSE
60. We are not really encouraged to speak up for ourselves in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
61. Family members are often compared with others as to how well they are doing at work or school. **TRUE/FALSE**
62. Dishes are usually done immediately after eating. **TRUE/FALSE**
63. You can’t get away with much in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
-

PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS SCALES (POPS)

THINGS ABOUT MY MOTHER
UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

I am interested to know more about your mother.

Each number is followed by four sentences or statements that describe four different types of mothers. In each situation, read the four sentences about the four types of mothers and decide which one is the one just like your own mother. Different people’s mothers are different and I want to know about yours.

Now please think about your mothers and compare her to these descriptions of people’s mothers. So, begin with number **1** and read the four descriptions. If your mother is most like the mothers in the first sentence, then circle the letter **a** in front of that sentence. If she is most like the mothers in the second sentence, then circle the letter **b** in front of the sentence. If she is most like the mothers in the third sentence, then circle the letter **c** in front of that sentence. If she is most like the mothers in the fourth statement, then circle the letter **d** in front of that sentence.

1.

- a. My mother **never has enough time** to talk to me.
- b. My mother **usually doesn't have enough time** to talk to me.
- c. My mother **sometimes has enough time** to talk to me.
- d. My mother **always has enough time** to talk to me.

2.

- a. My mother **always explains** to me about the way I should behave.
- b. My mother **sometimes explains** to me about the way I should behave.
- c. My mother **sometimes makes** me behave because she is the boss.
- d. My mother **always makes** me behave because she is the boss.

3.

- a. My mother **always asks** me what I did in school that day.
- b. My mother **usually asks** me what I did in school that day.
- c. My mother **usually doesn't ask** me what I did in school that day.
- d. My mother **never asks** me what I did in school that day.

4.

- a. My mother **always gets very upset** if I don't do what I am supposed to right away.
- b. My mother **sometimes gets very upset** if I don't do what I am supposed to right away.
- c. My mother **sometimes tries to understand** if I don't do what I am supposed to right away.
- d. My mother **always tries to understand** if I don't do what I am supposed to right away.

5.

- a. My mother **always has the time to talk** about my problems.
- b. My mother **sometimes has the time to talk** about my problems.
- c. My mother **doesn't always have the time to talk** about my problems.

d. My mother **never has the time to talk** about my problems.

6.

a. My mother **never punishes** me; she **always talks** to me about what was wrong.

b. My mother **hardly ever punishes** me; she **usually talks** to me about what was wrong.

c. My mother **usually punishes** me when I've done something wrong **without talking to me very much.**

d. My mother **always punishes** me when I've done something wrong without talking to me at all.

7.

a. My mother **always tells** me what to do.

b. My mother **sometimes tells** me what to do.

c. My mother **sometimes** likes me to **decide for myself what to do.**

d. My mother **always** likes me to **decide for myself what to do.**

8.

a. My mother **always thinks it's OK** if I make mistakes.

b. My mother **sometimes thinks it's OK** if I make mistakes.

c. My mother **always gets angry** if I make mistakes.

d. My mother **sometimes gets angry** if I make mistakes.

9.

a. My mother **never wants to know** what I am doing.

b. My mother **usually doesn't want to know** what I am doing.

c. My mother **sometimes wants to know** what I am doing.

d. My mother **always wants to know** what I am doing.

10.

a. My mother **always gets upset** when I don't do well in school.

- b. My mother **sometimes gets upset** when I don't do well in school.
- c. My mother **hardly ever gets upset** when I don't do well in school.
- d. My mother **never gets upset** when I don't do well in school.

11.

- a. My mother **always likes to talk to my teachers** about how well I am doing in school.
- b. My mother **sometimes likes to talk to my teachers** about how well I am doing in school.
- c. My mother **usually doesn't like to talk to my teachers** about how well I am doing in school.
- d. My mother **never likes to talk to my teachers** about how well I am doing in school.

CONTROL SCALE

My Mother is a person who . . .

is always trying to change how I feel or think about things.

A lot like her **Somewhat like her** **Not like her**

changes the subject whenever I have something to say.

A lot like her **Somewhat like her** **Not like her**

often speaks when I speak.

A lot like her **Somewhat like her** **Not like her**

blames me for other family members' problems.

A lot like her **Somewhat like her** **Not like her**

brings up mistakes I did in the past when she criticizes me.

A lot like her **Somewhat like her** **Not like her**

is less friendly with me if I do not see things the way she does.

A lot like her **Somewhat like her** **Not like her**

will avoid looking at me when I have let her down.

A lot like her **Somewhat like her** **Not like her**

if I have hurt her feelings, she stops talking to me until I please her again.

A lot like her

Somewhat like her

Not like her

	STATEMENT	LIKE ME	UNLIKE ME
1	Things usually don't bother me		
2	I find it very hard to talk in front of the class.		
3	There are lots of things about myself I'd change if I could.		
4	I can easily make up my mind.		
5	I'm a lot of fun to be with.		
6	I get upset easily at home.		
7	It takes me a long time to get used to anything new.		
8	I'm well-liked by kids my own age.		
9	My parents usually consider my feelings.		
10	I give in very easily.		
11	My parents expect too much of me.		
12	It's pretty difficult to be me.		
13	Things are all mixed up in my life.		
14	Kids usually follow my ideas.		
15	I have a low opinion of myself.		
16	There are many times when I would like to leave home.		
17	I often feel upset in school.		
18	I'm not as nice looking as most people.		
19	If I have something to say, I usually say it.		
20	My parents understand me.		
21	Most people are better liked than I am.		
22	I usually feel as if my parents are pushing me.		
23	I often get discouraged at school.		
24	I often wish I were someone else.		
25	I can't be depended on.		

Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory (SHORT FORM)

THE SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE

DIRECTIONS:

Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1-7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number in the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Slightly Disagree

4 = Neither Agree or Disagree

5 = Slightly Agree

6 = Agree

7 = Strongly Agree

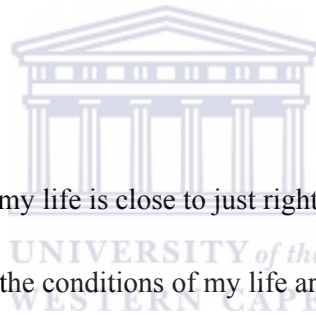
_____ 1. In most ways my life is close to just right.

_____ 2. On the whole the conditions of my life are wonderful.

_____ 3. I am happy with my life.

_____ 4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.

_____ 5. If I could live my life over, I would not change anything much.



APPENDIX D

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

**ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED IS ANONYMOUS AND CONFIDENTIAL
TICK THE BLOCK YOU CHOOSE**

1. Age of mother

20-24 25-29 30-34 35-39 40-44 45-49

2. Age of child

10 11 12

3. Marital Status

Never married Married Living together Widow Divorced/separated

4. Do you plan to marry in the near future?

YES

NO

5. IF MARRIED: How many years married with current husband?

0 1-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 >20

6. Tick the appropriate box:

First Marriage Second Marriage Third Marriage

7. Have you ever been to school?

YES

NO

8. Level of Education?

No schooling Some primary Complete primary Some secondary
Std 10/ Grade 12 University/Technikon Not stated

9. What is your race?

Coloured Black African White Indian/Asian
Other:

10. How many people usually live in the household?

1-2 3-4 5-6 7-8 9-10 11-12
13-14 15-20

11. What is the main language that is spoken by the people at home?

FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

TICK THE ONE YOU CHOOSE

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. Family members really help and support one another. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 2. Family members often keep their feelings to themselves. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 3. We fight a lot in our family. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 4. We don't do things on our own very often in our family. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 5. We feel it is important to be the best at whatever you do. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 6. Activities in our family are pretty carefully planned. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 7. Family members are rarely ordered around. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 8. We often seem to be wasting time at home. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 9. We say anything we want to at home. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 10. Family members rarely become openly angry at home. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 11. In our family, we are strongly encouraged to be independent. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 12. Getting ahead in life is very important in our family. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 13. We are generally very neat and orderly. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 14. There are very few rules to follow in our family. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 15. We put a lot of energy into what we do at home. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 16. It's hard to "blow off steam" at home without upsetting somebody. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 17. Family members sometimes get so angry they throw things. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 18. We think things out for ourselves in our family. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 19. How much money a person makes is not very important to us. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 20. It's often hard to find things when you need them in our household. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 21. There is one family member who makes most of the decisions. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 22. There is a feeling of togetherness in our family. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 23. We tell each other about our personal problems. | TRUE/FALSE |
| 24. Family members hardly ever lose their tempers. | TRUE/FALSE |

25. We come and go as we want to in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
26. We believe in competition and “may the best man win”. **TRUE/FALSE**
27. Being on time is very important in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
28. There are set ways of doing things at home. **TRUE/FALSE**
29. We rarely volunteer when something has to be done at home. **TRUE/FALSE**
30. If we feel like doing something on the spur of the moment we often just pick up and go. **TRUE/FALSE**
31. Family members often criticize each other. **TRUE/FALSE**
32. There is very little privacy (time alone) in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
33. We always try hard to do things just a little better the next time. **TRUE/FALSE**
34. People change their minds often in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
35. There is a strong emphasis on following rules in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
36. Family members really back each other up. **TRUE/FALSE**
37. Someone usually gets upset if you complain in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
38. Family members sometimes hit each other. **TRUE/FALSE**
39. Family members almost always depend on themselves when a problem comes up. **TRUE/FALSE**
40. Family members rarely worry about job promotions, school marks, etc. **TRUE/FALSE**
41. Family members make sure their rooms are neat. **TRUE/FALSE**
42. Everyone has an equal say in family decisions. **TRUE/FALSE**
43. There is very little group spirit in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
44. Money and paying bills (accounts) is openly talked about in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
45. If there’s a disagreement in our family, we try hard to smooth things over and keep the peace. **TRUE/FALSE**
46. Family members strongly encourage each other to stand up for their rights. **TRUE/FALSE**
47. In our family we don’t try that hard to succeed. **TRUE/FALSE**
48. Each person’s duties are clearly defined in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
49. We can do what ever we want to in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
50. We really get along well with each other. **TRUE/FALSE**
51. We are usually careful about what we say to each other. **TRUE/FALSE**

52. Family members often try to one-up or out-do each other. **TRUE/FALSE**
53. It's hard to be by yourself without hurting someone's feelings in our household. **TRUE/FALSE**
54. "Work before play" is the rule in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
55. Money is not handled very carefully in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
56. Rules are pretty inflexible in our household. **TRUE/FALSE**
57. There is plenty of time and attention for everyone in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
58. There are a lot of spontaneous discussions in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
59. In our family, we believe you don't ever get anywhere by raising your voice. **TRUE/FALSE**
60. We are not really encouraged to speak up for ourselves in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**
61. Family members are often compared with others as to how well they are doing at work or school. **TRUE/FALSE**
62. Dishes are usually done immediately after eating. **TRUE/FALSE**
63. You can't get away with much in our family. **TRUE/FALSE**

DIRECTIONS

On the next page, you will find a list of statements about feelings. If a statement describes how you usually feel, put an **X** in the column "**Like Me**". If the statement does not describe how you usually feel, put an **X** in the column "**Unlike Me**". There are no right or wrong answers. Begin at the top of the page and mark all 25 statements. Go with your first response.

	STATEMENTS	LIKE ME	UNLIKE ME
1	Things usually don't bother me.		
2	I find it very hard to talk in front of a group.		
3	There are lots of things about myself I'd change if I could.		
4	I can easily make up my mind.		
5	I'm a lot of fun to be with.		
6	I get upset easily at home.		
7	It takes me a long time to get used to anything new.		
8	I'm popular with persons my own age.		
9	My family usually considers my feelings.		
10	I give in very easily.		
11	My family expects too much of me.		
12	It's pretty difficult to be me.		
13	Things are all mixed up in my life.		
14	People usually follow my ideas.		
15	I have a low opinion of myself.		
16	There are many times when I would like to leave home.		
17	I often feel upset with my work.		
18	I'm not as nice looking as most people.		
19	If I have something to say I usually say it.		
20	My family understands me.		
21	Most people are better liked than I am.		
22	I usually feel as if my family is pushing me.		
23	I often get discouraged with what I am doing.		
24	I often wish I were someone else.		
25	I can't be depended on.		

THE SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE

DIRECTIONS:

Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1-7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number in the line preceding that item.

Please be open and honest in your responding.

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Slightly Disagree

4 = Neither Agree or Disagree

5 = Slightly Agree

6 = Agree

7 = Strongly Agree

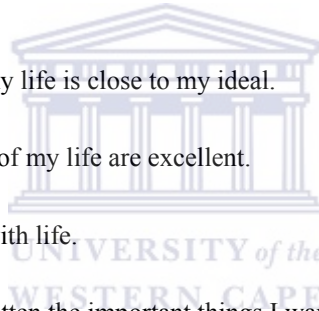
_____ 1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.

_____ 2. The conditions of my life are excellent.

_____ 3. I am satisfied with life.

_____ 4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.

_____ 5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.



APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MOTHERS

MOTHERHOOD/MOTHERING/RELATIONSHIP WITH CHILD

1. What does it mean to be a mother?

Probe: Perceptions of the “real” mother, “perfect” mother?

2. Tell me about your feelings about being a mother?

Probe: Difficulties, challenges, happy occurrences?

3. Describe your relationship with...child’s name.....?

Probe: Strengths, weaknesses, about the relationship?

4. A: What was your relationship with ...child’s name.....at 0 – 6 years?

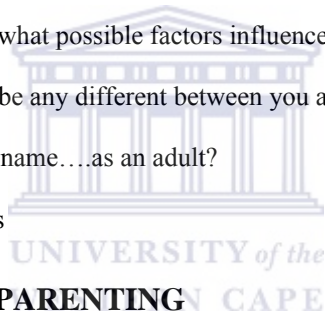
B: And how does that compare now?

Probe: Difficulties, challenges, what possible factors influence the mother-child relationship?

5. Would you want things do be any different between you and your child? Why or why not?

6. How do you seechild’s name.....as an adult?

Probe: Fears, Hopes and dreams



FAMILY BACKGROUND/PARENTING

Prompt: Think about your own family background for a moment.

1. A: Can you describe any factors in your family background that have influenced who you are today?

B: How does this influence your parenting?

Prompt: Think about your mother for a moment

2. What was your relationship like with your mother?

3. How does the relationship you had with your mother compare with the relationship you have with your child/ren?

4. How have your views of your mother changed now that you are a mother?

Probe: Positives or negatives?

SUPPORT

1. How are you supported or helped as a mother to help you take care of your child/ren?

Probe: Finance, Government support, Family support, Friends, Community?

2. You have just told me about the support or help you receive, in what ways does that work or not work for you?

Probe: Positives and Negatives of support/help or lack there of?

3. Tell me about a really challenging or difficult time where you needed help or support?

4. Who are you most likely to ask for help or turn to? Why?

5. How is this person related to you?

SIGNIFICANT OTHER

1. Who else is responsible for discipline or caring for your child when you are not at home?

[relation to the child and mother]

2. Describe the ways that caring or discipline takes place?

3. How do you feel about the discipline or caring that [this] person provides?

Probe: Positives, negatives [influences on the child], roles of significant other more primary than secondary?

4. Describe your perceptions (feelings and thoughts) of the relationship between the significant other and ...child's name....

5. How is it similar or different to your own relationship with...child's name...?