THE EXPERIENCES OF RURAL WORKING MOTHERS PURSUING HIGHER DEGREES AT A SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY

WELILE NTOMBIFUTHI MSIMANGO

THE EXPERIENCES OF RURAL WORKING MOTHERS PURSUING HIGHER DEGREES AT A SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY

THESIS

Submitted in complete fulfilment of the academic requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

Curriculum and Education Studies in the

School of Education

Faculty of Humanities

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Promoter: Prof. Thabo Msibi

Date submitted: 29 July 2020

DECLARATION

I, **Welile Ntombifuthi Msimango,** declare that "The experiences of rural working mothers pursuing higher degrees at a South African university," for the degree of PhD in the Department of Curriculum Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, hereby submitted, has not been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university, and that it is my own original work in design and execution, and that all the work done by others is properly acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signed by:

[redacted] _____

Welile N. Msimango Prof. T. Msibi

(Candidate-206523936)

(Promoter)

31 July 2020

_____

Date

ABSTRACT

This research explored the experiences of rural working mothers pursuing postgraduate degrees at a South African university. The focus of the study was on the experiences of older women coming into higher education. After being excluded by the apartheid government when they were young, after 1994 black people were motivated to improve their qualifications. The apartheid government controlled everything pertaining to black people's education, ensuring that black schools received inadequate resources, and had unqualified teachers and a degraded curriculum. The apartheid government also contributed to the segregation of universities, whereby black persons were prohibited from attending white universities. Instead, the apartheid government opened training colleges for police and teachers for people of colour. As a consequence, the majority of the informants in this study trained in teachers' colleges, receiving only a three-year diploma, and were not exposed to the opportunity to complete a university degree, but were regarded as qualified teachers. The post-apartheid era opened a new book by eradicating all apartheid-linked discriminatory policies, and black people were allowed to study in previously white institutions. The women in this project therefore enrolled to study at an advanced age, while working as qualified teachers with children and other responsibilities. Adult female students, in particular, are subject to many challenges, as society and particularly their loved ones still tend to stereotype women as full-time 'housekeepers' responsible for the well-being of every member of the family. As a result, managing their different roles causes a lot of stress in adult female students.

The intersectionality feminism and poststructural feminism theoretical frameworks have been utilised to inform this study. To investigate these women's experiences and challenges, this study adopted a qualitative interpretative approach and involved eight informants at a South African university in KwaZulu-Natal. Each of the following were explored: 1) the profiles of rural working mothers as postgraduate students; 2) the educational and social experiences of these women; 3) how they negotiated their multiple, concurrent identities of being black women, postgraduate students, full-time workers, and mothers; and 4) the nature of the support they received during their university studies. My desire to carry out this research was prompted by the absence of research in existing scholarly studies on the experiences of rural working mothers pursuing postgraduate qualifications. The literature review also revealed

that few international studies had explored women's experiences as adult learners, whereas few local studies had looked at the academic experiences of mothers in tertiary institutions. The dearth of literature on the experiences of rural working mothers in educational settings thus posed a need for this study to be conducted. As a consequence of the ensuing investigation, this exploratory study serves as a catalyst because it opens wide the field of study into the dynamics of feminism theories in a combination of rural cultural and urban academic environments. Moreover, the study offers a significant contribution to new knowledge and potential for further investigations. This study adopted a qualitative interpretive approach for two reasons: 1) it facilitates collection of rich empirical data; and 2) it acknowledges that knowledge is socially constructed and allows informants to define, describe and tell their life stories from their own viewpoints, thus illuminating the way they experienced the phenomenon. As a consequence, the life stories offered in this study were a way of exploring and interpreting the holistic picture of rural working mothers' experiences. A combination of verbal, visual and written data were generated employing interconnected data collection methods appropriate for the life history methodology and feminist theoretical framework that underpinned this study. A detailed thematic analysis of the data resulted in identification of five main emerging domains that had contributed in shaping the life experiences of these women: 1) impact of culture in rural women's experiences; 2) influence of apartheid on women's life experiences; 3) women's social experiences; 4) women's educational experiences; and 5) resilient women. Concerning the analyses of the many challenges the informants faced as postgraduate students in a higher education setting, the findings illuminate the contribution this study will make to knowledge building of gender scholarship in general and studies on women's academic experiences in particular. The findings revealed the importance of a variation of support that assisted the adult working females to achieve their educational goals during their university studies. The findings further revealed that a combination of personal coping strategies had to be negotiated by the informants to pave their way to success. Moreover, the findings also showed that there was a correlation between the ontological and epistemological assumptions set before the commencement of this study. The conclusions of this study cannot be generalised and transferred to any university or to the experiences of any other postgraduate students coming from rural areas in KwaZulu-Natal, as their life stories might bring a different perspective than those shared by the informants in this project.

To the wonderful, courteous and
powerful rural working mothers that
narrated their life stories.

I'm really obliged and grateful.

"Indeed, in life history, personal stories, theoretical perspectives, and historical truths become intricately interwoven to create a credible account" – Wright (2013)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank God for giving me the strength and opportunity to complete this thesis; even if I was unwell He never left me alone, He comforted me and He pushed and enabled me to say at last I am done after I had suffered so much in life.

My family, Mr Israel Msimango, Miss Thobeka Phumzile Msimango, Miss Londiwe Thabile Msimango, and Gcinile Nothando Msimango, I say thank for all that you have done and allowing me to complete this thesis, even if I took longer to complete and you were confused whether you should support me or not – but thank you for your patience.

My extended family, Mrs Ruby Msimango and her husband Mr Mathews Msimango, Mr David Msimango and his wife Mrs Tengetile Msimango, sister-in-law Mrs Jabu Gumbi, Mrs Martha Mpungose, Ms Joyce Msimango, Mr Ngithini Msimango, and Aunt Lulu Msimango, you had to wonder why Welile was behaving the way she did. I failed to answer you as I was waiting for this day. Thank you for the love and for treating me as your sister.

To Nkosingiphile Gama, Dwinkie Mpungose, Gcwalisile Msimango, and Sisa Msimango, thank you so much for being there if I needed help.

My siblings, Mrs Lungi Emmerantia Mhlongo, Mrs Rhonacia Nelisiwe Ngcobo, Mrs Winile Ntombenhle, Mr Bonginkosi Dennis Xulu, Mr Saziso Zacharia Xulu, Mrs Dumisle Xulu, Mrs Mpume Xulu and Mrs Doris Nkosingiphile Langa and her husband Mr Bheki Langa, I thank all of you for your immeasurable support.

To my cousins, Mr Xolani Dubazane and his wife Mrs Gugu Dubazane, Mr Sibonelo Dubazane and his wife Mrs Thande Dubazane, and Ms Doreen Dubazane, thank you for encouragement.

To all the informants in the study, the women who acted as if they had no other responsibilities and allowed me to generate data without changing their minds – this thesis would not have been possible without your untold and undocumented life stories. I thank you.

To my supervisor who groomed me while I was doing my master's degree, you pushed me to discover a potential I never knew was there, and further opened your hands even if you knew my weak points. You trusted and gave me hope that I should not be shy, I can make it. Without your unconditional love, support, dedication and perseverance I wouldn't have completed this thesis. Sometimes you would remind me about the fact that you would not

compromise its quality. Thank you for changing the way I used to think and for shaping me to be the better, more competent person I am today. It was not easy but I was ready and willing to learn. Thank you for allowing me to reach my educational dream. Standing on your shoulders left the marks that the water from the sea could not afford to erase. Thank you, Prof. Thabo Msibi.

I also thank Dr Zanele Ndlovu, Dr Blanche Ndlovu, Dr Nomkhosi Nzimande, Dr Smangele Xulu, Dr Misiwe Mzimela, Mr M. M. Mngomezulu and Mr Khathi for their support.

Thanks go to my neighbours, Mr Ajitha, Mrs Usha and their son Vyasa Rambarran, for their unconditional support and for always being there if I needed some help. I really appreciated your support, it meant a lot. Thank you.

Lastly, to my late mother-in-law, who never in her life saw a bride but only her daughter; her actions, feelings, and her personality spoke louder than words. One would argue that she was educated in terms of how she handled any situation. Thank you, Thabizolo.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late twin sister, Bongiwe Cwalisile Xulu, who passed on when she was 18 months old. Your absence led me to doubt my actions and my behaviour, as if there is something missing – but it was you.

It is also dedicated to my late father, Mr Johannes Xulu, who never put his feet in a classroom but worked hard and even used his pension to educate me, and to my late mother. Mrs Tsheliwe Xulu. who never reached secondary school level but instilled in me the love and the value of education. To my daughters, Thobeka, Londiwe and Nothando Msimango – girls, learn a lesson from mummy.

This work is also dedicated to my husband, Israel Msimango, my lovely sister Mrs Nkosingiphile Langa, my brother Bonginkosi Xulu and his wife Mpume Xulu, my brother Saziso Xulu and his wife Dumisile Xulu, for their moral support and their encouragement to complete this project.

This work is also dedicated to my sister-in-law, Mrs Lulu Dlamini, for her unconditional support and for teaching me many unforgettable lessons.

LIST OF FIGURES

1	Data generation procedures	114
2	Grounded one-to-one interview conversations	115
3	Group grounded conversations	118
4	Map of Durban	123
5	Artefacts as visual representations	128
6	My father, my twin sister and I in 1967	143
7	The six steps of Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis model	179
8	Map of the themes that emerged from the data	183
9	Various avenues of support	312

LIST OF TABLES

1	Expenditure on education	2
2	The African Homelands of South Africa	23
3	Some of the preliminary themes found in this study	181
4	Themes at the end of step 4	182
5	The time informants had spent in an educational setting	183

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HoD	Head of Department
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
NMF	Nelson Mandela Foundation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PIRLS	Progress in Instruction of Reading and Literacy
UKZN	University of KwaZulu Natal
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	United States of America

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION		iii
ABSTRACT		iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS		vii
DEDICATION		ix
LIST OF TABLES		x
LIST OF FIGURES		x
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS		xi

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	The purpose and focus of the study	1
1.3	Rationale for the study	2
1.4	Background to the study	5
1.5	Overview of the literature	6
1.5.1	Early missionary education for black people	9
1.5.2	The role played by Bantu education for black people	13
1.6	Objectives of this study	16
1.7	Critical research questions	17
1.8	Significance of this study	17
1.9	Definition of concepts	18
1.9.1	Experience	18

1.9.2 Motherhood 18

1.9.3 Parenthood 19

1.9.4 Rurality 19

1.10 Structure of the thesis 19

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction 21

2.2 Brief introduction of South African Homelands 21

2.2.1 Rurality and poverty 23

2.3 The legacy of rural education 24

2.4 The impact of patriarchal practices 28

2.5 Three interconnected aspects that influence and shape women's experiences 32

2.5.1 Racism 32

2.5.2 Gender 33

2.5.2.1 Gender bias 34

2.5.2.2 Gender inequality 35

2.5.2.3 Gender-based violence 36

2.5.3 Classism 36

2.5.4 The intersection of race, class, and gender 39

2.6 Factors influencing women's pursuit of higher education 40

2.6.1 Globalisation 41

2.6.2 Technology 43

2.6.3	Changing demographics	44
2.7	Access to higher education institutions	45
2.7.1	Experience of adult learners in a higher educational setting	48
2.7.2	The difference between experiences of undergraduate and postgraduate students	52
2.7.3	Impact of age on adult learners' educational experiences	53
2.7.4	Support structures for students	55
2.7.4.1	Support students receive from the university	56
2.7.4.2	Support from the university library	56
2.7.4.3	Use of technology in providing support at HEIs	57
2.8	The impact of lifelong learning	58
2.9	Factors that affect women as postgraduate students	60
2.9.1	Culture	60
2.9.1.1	Cultural expectations	61
2.9.2	Family dependency	63
2.9.3	Motherhood as an isolating experience	65
2.9.3.1	Women and the undetectable burden of care	66
2.9.4	Role strain	68
2.9.5	Work, study and family obligations	70
2.9.6	Power relations	71
2.10	Conclusion	74

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1	Introduction	75
3.2	Feminist theory	75
3.2.1	Criticism of the feminist theory	79
3.3	Theories adopted for this study	80
3.3.1	Poststructural feminist theory	81
3.3.1.1	Theoretical framework of structuralism	81
3.3.1.2	Definition of poststructural feminist theory	84
3.3.1.3	Difference between structuralism and poststructuralism	85
3.3.1.4	Using the lens of poststructuralism feminism	85
3.3.1.4.1	Discourse	86
3.3.1.4.2	Language	87
3.3.1.4.3	Power relations	88
3.3.1.4.4	Subjectivity	89
3.3.1.4.5	Identity	90
3.3.1.4.6	Deconstruction	93
3.3.1.4.7	Knowledge	94
3.3.1.5	Criticism of poststructural feminist theory	95
3.3.2	Intersectional feminism	95
3.3.2.1	Criticism of intersectional feminism	97

3.4	Rationale for the use of feminist theories	98
3.5	Conclusion	99
	CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	
4.1	Introduction	100
4.2	Research design	100
4.2.1	Qualitative research design	101
4.2.1.1	Criticism qualitative research approach	102
4.3	The main approaches to social sciences	102
4.3.1	Ontology	103
4.3.2	Epistemology	105
4.5	Methodology: Life history	106
4.5.1	What is a life history?	107
4.5.2	The origins of life history methodology	107
4.5.3	Reasons for the decline of life history in early sociological study	108
4.5.4	Choosing life history methodology	108
4.5.5	Rationale for the use of life history methodology	109
4.5.6	Criticism of life research methodology	110
4.5.7	Role of the researcher in life history research	110
4.5.8	The connection between life history research, orality, and African ways of knowing and learning	113
4.6	Strategies for collecting data	113
4.6.1	One-to-one grounded interview conversations	115
4.6.2	Criticism of one-to-one grounded interview conversations	117

4.6.3	Group grounded conversations	117
4.6.4	Group guided conversation (artefacts)	120
4..6.4.1	Criticism of group grounded conversations	121
4.6.5	Timeline method	121
4.6.5.1	Criticism of timeline method	122
4.7	Research context	123
4.8	Sampling	125
4.9	Preparing for data transcription and analysis	126
4.9.1	Transcribing the one-to-one grounded interview conversations and group grounded conversations	127
4.9.2	Transcribing conversations around visual representations (artefacts)	127
4.9.3	Data generated by timeline method	128
4.10	Turning transcription into poems	129
4.11	Strategies to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative life history research	130
4.11.1	Credibility	130
4.11.2	Transferability	131
4.11.3	Dependability	132
4.11.4	Confirmability	132
4.12	Ethical considerations in life history research	132
4.12.1	Obtaining informed consent	133
4.12.2	Protection from harm	134
4.12.3	Voluntary participation	134
4.12.4	Violation of privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality	135

4.12.5	Honesty and trust	135
4.13	Reflexivity in life history	136
4.14	Conclusion	139
	CHAPTER FIVE: LIFE HISTORY	
5.1	Prologue	140
5.1.1	The rationale for presenting my life history	140
5.2	Growing up in a rural community	142
5.3	My twin sister	143
5.4	My early childhood	145
5.5	My early rural education	148
5.5.1	Going to school in a rural area	150
5.5.2	The challenges of my schooling in rural areas	151
5.5.3	Semi-rural secondary education	153
5.5.4	Tertiary education in urban areas	156
5.6	Becoming a parent	159
5.6.1	Crossing the boundaries	161
5.6.2	What kept me going	161
5.7	My workplace	162
5.7.1	My sewing business	163
5.7.2	Working in a multilingual context	164
5.7.3	My current workplace	166
5.8	My first visit to the United Kingdom	166

5.9	The impact of having it all	167
5.10	Letters from my children	169
5.11	Why I regard myself as a feminist?	170
5.12	Epilogue	174

CHAPTER SIX: INFORMANTS' LIFE HISTORIES

6.1	Introduction	176
6.2	Thematic analysis	177
6.2.1	Step 1: Familiarising myself with data	179
6.2.2	Step 2: Generating initial codes	180
6.2.3	Step 3: Searching for themes	181
6.2.4	Step 4: Reviewing themes	182
6.2.5	Step 5: Defining and naming themes	183
6.2.6	Step 6: Writing-up and producing the report	184
6.3	Criticism of the thematic analysis approach	185
6.4	Principles of analysing data in life history research	185
6.4.1	Whose voice?	186
6.4.2	Are the data relevant?	187
6.4.3	What possible bias may occur?	187
6.4.4	Does the information that is included comply with the requirements for fair and ethical considerations?	187
6.5	The profiles of rural working mothers involved in the study	188
6.5.1	Lulama	189
6.5.2	Elihle	191

6.5.3 Aphelele 193

6.5.4 Amahle 194

6.5.5 Bongeka 197

6.5.6 Aphiwe 198

6.5.7 Sibusisiwe 200

6.5.8 Luyanda 202

6.6 Conclusion 203

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE IMPACT OF CULTURE ON WOMEN'S LIFE EXPERIENCES

7.1 Introduction 204

7.2 KwaZulu-Natal rural contexts experienced by the informants 204

7.3 Childhood upbringing in rural areas 211

7.4 Cultural beliefs 213

7.5 Stereotyping 218

7.6 Power relations 219

7.7 Gendered language 222

7.8 Survivors of a patriarchal society 224

7.9 Conclusion 227

CHAPTER EIGHT: EFFECTS OF APARTHEID ON WOMEN'S LIFE EXPERIENCES

8.1 Introduction 228

8.2 Rural education 228

8.3 Women and apartheid education 233

8.4 Women experiencing oppression because of apartheid system 239

8.5 Three interrelated categories that affected women because of apartheid and patriarchy 241

8.6 Conclusion 245

CHAPTER NINE: WOMEN'S SOCIAL CHALLENGES

9.1 Introduction 247

9.2 Motherhood as a social construct 247

9.2.1 Motherhood challenges 251

9.2.2 Women experiencing role strain 255

9.2.3 Mothers' survival strategies 258

9.3 Conclusion 261

CHAPTER TEN: EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION

10.1 Introduction 262

10.2. Rurality as an asset in black women's educational experiences 262

10.3 Women's educational experiences 263

10.3.1 Women's experiences of being adult learners in higher education 269

10.3.2 The language barrier 271

10.3.3. Knowledge deficiency 273

10.3.4 Use of technology 275

10.3.5 Support structures 279

10.4 Conclusion 282

CHAPTER ELEVEN: RESILIENT WOMEN AND ENABLING FACTORS

11.1 Introduction 283

11.2 Factors that strengthen resilience 283

11.2.1	Women resistance strategies	284
11.2.2	Empowerment	286
11.2.3	Women as lifelong learners	289
11.2.4	Education as a source of motivation	291
11.2.5	Education is evolving as a source of motivation	293
11.2.6	Women's attitude towards learning	294
11.2.7	Resilient women as change agents	296
11.3	Conclusion	298

CHAPTER TWELVE: CONCLUSION

12.1	Introduction	299
12.2	Discussion of the findings	299
12.3	What are the profiles of rural working mothers in pursuit of higher degrees at a South African university?	301
12.4	What are the experiences of rural working mothers in pursuit of higher degrees at a South African university?	303
12.5	How do women negotiate their multiple identities within the spaces that might be challenging?	305
12.5.1	Lacking voice	309
12.5.2	Accepting university challenges	310
12.6.	What are the sources of motivation for rural working mothers to access higher education?	310
12.7	What kind of support do women receive during their university studies?	311
12.7.1	Support offered by the university	313
12.7.2	Support from the university library	313

12.7.3	Supervision of students' work	315
12.7.4	Support offered by fellow students	316
12.7.5	Support offered by family members	318
12.7.6	Other kinds of support	320
12.8	New knowledge added by this study	321
12.9	Implication of the findings of recommendations	323
12.9.1	Recommendations for university policymakers and curriculum developers	323
12.10	Limitations of the study	324
12.11	Avenues for future research	324
12.12	Lessons learned from this life history research	325
	REFERENCES	327

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A	ETHICAL CLEARANCE	382
APPENDIX B	UKZN GATEKEEPER PERMISSION	383
APPENDIX C	CONSENT LETTERS	384
APPENDIX D	GROUNDED ONE-TO-ONE INTERVIEW-CONVERSATIONS	387
APPENDIX E	GROUP GROUNDED CONVERSATIONS	390
APPENDIX F	GROUP GROUNDED CONVERSATION (ARTEFACTS)	391
APPENDIX G	TIMELINE METHOD EXAMPLE	392
APPENDIX H	EDITOR'S CERTIFICATE	393
APPENDIX I	TURN-IT-IN REPORT	394

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This study reports on the experiences of rural working mothers in pursuit of higher qualifications at a South African university. The intention was not to focus exclusively on one university, but due to challenges in locating knowledgeable individuals who met the criteria for selecting informants, the study ended up with one university. This study explores the successes and obstacles that rural working mothers encounter while studying as postgraduate students. The objective of the study is to understand the personal and educational experiences of these mothers. This perhaps underscores the choice of life history as the predominant research methodology, because it allows participants to tell their stories from their points of view. It also enables the researcher to gain a holistic picture of the phenomenon being studied (Goodson & Sikes, 2001), to allow deployment of a wide range of interconnected methods to get rich written, verbal and visual data, and to provide evidence showing how individuals negotiate their multiple identities as mothers, workers, postgraduate students and black women. The intersectional feminism and poststructural feminism theories have been used as a lens to analyse generated data.

1.2 The purpose and focus of the study

The purpose of the study was to understand the experiences of rural working mothers who were postgraduate students, pursuing higher degrees at a South African university. The injustices perpetrated by the apartheid regime served as an inspiration to some black South African women to seek education, even though they were older, since they had been hindered from access to universities while they were younger. This is why some of them decided to enrol for higher education qualifications later in life. It is important to note that social inequalities of class, race, and gender profoundly shaped the experiences of black students in higher education. The apartheid Bantu Education Act of 1953 was passed for the government of the day to control the education of black people, since Afrikaners, especially members of the National Party, feared that the country was heading towards complete social integration and equalisation (Joubert & Britz, 1986). It is also worth noting that the provision of education in South Africa during apartheid was poor, particularly for the black population and emphatically so for those living in homelands (Wanka, 2014). During the apartheid era, the expenditure on education was unequal for the four racial groups in South Africa. Table 1

below shows the exact amount of money spent on each learner per category. African learners received the lowest share of all of the groups.

Table 1: Expenditure on education, in South African Rands per learner

Year	African	'Coloured'	Indian	White
1982-3	146	498	711	1211
1984-5	227	639	1112	1702
1986-7	369	887	1714	2299
1988-9	656	1221	2067	2882

Source: Blignaut, 1981.

This underinvestment in human capital development in black schools resulted in low levels of skills that have persisted until today (Wanka, 2014). The arduous educational journey of those who were residing in homelands or 'reserve' areas was marked by pain, especially during their primary and secondary school years. Due to this, some black South African female students only enrolled in university studies when they had become women with multiple responsibilities as mothers, caregivers, and workers. The literature demonstrates that since the end of the apartheid era there has been a significant expansion in the enrolment of blacks and women in South African institutions of higher education (Badat, 2011). This study argues that while male students in higher education often focus only on their studies, working female students in particular have to combine different roles. It is therefore the intention of this study to unpack the experiences of postgraduate students who are mothers and workers in pursuit of higher degrees. The focus is on their challenges and the kinds of support they receive during their university studies. The study also explores the negotiation strategies concerning the multiple identities of postgraduate students as working mothers, and those they employed to cope with the various challenges they encountered while studying and working simultaneously.

1.3 Rationale for the study

This study is informed by personal experience. I was inspired by the late Mr Nelson Mandela, the first black South African president, for his fight against the apartheid system, his sacrifices in fighting for social justice and his vocal stance on the multiple oppressions experienced by rural women. President Mandela studied in jail, not for his own benefit, but for the positive gain of South Africans. His experiences opened my eyes to the importance of

education and to realise that the education journey might not be smooth, but in his words, “I never lose, I either win or learn”. This study is also motivated by my professional interest in increasing knowledge and becoming a researcher contributing to knowledge production. Mouton (2015) suggests that the desire to become an expert in a certain field becomes a source of inspiration. Additionally, the challenges I faced as a working mother and postgraduate student from an isolated rural area, studying at an urban university, encouraged me to pursue research on the experiences of other rural working mothers who are also students. I argue that the apartheid system failed me and other black people in many ways concerning access to and quantity and quality of education (Maile, 2008). During the apartheid era many young black people, especially those residing in rural areas, did not have access to higher education. The consequence of this is that after the end of the apartheid era in South Africa many older black people have started pursuing higher education, as they now have better opportunities (Department of Education (DoE), 1997). Higher Education in South Africa observed in 2000 that the proportion of women in higher education has increased three times as fast as that of men, as women were particularly disadvantaged during apartheid. It is for these reasons that I became interested in investigating the experiences of rural working mothers pursuing postgraduate qualifications at a South African university. This is with the hope that the study will be useful to others who have had similar challenges. This investigation is significant, given that the difficulties and experiences of mature women have often been neglected and ignored (Harding, 1991) in education research. I grew up under the apartheid system, which ended in 1994 when I was still at school. The school environment, as well as the political, economic, educational, and social climate of the period contributed to making me who I am today. All these produced a flawed image of me as someone incapable of studying for a higher degree. I find it difficult to narrate how I mustered the strength to oppose the system and encourage myself to persevere. My ambition and dedication have helped me on this painful journey, and I am not ashamed to admit that the ghost of apartheid still haunts me even today.

After completing my high school education, I enrolled at a teachers’ college and obtained a teaching diploma that enabled me to secure a teaching post. Imparting what I had learned at the college to learners was more of a joy than a challenge, as I enjoyed teaching young learners. It was while I was teaching that I was married 24 years ago. I have since had three daughters, and it took me 16 years to reconsider further study. The hardships I faced during the years of my very early education were more numerous than my successes. I grew up in a

remote rural area where there were no early childhood schooling opportunities. The only primary school was far away from my home and only older children who were capable of walking to school were allowed to do so due to the long distance. There were more disadvantages than advantages of going to school. For example, there was no mode of transport except for by foot or on home-made wagons driven by cattle and built especially to transport goods and the elderly to collect their social grants from a shop far from where they reside.

Another problem was that even if a proper transport system was available, we could not afford it as my father was the sole provider and his income was not enough even to support himself. He was working in Durban as an unskilled worker and could only visit us once every few months. As my mother was unskilled and unemployed, our family only survived by ploughing the fields. Like other women in the community, my mother learned how to preserve food for all the seasons in a hard way. The women also learned how to plough alternative fields to ensure that there was food for the family at all times.

On top of this, starting school was a painful experience. I walked barefoot to school on a rocky road and often hurt my toenails throughout my primary school years. My feet were cracked during winter and it was worse if there was frost, as the cracks on my feet bled badly. My school experience was not enjoyable at all. Teachers used corporal punishment as they pleased and no one was especially concerned on behalf of us young children. Failing to understand a concept, story or content led to us being severely punished. I entered school when there was a shortage of classrooms, especially in the Foundation Phase, to such an extent that teachers divided young learners into two groups in each class. Some learners were told to come to school in the morning, and others were told to be at school from 11 o'clock. This also worsened the situation, because children who used to walk together would be separated due to their different learning times.

Finishing primary school was a harrowing struggle, moving from one grade to another and being taught by unqualified teachers. I am good at isiZulu, my mother tongue, but struggle with English, which is the preferred language because of its potential to help people to secure high-paying jobs and for communication purposes in an industrial context. English was, of course, the language of assessment and most subjects were taught in English. Struggling in English therefore affected all my schooling years. Entering higher education did not mean my

English had miraculously improved. I had never been proficient and I am still struggling, even now as a postgraduate student. This is what Badat (1999) refers to when he says that black students mainly "studied under sufferance" at English medium-only institutions.

This is what inspired this investigation into the experiences of rural working mothers in pursuit of higher degrees. To my knowledge, there is a paucity of formal research into the higher educational needs of mature black women in South Africa, and thus little is known about the experiences of rural working mothers in pursuit of higher degrees. This study therefore contributes to the growing body of knowledge regarding the rurality, gender scholarship and higher education needs of mature (black) women in South Africa.

1.4 Background to the study

I have found it impossible to overcome the difficulties of my educational experiences. The majority of teachers who taught me, especially at primary school level, were not trained; they used inadequate resources and relied on the books that were prescribed under the belittling Bantu Education Act (No. 47 of 1953). As a learner, I was expected to be passive and to reproduce only what I was taught. At secondary and tertiary institutions, I failed to fit in because of my weaknesses from primary school. Studying with better-prepared students suggested to me that tertiary education was not meant for students like me. These experiences, as well as heart-breaking difficulties I encountered at university, contributed to my desire to pursue this study. I also experienced severe difficulties in trying to balance work, studying and family responsibilities. The study sought not only to explore how women in similar situations coped with their challenges but also to illuminate the nature of the support they received while studying.

It is because of these reasons that I decided to include as part of the background of this study the apartheid education policy which had affected me. The apartheid policies in South Africa hindered many black learners in their pursuit of quality education. The prevailing acts (such as the Population Registration Act of 1950, the Group Areas Act of 1950, the Location in the Sky Act of 1955, the Bantu Education Act of 1953, and the Separate Universities Act of 1959) envisaged the preservation and protection of indigenous racial groups as separate national entities who had the potential to develop self-respect and mutual respect as divergent races of the country (Joubert & Britz, 1986). The principles entrenched in the apartheid policies meant that the various ethnic groups and sub-groups of black people were settled in their respective areas, resulting in blacks being placed in separate residential areas and the

interests of whites being protected (Joubert & Britz, 1986). The early intent of these policies was to ensure that people of colour and white people would not have equal status in whatever they did.

Of the four racial groups in South Africa, namely Indian, coloured (mixed race), white and black, the black people were widely regarded as the worst enemy of the white minority government, even as early as 1900. This is evident in what Gibson (2004) observed. Gibson strongly believes that apartheid policies disadvantaged black people in many ways and the lack of education among black people caused a lot of harm. For instance, 43% of the population claimed that they were not permitted to associate with people of different races or colour, and only the opposition parties documented the disadvantage that people of colour experienced from apartheid policies.

1.5 Overview of the literature

A review of existing literature revealed that little is known about the experiences of rural working mothers pursuing higher degrees at South African universities. The literature indicates that several studies have investigated the experiences of academic mothers (Pillay, 2007; Walker, 1998; Magwaza, 2009; Terborg-Penn, 2013). These studies all found that balancing work and family is exceedingly difficult. The challenges experienced by women often differ from those experienced by their male counterparts. For example, in a South African study conducted by Pillay (2007), the findings revealed that academic mothers lived their lives in two separate worlds (work and family), and many found that they were not doing as well as they would like in either world.

Literature that talks specifically to the experiences of rural working mothers as postgraduate students is not available. Also, related studies are based on the roles of women. For instance, a study by Mohney and Anderson (1988) on the effect of life events and relationships on adult women's decision to enrol at college, found that female adult learners are more likely to return to school only when their children are older. Women's multiple roles, such as work, study and family responsibilities, present major obstacles when they return to education (Mohney & Anderson, 1988). Over and above this, the literature also refers to how adult students, particularly mothers, negotiate their multiple identities in terms of the pressure of the things they need to do. Fairchild (2003) asserts that adding the student role to the many other roles of women may increase the probability of role strain. Although the term 'role

strain' had already been defined by an earlier scholar (Goodie, 1960), it is a term that will be used in this study as its meaning is most appropriate in terms of women failing to meet the requirements of their different roles.

According to Goodie (1960), role strain is a feeling of having difficulty in fulfilling role obligations. In line with this, Home (1998) insists that role strain is perpetuated by variables of role conflict, which is a simultaneous incompatible demand from two or more sources. The first source is *role contagion,* defined as "a preoccupation with one role while performing another" (Home, 1997). The second source of role strain is *role overload,* which is "having insufficient time to meet all demands" (Home, 1998). However, the challenges experienced by students in higher education settings differ from one individual to another. Researchers found that balancing education and other roles causes a lot of stress to women, and they may experience oppression. For instance, Stanley and Wise (1983) argue that two fundamental interlinked sources produce women's oppression. The first concerns women in the roles of wives and mothers, and the second concerns their role in the family as the main means of "socializing children". These scholars state that in the family, it is women who socialise children and therefore it is women who are responsible for all the "ills of family life". They outline how women are expected to be primary caregivers with all the responsibilities, such as nurturing children, doing housework, and being knowledgeable about what needs to be done, without anybody's help. While this may not be the immediate experience of South African women, many women do experience these challenges. In line with this, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (2003) notes that women continue to be marginalised and oppressed as a result of gender and socio-economic circumstances, and that they are deprived of access to free and quality education.

The literature also reveals that women lack support at higher education institutions (HEIs). Ntiri (2001) insists that another problem women encounter is the lack of institutional support to address the multiple and often conflicting demands of work, family, and school. Edwards (1993), reflecting on her own experiences as a mother, wife, and mature postgraduate student, pointed out that she performed different roles without experiencing any problems when she was focusing on her family and work only. However, she found it difficult when she re-entered education, as both her family and work environment now seemed to require her whole-hearted involvement to the exclusion of the other. The literature displays the major factors that had a detrimental effect on women, and Naidoo and Patel (2009) point out that

women experience pressures in many contexts, which include cultural, domestic, work and professional settings. Similarly, in a recent study conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2010) it was evident that a broad set of social, cultural and political factors is still severely limiting girls' and women's learning opportunities. In line with this, O'Connor (2010) argues that women continue to face barriers mainly enforced by definitions of the sexes, males and male-dominated career paths, female embodiment, and domestic responsibility.

Another element that emerges in the literature relates to a perception of women's subordinate role that is perpetuated by culture. Bradley (2000) reports that culture emphasises that women should be nurturers; they are locked into caretaking roles that have lower rates of economic paying occupations, such as in the humanities and social sciences, whereas males still dominate fields which include business, engineering, and technology. This demonstrates how culture has impacted on female choices in society. Another crucial element that emerged from the literature relates to the trivialisation of women's lives, even when educated. For example, in the Nigerian cultural milieu women's role and status are defined by marriage and motherhood, regardless of their educational credentials. For women in this country to remain unmarried or childless is a social taboo. Within this context of expectations, a professional woman who is single or divorced will experience social stigma, diminished status, and vulnerability to sexual harassment (Sackeyfio, 2013).

Locally, the dominant discourses about rurality are often concerned with aspects such as space, isolation, tribalism, resettlement, and poverty (Balfour, Mitchell, & Moletsane, 2008). In light of the above existing study, the questions that this study endeavoured to answer are: "What are the experiences of rural working mothers in pursuit of postgraduate qualifications at a South African university?", and "How do these black women negotiate their multiple identities as mothers, postgraduate students, and workers at the same time?" It is envisaged that this study may direct future research on the subject, since there is a paucity of knowledge about this phenomenon in the existing literature. My intention with this study was also to contribute to the research fields of gender and rurality and to further encourage an understanding of mature women's experiences by exploring how their social and cultural responsibilities are executed even while they are overloaded with demands associated with family, work, and study.

1.5.1 Early missionary education for black people

The early missionary education plays an important part in understanding the background to how education was introduced in South Africa. Missionaries came from different European countries such as Britain, Germany, France, Norway, and Sweden, and represented various denominations including the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Protestant and Lutheran churches, which set up mission stations in both rural and urban areas in Africa (Christie, 2006). The literature reveals that part of the work of missionaries was to establish schools. This was done for three reasons: firstly, so that people would be educated enough to take part in church activities; secondly, so that missionaries could spread the Western way of life among the 'heathen' Africans; and thirdly, to teach African people certain work values. The rationale behind the work values was that missionaries were preparing black people for the occupations required of a servant, such as a gardener for males and domestic worker for females.

The first mission school for Africans in South Africa was set up on the Cape Eastern Frontier at King William's Town in 1799, and other schools were established in different areas such as Lovedale in Tyume Valley in 1824. In the region formerly known as Natal, Adams College was established in 1853; Inanda Seminary was set up for girls in 1869, and Mariannhill Mission was established in 1882. In the regions known as Transvaal and Orange Free State, missions were set up in 1872 (Christie, 2006). As early as 1884 the government of the day had shown interest in the education of young children, and an ordinance was passed in the Transvaal through which the government introduced free primary education "for children whose parents are of European descent" (Christie, 2006). During this time separate curricula were drawn up for African schools and a system of inspection was introduced. At that time, the colonial authorities brought qualified teachers from Britain to teach white children. The government also provided white people with universities and technical education as well as teacher training facilities and reformatories.

Missionaries, on the other hand, established teacher training colleges that were divided into two groups. The first group of colleges, such as Inanda, Adams College, Lovedale Institution, Healdtown, and others, were among the best in the country, but the other group included those which were often much less known and not as successful (Christie, 2006). The literature also reveals that most schools for blacks had very little money, poor facilities and poorly trained teachers, and attendance was irregular. Black people at this time had no say, as

they were kept uninformed and excluded from education decisions. Due to a lack of knowledge, some black people became the subordinates of whites.

People who had money were able to send their children to the prosperous schools. For example, instead of sending their children to well-resourced public schools, affluent white parents decided to take them to private schools for much better-quality education. It is worth noting that while white education was compulsory between the ages of seven to sixteen and their schooling was free, black education was not compulsory and was ill-provisioned (Christie, 2006). From the above, it becomes clear that segregation and racism were inherently present even before the apartheid era. While white and black learners were arguably doing the same class, they were not given a chance to learn under the same roof. A skilful historian argues that "one cannot doubt that many missionaries were at times guilty of biased and distorted views but reference should be made to those who made a reasonable educational contribution such as Callaway and Boyce" (Campbell, 1815). Additionally, one might argue that if black education was not compulsory, black parents may not see the need to send their young ones to school. Again, white teachers employed in white schools were generally better qualified, class sizes were smaller and the facilities were generally better than those for the other racial groups.

As established above, it becomes clear that from the inception of the schooling system in South Africa and through the system of segregation, white learners did not experience the deprivation that was imposed on black learners. White learners without fail had qualified teachers, while the few black learners in mission schools were the only ones of their race to be taught by qualified teachers. The literature reveals that being aware of the disparities that existed in the South African schooling system, missionaries started playing an important role in the schooling of black learners by establishing more schools. In 1925 there were 2702 mission schools with an enrolment of 215 956, compared to 68 government schools for black people with an enrolment of 7710 (Behr, 1984). Missionaries built separate mission schools and teacher training colleges for whites and blacks. However, their educational goals were contradictory. On the one hand, some believed that black learners should be given the same education as whites, while on the other hand, some thought that the curriculum should be adapted to take local conditions and customs into account, and prepare black students for living in their societies which, it was believed at that time, would not require much academic education (Behr, 1984). From this, one can argue that black education was intended to

prepare black learners to become trained labourers, with inadequate knowledge that would make them unable to secure well-paying jobs. Indeed, the Job Reservation Clause made it clear that certain kinds of work would be reserved for certain population groups (Joubert & Blitz, 1986).

With the introduction of the Bantu Education Act of 1953, all schools for Africans had to be registered with the government. As a result of this Act, almost all mission schools closed down, and this was the time that the apartheid system formally began (Morris, 2012). The Bantu Education Act of 1953 made the practice of mission education virtually impossible due to financial and political constraints (Lewis, 2007). Another scholar points out that the Bantu Education Act of 1953 was the Act that enabled the apartheid government to take over schools from the churches, to provide blacks only with an inferior education that was designed to turn them into members of a compliant working class (Pieterse, 2001). In supporting this sentiment, Manala (2013) states that it is clear that those who had tasted good and equal church education would be nostalgic for that education in a country dominated by a hostile apartheid ideology.

According to Christie (2006), this obnoxious Act gave the following options to the missions: rent or sell the school and hostel to the DoE; rent or sell the school and retain the hostel, with a subsidy from the DoE; or close the teacher training colleges, and continue as primary and secondary schools. In spite of the risks, some missionaries resisted handing over their schools. They encountered some problems, since the government stipulated that teacher training could only take place in teacher training centres under the control of the Education Department. They were told that the qualifications of teachers trained in non-government teacher training colleges would not be recognised. Consequently, most of the missionary schools closed down, but students who were fortunate enough to attend these schools received a quality education. Their command of English was very good, as they learned from English speakers. Their English was called ‘Royal English’ because some of the teachers were recruited from Europe.

The high standard of education in the missionary schools was evident among some prominent black people who had attended these schools, such as former South African President Nelson Mandela and the retired leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi. These prominent leaders were among those fortunate to benefit from mission school

education under apartheid. Mandela received his early education at a Methodist mission school and matriculated from Clarkebury Mission School. Four years later he graduated from Healdtown, a strict Methodist college. For his part, Buthelezi attended high school at Adams College from 1944 to 1947 (Gastrow, 1987). Mission schools were thus able to produce confident, well-spoken, critical thinkers and politically conscious black people who fought for the rights and freedom of all South Africans.

Besides this, it is worth noting that before 1948 there was a system of segregated and unequal education in South Africa (Christie, 2006). While white education was progressing smoothly, black education faced several challenges (such as shortages of money) which led the system to suffer in many ways; there were not enough schools, nor enough teachers (Christie, 2006). Those black learners that attended school encountered many challenges. Boys and girls did not have equal experiences at school, and nor did they have equal chances in life after school (Christie, 2006). As a result, women were – and still are – less likely than men to rise to higher positions, and usually get lower pay than men. Women often perform low-paid jobs like cooking, cleaning, laundering, or child care, and in the professions they are mostly teachers, nurses and social workers, all caring professions with a lower status than those such as doctors and lawyers (Christie, 2006). Concerning Matric Certificates, the Department of Education and Training in 1981 stated that:

> the same standards apply in Black schools as in the schools of other education departments concerning syllabuses and examinations. The same core syllabuses are used and the Joint Matriculation Board requires the same standards from black pupils for university entrance as from any other pupil in South Africa.

This statement was derisive, matching black learners who received an inferior education with those who received a quality education with adequate resources and taught by qualified teachers. The above information makes it clear that segregation and discrimination were the norms of both the missionaries and the apartheid system. With this in mind, it becomes apparent that mission schools will continue to play an important role as long as the history of especially black people is the focus of research (Lewis, 2007). This study aims at understanding the experiences of black rural working mothers in pursuit of higher degrees at a South African university, and it is hoped that it will contribute to the knowledge building and scholarship of Women's Studies.

1.5.2 The role played by Bantu education for black people

I present this discussion because I want the reader to understand that the context of there now being so many adult learners in South African education has historical roots. The closure of some mission schools had negative outcomes for black students. Belyakov, Cremonini, Mfusi, and Rippner (2009) argue that the at-risk groups of black students today were created by yesterday's regimes. It is important also to highlight the following legislation that was enacted during the apartheid era: Group Areas Act of 1950, Bantu Authorities Act of 1951, Bantu Education Act of 1953 and Separate Universities Act of 1959 all ensured that blacks received inferior and degraded education. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 was designed to disadvantage black people and was, in the eyes of black people, the most offensive and oppressive of the apartheid policies. This policy resulted in segregated education. Black learners received inferior education while white, Indian and coloured learners received a quality education. Christie (2006) argues that:

> the schooling system in apartheid South Africa was never designed to bring population groups together. Separating schools based on the ethnic orientation was part of an overall plan for the social, economic and political development of the white population during apartheid. Schools were part of creating and maintaining an awareness of separateness and difference.

It was the ideology of the apartheid regime that natives (black people) should not be exposed to a school system that would draw them away from their communities and 'mislead' them by showing them the "green pastures of European society" in which they were not allowed to graze (Rose & Tunmer, 1975). In the early years of Bantu Education most black African learners attended school in rural areas (Christie, 2006). It is also important to note that the Bantu Education Act did not affect only those living in rural areas, but also those residing in urban areas. In other words, for black learners the aim of education at that time was not to develop learners' personalities and talents or prepare them for an active role as adults in society. It is understood that the Bantu Education Act was implemented for the following reasons only: 1) to ensure that black African people received inadequate, inferior education designed to prepare them for subordinate roles in society; 2) to train black females to become childminders and scrubbers of floors for white families; and 3) to train the black youth to be "*hewers of wood and weeders of fields*" (Truscott, 1994).

Unquestionably, most black people residing in rural areas suffered the consequences of this Act in multiple and treacherous ways. From 1922 up to the end of apartheid in 1994, the

curriculum for black education was of the poorest standard. It made the learners' home language the medium of instruction and the teaching of it as a subject compulsory in all primary classes (Pells, 1954). It became clear that content taught could not take black people any further than becoming labourers for white people with extremely low wages in return for hard work. The Bantu Education Policy treated blacks as perpetual children in need of parental supervision by whites, which greatly limited black students' vision of their place in the broader South African society (Hartshorne, 1992). The educational philosophy for black people under the apartheid regime was in stark contrast to what Molteno (1984) believes schooling should accomplish:

> The school is South Africa's most significant arena for the mediation and management of the different kinds of knowledge a child will need in becoming an adult. [Knowledge comprises] … the abstract knowledge of reasoning, the social knowledge about relations and relationships, the practical knowledge, the knowledge required to manipulate the physical environment, the personal knowledge of the self and the general knowledge required to navigate one's way into adulthood.

Being deprived of knowledge is why black people were highly vocal about the real aims of apartheid education. They viewed school as a place that would deprive them of the knowledge that might benefit them and enable them to obtain better-paying jobs and sustain a good standard of living. Indeed, black schools seemed to exist only to produce semi-literate labourers. The Protestant church also objected to Bantu Education, believing it to be "education for subordination" that "denied blacks the right to participate as equals in areas outside the reserves" (Maile, 2008).

Significantly, there was a high drop-out rate in black schools. Most black learners did not stay beyond lower primary school (i.e., four years of education), which means they had very little education. Over and above this, those girls who did attend school could not easily proceed to higher education levels (Christie, 2006). It was mainly the boys who went on to secondary and higher education, and this affected the work women could do and the status they could achieve (Christie, 2006). Besides that, less than 1% of the African population succeeded in obtaining a matriculation (formerly known as Standard 10) certificate. McNamara believes that no social, political or economic problem can be solved without adequate education (Christie, 2006). Echoing this sentiment, Fiske and Ladd (2004) confirmed that there was no doubt that the repeating of grades and drop-out rates among black students were high and that the chance of black students achieving a matric (Standard

10) qualification was almost nil as a result of unjust apartheid policies and legislation. The apartheid legacy left the country with an education system that was characterised by "fragmentation, inequity in provision, a crisis of legitimacy and, in many schools, the demise of a culture of learning as well as resistance to changing the way things have been done in the past" (Maile, 2008). He notes further that:

> Apartheid led to an education system characterised by racial, regional and gender inequality. Neglecting the quality of African education led to the disintegration of learning environments and the demise of a culture of learning and teaching in many black schools. This was exacerbated by the curricula which had little relevance to the students.

Moreover, Behr and MacMillan (1971) argue that in all provinces "black secondary schools prepared pupils only for the junior certificate examination" (formerly known as Standard 8). Only a small number of schools created opportunities for their pupils to write the matriculation examination. For instance, in 1971 more than 75% of black children of school-going age were not attending school. There were thousands of potential pupils who were eager to obtain an education, but who could not be accommodated by the system due to a lack of facilities. De Clercq (1984) confirms this:

> The past few years have been a rapid expansion of secondary schooling for Africans which unfortunately was not accompanied by a corresponding increase in school budgets nor the supply of qualified teachers. This resulted in overcrowding of classrooms and a general drop in the quality of schooling and academic performance.

The above sentiment gives a clear picture of the challenges faced by black learners during the apartheid era. The question that presents itself is: How did black students make it to university at all, given the difficulties of their earlier educational experiences? Indeed, the majority of students did not make it to university level due to these difficulties. The ending of apartheid in 1994 together with the new South African Schools Act and the National Education Policy of 1997 brought hope, because the new policies addressed the needs of learners, regardless of race, gender, ability, sexual orientation or creed, from preschool to university. Dhunpath and Vithal (2014) point out in this regard that the importance of succeeding in providing access and growing higher education cannot be over-emphasised. The South African *National Development Plan 2030* (National Planning Commission, 2012) highlights that universities are key players in developing a nation. As such, they fulfil three main functions in society:

(a) Universities educate and train people with high-level skills for the employment needs of the public and private sector;

(b) Universities are the dominant producers of new knowledge, and they critique information and find new local and global applications for existing knowledge; and

(c) Given the country's apartheid history, higher education provides opportunities for social mobility and simultaneously strengthens equity, social justice, and democracy.

It therefore becomes clear that HEIs have a critical role to play in ensuring that they provide educational programmes that address the needs of those individuals who were left behind due to the legacy of apartheid. Notably, the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) policy (DoE, 2003) was designed as a framework for providing basic education, especially to targeted groups of organised labour in the formal economy; self-employed and under-employed people; unemployed youths and adults in urban areas and settlements; unemployed people in rural areas; and women who are heads of households in both urban and rural areas.

Belyakov et al. (2009) confirm that since the demise of apartheid in South Africa the entire system has been focusing primarily on removing barriers to learning and providing access to higher education for black students, disadvantaged groups, and women. However, while the government attempts to establish some literacy programmes for adult women, substantial obstacles remain in the way of their participation; for example, home chores continue to be the task of women. In reality, most programmes do not take into account lack of childcare provision, concurrent family responsibilities, and poor health (UNESCO, 2010). It is a fact that whether women are studying or working, childrearing and family care remain their responsibility. While the South African democratic government encourages people, including women, to further their studies, women's social roles may be a huge obstacle to their journey to better education. It is these challenges that this study sought to unpack.

1.6 Objectives of this study

Given the lack of literature on the experiences of rural working mothers in pursuit of higher degrees at South African universities, the need for this study is apparent. It is this silence in the existing literature that this study hoped to address, and through which the objectives for the study have been formulated as follows:

- To determine the profile of rural working mothers who pursue postgraduate qualifications at a South African university;

- To unpack the educational and social experiences of these women;
- To explore how these women, negotiate their multiple identities as working mothers, wives, partners and students; and
- To establish the kind of support these rural working mothers receive during their studies.

1.7 Critical research questions

The literature makes it clear that people have sufficient knowledge to explain everything about their lives and what they do (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). As such, it is important to highlight that the multiple complexities of women's lives need to be taken into account "if feminist qualitative researchers are to address enduring and emergent questions of gendered social justice" (Olesen, 2011). Indeed, research that starts with women's lives yields a more accurate picture of how a given society functions (Brooks, 2007). Such research also uncovers the necessary ingredients for social change. A researcher should ask questions that have novelty in their curiosity, and although the research should eventually link to what others have done, it should also be something one can call their own (Stake, 2010). Additionally, poststructural feminist research makes knowledge and its production the focus of the inquiry (Barret, 2005). In adhering to the above sentiment, the critical, central research question for this study were as follows:

- What is the profile of rural working mothers who also pursue postgraduate qualifications at a South African university?
- What are the educational and social experiences of these rural working mothers?
- How do these women negotiate their multiple identities as working mothers who may also be wives and partners, and students?
- What kind of support do these rural working mothers receive during their university studies?

1.8 Significance of the study

South African universities accommodate students from all of the racial and ethnic groups in the country. Some of these students come from urban and some from rural areas. These students have different learning challenges and barriers emanating from a range of contributing factors, such as historical background, cultural beliefs and values, and socio-economic status. It is therefore hoped that this study will:

- contribute to a better understanding of the experiences of rural working mothers studying at university; and
- inform higher education policy relating to the needs of adult learners and particularly the needs of those learners from rural areas.

As literature that addresses the experiences of rural working mothers who pursue academic advancement is virtually non-existent, this study aims to contribute to the pool of knowledge about this phenomenon. The aim of HEIs is to empower students with the necessary skills and knowledge to become productive, independent and competent workers. I am deeply convinced that this study may enable working mothers with a rural background, who pursue postgraduate qualifications, to learn from the strategies used by other postgraduate students to cope with their experiences as mothers, women, and workers concurrently, thereby offering resistance against women oppression and poverty.

1.9 Definition of concepts

This section deals with clarification of the key concepts applicable to this study. The use of these concepts in this study served three purposes: first, these concepts define the main features of the research; second, they will help the reader to gain a clear understanding of the academic discourse as they illuminate meanings relevant to this study; and finally, they were used to determine which questions had to be asked and how empirical procedures were to be used as tools in search of answers to the research questions (De Vos & Fouché, 2002).

1.9.1 Experience

Although the term ‘experience’ has been in use for many decades, it means different things to different scholars. According to De Lauretis (1984) experience is “the process by which all social beings’ subjectivity is constructed”. In this study, the term will be used to understand the challenges and trials as well as the triumphs of rural working mothers engaged in postgraduate studies.

1.9.2 Motherhood

According to Arendell (2000), motherhood is “the social practice of nurturing and caring for dependent children.” In this project, motherhood refers to the experiences and challenges of female parents who either have their own or are raising other people’s children as their dependents.

1.9.3 Parenthood

Parenthood can be defined as “a transition stage in the family life cycle, raising issues of gender and sex roles” (McLeish, 2004). In this study it refers to the role played by each parent and specifically illuminates the experiences of rural working mothers as female parents.

1.9.4 Rurality

Haynes and Bentham (1982) and Rousseau (1991) define rurality in terms of remoteness from major centres of population, while Surty (2011) defines it as “relatively underdeveloped places, lack infrastructure for sanitation, roads, and other transport, lack electricity and information and communication technologies (ICT) and, as a result, schools are poor and disadvantaged”. In this study, ‘rurality’ is used to describe places remote from urban residential and business areas, where the working mothers grew up and received their early childhood education. It is also used to understand the role played by rural education as a stepping stone for the attainment of secondary schooling as well as undergraduate and postgraduate degrees by rural working mothers.

1.10 Structure of the thesis

Chapter One orients the reader by presenting the purpose and the focus of this study, the rationale for the study, and the background. It also includes an overview of the related literature, the research questions, the significance of this project, and a clarification of key concepts. Finally, it provides the reader with a summary of the structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two presents a comprehensive review of the related literature in an attempt to illuminate the discourses of other academics about the phenomenon under study.

Chapter Three presents the theoretical framework underpinning this study.

Chapter Four discusses the study’s research methodology, its research design, data generation tools, and data analysis process as well as the different modes of narrative inquiry employed.

Chapter Five provides an account of my personal life history following the life history methodology that was adopted in this study. It gives an account of my early childhood experiences, my early school years in a remote rural area and my semi-rural high school

experiences. It also includes my experiences of living in a remote rural area with my grandparents and my parents, and my workplace experiences.

Chapter Six is organised into two sections: the first discusses how data were analysed and the principles of analysing data in life history research, and the second presents the profiles of the informants who participated in this study.

Chapter Seven presents the role of culture in women's life stories. It discusses how informants were brought up, their cultural beliefs and the four factors that have been perpetuated by culture to shape women's social experiences.

Chapter Eight presents the effects of apartheid on women's life experiences. It discusses their early rural education and the three interrelated categories of apartheid that affected women.

Chapter Nine presents women's social challenges, motherhood experiences, and the impact of role strain as mothers, workers, and students at the same time. It also discusses the strategies they employed to survive as mothers.

Chapter Ten discusses the experiences of women in higher education settings.

Chapter Eleven presents women's resilience and the factors that contributed to strengthening their resilience.

Chapter Twelve presents an overview of the research process. It revisits the research questions to determine whether they were answered. A summary of the findings is presented and recommendations for future research are offered.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The study of the related literature was embarked on for two reasons: firstly, to provide information relevant to the topic (Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2007), and secondly, to explore what other researchers have said about the phenomenon under study to identify gaps in existing knowledge and fill these as a contribution to new scholarly knowledge. The legacies of rural education on the life experience of rural people, the significance of the impact of apartheid on South African citizens and the difficulties in accessing HEIs among rural dwellers, the experiences of adult learners at higher education settings, differences between undergraduates and postgraduates, and the impact of age and lifelong learning will be explored in this chapter. Factors influencing women to participate in higher education and those that affect women as postgraduate students will be explained. Finally, the literature is reviewed to reflect on what is not yet known about the topic under study and to answer the question: Where does this research fit into this prior body of work? (Tummons & Duckworth, 2013). The brief introduction of the South African homelands followed by the impact of poverty in rural areas will be discussed below.

2.2 Brief introduction of South African homelands

The literature has documented that although 70% of the people of South Africa are blacks representing considerable ethnic diversity, neither the size of population nor cultural identity has been considered a criterion in locating homelands, the apartheid government designated ten preponderantly rural areas as homelands (Butler, Rotberg, & Adams, 1977). These homelands were: Transkei for Xhosa speaking people; Ciskei for Xhosas; KwaZulu for IsiZulu speakers; Lebowa for Pedi and Ndebele's; Venda for Venda speakers; Gazankulu for Shangaan and Tsonga speakers; Bophuthatswana for Tshwana speakers; QwaQwa for Sotho speakers; Swazi for SiSwati speakers; and Ndebele for Southern Ndebele speakers, see Table 2 below.

In homelands, 53% of the black population were confined to 13% of the most underdeveloped and increasingly crowded land far away from economic activity (Platzky & Walker, 1985). Horrell (1973) compiled the table below depicting the South African homelands enacted by the apartheid regime without any further provisions for ensuring proper infrastructure they deserve as human beings. Due to this bad intention, Jensen and

Zenker viewed homeland as a system that perpetuated enormous misfortunes (Jensen & Zenker, 2015).

Ethnic Composition, [a] Size, and Stages of Self-Government of the Homelands				
Homeland	*People*	*Land Area (sq. miles)*	*Date of Establishment of Legislative Assembly*	*Date of Self-Government*
Transkei	Xhosa	14,178	1963	1963
Ciskei	Xhosa	3,547	1971	1972
KwaZulu	Zulu	12,141	1972	1976 (?)[b]
Lebowa	Pedi/N. Ndebele	8,549	1971	1972
Venda	Venda	2,333	1971	1973
Gazankulu	Shangaan/Tsonga	2,576	1971	1973
Bophuthatswana	Tswana	14,494	1971	1972
Basotho QwaQwa	S. Sotho	144	1971	1975
Swazi	Swazi	818	– –c	– –c
S. Ndebele	S. Ndebele	?	– –d	– –d
		58,813		
Source: Muriel Horrell, *The African Homelands of South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1973) and the annual reports *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1969–1975).				

Table 2: The African Homelands of South Africa

While black people were moved into homelands, actually the homelands were impoverished, backward, overcrowded, and unhealthy (Butler, Rotberg, & Adams, 1977). For example, much of KwaZulu homeland was hilly or mountainous and best suited for use as pasture or forest, and some parts are suited for producing vegetables for urban markets. Butler, Rotberg and Adams (1977) found that KwaZulu has a poorly developed infrastructure, as a result, this hinders the development of agriculture and industry in this homeland. Despite this, when comes to the provision of education, Robert McNamara, the erstwhile President of the World Bank, noted in 1982:

> "I have seen very few countries in the world that have such inadequate educational conditions, but I was shocked at what I saw in some of the rural areas and the homelands" (Christie, 2006).

His statement was based on the poor infrastructure he had witnessed in the country. Indeed, rural areas in South Africa are underdeveloped, remote, isolated places that were specially reserved for black people, as is still the case today. The socio-economic conditions of these places are generally challenging, as inhabitants lack job opportunities and living standards are poor.

The arduous educational journey of those who were residing in homelands or 'reserve' areas was marked by pain, especially during their primary and secondary school years. This underinvestment in human capital development in black schools resulted in low levels of skills that have persisted until today (Wanka, 2014, p.3). The literature demonstrates that since the end of the apartheid era there has been a significant expansion in the enrolment of blacks and women in South African institutions of higher education (Badat, 2011: 9). However, it must be highlighted that post-apartheid brought huge changes in the lives of South African black majority people. The democratic government work hard in an attempt to eradicate the pains of the past and empower black people. Due to poor conditions in homelands, this prompted the black women participated in this study to leave their homeland and enrolled in urban university as postgraduate students while they were older, something they were hindered to do previously. The time they enrolled in the university they had multiple responsibilities as mothers, caregivers, and workers. This study argues that while male students in higher education often focus only on their studies, working female students in particular have to combine different roles. It is therefore the intention of this study to unpack the experiences of postgraduate students who are mothers and workers in pursuit of higher degrees. The focus is on their challenges and the kinds of support they receive during their university studies. The study also explores the negotiation strategies concerning the multiple identities of postgraduate students as working mothers, and those they employed to cope with the various challenges they encountered while studying and working simultaneously.

2.2.1 Rurality and poverty

The body of work demonstrates that South Africa has a history of marginalisation and exclusion based on race, land dispossession and domination of imperialist economic power through seizure of mineral wealth (Oyedemi, 2018). Students from rural contexts are one of the historically underrepresented groups entering higher education, who have experienced unique forms of a disadvantage as a direct result of coloniality and the continuing legacy of apartheid (Timmis et al., 2019). In this regard, one might argue that indeed a lot of challenges experienced by students from rural areas are due to the prevailing conditions in the areas they come from. One of these challenges is poverty, which people living in rural areas still experience even after 26 years of democracy. Sulla and Zikhali (2018) insists that by any measure, South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world and that inequality has increased since the end of apartheid in 1994. This author further notes that inequality of

opportunity, measured by the influence of race, parents' education, parents' occupation, place of birth and gender on opportunities, is rife. The term "geography of race" was coined by Gordon (2015) to describe the relationship between race, geography, land, and rurality, where the white populations has more geographical space than people of colour. However, it does not end with white people having more geographical space; the infrastructure and all other facilities assigned to areas where white people live are of the highest standard, while rural areas still lack these resources.

Additionally, so many South Africans live in poverty in a middle-income country because of apartheid (Alexander, 2019). Apartheid was a crude attempt at social engineering designed to make black South Africans a cheap and plentiful source of labour. Instead, it excluded most people from any meaningful economic participation and made South Africa poorer than it should have been. As such, the inheritance of a huge group of poorly endowed and marginalised rural poor has greatly increased the difficulty and costs of post-apartheid social delivery and effective poverty alleviation (Leibbrandt, Woolard, & Woolard, 2009). While poverty has many dimensions, its two fundamental aspects are the lack of economic power owing to low income and assets, and the lack of socio-political power, as reflected in limited access to social services, opportunities and information, often by the denial of human rights and the practice of discrimination (Van der Westhuizen & Swart, 2015). Also, poverty advances poor health, lack of opportunities, high school dropout rates and many other social ills experienced by people living in rural areas in particular. Currently, the fourth industrial revolution brings even more opportunities that will never be enjoyed by those black people living in rural areas under the most atrocious levels of poverty. The next section will explore the legacy of education in rural arears.

2.3 The legacy of rural education

The legacy of rural education which women experience cannot be understood without a clear background of what rurality is, as a space connected to rural people. Rurality, as defined in Chapter One, refers to "places which are relatively underdeveloped, lack infrastructure for sanitation, roads and other transport, lack electricity and ICT and, as a result, schools are poor and disadvantaged" (Surty, 2011). Gardiner (2008: 3) contends that villages and rural communities are difficult to reach. Similar conditions are found in rural areas in different parts of the globe. For instance, research shows that in Canada rurality is strongly associated with places of stagnation and with a kind of humiliation (Corbett, 2006). According to

Corbett, Canadian rural communities remain caught up in national and regional narratives that complicate problems of cultural, economic and social development. Similar challenges manifest in South African rural areas with a history of racial discrimination. These areas face challenges of unemployment, poorly developed infrastructure, limited access to services (health, social welfare), and the looming presence of HIV and AIDS with their related loss, grief and caretaking responsibilities (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2012).

It is crucial to highlight that people living in rural areas owned only 13% of the land of South Africa, while the other 87% was owned by whites who mainly lived in urban areas that were known under apartheid to be the places where whites resided (Gardiner, 2008). According to Cloke and Johnstone (2005) "the differences between rural and urban areas go beyond the materiality of the land into more subjective 'deep-seated differences' of associations and identifications." As a result, people in South African rural areas are limited and excluded from fundamental opportunities and resources such as financially secure employment, well-established infrastructure and the different modes of transport found in urban areas. Furthermore, it is of utmost importance to highlight that the vast majority of school-going children in South Africa live in rural areas (Nelson Mandela Foundation (NMF), 2005). With this in mind, it becomes clear that – for good or bad – the impact of rural education affects the majority of South Africa's young learners. Whereas Carmichael (1982) defines rural schooling as "education provided for school-aged children residing in rural areas," a study by the NMF reveals that rural education and its development are deeply connected with the problems of poverty in rural areas (2005). The NMF study shows that the relative scarcity of resources, and in some cases the desolation and poverty of rural communities, seriously limit the developmental possibilities that can be achieved through education. Besides, the physical conditions in rural schools are inadequate, and learner performance in comparison to schools elsewhere is generally weak (Gardiner, 2008).

In the United States of America (USA) rural education is viewed as an interaction of the characteristics of sparsely populated communities with the traditional rural values and beliefs of their inhabitants (Carmichael, 1982). These characteristics include a belief in free public education and, in many instances, the poor economic status of its residents. Because of these characteristics, rural education tends to offer a more limited curriculum than in metropolitan areas; offer fewer libraries and fewer programmes for special populations; and employ few support personnel such as counsellors and curriculum specialists (Carmichael, 1982).

Expanding on this, Alcázar, Rogers, Chaundhury, Hammer and Kremer (2006) note that in Peru the greatest challenge faced by rural schooling is that of teacher absenteeism. They argue that teachers in rural areas lack intrinsic motivation, noting that teacher absenteeism is much higher in Peru's poorest and remotest communities. They believe that variables that contribute to increased absence include poor working conditions; teachers having fewer ties to the school's community; contract teaching; and the absence of private competition. In India, the lack of infrastructure is identified as being largely responsible for the poor state of schooling, despite the significant resources being deployed annually by the Indian Government for rural elementary education in the country (Ward, 2007).

In South Africa in the mid-1990s a person was deemed qualified to teach if she/he had a Senior Certificate plus three years of additional training. However, the teacher audit in 1995 established that almost a quarter (24.3%) of all teachers were underqualified to teach based on this criterion (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). Even so, that figure understates the magnitude of the problem, because many teachers received very poor training at teachers' colleges under the control of the homeland governments. With this in mind, it becomes clear that there is a correlation between learners' performance and the problem of incompetent teachers. Also, Corbett (2006) contends that rural places "have been left behind, since the history of rural education is a history of educating the country out of people and educating people out of the country." Equally, rural education was subject to several challenges associated with the low socio-economic status of rural areas as well as cultural, social and educational factors (NMF, 2005). This study also noted that rural education lagged behind educational development in other parts of the country, even though a vast majority of school-going children lived in rural areas. Echoing this, Ndandani (2005) states that:

> [Assuming] that in 1995 a child starts in an urban school and another one starts in a remote rural school during the same year, and assuming that they progress successfully from Grade 1 to Grade 10, [it is a fact that] the quality of education these two kids [will] have received [will be] as different as a hut in the rural village and a double-story house in the suburb of Sandton in Johannesburg where the black elite now reside. In two years, these two kids will be completing Grade 12 and the scenario of access to tertiary institutions presents yet another grim picture of unfairness and veiled injustice to the rural learner.

These challenges that were obvious during apartheid still exist even now, after 26years of democracy, and education in black schools is characterised by the repetition of grades, drop-out rates and poverty, especially for those in rural areas (Howley & Howley, 2010; Maltazan,

2006). These factors are intricately related to the poor performance of some learners receiving education in rural areas, where fewer young people between 25 and 34 years of age have completed schooling than in urban areas (DoE, 2006a). Also, more than double the number of urban students than rural learners achieved a post-school qualification. Furthermore, Bryant (2010) argues that one of the primary obstacles of rural education is wilful ignorance, particularly on the part of the government, of the conditions in rural areas and rural schools. This ignorance is also evident in other countries such as Canada where, according to Corbett (2006), education authorities "do not know a great deal about rural schools and how they operate in their communities, partly because they are largely absent from most Canadian educational policy discussions." It is therefore clear that some rural learners are more likely to struggle or leave school than their urban counterparts.

In South Africa, parents in many rural communities lack the professional help and support, governance structures, books and learning materials that they need to provide the necessary support and care for their children, who suffer the consequences in differing ways. Rural schools lack qualified teachers and adequate resources for subjects like Computer Literacy, Life Sciences, and Physical Sciences. Apart from prescribed textbooks, rural areas also lack additional teaching and learning resources. Other problems include high numbers of learners per class, language barriers, poor socio-economic status of parents, and minimal support from the DoE (NMF, 2005; Nkosi & Nkosi, 2012). According to the Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study (PIRLS), 43% of Grade 5 learners in South African schools have not developed the basic skills required for reading at equivalent international Grade 4 levels (Howie, van Staden, Tshele, Dowse, & Zimmerman, 2012). The bad performance of rural schools is the reason why many rural parents now prefer to relocate their children to urban areas for their education. However, even if parents decide to move their children from a rural to an urban school, the reality is that moving to the city for further education "is a move that requires an 'emotional hurdle' not everyone can achieve, and thus the gaps between opportunities for rural and urban people continue to deepen" (Alston & Kent, 2003). In light of the above, it has become clear that gaps in the provision for the educational needs of rural communities cause serious damage in the lives of learners, that are either irreparable or will take many years to address. The lack of services such as running water, electricity, proper roads and poor infrastructure forces one to wonder how people living in such conditions survived. This leads to a deep understanding of the significance of the impact of apartheid on

the South African citizen. Next, I present the impact of patriarchal practices on black rural women's life experiences.

2.4 The impact of patriarchal practices

The term 'patriarchy' is derived from the Greek word *patriakhés* which means 'father of a race' or 'chief of a race', a person who rules over a family, and has immediate connotations of power, family-relations and social hierarchy (Ademiluka, 2018). According to Igbelina-Igbokwe (2013) the term 'patriarchy' was originally used to describe the position of the father as a household head, but it has progressively been used to refer to the systemic organisation of male supremacy and female subordination. Patriarchy ensures and maintains the status quo of 'power over' orchestrated by gendered roles/division of labour where male authority and power are dominant (Igbelina-Igbokwe, 2013). The term 'patriarchy' has been defined by intellectuals in different ways. For example, Andermahr, Lovell, and Wolkowitz (2002) defined patriarchy as "the father and ruler of a family or tribe, and metaphorically, of the church, or religious order" while Mitchell (1974) described it as "the rule of the father over his wife, immature children, and any other household dependants". To Walby (1990: 20), patriarchy is "a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women". This scholar breaks patriarchy into six component structures, namely: husbands' exploitation of their wives' labour; relations within waged labour; the state; male violence; sexuality; and culture. Walby further argues that the combination of these components gives the concept of patriarchy the flexibility it requires. In other words, patriarchy cannot be viewed as an individual figure ruling the family, but it can also include the structures that enable the ruler to control the subordinates without having fear of being punished. The first patriarchal structure is that of the household. Walby (1990) argues that this structure is a site in which men oppress women, in that men benefit from women's domestic labour. This author further believes that it is through patriarchal production relations in the household that women's household labour is expropriated by their husbands or cohabitees (Walby, 1990). For example, women may be supported financially in exchange for providing their labour, especially those not engaged in wage labour. The second patriarchal structure within the economic level is that of patriarchal relations within paid work. This structure excludes women from the better forms of work and segregates them into subordinate jobs which are deemed to be less skilled. Regarding the third structure, which is manifested by the state, Walby found that the state is patriarchal, capitalist and racist. The

state as a site of struggle has a systematic bias towards patriarchal interests in its policies and actions (Walby, 1990). The fourth structure is that of male violence. In this structure male against a female violence is considered to be part of a system of controlling women, unlike the conventional view which holds that rape and battering are isolated instances caused by a psychological problem in a few men (Walby, 1990). Male violence against women is systematically condoned and legitimated by the state's refusal to intervene against it, except in exceptional instances, and exacted through the practices of rape, wife-beating, sexual harassment, and so on. The fifth structure is that of patriarchal relations in sexuality. Walby (1990) argues that sexual harassment is a continuum of actions that may extend to the use of physical force. The threat of physical force may also be relevant in that fear of it often prevents women from walking in public spaces after dark, with consequent effects on access to jobs that require this, such as shift work. The sixth structure is that of patriarchal cultural institutions. This structure is composed of a set of institutions that create the representation of women with a patriarchal gaze in a variety of areas, such as religion, education and the media. The structures are emergent properties of practices: any specific empirical instance will embody the effects, not only of patriarchal structures but also of capitalism and racism.

The oppressive effects of patriarchy can be seen in politics, educational institutions, and public governance. For example, Trebilcot (1984) shows how mothering within patriarchal societies "helps to perpetuate the dominant values and hierarchical arrangements of the society". Mothers are expected to transfer these values during socialisation and are required to support the patriarchal system through their caring activities. Furthermore, Saul (2003) argues that the expectation that women will be caregivers makes it difficult for women to pursue many occupations and, conversely, does a great deal to prevent men from becoming primary caregivers. In this respect, it is clear that the issue of egocentrism might take a long time to be eradicated in the mindset of different communities. Orwell (1946) pointed out that to instil a culture of 'all animals are equal' may take even longer.

Walby (1990) emphasises that paid work is one structure among others established to exploit women. In a similar vein, Schultz (1998) argues that stereotypical perceptions about women's competence are invariably based on male-dominated jobs. She notes that stereotypes about men also come into play; certain jobs are viewed as masculine and when performed by women this may upset men, whose view of themselves depends to a great extent on the supposed masculinity of their work. Instead of the term patriarchy, Williams (2000) uses the

term ‘ideal worker norm’ to refer to jobs structured around traditional family patterns where men are breadwinners with stay-at-home wives.

Another perspective about the influence of the term patriarchy on the life experiences of women holds that people who defend this view assume that “men have shaped and led humankind, while women have done little more than fulfil their biological role of bearing and rearing children” (Williams, 2000). Such a perception points to the achievements of men in science, art, and politics – indeed in all walks of life (Higgs & Smith, 2002). In this regard, second-wave feminists argue strongly that historically men only achieved what they did because of the “unforeseen labour and unseen presence” of women.

I argue that it is not that men are more capable than women, but that it is a matter of women not having been allowed to prove their capabilities. Women nowadays excel in fields that were previously regarded as suitable for men only. Wyatt-Nichol, Cardona, and Drake (2012) argue that structuring work in a way that positions men’s lives as normal and women as problematic places working mothers at a disadvantage. Differently put, it was fundamentally wrong to assign work according to the sexes; for example, men assumed high positions in politics while women were encouraged to do work related to caregiving, such as nursing and clerical work. Additionally, Martin (1999) believes that when gender stereotypes are brought to light, the impetus they have on society begins to lessen. Consequently, the goal of exposing stereotypes and androcentric biases is politically charged. Research shows, however, that not everyone benefits from the subversion of stereotypes. For example, Lind (2011) agrees that efforts by the former Kabul government to ‘modernise’ and liberate and/or improve women’s educational and economic opportunities throughout the 20th century were largely limited to women of high socio-economic classes, larger ethnic groups, and/or women living in Kabul itself.

Moreover, Sultana (2011) maintains that patriarchy is the prime obstacle to women’s advancement. This author adds that despite differences in levels of domination, the broad principles remain the same, i.e. men are in control. Patriarchal society gives absolute priority to men and to some extent concurrently limits women’s human rights (Sultana, 2011). Patriarchy refers to male domination both in public and private spheres; for this reason, feminists use the term ‘patriarchy’ to describe the power relationship between men and women as well as to find the root cause of women’s subordination (Sultana, 2011).

Patriarchal ideology exaggerates biological differences between men and women, making certain that men always have the dominant or masculine roles and women always have the subordinate or feminine ones. Sultana (2011) points out that this ideology is so powerful that "men are usually above to secure the apparent consent of the very women they oppress". Millett (1977) adds that they do this "through institutions such as the academy, the church, and the family, each of which justifies and reinforces women's subordination to men." Patriarchy has the power to keep women subordinate in many ways. The subordination that women experience daily, regardless of the class they might belong to, takes various forms – discrimination, disregard, insult, control, exploitation, oppression, violence – within the family, at the place of work, in society (Sultana, 2011). This author further highlights that the feeling of powerlessness, discrimination, and experience of limited self-esteem and self-confidence jointly expound on the subordination of women.

A different perspective demonstrates that patriarchy was instituted at the moment of the creation of humankind (Filmer, 1680). This scholar points out that successful kings in the Bible had been descendants of patriarchal genealogy and in a time when other forms of government brought disorder, managed to defend a worldview in which the world was composed of families over which the father ruled. Over and above this, Walby (1990) further distinguishes between two forms of patriarchy, namely the private and the public. This author maintains these two forms differ on a variety of levels; firstly, in terms of the relation between the structures, and secondly, in the institutional form of each structure. They are also differentiated by the main form of patriarchal strategy, that is, exclusionary in private patriarchy and segregationist in public patriarchy. In private patriarchy, it is a man in the position as husband or father who is the direct oppressor and beneficiary, individually and directly, of the subordination of women. Private patriarchy is based upon the relative exclusion of women from areas of social life apart from the household, with a patriarch appropriating a woman's services individually and directly in the private sphere of the home, while public patriarchy does not exclude women from certain sites, but rather subordinate's women in all of them.

It is often claimed that abuse of women inevitably emanates from patriarchy (Ademiluka, 2018). The feminist struggle in its challenge of patriarchal systems promises one of the most far-reaching changes, given the embedded nature of gender relations (Ahikire, 2008). This scholar further points out that the feminist critique succeeded in breaking some of the

heavily-guarded boundaries. As opposed to general democratisation struggles, feminism touches the core of the person and the personal. Coward (1983) argues that various patriarchal relations describe the oppression of all women by all men (what is often also referred to as sexism), a particular kind of kinship structure, or ultimately a residual ideology of male dominance. The nature of patriarchy changed from private patriarchy in the 19th century to public patriarchy in the 20th century. The rise of capitalism led to the development of a new form of patriarchy (public), but not an alteration in its basic structures. In the public form of patriarchy, women gained great access to the public sphere as workers; their opportunities for employment increased, although they were still disadvantaged in the labour market relative to men. Thus, women were no longer exploited so much by individual patriarchy, that is, fathers/husbands, but instead were exploited by men collectively through their subordination in public areas. Walby (1990) states that first-wave feminism made a major impact on the position of women and the forms of patriarchy. As such, there is a considerable list of gains, which defeated the patriarchal strategy of restricting women to the private sphere of the home. Women won access to higher education; they won the rights to leave a marriage either by legal separation or by a divorce, and to live with their children without a man and, in certain circumstances, to oblige him to continue to support her. Additionally, men and boys are protagonists as heads of households and breadwinners in the private and public domain, while women and girls take on a secondary position and value regarding their ability to organise household social reproduction efficiently (Igbelina-Igbokwe, 2013). The three interrelated categories that have an impact on women's life stories is explored in the next section.

2.5 Three interconnected aspects that influence and shape women's experiences

Race, class, and gender are the three interconnected categories that cannot be separated if one wants to obtain a deeper understanding of the reason why some black rural women behave the way they do as workers and as postgraduate students concurrently. Each category will be explored individually and then separately from each other.

2.5.1 Racism

I start by describing the term race as a social construct and racism as the systematic subordination of members of targeted racial groups who have little social power (Wijeysinghe, Griffin, & Love, 1997). The term race is one of three interconnected terms that shape black women's experiences. In essence, race can be described in differing ways,

depending on the context and circumstances. Clair and Denis (2015) maintain that the term 'race' was first used to describe peoples and societies in the way we now understand ethnicity or national identity. As Western colonialism and slavery expanded, the concept was used to justify and prescribe exploitation, domination, and violence against peoples racialised as non-white. Omi and Winant (1994) argue that the concept of race played a fundamental role in structuring and representing the world. Henry (2004) agrees that 'race' as a description of the physical condition probably dates back to the dawn of the human species, through European expansion in the 16th to the 19th century when the front and centre position of 'race' as a physical descriptor emerged. During this era, European people started to view their race as more important than other non-white people. They started to be rigid in terms of their ambition to enact hierarchies in society that would enable them to control the emerging resources without sharing the same status with non-whites. It was when European colonisers, whose aim was mainly to seek out valuable primary products such as sugar, tin, and rubber, came into contact with 'native' populations who were 'people of colour' that racism became a dominant force in western society (Henry, 2004). For this reason, the term 'racism' is often used synonymously with prejudice (biased feelings or affect), stereotyping (biased thoughts and beliefs, flawed generalisations), discrimination (differential treatment or the absence of equal treatment), and bigotry (intolerance or hatred). Similarly, Salter, Adams and Perez (2018) theorise racism as a set of basic social-psychological processes underlying the psychologies of individuals (i.e. stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination) and merely applied to the context of race. Through racial discrimination, Pascoe (2009) points out that the lines that demarcate different races were drawn by humans in ways that relate to power and resources. As a result, some people would be unfairly treated, and others would be fairly treated at the expense of the powerless.

2.5.2 Gender

It becomes important to note that there are multiples definition for the term 'gender' and defined according to the specific contexts. Having said this, the term 'gender' is multidimensional. While scholars note that gender is formed throughout one's lifetime, it is thus a social category rather than a biological trait (Lee, Lynch & Clayton, 2013). Another dimension regard gender as an identity, meaning thinking of oneself as a member of a different gender, i.e. male or female. A different perspective describes this term as 'gender role' meaning behaving in ways considered appropriate for women or men in the surrounding culture (Lips, 2014). Anderson and Taylor (2009) believe that the concept of gender is

socially learned expectations and behaviours associated with members of each sex. The term gender is used to classify the roles of females and males in society. While gender can be regarded as the social construction of men's and women's roles in a given culture or location (UN Women, n.d.). It worth understanding that sex and gender are intertwined, and it is usually impossible to separate them (Lips, 2014). However, the problem of assigning people roles based on gender creates dissatisfaction, since the gender roles may not be experienced in the same way among females and males, and gender bias emerges.

2.5.2.1 Gender bias

Gender bias is one of the major social problems in developing countries like India (Mahadevappa, 2012), and the same can be said of South Africa. This scholar points out that gender bias has paralysed society because of one sex being discriminated against by the other sex. In South Africa, Hutson (2007) argues that gender discrimination is deeply rooted in the ethnic fabric of multicultural communities as it was exacerbated by the apartheid system. The concept of gender has been criticised because the gendering of people, actions and things within a culture is always implicated in differences other than those of sex (Andermahr, Lovell, & Wolkowitz, 2000). These authors insist that there is a powerful case that masculinity and femininity are constructed not alongside race and class, ethnicity and nationality, but in and through these and other distinctions, and that it is misleading to privilege sex in accounts of the social construction of masculinity and femininity. Bwakali (2001) argues that by today's standards, traditional African culture was not fair to women: it dictated that a woman's place was in the kitchen, including looking after everyone in the family. With this in mind, Hutson (2007) notes that boys and girls grew up knowing what was required for them in society. For example, boys grew up knowing they had to be strong and wise to take care of and provide for their wives. In contrast, girls grew up knowing that they had to be hardworking and submissive to appeal to a man as a wife. Cole (2009) insists that gender continues to be connected with some of the most exclusionary and discriminatory practices in the world, whether this relates to society, home, school, or further and higher education. This author also notes that in almost every culture, being 'male' or 'female', or gender is used to define people. This resulted in inequality of the gender roles and boosted males (husbands) to have superiority over their wives as subordinates.

2.5.2.2 Gender inequality

Jayachandran (2015) claims that gender gaps favouring males – in education, health, the economy, personal autonomy, and more – are systematically larger in poor countries than in rich countries. In addition to this, Sackeyfio (2013) documented that:

> Gender inequality was a fundamental characteristic of the university, manifesting in various ways and affecting different elements of the cultures of the university. From gender inequalities in student and faculty numbers to the male-centred approaches in the residential arrangements and the governance structures, the university has been an inequitably gendered space in which women have had to work hard to establish themselves.

This demonstrates that gender inequality "lies at the root of the lasting effects of inferiority that affect women at every stage of their lives" (Delors, 1998). Bhana and Pillay (2012) are of the same view, that the pervasiveness of gender roles and identities limits opportunities for women. Ghosh (2011) elaborates that gender discrimination tends to be intertwined with other forms of social and economic disparity which determine the extent of deprivation of women and girls. Still, Folbre (2001) maintains that "gender, intersected with race, trumps our queerness to designate us as 'good mothers'; yet gender confines women to a large private and altruistic (that is selfless) role". It is apparent from the above that the consequences of gender bias are worse for women than for men, and that this phenomenon leaves some unforgettable memories and unanswered questions about what needs to be done to alleviate the plight of women and bring social change. Another difficulty that arises from the stereotypical idea that women are to be the housekeepers and mainly responsible for the well-being of every member of the family is that if they fail to satisfy their roles, they turn to their daughters for extra assistance (Andermahr et al., 2002; Jacobson, 1992). As a result, the increasing tendency to keep girls out of school to help their mothers virtually ensures that another generation of females will grow up with fewer prospects than their brothers. In rural areas, in particular, women work an average of 12–18 hours per day – producing food, managing, and harvesting resources, and working at various paid and unpaid activities, compared to 8–12 hours for men (Jacobson, 1992).

The literature also reveals that gender bias is practiced even in HEIs. In addition, a South African study conducted by UNESCO (2008) showed that men continued to dominate in science, engineering, and technology. Traditionally, gender inequalities discriminate against women's intellectual capabilities and compel them to do low- paid jobs compared to the jobs

done by their male counterparts. Textbooks give stereotypical views of the different roles of men and women in society, and boys and girls have different schooling experiences and do not have equal chances in life (Christie, 2006). For example, History and Typewriting are often seen as 'better subjects for girls'. It is common knowledge that women are hardly ever portrayed in roles of leadership, adventure, heroism, scholarship, or career expertise (Biraimah, 1982). Over and above this, the suffering of women is endless; while women experience gender inequality, they are also subjected to gender-based violence.

2.5.2.3 Gender-based violence

"Gender-based violence in all its forms denies women and girls the opportunity to achieve equality and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution," says Maluleke (2012). In everyday speech, and even in most social science discourse, domestic violence is about men beating women (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000). One in five women older than 18 has experienced physical violence (South African Demographic & Health Survey, 2016). The killing of females simply because they are females is a rare phenomenon in South Africa, while the incidence of female homicide resulting from domestic violence or violence emanating from broken relationships is unacceptably high (Maluleke, 2012). According to a study conducted by Roberts and Price (2019) on gendered perceptions of domestic violence behaviours, females considered a broader range of behaviours to be domestic violence, particularly psychological/emotional and financial violence, compared to males.

Rape targeting women and girls is a serious problem in South Africa. The 2016/17 Victims of Crime statistical reported that 250 out of every 100 000 women were victims of sexual offences compared to 120 out of every 100 000 men (Maluleke, 2018). South Africa is home to the rape of women at any age – from deep into old age to a few months old. These alarming occurrences point to the fact that rape is an enduring nightmare in the country (Gqola, 2015). In South Africa, a country scarred by the history of apartheid, violence against women is endemic (Sibanda-Moyo, Konje, & Brobbey, 2017). These researchers point out that statistics on femicide, rape, and domestic violence demonstrate unprecedented prevalence rates, with South Africa having the highest rate of sexual violence in the world. I next discuss the influence of social class in shaping people's wellbeing.

2.5.3 Classism

In South Africa the Employment Equity Act (1998) was approved to enable the government to monitor progress regarding the employment of blacks, coloureds, Indians, and people with

disabilities, as these groups had previously been deprived due to discrimination. This Act was founded on the basis that it should enforce equity in the workplace, since the workplace had been a site of white privilege. Indeed, access to opportunities was based on race, giving rise to a racial privilege, where an individual's position in the hierarchy determined what privileges he or she enjoyed or was denied (Houston, Davids, & Kanyane, 2018). These authors believe that the centrality of race and discriminatory laws and programmes gave rise to racial stereotypes and the consequent racism that most people of colour experienced during the apartheid era. The Employment Equity Act brought high hopes and relief to the majority of South African people, as it compelled employers to ensure that all employees are treated equally and fairly, regardless of colour, race, or gender. In the White Paper on Reconstruction and Development (Office of the President, 1994), former President Nelson Mandela states that people elected the African National Congress-led Government because they want change. As such, people have legitimate expectations.

Worldwide classism differentiates between people based on social class. Societies can be analysed in terms of the categories which people themselves use, and class structure can be mapped according to the categories into which people put themselves (Seekings, 2003). This author differentiates social classes in a hierarchical sequence, with first the upper class, which consists of managers and professionals. Next follows the semi-professional class, which consists of teachers and nurses, and thirdly the intermediate class, which consists of routine white-collar, skilled and supervisory individuals. Fourth comes the core working class, which comprises semi-skilled and unskilled workers, except for farm workers and domestic workers. Last is the marginal working class, which encompasses farmworkers and domestic workers (Seekings, 2003). A 'class' can be defined in terms of an individual's economic position and educational attainment as well as his/her occupation (Manstead, 2018). This researcher points out that when people are asked about their identities, they think more readily in terms of socioeconomic status than in terms of social class. This is probably because they have a reasonable sense of where they stand relative to others in terms of economic factors and educational attainment, and perhaps recognise that traditional boundaries between social classes have become less distinct.

In South Africa, where exceptionally high inequality in living standards persists, a sizable share of the adult population places itself in the lower class (Roberts, 2009). This scholar analysed the South African Social Attitudes Survey data collected in 2008, where people

were asked to describe or categorise themselves according to the social class they belong to. The findings revealed that a large share of African respondents considered themselves as being in the lower class (45%), compared to only 3% of white respondents. It became evident that the higher the self-described class, the greater the likelihood of reporting better life satisfaction. In 2008, three-quarters (77%) of South Africans who identified themselves as upper-middle or upper class expressed satisfaction with life. In comparison, life satisfaction among the self-identified lower class was on average 50 percentage points lower, at 26%.

The pattern is much weaker concerning retrospective and future evaluations of life improvements (Roberts, 2009). Seekings (2003) points out that it is not surprising that the majority of the marginal working class live in rural areas, as the category includes farmworkers and their dependants; however, it is perhaps surprising that almost half of the core working class also lives in rural areas. Having a large number of teachers in rural areas means that almost half of the semi-professional class is also in rural areas. According to a study conducted by Manstead in 2018 on how socioeconomic status impacts thought, feelings, and behaviour of social class in England, there is a difference in the ways that working-class and middle- and upper-class people think and act, reinforcing these influences of social class background and making it harder for working-class individuals to benefit from the kinds of educational and employment opportunities that would increase social mobility and improve their material circumstances (Manstead, 2018). This scholar further maintains that the material conditions in which people grow up and live have a lasting impact on their personal and social identities, and influence both the way they think and feel about their social environment and key aspects of their social behaviour (Manstead, 2018).

Stephens, Markus, and Phillips (2014) have analysed how social class shapes self-concept through the 'gateway contexts' of home, school, and work. With a focus on the USA but with broader implications, they argue that social class gives rise to culture-specific identities and patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting. Middle-class contexts enable people to act in ways that reflect and further reinforce the independent cultural ideal – expressing their personal preferences, influencing their social contexts, standing out from others and developing and exploring their interests (Stephens et al., 2014). The school system reproduces social inequalities by promoting norms and values that are more familiar to children from middle-class backgrounds (Bourdien & Passeron, 1990). While this helps middle-class children to outperform their working-class peers, the 'meritocratic' approach holds that such

performance differences are due to differences in ability and/or effort, and uses this to 'explain' unequal performance. The notion that people who are disadvantaged by a social system are especially likely to support it is known as the 'system justification hypothesis', which holds that "people who suffer the most from a given state of affairs are paradoxically the least likely to question, challenge, reject, or change it" (Jost, Pelham, Sheldon, & Sullivan, 2003). When economic inequality deepens on a societal scale, the evidence suggests that both societies and individuals suffer (Kraus, Park, & Tan, 2017). Currently the South African unemployment rate is disappointing, and black people lead with a majority of unemployed people. Having presented all three categories, I will now explore the impact of these interconnected categories, as one might not get a clear analysis of women's experiences by focusing on a single aspect.

2.5.4 The intersection of race, class, and gender

In essence, gender is used to differentiate between male and female sex, whereas class is used to differentiate low-, middle-, and working-class people. The literature defines 'racism' as 'conscious or unconscious' actions or attitudes initiated by individuals, groups, or institutions that treat human beings unjustly because of their skin pigmentation (Collins & Preciphs, 1991). According to Wright-Meyers (2002):

> racism, sexism and numerous other 'isms' are systems of advantage that provide those of the 'right' race and sex with opportunities for rewards that are unattainable to other individuals and groups in society. Sometimes they work in isolation from each other, but most of the time they operate in combination to create a system of advantages and disadvantages that enhance the lives of those of the 'right' race and sex while limiting the life chances of those who are not.

In South Africa racism under apartheid was both informal (that is, an everyday practice) and formal, with laws designating areas where blacks could live, banning interracial mixing, and barring the employment of blacks for certain positions (Msimang, 2001). For these reasons, victims of apartheid found it hard to escape its confines, and black women were especially disadvantaged (Maboleka & Mawila, 2004). Women's experiences of the paid and unpaid 'reproductive labour' – i.e. maintaining households, relationships, and care of children and other adults – reflect the intersection of race, gender, and class, as black women are relegated to the 'lowlier' and least valued aspects of reproductive labour (for example cooking and cleaning) while white women have traditionally held more skilled positions related to supervision, technical and administrative support roles (Maboleka & Mawila, 2004). In this regard, Hill-Collins (1998) claims that "gender inequality has been maintained historically by

'a politics of containment' that places black women in segregated housing, schools, and jobs designed to keep them at the economic bottom". Besides, Msimang (2001) notes that black women's conditions of living had "profound effects on the private lives of women both in their homes and in public, with the state's encouragement of violence and the conservative patriarchal nature of the society worsening these effects". African-American women have been shown to have similar experiences (Hill-Collins, 2002). In the higher education context, Caffarella et al. (2007) argue that race, class, and gender are highly interrelated. They believe that it is not possible to talk about racism, classism, sexism and other 'isms' without reference to power and oppression, nor can power be considered apart from issues surrounding knowledge construction. In other words, the levels of power relations have a significant role in enacting classism and sexism to oppress others, even in the higher education sector. Caffarella et al. (2007) agree that racial, class, gender and ethnic identities can also act as barriers to participation in higher education. Amstuz (1994) suggests that there are three reasons why racism persists in adult education. First, she sees a discrepancy between the rhetoric of adult education that speaks of empowerment and equal access, and actual behaviours that more often than not are 'unempowering' and 'traditional'. Second, most adult educators are white and middle class and have had little interaction with minorities of any kind, and have failed to examine their own beliefs, assumptions, prejudices, and biases. Finally, she believes that most adult educators have an unwarranted faith in institutions, believing that institutional practice is well-meaning and that the policies under which their institutions operate are not biased. I now explore factors that prompted women to advance their skills.

2.6 Factors influencing women's pursuit of higher education

Adults become involved in organised learning if the learning can be linked to some life-changing events, and because of perplexing circumstances in their life-worlds – i.e. when problems, challenges, and needs arise from their social or vocational roles (Zemke & Zemke, 1995; Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998). Another perspective holds that adults pursue higher education because they have the desire to acquire some type of knowledge, information, or skill, and for the following reasons:

1) to increase income;
2) to satisfy an inquiring mind;
3) for personal enrichment;
4) for managerial employment status;
5) to upgrade their careers;

6) for job-related motives; and

6) because of life transition (see also Johnstone & Rivera, 1965).

According to Courtney (1992) there are indeed many complex and varying motivations behind the interest in higher education. However, Wlodkowski (1999) believes that adults attend higher education because "they seek to enhance their identity through learning that further develops their competence." This shows that there is no universal motivation for pursuing higher education, even though there are common end goals, which are self-development and career advancement. However, in the case of black South African students who were denied access to higher education under apartheid, the reason for the drive for further education is self-evident.

2.6.1 Globalisation

Globalisation is an overarching concept encompassing changes taking place worldwide (Merriam *et al*., 2007). It reflects the increasing integration of economies around the world, particularly through trade and the flow of finance, as well as the movement of people and information. In reality, globalisation attracts people to move from one country to another in exchange for manpower and income. At the same time, globalisation has divided people into two categories, namely employers and employees. Employees find themselves manufacturing different goods that are in demand worldwide; this leads to continuous labour processes. The term globalisation has been used in a variety of ways to refer to the "various strategies employed by self-servicing transnational corporations [as well as to] the ideology promoted by capitalist interests seeking a global marketplace unfettered by (national) government regulation" (McCaffery, 2010). It becomes clear that, due to globalisation, all types of economies are dependent on the global market. While it can be assumed that globalisation makes life easier and more enjoyable as it increases, it also has an enormous transformational impact on the lives of people. It is undeniable that globalisation has brought positive changes to various communities globally. Modern industrial societies require a highly skilled and specialised labour force which is produced by the tertiary education system (Ali, 1975). HEIs play an important role in producing knowledgeable people who use their expertise in labour markets with ease. In terms of the role of universities, Merriam et al. (2007) insist that "professional occupations require extensive educational preparation to keep in line with the demands of the world of work". Globalisation has provided these highly skilled labourers with a feeling of excitement and a sense of becoming part of the world community since the end of the past century (Mengisteab, 1996). Moreover, it inspires a sense of being well-

rewarded. Essentially, employment patterns and workplace processes evolve rapidly, and together these changes exercise "a profound impact on the topography of relevant knowledge and skills and hence on the capacity of individuals, young and old, men and women, to participate in economic life" (OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development], 1992). However, the negative side of globalisation is that global capitalisation has the power to bring the rural and urban together in strange and unequal ways (William, 1973). The positive side is that globalisation of economic activity during the last third of the 20th century incorporated millions of women into the labour force. Women were no longer bound to be only housewives and dependent on their husbands. Peet and Hartwick (2009) argue that women have become the majority of the new global working class, where they are pitted against global financial and industrial capital that is male-dominated.

Earlier literature reveals that in the South African context it is argued that "when oppressive practices such as those of apartheid do not enforce the separation between husbands and wives, women regard wage labour or the petty commodity sector as a means of escape" (Roberts, 1983). For this reason, many black rural women have moved to urban areas as they can no longer rely on crops because of climate change and the scarcity of rain. Those who remain in rural areas, therefore, lack job opportunities and suffer from the resultant poverty. For this reason, large numbers of black women do not turn back to their previous rural lives. They seem to take this decision because they are dissatisfied with staying at home and performing unrewarded and duties of low esteem, while at the same time the economy demands their services outside the home (Turshen, 2010). However, moving from their rural areas does not guarantee them well-paid jobs – instead, they become low-paid labourers. One reason for the lagging of women's entry into better-paid positions is their lack of education (Turshen, 2010). It therefore becomes clear that in the current labour market formal education is a valued asset that greatly increases one's chances of gainful employment and social mobility. The reality is that education has the potential to enhance people's opportunities for achieving economic independence (Steady, 2006).

It is argued that global development has pushed poor Third World women, such as those in India, into jobs that have changed their social and economic status. Surprisingly, there has been an increase in the number of poor households headed by women, forcing women to undertake paid work along with their domestic responsibilities, which has doubled their total work effort (Peet & Hartwick, 2009). The literature demonstrates that globalisation trends

have harmed the developing parts of the world, where countries are still struggling with high rates of unemployment (Jarvis, 2007; Kiely & Marfleet, 2002). Another negative effect of globalisation is that of social exclusion (Byrne, 1999). Merriam et al. (2007) argue that globalisation has the ability "to dislocate workers in both the industrial and agricultural sectors where, with few, if any transferable skills, they find themselves in low-skill, low-paying jobs". Besides, the economies of the world are subject to the forces of globalisation, an agenda set by the demands of transnational capital: "[T]hese demands, as well as their spectacular global financial failures, are now affecting the economies of many of the so-called wealthy nations in the same direction (though not, so far, to the same extent) as those of the less wealthy" (Tesoriero, 2010). Moreover, globalisation has been linked with the devaluation of women's work, in a sense that women are considered by their families and communities to be 'non-productive' and economically inactive compared to their male counterparts, something which Shiva (2004) argues to be "the natural outcome of a system constructed by a capitalist patriarchy". Globalisation forces people to migrate for the sake of job hunting, and although children are valuable to families, particularly to their mothers, the effort of raising them does not earn much credit in the eyes of the world (Hochschild, 2002). It has also been shown that children who are left behind when their mothers leave to seek work later also leave their children behind for the same purpose (Hochschild, 2002). Pettman (2003) states that "the changing global division of labour has led to a growing demand for actualized, poorly paid and often vulnerable labour on the global assembly line and to an increasingly transnational provision of sexual and domestic services". These 'services' often involve labour migration, which in turn affects the family form and gender relations. In short, it can be argued that, due to globalisation, it is women with low skills who suffer the most. It is especially those people living in underdeveloped countries who become the targets for cheap labour, leaving them even poorer, while the wealthy become richer at the expense of others. As such, globalisation, technology, and changing demographics have proved to be influential factors in motivating women to pursue higher degrees in an attempt to escape poverty.

2.6.2 Technology

Globalisation has led to increased demands for new knowledge appropriate for operating new industrial technologies, and the utilisation of ICT at the workplace and in society at large. Accordingly, technology has been instrumental in bringing about the information society, which has both created new jobs and eliminated others (Merriam et al., 2007). However, part

of what most professionals know when they finish their formal training will be outdated in less than five years. Nevertheless, the positive side is that the storage and affordability of information exchange have been made possible due to rapid development. Gardner (1996) points out that "computer technology frees labour from a particular location. Knowledgeable workers can work anywhere; they simply have to have access to computer connection. Even within the team framework, workers can stay engaged in their mutual tasks even if not near to each other." This highlights the importance of technology in modern life in general. Significantly, in HEIs, technology is indispensable. For example, it can be used for searching information, retrieving stored information, disseminating information, and publishing it. Different software packages can be used, such as word processing, spreadsheets, databases, presentation graphics, and electronic mail packages, to name only a few. However, this requires know-how in terms of using it effectively. This can be a challenge for students who had not been exposed to new technology before entering higher education.

2.6.3 Changing demographics

The third factor that influences adult learners' participation in higher education settings is that of changing demographics. It is noteworthy that the higher education sector nowadays has to deal with the growing diversity of student demographics, since students from different geographical areas have unique needs. It is imperative that the university, as the provider of learning programmes, responds to the needs of its diverse students. The university should also take into consideration that while some students enrol directly after school, others delay registration and only enter at a later and more convenient time, for various reasons. By the time such students decide to enter, various changes may have taken place. Carranza and Ender (2003) suggest that cooperation and collaboration among academic services are critical. Concerning the changing face of many HEIs, Merriam et al. (2007) observe that:

> For the first time, adults outnumber the youth; there are older adults, the population is better educated than ever before, and there is more cultural and ethnic diversity. For various reasons, individuals and groups of people seek out learning experiences. For other reasons, society targets learning activities for certain segments of the population. Thus, certain learning activities are learner-initiated and others are society-initiated in response to the changing demographics.

Traditionally, universities used to have younger students of a more or less similar age group. However, the eradication of the policies that precluded older students from enrolling at HEIs in the past has inspired adults to make informed decisions to re-enter education when they are older. These adults have been motivated by some influential factors and have themselves

become influential in the provision of learning activities (Merriam et al., 2007). In other words, the demographic changes require programme providers to ensure that they develop appropriate teaching and learning activities that will satisfy all of the students, regardless of age and ethnicity. The next section explores the experiences of postgraduate students accessing the higher education sector.

2.7 Access to higher education institutions

In the South African context, admittance to higher education has long been problematic (Boughey 2018). The policy of 'separate development' during the apartheid era not only ensured that the black majority was denied the sort of learning experiences which would prepare them for tertiary study, but also that access to well-resourced HEIs was largely available only to white students. Boughey (2018) further notes that the election of a democratic government in 1994 has not resolved these problems; the divisions in the higher education system created as a result of apartheid have proved hard to eradicate, and the school system continues to fail the majority of students in terms of the quality of learning experiences that it makes available to them. Another perspective points out that access to higher education is a topic of high interest, with direct consequences on national education policies, the development of the labour market and quality of life (Prodan, Maxim, Manolescu, Austei, & Guta, 2015). In the previous political dispensation in South Africa, the majority of students attending HEIs were white. For example, in 1980 74.8% of students were white and only 12.5% were black (De Villiers, 1996). After the first democratic election in 1994, a definite effort was made to ensure that more students of colour attend HEIs. It becomes clear that widening access or widening participation in the South African context is not the same as in a Northern hemisphere setting, as in South Africa exclusion in higher education is grounded on both race and class, and poverty is deep and endemic (Leibowitz & Bozalek, 2014). The latter authors further mention that often African families are particularly poor, with some parents and caregivers earning less than R1600 a month, making it impossible for them to support their children to pursue higher education. It is also noteworthy that previous research on access to HEIs reveals a need to promote equity of access and fair chances of success for all seeking to realise their potential through higher education, while eradicating all forms of unfair discrimination and advancing redress for past inequalities (National Development Plan, 2001). Concerns regarding equality and participation for marginalised groups in societies characterised by discrimination along dimensions such as gender, class, caste, ethnicity, language or religious background have led to provision of access to higher education in various countries (Borden, Vithal, & Dhunpath, 2014). Offering

access to disadvantaged students for the first time at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) was the result of the former universities of Durban-Westville and Natal merging in 2004 (Borden et al., 2014). These scholars further note that the main core value of the merged UKZN was to promote access to learning that would expand educational and employment opportunities for all. In relation to this, it must also be noted that the earlier researchers in England (Pascall & Cox, 1993) argued that the subject of women returning to higher education as mature students is intriguing for several reasons: 1) the shape of women's careers is dramatically changing; 2) they have an increasing commitment to the labour market and the way they negotiate a path between paid and unpaid work; 3) the educational deficit of those who grew up assuming that to be an adult woman was to be a full-time housewife; and 4) the case of women who finished their first period of education in an era when opportunities in higher education were more restricted, especially for girls (Pascall & Cox, 1993). The above reasons were the driving force in South Africa, as in other countries.

The literature indicates that increased student access to HEIs has been associated with the recent massification of higher education in the South African context (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007). Although this concern with greater participation has become a feature of South Africa's higher education sector since the demise of apartheid (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007), this might be different from the experiences of England which were caused by new policy development (as opposed to the apartheid system in South Africa). It is noteworthy that since 1994 the South African Government along with other stakeholders in higher education, public intellectuals, the business community, and others have continued to introduce important changes to the national education system to overcome the restrictions and correct the imbalances previously imposed by apartheid policies (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007). Admittance to higher education had been intricately tied to the quest for social equity and justice (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2014) for black people who were disadvantaged because of their colour. The vast majority of Africans had been denied the opportunity to access professional development and were marginalised and poorly educated throughout the apartheid years (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007). As Fleisch (2008) noted, "apartheid educational policies restricted Africans from gaining access to artisanal, professional, and management skills." Maile (2008: 162) states that in South Africa the apartheid system failed blacks concerning access to and quantity and quality of education. Tomasevski (2003) argued that the denial and abuse of education is a violation, with accompanying remedies, but if the status of right is lost, then denial and abuse have no legal remedy. It is important to highlight that in South

Africa during the apartheid era many young black people did not have access to higher education. Due to apartheid policies, the democratic government has vowed to eradicate all of the injustices of the past, and offer a legal remedy (Tomasevski, 2003). The DoE (1997) therefore implemented a lifelong learning policy aimed at enabling workers and professionals to pursue multi-skilling and re-skilling and to help adult learners who had lacked access to higher education in the past.

In the South African context, HEIs became more accessible for adult black students after 1994, when those who had been excluded and marginalised in the past could more readily pursue qualifications at universities. This was not an easy task; universities were asked to assess the capabilities of the students before accepting them. HEIs were expected to safeguard themselves from recruiting students without prerequisite potential and against retaining students with no chance of success (National Development Plan, 2001). The reason for this was that the Education Ministry had allocated funds: a) to targeted policy objectives to increase access of poor students and the disabled in particular to higher education; and b) to enable HEIs to introduce, or continue to offer, extended curricula in key subject areas as a means of improving access and success rates for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (National Development Plan, 2001). With this in mind, Dhunpath and Vithal (2014) add that approximately 3% of the South African national budget is allocated to higher education. It is noteworthy that, apart from the long-lasting effects of apartheid education policies in South Africa, another issue that still seems to hinder access to higher education is the language barrier. According to Walters (2012), mere admittance to higher education in large numbers is not sufficient, as adult learners are faced with pedagogical challenges that need to be confronted more fully by HEIs. For adult black women, there is the added practical challenge – over and above the academic challenges of university life – of urgency and the feeling that time is running out for them to reach their goals. A study commissioned by the South African Council on Higher Education (2010) concluded that students' unpreparedness, or students not being academically 'strong enough', language skills, students' approach to learning, a diminished learning culture or students taking less responsibility for their learning, and issues of the student's life and other pressures (such as personal, financial or family matters) are factors that come into play. The next section explores the experiences of adult learners in a higher education setting.

2.7.1 Experiences of adult learners in a higher education setting

The experiences of adult learners in HEIs cannot be understood without having a clear understanding of what the term 'adult learner' entails, and identification of the characteristics of an adult learner. It is also of the utmost importance to have a clear understanding of the concept 'adulthood', simply because adult learners fall into this life category. The not-so-current literature defined the term adulthood as "a time of growth, change, and integration in which one constantly seeks the balance between the amount of energy needed and the amount available" (McClusky, 1963). It is also "a period in the human lifespan in which full physical and intellectual maturity is attained" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2015). Other scholars view adulthood "as a stage of life into which every male and female has to be initiated into before being considered and accepted by the community as an adult" (Nafukho, Amutabi, & Otunga, 2005). They point out that in Africa the achievement of adulthood is based on fulfilling certain social functions, such as making pottery, hunting, and farming. They also argue that nowadays the concept of adulthood has been influenced by Western trends.

According to Western ideology, one is considered an adult from the age of 18 years onwards. I argue that adults are expected by their society to behave in a specific manner, proving that they are no longer teenagers but are mature and can therefore be regarded as adults, and they have a crucial responsibility to act like adults in society. Adulthood is a critical juncture in human life development, implying that adults are expected to show signs of maturity in all that they do (Tanner, 2006). For example, they have responsibilities that they need to fulfil as adults such as parenthood, where they are expected to support and guide their young ones. In an educational context, Gravett (2005) identifies three characteristics of the adult learner:

1) these students are adult by definition;
2) their readiness to learn is linked to their life roles and life tasks; and
3) they bring accumulated experience with them into educational events.

The foregoing sheds some light on adulthood; what follows next is a focus on the adult learner. Johnstone and Rivera (1965) note that an adult learner is anyone aged 21 years or over; who is married or who is the head of a household. Over and above this, the literature reveals that some adult learners have lower levels of education, lower-status jobs, and are employed as part-time workers (Creighton & Hudson, 2002). The above literature painted a clear picture of the characteristics of adult learners and their intention of pursuing higher education. The literature has also been reviewed in an attempt to find out what is known

about adult learners in higher education contexts. Several studies have been perused, and they revealed different perspectives on this phenomenon. For example, in a study conducted by Dill and Henley (1998) on adults re-entering HEIs, the findings revealed that one of the challenges faced by adult students is the difficulty of readjusting to student life after a long absence from any formal educational environment. According to a two-country study conducted in the United Kingdom and Belgium, entitled 'Adult University', Bourgeois, Duke, Guyot, and Merrill (1999) found that more than half of those in higher education systems are adults in the sense of having left full-time education for other roles, before returning to full-time or part-time study later. Such students commonly combine study with other major life roles, such as work, family and community (Bourgeois et al., 1999).

The above information shows that women have taken a stand in realising the potential and the benefits of education. Besides, while women's enrolment in graduate programmes in the USA has greatly expanded, women's paths to higher education are still more likely than men's to be interrupted by family formation (American Association of University Professors, 2004; Spain & Bianchi, 1996). It is also important to highlight that while women are interested in participating in higher education, they also encounter several barriers. For example, Bowl (2001) affirms that black women experience barriers that relate to their gender position – as mothers, frequently as lone carers (as single parents), and as workers in jobs with poor wage and career structures. On top of this, adult participation is also hindered by financial matters, child and family care and community expectations, all of which are central features of life around which academic study must be fitted (Bowl, 2001). In the study executed by Magano (2010) on the 'Narratives of challenges of female black postgraduate students' who had succeeded in their postgraduate studies and those who had not, findings revealed that although participants valued the knowledge that they acquired, their experiences of studying at postgraduate level were nevertheless arduous. Supporting this sentiment, Olivier (2007) maintains that the attainment of a master's or doctoral degree is not a straightforward experience for most students. This scholar further adds that some postgraduate students are ill-prepared to deal with the workload, which can be a serious challenge for the student throughout their studies and research. Magano (2010) points out that female South African postgraduate students had varying studying experiences and challenges, such as work-related and social problems. The social problems, as identified by Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2006), emanated from the micro-system family, which had a ripple effect on other systems. Furthermore, Hutson (2007) emphasises that despite cultural

conflicts, women have still made efforts to end oppression, empowering themselves through education and becoming financially independent as workers. However, their participation comes with challenges; for example, Hlalele (2012) acknowledges that rural students in higher education systems are the most challenged. In other words, those students coming from rural areas encounter educational challenges different from those faced by other students.

In this light, Corbett (2006) asserts that some students from a rural background are more likely to struggle because of their educational background and the conditions of learning that they had been through, compared to those from urban areas. Some of the rural students lag in terms of academic knowledge and academic confidence, and are at risk of not being able to cope. Corbett (2006) acknowledges that rural schools did not prepare them for the outside world or higher education in particular. As a result, they encounter challenges when they attend HEIs. Merriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner (2007) point out that particularly while they are studying, adult learners have to be adept at juggling multiple responsibilities and demands on their time. The multiple-role involvement of adults is a significant element in any adult educational endeavour (Squires, 1993). In any group of adult learners there will probably be more differences than similarities among the learners, due to their socio-biological histories and their varying life experiences (Bee & Bjorklund, 2004). In essence, the main aims of higher education are to support learners' aspirations for self-development, to supply high-level skills for the labour market and economic benefit, to develop critical citizens, and to equip individuals to make the best of their talents and the opportunities offered by society for self-fulfilment (DoE, 1997). Besides that, education has the potential to satisfy the enquiring mind, and it is also a powerful tool for opening doors that would otherwise be closed, especially for motivated adult learners (Yamamoto, 2012). The effect of this is that in post-apartheid South Africa, many black people start pursuing higher education goals when they are older. It is for this reason that the DoE (1997) argued that the adult learners whose access to higher education had been thwarted in the past now have opportunities that are open to all of them. Further, in South Africa the Council on Higher Education (2000) has also observed that the proportion of women in higher education has increased three times as fast as that of men.

Walker's (1998) study on the academic identities of South African women concluded that the apartheid education – which is what the current generation of adult women had passed through – was intentionally and deliberately designed to stifle intellectual development and

opportunities for generations of black children, and that Bantu education in particular was marked by gross inequalities, savage political repression and crushed hopes. Walker (1998) further states that apartheid education has had specific damaging effects in shaping the educational opportunities for all South African women who currently work in South African academic contexts. Magwaza (2009) agrees, stating that "the academic world is a place where one is thrown into the deep end and told to swim." Regarding the challenges faced by women, Mufti (1998) alludes to their status in the community and their social roles being of utmost importance. Educating women is probably one of the most rewarding investments a nation can make. Indeed, there is a saying: "By educating a woman, you are educating a nation." However, there is the difficulty that arises from the stereotype that women are to be the housekeepers and mainly responsible for the well-being of every member of the family. As a result, managing different lives or roles causes a lot of stress to women as students. Belyakov et al. (2009) acknowledge that in recent years' access to higher education has become increasingly important, because it has the potential to improve people's lives. Furthermore, Frizelle and Hayes (1999) insist that there is an assumption that when a woman becomes a mother, she is naturally equipped to be a mother; that through patience and unconditional love accompanying the birth of her child, she will be able to meet her child's every need and keep him/her content and happy at all times. Besides this, a study conducted by Edwards (1993) on women studying at HEIs found that 8% of participants had left their partners because of their experiences of being unable to share their intellectual work with their partners, either through talking about what they were doing or through sharing the increased burden of household and family responsibilities as well studying.

What is not known and not documented in the existing literature are the experiences of rural working mothers in pursuit of higher degrees at a South African university. It is therefore the intention of this study to explore how rural women negotiate their multiple identities within spaces that may be challenging. I want to understand how these women, who often struggle with so many 'hats', cope in higher education. Also, I intend to ascertain their motives behind their participation in adult learning programmes, while others are reluctant to enter them. I also hope to explore the kind of support they receive from their families and the universities as providers of adult education programmes. I argue that the obvious paradigm shift from this worldview propels women to take part in the economy. The prevailing cultural norms, beliefs, and values expect mothers to be fully engaged in their social roles as women. It is for this reason that I am very curious to investigate the experiences of other rural working

mothers pursuing higher degrees in a South African university. While adults in higher education often have to combine different roles, women in particular are forced to combine different roles. Some of the pressure comes from the social expectations of women. It is for these reasons that the focus of this study is on the experiences of rural women. The focus is on the exploration of their negotiation strategies concerning their multiple identities as mothers, workers, and students, and the strategies they use to cope with the various challenges they encounter while studying and working in urban environments. Next I present the differences between undergraduate and postgraduate students, in an attempt to understand whether they experience similar challenges when studying at university.

2.7.2 The difference between experiences of undergraduate and postgraduate students

Reviewing the literature led me to notice that very little attention has been given to the experiences of undergraduate and postgraduate students. More studies have looked at the challenges of adult female learners as full-time postgraduate students (Baharudin, Murad, & Mat, 2013); the challenges of adult learners (Habibah, 2006); and barriers and challenges of female adult students enrolled in higher education (Lin, 2016). Others make it clear that adult learners have specificities that set them apart from traditional students (Rothes, Lemos, & Gonçalves, 2017). Bowl (2001) points out that the experiences of younger students differ from those of adult black women who have to be students while still working a full-time job at the same time. For example, most adult students enrol voluntarily in educational programmes and are usually part-time students who have to balance education with other life tasks (such as work and family), which means that they are often more at risk of dropping out of education (McGivney, 2004). Non-traditional students or postgraduate students are over the age of 25 years and many are returning to complete their degrees, or they may have delayed higher education until they were older than the traditional age for students (Black-Chen, 2013). Comparative research shows that non-traditional students tend to be more intrinsically motivated and mastery-oriented than younger students (Archer, Cantwell, & Bourke, 1999). Another perspective contends that adult learners may perform better than traditional students, despite having fewer sources of support outside of their educational institutions and more stressors (Osam, Bergman, & Cumberland, 2017). Adult learners also carry multiple responsibilities, frequently working while studying (Ho & Lim, 2020). Over and above this, a study conducted by Baharudin et al. (2013) maintains that adult students are different from the traditional-age students in many aspects. One of the main differences is the challenges that they face once they decide to further their education. They find it difficult to submit their work on time, and if submitted, the work may not be of a high standard; some

students are frequently absent from class for several reasons. The following section briefly explains the impact of age on adult learners' educational experiences.

2.7.3 Impact of age on adult learners' educational experiences

Researchers have documented the significant role played by education in one's lifetime. The increasing diversity of students, particularly in terms of age, attending university has seen a concomitant interest in factors predicting academic success (Sheard, 2009). Education is considered the first step for every human activity, as it plays a vital role in the development of human capital as well as an individual's well-being and opportunities for better living (Eze, Ezenwafor, & Obi, 2015). It can be argued that providing opportunities to learn throughout life turns out to be a crucial factor in the struggle to eradicate poverty and educate for sustainable development (Power & Maclean, 2011). In reality, the impact of age on adult learners' educational experiences as compared to younger generations cannot be denied. The literature demonstrates that students' academic gains and learning performance are affected by numerous factors, including gender, age, teaching faculty, students' schooling, father/guardian's social-economic status, residential area of students, medium of instruction in schools, tuition trend, daily study hour and accommodation options as hostel resident or day scholar (Ali, Haider, Munir, Khan, & Ahmed, 2013). Decline in cognitive functioning becomes more evident in old age (Louw & Louw, 2009). These authors further acknowledge that physiological changes in the brain and losses in visual and auditory acuity affect mental efficiency, because they degrade information that the brain needs to interpret the world. According to a study conducted in the USA in 2006, the oldest pupils in a given class or cohort typically outperform their younger peers in a wide array of cognitive and academic outcomes (Bedard & Dhuey, 2006). In addition, it can be argued that the amount of prior knowledge that adult learners have acquired over the years has a positive impact on higher education. An influential South African book written by Louw and Louw in 2009 makes it clear that prolonged education, higher socio-economic status or a lengthy marriage to an intelligent spouse have all been indicated to affect the maintenance of cognitive functioning in old age (Louw & Louw, 2009). This suggests that these factors contribute positively to improving memory and reducing mental fatigue in older people and enabled them to cope in a higher education setting, regardless of their age. In line with this, a study conducted by Imlach, Ward, Stuart and Summers (2017) on the cognitive, psychosocial, lifetime, and genetic predictors of university-level academic performance in older adults (50–79 years old) demonstrates that ageing does not impede academic achievement, and that discrete cognitive skills as well as lifetime engagement in cognitively stimulating activities can promote

academic success in older adults. Research has also shown that with the ageing of the world population older adults are increasingly engaging in university education, for interest or career advancement/redirection (McKenzie & Schweitzer, 2001).

For any class of students, high academic achievement is an indication of teaching/learning effectiveness, while poor academic achievement is an indication that the teaching/learning process is anything but effective (Eze et al., 2015). Despite this, Ali (2013) and Ganai and Mir (2013) observed that students' academic achievement is affected by a host of factors, including individual and household characteristics such as the students' ability and motivation, age, gender, quality of secondary education received, quality of lecturers and their instructional strategies, class size, location and environmental characteristics such as lighting and ventilation, among others. In addition, it emerges from the literature that other factors may include childhood training and experience, attitudinal differences, parental and teacher expectations and behaviours as well as differential course taking (Eze et al., 2015). It becomes evident that there is a combination of different factors that influence continuous cognitive development in adult students. For example, Foubert-Samier, Catheline, Amieva, Dilharreguy, Helmer, Allard and Dartigues (2010) single out factors such as education, occupational attainment, and leisure activities, that have been shown to make both independent and overlapping contributions to cognitive reserve. In spite of this, Gatz, Svedberg, Pedersen, Mortimer, Berg, and Johansson (2001) state that those individuals already higher in cognitive reserve may also be more likely to engage intellectually without difficulty, despite their age level. Lenehan, Summers, Saunders, Ward and Ritchie (2016) agree that, regardless of whether education influences the rate of normal age-related cognitive decline, enhancing an individual's level of cognitive function has the potential to preserve normal cognitive function for a longer period. Additionally, Churchill, Galvez, Colcombe, Swain, Kramer, and Greenough (2002) confirm that the mental exercise provided by frequent engagement in intellectually demanding activities at work may facilitate the maintenance of inherent cognitive reserve, leading to more sophisticated cerebral networks in old age.

There are also some influential factors that one might take for granted, yet they have a positive impact on cognitive reserve for adult learners. Fratiglioni and Wang, (2007) agree that several factors, including work complexity, social network and leisure activities, may contribute to this reserve, allowing cognitive function to be maintained in old age. They further point out that higher education, adult-life occupational work complexity, as well as a

mentally and socially integrated lifestyle in late life could postpone the loss of memory in adults. In this regard, Louw and Louw (2009) maintain that personality factors such as a positive self-image, an internal sense of control, positive feelings of self-efficacy and effective use of strategies, may also combat the decline in cognitive functioning, since people who believe they can perform effectively usually do perform. Supporting this sentiment, Lenehan et al. (2016) insist that the overwhelming majority of healthy older adults who engaged in some degree of university-level education for at least 12 months displayed a measurable increase in cognitive reserve. Leisure activities with all three components – physical, mental and social – seem to have the most beneficial effect (Fratiglioni & Wang, 2007) in boosting mental retention. Over and above this, the literature indicates that there is a strong link between early-life education and subsequent reduced risk of dementia (the weakening of mental ability). This suggests that education in later life could enhance cognitive function and may reduce age-related cognitive decline and protect against dementia (Thow et al., 2018). Undeniably, it becomes evident that an intellectually stimulating lifestyle may help modify late-life cognitive outcomes (Fratiglioni, 2007). In the next section I present support structures that might be needed by students who are pursuing higher degrees.

2.7.4 Support structures for students

Sound support structures that address the needs of students can play an important role in helping them succeed, such as, academic support, financial support, family support. Indeed, graduate school is a space and a place where "real changes can begin to enact different policies, build a different community, draw on functioning and effective support systems, and make inclusiveness and diversity a reality (William 2007). These changes can happen only if support comes from all fronts. It is thus also necessary that children and family life are coded in the academy as symbols of encouragement rather than problems to be managed by individual women. The term 'support' means the provision of safe space where the student accesses trust, recognition, and assistance to move ahead (Daloz, 1999). In regards to this, it might be highlighted that some aspects of family relations such as attending to the needs of children, partners, and incapacitated parents may impose demands on a student's time and intention (Peterson, Lenz, and Sampson (2003). As such, dysfunctional families and personal relationships can also hinder or distract students. However, in as much as the support the student might need is crucial for success, the student should also go the extra mile to communicate his/ her expectations as a student and as a member of the family. Because lack of support delays completion of and leads to dropping out of programmes (Rowntree 1992).

As this might have a bad impact on his/her intention to finish the course, but without the understanding support of the family, studying can be a struggle. The next section presents an overview of the kind of support offered by HEIs.

2.7.4.1 Support students receive from universities

Graduate students often experience problems that delay their studies or prevent them from finishing them (Ismail, Abiddin, & Hassan, 2011). For this reason, a student support system has been established in most universities, with a thorough selection of knowledgeable individuals assigned to offer various kinds of assistance to students enrolled there. It might be therefore argued that providing support to students has some positive consequences. For some students' educational goals are easily realised, but for many others the path is very different and learning goes from being a challenge to being a struggle. It must be also remembered that the learning that takes place during graduate studies is a maturing process that must be enhanced with timely and appropriate support (Ismail et al., 2011). This is crucial, since universities are trying to produce more quality students who can to conduct outstanding research projects. In this vein, master's students need to methodically master the research process while the doctoral candidate is expected to produce more original work and may therefore need more input in developing depth, synthesis, and critical ability (Lessing & Schulze, 2002). This suggests that postgraduate students need to be supported in an attempt to help them achieve their educational goals. Besides this, the supervisor must be willing to make adjustments in the relationship process to meet the supervisee's learning needs (Hodza, 2007). This might involve some appointments to consult with the postgraduate student. Indeed, effective supervision is essential to guide postgraduate students during their progress in their studies (Ismail et al., 2011). From the above perspectives, it becomes clear that support from the supervisors also plays a crucial role in trying to help postgraduate students, especially those who might need extra supervision assistance.

2.7.4.2 Support from the university library

All universities have academic libraries with staff for various functions. Each university library has media specialists who help students and teachers or instructors to become effective users of ideas and information, by providing access to materials and providing instruction to develop users' interest and competence in finding and using information and ideas (Newby, Stepich, Russell, & Lehman, 2006). University libraries promote active learning which contributes to students' ability to think critically and work well independently

or in a group (Guskin, 1996). The main purpose of academic libraries is to support the objectives of the academic environment in the areas of teaching, learning, research, and service (Aina, 2014). This has a positive impact on students' learning process, including performance. Using libraries offers benefits, such as: 1) easy access to high-quality content, which is a key foundation for good research; 2) specialist staff working in partnership with academic departments; and 3) recruitment and retaining of top researchers (MacColl & Jubb, 2011). Consequently, these benefits ensure that the institutions become the recipients of research income. Libraries need to serve all stakeholders. Students benefit by using facilities such as photocopying learning materials, borrowing books, and searching for information that they utilise for study and examination purposes, to name but a few.

2.7.4.3 Use of technology in providing support at HEIs

The possibilities that the World Wide Web offers for providing support services in adult education are enormous (Shelly, Gunter, & Gunter, 2010). The Web opens doors to new learning resources and opportunities and allows the sharing of information and knowledge as never before. Nowadays, students around the world can visit historical places by using interactive and virtual tours on the Web (Shelly et al., 2010). For example, a wide range of technology uses offered by the Internet may include search information for whatever purpose it is needed for higher education. These facilities allow students and lecturers access to a wealth of information. They can now read electronic mail, receive attachments and assignments, interact using video-conferencing, use online encyclopaedias, and utilise online learning as a means of support. Also, Web-based services may include mailing lists for students and lecturers. Mailing lists can be used in adult education since they allow lecturers to deliver assignments, official study materials, and additional resources or announcements to a targeted group of students. Most students bring a set of expectations to the services they receive from their academic institutions (Kramer & Associates, 2003). The services that are now offered mostly include information on admission requirements, admission and closing dates, available scholarships, application facilities for basic services, career guidance, and financial aid options. It can be argued that university websites need to be updated regularly to allow students and prospective students to search for and view information at any time without having to visit the university administration office. This helps students in many ways and saves time and money.

2.8 The impact of lifelong learning

The literature review demonstrates that there are widespread changes in the cultures, values, and lifestyles of people, particularly in developed countries, which arise partly from the changing patterns of work, leisure and family life, and partly from the changes in values, attitudes and identities due to the impact of globalisation and technology (Green, Preston, & Sabates, 2003). These deep-rooted changes have major implications for education and training at all levels. These changes serve as the driving force for adult learners to continuously embark on higher education quests. A group of empirical studies has defined the term 'lifelong learning' in terms of its importance in the life of adults (Suri & Beckett, 2012; Fischer, 1999; Slowey & Schuetze, 2012; Garipagaoglu, 2013; Kiliç & Yilmaz, 2019), while Suri and Beckett (2012) perceive a lifelong learner as someone whose learning occurs independently of educational organisations. A lifelong learner is also someone motivated and able to engage in formal learning throughout his/her lifespan. The Commission for a Nation of Lifelong Learning (1997) in Washington DC further defined it as a continuously supportive process that stimulates and empowers individuals. This Commission believes that in lifelong learning there is acquisition of knowledge, values, skills, and understanding that learners will require throughout their lifetime, whereby they apply them with confidence, creativity, and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances, and environments. Carlson (2016) further analysed this definition in the following manner, indicating that lifelong learning is:

a) a continuous endeavour in that it never ceases,

b) supportive in that it is not achieved independently,

c) stimulating and empowering in that it is self-directed and active rather than passive,

d) incorporating knowledge, values, skills, and understanding in that it is more than what learners know,

e) applied in the sense that the knowledge is not just for knowledge's sake,

f) incorporating confidence, creativity, and enjoyment in that it is a positive and fulfilling experience, and

g) inclusive of all roles, circumstances, and environments in that it applies not only to the chosen profession but also to the entire life of the learner.

In other words, lifelong learning provides the ongoing opportunity of acquiring the necessary knowledge by any adult who is willing to learn. Knapper and Cropley (2000) argue that lifelong learners are active learners that plan and assess their learning rather than waiting for others to plan for them. In essence, a lifelong learner can be anyone who dearly longs for new knowledge and new skills and who persists in making an effort to acquire these over most of

their lifetime. This person wants to be informed about current trends and is never satisfied with what he/she has accomplished in his/her lifetime. Fischer (1999) maintains that lifelong learning is a necessity rather than a luxury. For Diker and Demirel (2010) lifelong learning is deliberate and focused learning that takes place throughout a person's lifetime. To Slowey and Schuetze (2012) it is built around two axes: a vertical one which relates to the truism that people learn not just while they are young but over the whole of their lives, and a horizontal axis which relates to the fact that active and purposeful learning takes place not only in formal educational institutions but also in the workplace as well as through individual non-formal study. Living beings at all times and in every term adapt to changes taking place (Kiliç & Yilmaz, 2019). These scholars highlight that human beings both change their environment and change themselves, especially in the current time. Experiences that have been undergone contribute to the increase in the knowledge that exists in the world. As such, the demands of the expanding body of knowledge and the ever-adapting nature of change obliges us human beings to keep up to date and to apply continual learning (Kiliç & Yilmaz, 2019). In line with this, Hanemann (2015) states that lifelong learning is becoming a necessity, not only in formal education but especially for those who are disadvantaged or not formally educated. It has become an important strategy of coping with the challenges of globalisation, as it supports a rapid transition to a knowledge-based economy (Uggla, 2008).

The European Union (2001) emphasises that lifelong learning strategies are necessary to face the challenges of competitiveness and the use of new technologies to improve social cohesion, equal opportunities, and quality of life. The 21st century requires people to have the right tools for survival, which lifelong learning seems to provide. With lifelong learning, it is assumed that an individual takes responsibility for his/her learning and in this process the person actively looks for knowledge, not only at educational institutions but also in the workplace and everyday life (Thunborg & Bron, 2012). With this in mind, one might say that lifelong learning serves as a tool for empowering people. Besides this, Bentley (1998) argues that because it is not possible to equip young people with all the knowledge and skills that they will need throughout their lifetime at schools, colleges or universities, lifelong learning may be the only sustainable way to ensure the prosperity of nations. Furthermore, Garipagaoglu (2013) is of the view that lifelong learning plays a vital role not only in the pursuit of personal and professional development, but also in national competitiveness and development. It is therefore important to note that adult learners enrich their minds and acquire knowledge for survival purposes by embarking on lifelong learning programmes. In this regard, Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007)

acknowledge the role of post-secondary education in shaping lifelong learning through access to higher education for adults of any age and at any stage of their lives. I argue that lifelong learning frees people in their lifelong journey to gain new and update existing knowledge. It also enables social justice and equity by offering people opportunities to fulfil their dreams, while at the same time allowing them to possess the right skills and be productive in the economy. Lifelong learning should not only aim at "sustaining productivity and prosperity but also at building strong family lives and personal identity" (Walters, 2012). One of the most important reasons for lifelong learning is the complexity of today's society – with dynamic and ever-changing information, mass use of the Internet, multimedia, and educational technology's demand for a more flexible workforce and an ever-changing labour market (Kiliç & Yilmaz, 2019). Therefore, a positive attitude towards lifelong learning in the workforce has gradually become an asset that industries yearn for to increase their competitiveness. At the same time, it has also become something that governments try to inculcate in their people for national competitiveness, as it is considered the nation's primary source of competitive advantage and a driver of economic growth (Garipagaoglu, 2013). In conclusion, starting from the premise that it is not possible to equip young people with all the knowledge and skills that they will need throughout their lifetime at schools, colleges or universities, lifelong learning may be the only sustainable advantage for the prosperity of nations (Bentley, 1998). I next present the factors that have an impact on women's experiences in higher education.

2.9 Factors that affect women as postgraduate students

The factors that shape the life experiences of women pursuing higher degrees may include the impact of culture, cultural expectations, family dependability, motherhood, caregiving, patriarchal practices, role strain, power relations and work, and study conflict.

2.9.1 Culture

Several scholars agreed that the term 'culture' is complex per se; there are as many definitions of culture as there are scholars who are interested in the phenomenon. Edward B. Taylor is regarded as an eminent scholar who defined culture in his work *Primitive Culture* (1871, reprinted in 1958). Taylor saw culture as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs or any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. Feminism describes a culture in which women, because they are women, are treated differently than men, and that women are at a disadvantage in this difference of treatment (Bisong & Ekanem, 2014). These researchers further point out that feminism emphasizes that such treatment stems from culture, and this can change and is not simply the way the world is and must be. Culture is the total socially acquired life-way or lifestyle of a group of people (Harris, 1975). It consists of the patterned, repetitive ways of thinking, feeling, and acting that are characteristic of the members of a particular society or

segment of society. Given this perspective, Idang (2015) maintains that culture entails a totality of traits and characteristics that are peculiar to a group of people, to the extent that it marks them out from other peoples or societies. These peculiar traits include the people's language, dress, music, work, arts, religion, dancing and so on. They also include people's social norms, taboos, and values. Values here are to be understood as beliefs that are held about what is right and wrong and what is important in life (Idang, 2015). In essence, culture can be seen as a mechanism that controls a particular group of people sharing the same beliefs, values, and ideas and has always played a crucial role in women's life experiences. Also, earlier scholars argued that the essence of a culture is not its artefacts, tools, or other tangible cultural elements, but how the members of the group interpret, use, and perceive them (Merriam et al., 2007). It is these values, symbols, interpretations, and perspectives that distinguish one person from another in modernised societies, not material objects and other tangible aspects of human societies. These scholars further highlight that culture consists of "the shared behaviour and symbolic meaning systems of a group of people" (Merriam et al., 2007). There is a perspective that, of all South Africa's peoples (with the possible exception of the Swazi), the Zulus have perhaps been the closest to their culture (Joyce, 2009). According to Joyce (2009), "much of this culture has disappeared as the cities have grown and the imperatives of modern industrial society have taken over, but much has also remained intact" The place of values in African culture permeates every aspect of human life (Idang, 2015). This scholar adds that whether people are aware of it or not, the society people live in daily imprints its values about what is good, right and acceptable on us. For this reason, people try by all means to conform to acceptable ways of behaviour and conduct. People who do not conform to their immediate society's values are somehow called to order by the members of that society. I now resent the cultural expectations to be fulfilled by women as postgraduate students.

2.9.1.1 Cultural expectations

Rudwick (2008) points out that many African societies ascribe great significance to respectful behaviour, because many social practices and cultural customs in these societies are based on strict patriarchal principles. It can be argued that traditional culture has the power to control women to respect their husbands and do as they are commanded by the latter, leaving women no chance to make positive choices that can benefit the whole family, just because they are women. I argue that habitually the Zulu people, like other African ethnic groups as well as the entire global community, expected women to fulfil unpaid roles (inside the home or

ploughing and harvesting the field) to sustain the family, while men were free to look for jobs and leave their wives and children behind. In this regard, Magwaza (2009) observes that:

> At the turn of the 20th century, the role of Zulu women was mainly within the confines of the home. This state of affairs carried on during the Industrial Revolution era and into a period of a mass exodus of men from rural [areas] to cities in search of employment. Women were expected mainly to give birth and look after the children and the family through her gender defined domestic roles.

It is also important to highlight that Zulu people, like some other African cultures, transfer their customs from one generation to the next in the hope of preserving them for future generations. However, due to globalisation some customs are rapidly disappearing. In contemporary times, when most women are active, informal work activities outside the home and the traditional role of a married Zulu woman have been altered by the demands of a different set-up (Magwaza, 2009). However, a Zulu woman is still expected to maintain the good name of her family by showing respect and by being submissive to her husband and also to every other male figure in the community, regardless of how the husband treats her. Traditional African culture stipulated the different roles of men and women in society, and there were clear results if these rules were breached (Bwakali, 2001). However, the consequences were worse for the wife, because she would be told to go back to her family and inform them about her misconduct, and then she would be expected to return with sacrifices as penance. These sacrifices, such as goats, were slaughtered for reconciliation purposes. In spite of this, traditional culture expected women to be nurturers who perform a caretaking role in society (Bradley, 2000). This caretaker's role has continued to be inherited to the present day.

However, in modern societies the role of caretaker has lower economic value for females who occupy positions in the humanities and social sciences, whereas male-dominated fields include business, engineering, and technology, which have high financial rewards. This demonstrates how culture has impacted on female choices in society (Bradley, 2000). Indeed, for centuries, due to cultural expectations, women were reduced to an appendage at home, where their status was negligible in society (Nanzhao, 1998). From this traditional bias, a vicious cycle emerged; for example, in many Asian cultures girls were expected not to play any role in economic growth or their families and therefore had much less schooling than boys. Similarly, Barlow, Duncan and James (2002) highlight how society has never truly viewed women "as individual citizens endowed by the constitution with inalienable rights …

[instead], they are expected to carry our traditional role expectations, despite the requirements of a modern economy." Ross (1995) and Elvin-Nowak and Thomsson (2001) argue that the feelings of inadequacy of many working mothers are mainly brought on by constantly "swimming upstream in a society that imposes impossible cultural expectations and unrealistic multiple role prescriptions" on them. To radical feminists the oppression of women is a fundamental and primary form of oppression of their rights (Andermahr et al., 2000: 189). Culture itself has perpetuated the oppression of women in many enduring ways. It has contributed to oppressing women and promoting males as being superior at the expense of women. Hutson (2007) argues that because of the norms of society it was traditionally not up to women to make their lives successful; rather, it was up to their future husbands. While some women decided to take part in the economy, some did not, because people (mainly men) believed that 'family life' would suffer and that women would lose their desirable feminine qualities (Guppy, Balson, & Vellutini, 1987). It is therefore not strange that, in many spheres, men still dominate – for example, in education, politics, and industry. In these ways, culture contributes to keeping women in the domestic field and has prohibited them from taking part in the economy and becoming financially independent. The next section discusses the impact of family members' dependence on postgraduate students as mothers.

2.9.2 Family dependency

A rich body of literature has evolved in the study of the 'family' as a contested concept. Lubbe (2007) acknowledges that the term 'family' is perhaps "the most timeless, central, and enduring of all social constructs, for the reason that the concept 'family' is often taken for granted and not subjected to the critical scrutiny that it requires." In the South African context several types of families are found. For example, families may consist of a single adult with adopted children; a married couple consisting of a husband and wife and their children; a single divorced parent with one or more children; a single unmarried parent with a child or children; and a third-generation family which consists of either a single or both grandparents with their children who are the parent(s) of their children (Economic Policy Research Institute, 1998). All the above types of families depend on mothers or women for support and caregiving, regardless of other roles that the women may be entitled to. Mattessich and Hill (1987) posit that families display four systematic features, the first of which they call "intimate interdependence". Within this structure the husband and wife tend to rely on and trust each other. The second is "selective boundary maintenance", which is based on the traditional view of a mother as the only person responsible for catering for everyone, while the father is only responsible for putting bread on the table. The third feature is the ability to

adapt to change and the commitment by the husband and wife to share ideas and to compromise if the need arises. The last feature is that of a family type that maintains its identity over time, including the performance of family tasks. Each member of the family is aware of his or her social role in the family, which might involve physical maintenance of the house, maintenance of family morale, control of social and sexual behaviour, the acquisition of new family members through procreation or adoption, and the socialisation and education of their children (Mattessich & Hill, 1987). However, the family is not "an altruistic space of harmonious distribution of resources, but a deeply contested space where women suffer owing to the patriarchal social relations existing within the home and in the public sphere" (Dréze & Sen, 1990).

A mother's role in a family is arduous, denigrated and unrewarding, and the pressure to be a mother is social and subject to social control (Puget, 2003). Equally, even if mothers are not working, they are cleaning the house, feeding children, changing nappies, and performing many more duties that are burdensome, and they are subject to interruption at any moment (Bernard, 1976). Moreover, this burdensome social role requires that women uncomplainingly offer tender, loving care around the clock, and have the added elusive responsibility of bringing up their children. This causes a lot of stress in women and creates situations that lead to anxiety, especially if the women are students and workers at the same time. For his part, Mohanty (1984) points out that practices which characterise women's status and roles vary according to class. Women are constituted as women through the complex interaction between class, culture, religion and other ideological institutions and frameworks (Mohanty, (1984). Furthermore, the gender division of labour continues to influence how families function. Gender roles are male-oriented, putting more pressure on women and leaving no room for women to escape. Women typically assume more household responsibilities than their male counterparts. Women spend the largest portion of their time on unpaid work and caring for both their husbands and the entire family. With this in mind, the literature reveals that feminists have long been fighting for women's rights and their freedom from oppression. Because of this, social cohesion allows some families to share family responsibilities, as Tusabe (2002) points out:

> One of the most desirable fruits of a people who live by the spirit of group solidarity or nationhood is that they identify that which is human in others, which gives them the capacity to dialogue with others and to be enriched by their good qualities. With the spirit of cohesion, people feel implicitly bound together to co-

> operate, realising common ends by the use of common means, each person guaranteeing his or her co-operation, so that all can depend on each other.

The foregoing demonstrates the different ways in which the family represents a critical contextual factor that shapes women's life experiences. The next section looks at motherhood as an isolating experience.

2.9.3 Motherhood as an isolating experience

A large body of literature has explored the meaning of the concept of 'mother' and its impact on mothers' lives. According to the Macmillan English Dictionary (2005), 'mother' is a term that has different meanings for different people. It has been used to describe a woman who has given birth to a child and has the full responsibility to protect, care for, and raise that child. The term 'mother' can also refer to a female parent who provides the physical, cognitive and emotional care required by a child, even if it is not her own. For their part, Keohane, Rosaldo, and Gelpi (1982) describe motherhood as a political battleground; a contested area for control of women's bodies, of the fortunes of community support, and the constraints of choice. To them, the concept 'mother' has been misused as a mechanism of controlling women so that they will not detach themselves from their children – women should be aware that they are bound to mother the latter, no matter what. Guendouzi (2006) emphasises that in constructing the notion of motherhood, mothers are seen as the main tool in the maintenance of family life, while Burman (1994a) sees motherhood as a social, historical and cultural construct rather than a natural consequence of the maternal instinct. Cooley and Stone (2009) observe that the term 'mother' is steeped in cultural and historical meaning, but is also semantically unstable. They highlight that today women find themselves affected by the powerful, contradictory expectation that while mothers are stay-at-home caregivers, paradoxically they will also be well educated and have meaningful careers.

A study by Walker (1990) revealed that both working-class and professional women are tired and feel tension when simultaneously trying to cope with their roles as mothers and workers. They also feel guilty about spending inadequate time with their children. It is argued that "tension coexists within a mother and renders her neither as 'bad' as society fears nor as 'good' as society desires" (Parker, 1995). The question, therefore, arises: "What constitutes a good mother and what criteria are used to qualify a good mother?" Welldon (1988) states that over time society has glorified motherhood and denied that it could have any negative aspects. She uses the example of how in the 1960s the phenomenon of baby battering was a

great concern, but no one seemed to understand these women as mothers: “Women were seen as capable of such action, but not ‘mothers’” (Welldon, 1988). It might be argued that women battered their young ones not because they did not love them, but because of certain circumstances that were beyond their control. In such circumstances, they viewed battering as the only option since their partners may not have been willing to share the burden of raising the child. The misconception that women who battered their children were not ‘real mothers’ may also have rested on the assumption that when a woman becomes a mother, she is naturally equipped to be a mother – that patience and unconditional love accompany the birth of her child, and that she will naturally be able to meet her child’s every need and therefore keep him/her content and happy at all times.

Mothers have since become more vocal about their challenges, because they are tired of suffering in silence. It was these challenges that propelled women into the streets of Gera in Germany in 1929 (Domansky, 1994). These women had become fed up with the ‘day-to-day’ assaults and the endless cycle of cooking, washing, cleaning, and mending without recognition or pay that decided a family’s day-to-day survival (Domansky, 1994). Instead, their bodies had been exposed to the vulnerability of illnesses, injury, rape, miscarriages, stillbirths, and pregnancies, and they were plagued by pain and birth complications. It was also painful experiences similar to these which led women to fight for their rights at the Union Buildings in Pretoria in 1956 and on the streets of Beijing in 1995. The experience of academic mothers is the subject of much research (Pillay, 2007; Walker, 1998; Terborg-Penn, 2013; Magwaza, 2009). In the context of higher education, mothers as graduate students experience high rates of attrition “because of the conflict between embracing intensive motherhood and navigating universities and colleges that implicitly regard the family as a private, largely female endeavour” (Adel, 2013). Hallstein and O’Reilly (2012) add that “mothering and professing simultaneously seems incompatible, if not impossible”. To them, being a mother and a professional at the same time is fraught with a complex set of challenges and difficulties, primarily because of the new and unique contexts within which academic women and mothers find themselves today. Hallstein and O’Reilly (2012) attest to the fact that while HEIs are liberal and progressive, academic mothers are living, working and mothering at the intersection of three forces that create a unique academic-to-mother set of challenges when they try to have and manage ‘it all’. It is this that makes academia a more challenging profession for women or for those who want to become mothers. The next section explores the experiences of women as caregivers.

2.9.3.1 Women and the undetectable burden of care

In an attempt to discuss women's role as caregivers, I will begin by describing the term 'care' to enable the reader to get a deeper understanding of what this role requires from women. The term care generally may mean to look after someone who requires support; there is no straightforward definition of it. Tronto (1993) has identified four phases of care. The first phase is that of caring *about,* where the focus of the carer is on noticing people's needs, and listening to what people are saying and what they are not saying (attentiveness). The second care phase is that of *care for,* where the carer has to take full responsibility to ensure that people's needs are met. The third phase is that of *caregiving,* whereby the carer actively engages in caring for people. The final phase is that of *received care,* where the carer has to try to understand "how do care receivers respond to the care they are given?". Reddy, Meyer, Shefer, and Meyiwa (2014) agree that care is existential; without it, human beings do not live. They further point out that good care is indispensable to the flourishing, wellbeing and prosperity of individuals and societies. While this sentiment sounds acceptable, a caring role traditionally fell to the women in each family worldwide.

The African gender norms stipulate caregiving as a female normative role, where women and girls in the various communities become caregivers (Asquo, Etowa, & Akpan, 2017). Due to this norm, even today women find themselves affected by the powerful, contradictory expectations that mothers are stay-at-home caregivers but also will be well educated and have meaningful careers (Cooley & Stone, 2009). I argue that women find themselves attempting to strike a balance and to be energetic enough to satisfy their multiple roles as mothers and workers simultaneously. Coming home from work does not award them the same credits granted to men. For women, 'coming home' from work means that they have to carry on with the household chores and take care of their children and their husbands concurrently. Concerning 'taking care of the children', especially infants, Harris (1987) states that the literature on psychology shows that the infant's actions express a 'need' which the mother must learn to recognise and meet with an appropriate, culturally defined response. Furthermore, a stimulus-response model of communication is set up between the mother and the infant, with the mother reading and responding to the cues or signals of the child. This adds an extra burden to an already burdened working mother, especially if she has other children to take care of as well. Frizelle and Hayes (1999) argue that it is the mother who can provide the necessary conditions for the healthy adjustment of her child, and for this reason she is primarily responsible for her child. However, Pillay (2007) argues that although the

responsibility for nurturing is phenomenal, taking this on alone is self-defeating. In other words, mothers should not be the only persons responsible for the children. If motherhood is a social practice, it becomes clear that child-rearing should be a shared practice. Role strain is presented in the next section.

2.9.4 Role strain

The term 'role strain' is explored in this study in an attempt to understand the impact of gender roles in the lives of women as mothers, workers and postgraduate students simultaneously. According to Goodie (1960) 'role strain' means a feeling of having difficulty in fulfilling a role or obligations. In line with this, Home (1998) insists that role strain is perpetuated by variables of role conflict (i.e. simultaneous incompatible demands from two or more sources). In this case, it can include sources such as the workplace, family needs, community needs, and a student role. However, according to the earliest literature, the first source includes 'role contagion', meaning a preoccupation with one role while performing another role (Home, 1997). The second source of role strain is 'role overload', which means having insufficient time to meet all role demands (Home, 1998). The latter spells out that human beings may find it difficult to execute two or more roles at a time; as a result, role strain occurs unexpectedly. Traditionally, in most communities' gender roles suppress women more than men. With this in mind, Ahmad (1995) points out that the major role problem a woman faces is the conflict arising from multiple roles. In support, Katz and Khan (1978) argue that the fact that multiple roles operate at the same time leads to greater role conflict. The reality is that the expectations surrounding any of these roles can generate inter-role conflict, when they involve pressures to dominate the time of the focal person and interfere with fulfilling the expectations associated with other roles (Ahmad, 1995). Nowadays, while the multiple roles of women cannot be ignored, it is worth noting that women's roles are emerging differently. with a new commitment and displaying a career orientation concurrently with commitment to family (Sinha, 2017), compared to the traditional roles. This in turn leads to some stress and strain among working women. Higher education is only one of the many activities in which adult women students are involved (Fairchild, 2003). While assuming the role of a student, it is important to note that adults are often employed full-time and as workers; these adults are also caregivers for children and ageing relatives, community leaders, and volunteer workers (Fairchild, 2003).

Barnett (2004) claims that the roles of wife and mother are ‘natural’ roles and are therefore performed without undue stress, and in contrast, the roles of an employee are seen as ‘unnatural’ and therefore highly demanding. I concur that the combination of these two competing roles raises some concern as to whether women can handle the demands of multiple roles without any conflict or serious negative health consequences. The literature demonstrates that increases in roles, demands, and time conflicts are associated with high levels of stress, anxiety and depression for some adult female students (Carney-Crompton & Tan, 2002). Over and above this, Okin (1989) believes that the allocation of roles in the family by sex is due to how we are socialised into gender roles and to government and workplace policies which serve to reinforce the association between women and caregiving, pressuring couples into traditional roles. Researchers reveal that the role conflict between being mothers and workers may cause women to choose the type of work that fits the family's needs best (García & De Oliveira, 1997). Castanéda and Isgro (2013) point out that in higher education settings in the USA women faculty members with children (that is, mothers in academia) are often encouraged to pursue their careers at lower-tier institutions. This push has the potential to steer talented women away from pursuing faculty careers at Research I and Research II institutions, based on the assumption that the roles of being both scholar and mother are incompatible. This view disadvantages women compared to their male counterparts. Given this, Henderson and Tindall (2013) argue that “the concept of work/life balance is a ‘misnomer’, as there will always be a tendency to prioritise one role over another.” As a result, some women students focused on their tenure before having children at a later stage, aiming at reaching the glass ceiling. This view is supported by Ennis (2012), who states that “in balancing work with motherhood, some working mothers can combine both, while others give up some activities temporarily, such as the contract-faculty mother. When working mothers feel a sense of powerlessness, the results are a sense of feeling frazzled, torn, tired, anxious, depressed and guilty.” Also, Slan-Jerusalim and Chen (2009) argue that the more important or salient a woman views her role as a mother, the more time and energy she will invest in that role, which will lead to less energy being available for other roles; this is ‘role overload’. According to Braun, Vincent and Ball (2008), it is apparent that combining motherhood with a paid career is difficult “as working mothers have little time at home with the children, thus placing them at odds with a dominant mothering discourse which prioritises mothers spending time with their children”.

Furthermore, Gazso's 2007 study of mothers' experiences with balancing expectations of employability and family responsibilities while on social assistance suggests that mothers' experiences of a time crunch, overload, and interference vary, depending on their employability status. This shows that most women do experience role strain, but the pressure varies from one to the next, depending on the type of employment, demand for work and number of dependents they have. This is supported by Erdwins, Buffardi, Casper, and O'Brien (2001) who demonstrate that the time pressures from a never-ending workload at home and work result in role overload and lead to mothers feeling unable to perform their multiple roles adequately. Higher education institutions have some structures aimed at helping academic mothers cope with work overload. Michailidis (2008) states that for many women, occupational stress in higher education is gendered, with women experiencing heavier workloads and greater stress in managing their multiple roles. Research shows that not all women make use of the support channels provided by experts. Instead, due to stress levels, some academic mothers sometimes engage in negative stress management behaviours such as smoking, drinking, overeating, and succumbing to a sedentary lifestyle (Michailidis, 2008; Vancour & Sherman, 2010). In developed countries there is consensus on the establishment of technologies that would reduce the multiple roles of women. Simultaneously, husbands are encouraged to share house chores. Andrew and Shahrokni (2018) highlight that in the final decades of the 20th century women in the developing world tirelessly went "on the move": women started working, studying and applying themselves outside the home. As they entered the public arena, local definitions of what was considered appropriately feminine also changed, together with a shift in the masculine role. The next section explains the work, study and family obligations as experienced by women.

2.9.5 Work, study, and family obligations

Traditionally, the role of women was that of housewife and mother, to the extent that women were encouraged to focus on raising and nurturing their children, supporting their husbands' career goals, and acting as gracious and accomplished hostesses (Gaughan, 2003). However, even if these aspirations still seem desirable, women and mothers want to escape these roles to avoid boredom and their dependence on their husbands for financial support. Instead of relying on their partners, they see work as a way of providing a better life for themselves and their children, and as a means of acting responsibly as role models for their children (Braun et al., 2008). Research also reveals that despite their vital contribution to the nation's economic, social and political development, the majority of working women face numerous individual

constraints while working, especially if they are married and have children (Abudullah, Wahab, Shamsuddin, & Noor, 2012). It is not that their contribution is ignored, but the challenges they encounter during their participation stem from the fact that they are women and wives who as such bear the sole responsibility for nurturing their children and taking care of their families. In this regard, Sackeyfio (2013) points out that cultural expectations and norms legitimise a woman's role so that educational credentials and professional career achievements take second place to the marriage mandate. He further posits that the conflict between mothering, university teaching and coping with the graduate school has led many women to stop working so hard, because they might collapse (Sackeyfio, 2013).

The reality is that working long hours at work is stressful on its own. Coming home, only to find that there are still things that need to be done by the same person without having a rest, is traumatic. This is why feminists think that 'the family' plays a key role in the perpetuation of women's oppression (Davis, 2009; Stanley & Wise, 1983). This is in connection with women's roles as wives and mothers as well as the role of the family as the main means of 'socialising' children, all of which place heavy burdens on women. Magwaza's study (2009) on the experiences of a black South African woman shows the replication of similar challenges and negative perceptions about women in the work and family domains. Magwaza argues that work, family, community and sociocultural spheres not only form part of women's lives but also need to be seen as an interconnected continuum that does not necessarily require balancing (Magwaza, 2009). Similarly, Vincent, Braun and Ball (2010) have demonstrated that most mothers – both those who mother alone and those who have partners – battle with depression, debt and poverty, social isolation, stressful personal relationships, threatening surroundings and the demands of employment and family. Magwaza (2009) reports that, as a woman, she finds it hard to strive towards gratifying all parties (family, multi-mothers, cultural group, social life, work), as this brings unnecessary pressure, leads to depression, and in turn has negative effects on everyone. The above review has illustrated that work/family conflict is still in existence and that society still perceives mothers as the persons responsible for all of the ills in the family, regardless of their contribution to the prevailing circumstances. The impact of power relations will be discussed in the next section.

2.9.6 Power relations

I will start by defining the term 'power' and then present the impact of power relations in the life of women. The concept of power is complex and contested, and varying views of power

have been identified by social and political theorists (Clegg, 1989). According to Allen (2005) the literature on power is marked by deep, widespread, and seemingly intractable disagreements over how the term power should be understood. Burke, Cropper, and Harrison (2000) view the concept of power as often associated with other emotive terms, such as oppression, inequality, powerlessness, and discrimination. In the most general sense, 'power' may refer to any kind of influence exercised by objects, individuals, or groups upon each other (Burke et al., 2000). The concept has also received very systematic attention in feminist critiques and appropriations (Sawicki, 1991). Although any general definition of feminism would no doubt be controversial, much work in feminist theory is devoted to the tasks of critiquing women's subordination, analysing the intersections between sexism and other forms of subordination such as racism, heterosexism, and class oppression, and envisioning the possibilities for both individual and collective resistance to such subordination (Allen, 2005).

Also, in understanding the concept of power, academics came up with three unrelated descriptions that may intersect at any time. McCorkel and Myers (2003) are of the view that power is commonly conceptualised in ways that dissociate it from love and care, as can be seen when men assault women. For his part, Yates (1993) argues that power does not necessarily entail having a structural relation to an unidentifiable set of materials, but is something to be identified within a particular cultural way of being, seeing and, above all, speaking. Rich (1995) argues that the language of patriarchy insists on a rigid dichotomy, where one person has power and others are powerless. Foucault (1980) firstly sees power as a possession held by individuals or classes; secondly, he sees power as emanating from a single site or central source or imposed from top to bottom; and lastly, he sees power as primarily repressive in its exercise, a prohibition based on sanctions. Over and above this, Foucault further adds that there is a multiplicity of power relations at work in any particular area, and that power is produced at every moment and every point. Another view maintains that power is an ever-present phenomenon in all social interactions (Clifford, 1998; Foucault, 1980). These scholars further add that personal or public interactions are determined by power relationships, whether explicit and conflictual or implicit and seemingly amicable, as reflected in the institutionalised processes of the organisation.

Hayward (1998) sees power as a network of social boundaries that constrain and enable the action of all actors. Regarding the network of social boundaries, she proposed reconceptualising power's mechanisms, not as instruments that powerful agents use to

prevent the powerless from acting independently, but rather as social boundaries (such as laws, rules, norms, institutional arrangements, and social identities and exclusions) that constrain and enable action for all actors (Hayward, 1998). Galinsky, Magee, Inesi and Gruenfeld (2006) point out that people in power have control over valuable resources and are therefore less dependent on others. These scholars further highlight that people in power may be less likely to adopt the perspective of other people. For example, in the case of an employer and an employee, the employer has more power and is also more concerned about the valuable resources for growing the business than the employee. Hamilton and Sharma (1996) point out that the term 'power' is related to several other similar terms, such as authority (the power of the acting agent to enforce obedience), domination (includes having commanding influence over a certain territory, aspect, or person), control (directing or constraining action or right of supervision), and force (strength, energy, impetus, violence, and coercion). Cast (2003) maintains that individuals with more power in their marriages resist the identities imposed on them by their less powerful spouses.

Power relations have an immediate effect on the body, as abusers mark the body, train it, torture it, and force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, and to emit signs (Foucault, 1977). In other words, the concept of power divides people into two groups, namely those who are either powerful or powerless. In some cases, men exercise power over women; as such, women fail to defend themselves. The power relations between men and women especially struggle over control of women's bodies and have been a key focus of feminist analysis (Andermahr, Lovell, & Wolkowitz, 2000). Power and power relations are increasingly regarded as constituted by the social interaction between human beings instead of being considered a result of constant and unchangeable structures that govern the lives of human beings (Olsvik, 2010). The relations of power are multidirectional and can be contradictory; that is, some experiences may be simultaneously empowering and disempowering (Pillay, 2017). The major consequences of poverty are that people have little choice in making decisions about their own lives (Tesoriero, 2010). Cultural norms and values perpetuated by dominant discourses within a culture can restrict people's power over personal choice (Tesoriero, 2010). Cultural norms and patriarchal systems can hinder some people from making important life decisions that can help them overcome the obstacles they face. Research indicates that power has the potential to divide and to make some people believe that they are superior to others (Foucault, 1977). Violence in societies, often grounded in oppressive circumstances, is caused by imbalances in power relations and

inappropriate conceptions and applications of power (Hamilton & Sharma, 1996). In this regard, ideologies of the past have been one important factor in the socialisation of individuals and social groups into present power relations, and breaking away from old habits is a difficult task. In this regard, Hansen (1993) insists that those who wield power can control others in varying ways, such as getting them to engage in activities that are not in their own best interests.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed and documented the related literature in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of what has already been said and what is still missing from the existing literature on power relations. We know the impact of apartheid and rural education on the lives of African people. The literature also displayed the factors that influence women's pursuit of higher degrees and those that affect them as women, workers, and postgraduate students. However, the existing literature fails to highlight the experiences of rural working mothers studying at a South African university. For this reason, this study may help in directing future research on the subject, since this knowledge is still lacking in the existing literature. As this a feminist research, chapter Three will present the theoretical framework underpinning this study. Including the rationale, why adopted feminist theories were chosen over other known theories. It is also important to highlight that the methodology of this study is presented over two chapters, that is: chapter 3 and chapter 4.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This project aims to develop a deeper understanding of the experiences of rural working mothers as postgraduate students. As this is a qualitative, interpretive study, it is important to note that it is informed by one of the theoretical frameworks suitable for social sciences. A theoretical framework is a system of ideas or conceptual structures that help us to understand, explain, and change the world (Conelly, Li, MacDonald, Parpart, & Barriteau, 2000). Since it is impossible to come to a research study without any preconceived ideas, qualitative researchers report their theoretical orientation to state their bias explicitly, so that findings can be interpreted in light of this bias, thus increasing the credibility of the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). In an attempt to analyse the life stories and lived experiences of rural working mothers studying at a South African university, feminist theories were adopted in this study. This study hopes to document the experiences of these rural working mothers in terms of why they behave in the way they do. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section will explore the historical origins of feminism theory, the second presents the different perspectives within feminism, and the last section discusses poststructural feminism and intersectional feminism, as these two theories are adopted to understand the lived experiences of rural working mothers.

3.2 Feminist theory

It is a challenge to ascertain when the term ‘feminism’ was introduced in terms of knowing exact times and places. However, what is common about feminist theories which have emerged from England, France, the USA and other international countries is that feminism was/is about women’s issues, challenges, and women’s body and lived experiences as compared to their male counterparts. It must be highlighted that feminist theory also spread throughout the African countries. The term ‘feminism’ has its origin in the Latin word ‘*femina*’ which designated women’s concerns (Nicolaides, 2015). A significant body of work points out that feminist theory is not simply about any kind of theoretical work or only a certain kind of theoretical work, but is produced in particular ways, in different times and places (Ahmed, 2000). This author further explains that to say feminist theory is produced here and there is also to point to how theory travels, and how it moves around the world; however, location is not a fixed point, but a site of struggle. In this regard, Offen (1988) argued that feminist theory could be used to analyse and interpret thought and action

concerning women's status across cultures and across time. Higgs and Smith (2002), point out that the origins of feminism can be traced back to 1782. In contrast, Offen (1988) insists that the feminist movement effectively began in 1848 at Seneca Falls in New York in the USA, and the focus was on votes for women. Bell, Meriläinen, Taylor and Tienari (2019) state that narratives of how feminism developed historically are often structured using the metaphor of 'waves'. Supporting this sentiment, Higgs and Smith (2002) note that the first feminist movement was formulated and was called the 'first wave'. The emphasis of first-wave feminism was on women's social and political rights. Their concern was regarding women's right to be free to vote, receive equal pay, and be equal before the law and in divorce. Expanding on this, Offen (1988) highlights that the key notion of feminist theory is the means to the end of "advancement," "rights equal to those granted by men." As a consequence, the first-wave feminist collective movement helped women to achieve their goals. Subsequently, building on the remarkable success of the first-wave movement, second-wave feminists took the movement further. Their principal aim was to examine the highly questionable assumption underlying male domination. They opposed the claim that men shaped and led humankind while women did little more than fulfil their biological role of bearing and rearing children (Higgs & Smith, 2002). Second-wave feminism claimed that men had only achieved what they had because of the 'unseen labour and unseen presence' of women. Rogan and Budgeon (2018) maintain that second-wave feminism had a clear object (women), a clear goal (to change the fact of women's subordination), and even a clear definition (political struggle against patriarchal oppression). Second-wave feminism believed that until women had complete control over their bodies, any other gains made by the movement would be of little significance (Brown, 2004).

Another feminist movement that emerged later was the third-wave feminist movement. Nicolaides (2015) notes that third-wave feminism was inaugurated in the 1990s in response to the perceived failure of the second wave. This scholar maintains that third-wave feminism challenged many second-wave white, upper-class 'essentialists', and the focus fell on the juncture between race and gender, including reproductive rights. Women at that time were demanding contraception and birth control as they sought greater sexual freedom. This was unlike the general tendency among many (especially early) second-wave feminists who, while having different theories or explanations for women's oppression, tended to work within foundational western political theories such as liberalism or socialism (Jaggar & Rothenberg, 1984). The perspective of third-wave feminism "begins with women's point of

view, notably the diversity and difference in perspectives among women" (Arneil, 1999). Third-wave feminism argues that men are intrinsically malicious in their dealings with women (Higgs & Smith, 2002). In some cases, men punish women for any failed gender role that they believe is supposed to be executed by women. Lack of support of their children, sexual harassment, rape and homicide are some of the instances where men use their power to harm women. As Byrd, Cole, and Guy-Sheffal (2009) quote Audre Lorde's words: "Attend me, hold me in your muscular flowering arms, protect me from throwing any part of myself away."

It is noteworthy to highlight that since its inception, the subject of feminist theory has been women's lives, past or present, historically recorded or known only by inference (Keohane et al., 1982). These scholars agreed that the reason behind the adoption of feminism is that there is a strong belief that feminist theory brings the added awareness that the construction of women's experiences has never been adequate. As such, feminist theory takes it as a norm to be more vocal about the way women are treated, and provides a platform to find the solution. Feminist theory permits women worldwide who speak the same 'language' "to share the concepts, terms, and grammar of a common field of study" (Arnot & Weiler, 1993). These authors state that through feminist analysis the 'language' and set of shared understanding has helped women to learn from one another's experiences and those of women within different but often historically related educational systems. It therefore becomes clear that the mandate of feminist theory is its commitment to seek justice for women and to deal with or address women's challenges in a collective way. Feminist theory was adopted in this study because it has the potential of enabling women to stand up for their rights, and not to suffer in silence but instead to be more vocal about their experiences and the challenges they encounter as women and as mothers, regardless of where they are. Indeed, feminist theory leads us to solutions and clarity as to why women behave in the way that they do (Higgs & Smith, 2002).

Beside this, Brooks and Hesser-Biber (2007) argue that thousands of women from all points on the globe face a diverse array of daily challenges, and there are many different struggles and actions that women engage with and participate in. For this reason, many feminists seek to understand women's (and men's) experiences in a culture that is considered patriarchal (Tummons & Duckworth, 2013). These scholars further contend that feminists are committed to uncovering structures and conditions that contribute to gender inequality, with a commitment to inform society at large of the factors that generate this phenomenon. In this

process they put forward ways that can help alleviate this situation, thus empowering women and giving them a voice to speak about social life from their point of view. However, it is important to note that there is a contradiction when the experiences of men and women are compared. In light of this, Elliot and Mandell (1995) argue as follows:

> what oppresses women are not what oppresses men; rather, it is a special form of life called 'patriarchy' through which men appropriate all superior social roles and keep women in subordinate and exploited positions.

In this vein, Peet and Hartwick (2009) define patriarchy as "a set of social relations between men which has a material base and which, through the hierarchy, establishes or creates interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women". As a consequence, feminists are concerned with direct discrimination or unequal treatment directed at women because of their sex, or indirect (unequal) treatment where some other criterion is used that puts one sex at a disadvantage and is not otherwise justified (Acker, 1993). For example, an entire interview panel might favour a male over a female; or when a couple buys a car, it is the husband's prerogative to drive it. Because of this discrepancy, feminists are no longer quiet; instead, feminists are concerned with power issues and all other issues that might lead women to receive unequal treatment. Over and above this, feminists fight to address the emancipatory element of educational research (Usher, 1996), since mainstream research fails to document the experiences of women. Concerning this, Brookes and Hesser-Biber 2007) point out that "we want to be part of research activities since they have observed that mainstream research is male-dominated and it lacks accurate representation of women's experiences." One might argue that women find themselves in a continuous struggle, and conquering one challenge is not enough since the challenges come from all directions of life because they are women.

Another challenge is that of sexism. Robson (1993) argues that sexism can reside in the conduct of educational research. This scholar has identified seven sources of sexism in research which she believes reveal that most educational research sees the world through male eyes. The first source is based on the fact that there is a tendency to apply male research paradigms to females, which is called 'androcentricity'. The second source is that, in some cases, a study generalises from males to females, which is known as 'overgeneralisation'. The third source is based on gender insensitivity, which occurs when a study ignores sex as a possible variable. The fourth source is that of double standards, which happens when a study

uses male criteria and standards to judge the behaviour of women. The fifth source is based on the fact that, in some cases, 'sex appropriateness' occurs when a study may assume that child-rearing is women's responsibility. The sixth source is 'familism', which occurs in the unfair treatment of the family rather than the individual as a unit of analysis. Finally, 'sexual dichotomism' occurs where a study treats men and women as distinct social groups, when in fact they may share characteristics. It is this direct discrimination against and marginalisation of women that led Brooks and Hesser-Biber (2007) to acknowledge that women are often left out of scholarship and research samples altogether, and that research topics consistently fail to take women's activities and experiences into account. Because of the failure to recognise the importance of including women's experiences in research, feminist researchers began to ask new questions and develop new epistemological frameworks and research methods that took women's lives and experiences into account, and that valued women's life stories as knowledge. Feminism is concerned with the under-representation of women and their experiences within the social sciences (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Indeed, feminists have been at the forefront of debates about social justice and equal opportunities in terms of gender (David, 1993). This author further adds that, since gender shapes agendas and the choice of problems, it becomes apparent that the relationship among stakeholders should be good. In line with this view, Creswell (1998) suggests that feminist research should strive to establish collaborative and non-exploitative relationships. Additionally, Denzin (1989), Miles (1993), Haing (1997) and De Laine (2000) share the opinion that collaborative, collectivist research undertaken by collectives – often women – should combine researchers and the researched, and break subject-object and hierarchical, non-reciprocal relationships. The literature suggests that when women are researching other women, there should be a mutual relationship among them to break the hierarchical stance that could make the informants feel intimidated when sharing their experiences.

3.2.1 Criticism of feminist theory

While feminist theory has been celebrated for its potential in fighting for the rights of women, it has been criticised for splitting hairs. For example, people from vastly different cultural situations variously categorise feminist practices as reactionary, unbalanced, elite, exclusive, and hysterical (Wasley, 2005). Wasley adds that whatever the era, people have always said that feminism is too narrow. Other scholars argue that feminism claims to be fighting for the rights of women, but when these rights are attained it is women that will be at the losing end (Bisong & Ekanem, 2014). These researchers maintain that the patriarchal structuring of

society limits not only the woman, but is also rather more damaging to males. They believe that patriarchy instead demands more from males, leading them to take more risks than females, and this risk translates into more death among males compared to females. These scholars further allege that feminists seem to have pushed the woman to the position of advantage over the man as regards work and payment. These allegations against feminist theory are unacceptable, because feminists fight against women's oppression. It has been documented that patriarchy is the root cause of women's subordination (Flax, 1999). All over the world, women can count on the work of feminist movements and activists in terms of offering platforms for women to seek social justice, encouraging them to speak out about their sufferings and their challenges to be addressed.

3.3 Theories adopted for this study

Having explored radical feminism, liberalism feminism, choice feminism and African feminism, I noted that none of these theories were appropriate for this project. The main aim of this chapter is to explore the two feminist theories chosen to inform this study in an attempt to analyse the viewpoint of rural working mothers as postgraduate students. These two theories are poststructural feminist theory and intersectional feminist theory. I believe that research conducted within a feminist framework is attentive to issues of difference, the questioning of social power, resistance to scientific oppression, and a commitment to political activism and social justice (Hesse-Biber, Leavy, & Yaiser, 2004). In this study, feminist theories are used as a tool that can help me to understand and make sense of the experiences of black working mothers. As I indicated in the above paragraphs, there are a variety of feminist perspectives, but they have all been driven by the political agenda of liberating women from their chains of oppression, marginalisation, being silenced and suffering because they are women. However, it is worth noting that among the diversity of feminists there is a common thread directing otherwise different viewpoints towards one ultimate objective: the recognition of male dominance in social arrangements and a desire for a change in this situation (Seneviratne, 2018).

Some scholars point out that western feminist models are inappropriate for thinking of research with women in postcolonial sites (Spivak, 1988) such as South Africa. In this case, and for this project, I strongly believe that the acts of making sense of the local involve acts that move beyond the local, although in very different ways (Ahmed, 2000). As such, western feminism was employed in this work to enable the researcher to cite the work of other

feminists who came before me (Ahmed, 2017), and acknowledge their insights of what it means to be a black feminist woman. Also, I admit that there is no single theory or theoretical framework sufficiently appropriate to provide an excellent account of what is being researched. For this reason, the employment of a dual theoretical framework allowed me to 'see', understand and interpret certain aspects of the experiences of rural working mothers from different angles, as my aspiration was to understand why these women behave in the way they do. I acknowledge that my goal cannot be achieved without utilising feminist theories, as their concern is with dismantling the patriarchal system, the experiences of women, and their challenges and struggles of being women. The next section presents a discussion of each of the two theories used in this study, starting with poststructural feminist theory and followed by intersectional feminist theory. Finally, I shall justify my choice by discussing the reasons why feminist theories were best suited for this project.

3.3.1 Poststructural feminist theory

In an attempt to present poststructural feminist theory I will briefly explain how poststructuralism came to exist and how it differs from structuralism. I would like to acknowledge that by presenting differences between the two frameworks, there is no intention to dishonour those who prefer to engage with structuralist ways of working (Thomas, 2002). Indeed, having a large body of theoretical frameworks allows one the privilege of choosing the theory best suited to analyse the work at hand. As this study explored the experiences of rural working mothers in pursuit of higher degrees at a South African university, it would be naïve for the researcher to ignore feminist theories, as these theories have been proven by many scholars as appropriate to analyse women's lived experiences. In this section I briefly present the following poststructural feminism concepts in an attempt to gain insight into the effects of these concepts as perceived by women. These aspects are discourse, language, power relations, subjectivity, identity, deconstruction, and knowledge, and have been explained in no particular order, but all have been utilised by various poststructural feminists.

3.3.1.1 Theoretical framework of structuralism

Structuralism was a largely French intellectual movement that began in the 1950s and rose to great prominence throughout the 1960s and 1970s (Lundy, 2013). This scholar also highlighted the influential thinkers who were associated with the structuralist movement at one point or another, including Roland Barthes, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Louis

Althusser, Nicos Poulantzas, Algirdas Julian Greimas, Tzvetan Todoroy, Jacques Derrida and Pierre Bourdieu (Lundy, 2013). The chief structuralists among these were Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser, and Jacques Derrida. In their ways, these three thinkers contested, modified and/or failed to adhere to various aspects of the classical structuralist image. Additionally, all three were philosophers by trade and tradition. Thus while they each had a keen interest in the new developments coming from the social sciences, their objective was not exactly to dethrone the discipline of philosophy, but to reassess its foundations and suggest new directions. As a result, these thinkers each in their own way used structuralism to reinvigorate philosophy rather than usurp it (Lundy, 2013). Research studies further reveal that structuralism is regarded as an intellectual movement most readily associated with some philosophers, including the Swiss Linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913). The anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss (1968) examined cultural phenomena according to the underlying formal systems out of which those phenomena naturally sprang (Bush, 1995). Also, Freundlieb (1989) notes that in 1975 Culler was among these structuralist theorists, but holds that Culler and other structuralists never took the scientific aspirations of early structuralism seriously. These philosophers believe that both language and culture acquire meaning only insofar as they participate in a complex pool of structural relations. However, for De Saussure the goal was to understand the abstract structures behind all forms of social communication, from painting and religious rituals to chess and the rules of courtship (Woodward, Dixon & Jones, 2009). As a linguist De Saussure rejected the traditional in the study of language as a philosophical endeavour focusing on detailed descriptions of the historical evolution of particular languages and language families. As an alternative, he points out that the elements of language gain their currency according to the structures within which they are embedded. For example, just as chess and courtship (both systems) are built around certain rules of the game (the moves of the knight, the lingering glance), so too are all languages founded upon abstract regulations that shape how they are ‘played’ or manifested in practice (Woodward, Dixon & Jones, 2009).

As such, the object of study in structuralist thought is the system and structure of language and how meaning is generated. In an attempt to understand the meaning, structuralist asks, where does meaning come from (Ward, 1997):

> Does it come from the text itself? Does it come from the context in which the text is consumed: Is the reader free to create his or her meaning? To what degree can the author of a

> text control how it is interpreted? Does the production of meaning arise from the interaction of these factors? If so, how do they interact?

As a consequence, in generating the responses to these questions, structuralists ought to locate the meaning. Since its inception, structuralist ideas began to influence the social sciences, and cause people in a range of disciplines, such as anthropology, linguistics, sociology, psychology and family therapy, to look for the underlying internal 'structures' of people, families, societies, culture, and language (Thomas, 2002). This scholar also notes that one of the effects of the 'structuralist' perspective in the social sciences is a fostering of the understanding that people can be studied in the same way that an object is studied. The underlying assumption is that there are fundamental unchanging structures that govern everything from the cosmos to the behaviour; through this, it was accepted that scientific, objective exploration could provide reliable, valid and universally applicable knowledge of the physical world. This approach led to some enormously significant developments in the physical sciences, and the inventions and technologies that spread from this have transformed the world in many ways (Thomas, 2002). Building on this viewpoint Nieuwenhuis (2007) asserts that structuralism focuses on "the systems (structures) within a society and the power relations within and among the parts (subsystems), and it also seeks to reveal how some common aspects of the parts relate to the larger whole." This researcher adds that in the formal structure one can easily see the hierarchy of positions and levels of power when utilising structuralism.

Furthermore, structuralism searches out the patterns in any human productions or texts (Zeeman, Poggenpoel, Myburgh, & Van der Linde, 2002). Due to this view, structuralist assumes that the human mind is at the same time structured and a structuring agent. This process of structuring is, therefore, a two-way street: humans, having shaped their world, are in turn shaped by it. This procedure likewise points to deep structures, which carry the dominant discourses on which text is based, on rereading or reinterpreting the surface details of the narrative (Milne, 1989). Rereading the text based on the structure of the language enables the reader to elicit the meaning. In the late 1960s, just as structuralism was reaching its apex as an influential theory of language, along came a new wave of philosophers' intent on subjecting it to a rigorous and sustained critique (Bush, 1995). In this transition from structuralism to poststructuralism the labels themselves seem to indicate that this change did not come about accidentally (Freundlieb, 1989). This scholar argues that the change from

structuralism to poststructuralism was probably because most structuralists seriously misunderstood their project, at least in part, and deserted it for reasons that are far from convincing. Had they understood and taken seriously structuralism's scientific aspirations and explanatory potential, it would have been possible to develop it further without the birth of poststructuralism or deconstruction (Freundlieb, 1989).

3.3.1.2 Definition of poststructural feminist theory

While structuralism is thought of as an approach or method rather than a clearly defined discipline (Ward, 1997), the search for the definition of poststructuralist theory tends not to be easy. The literature demonstrates that poststructuralism does not have one fixed definition, but is generally applied to a range of theoretical positions developed from such thinkers as Derrida (1987) and Foucault (1980). Each of these scholars was working more or less independently within the same couple of decades, and their collective works did not produce a unified poststructuralist perspective (Baxter, 2016). Poststructuralism refers to a more or less loosely grouped collection of texts and philosophers which came to prominence in France during the 1960s (Harrison, 2006). Poststructuralism can also be regarded as primarily a linguistic movement associated with the development of literary, cultural, and discourse theories from the 1960s onwards (Baxter, 2016). For poststructuralism, meaning and identity are effects rather than causes. This theory also has a major ethical aspect, particularly in its concern for radical otherness and difference. This ethical stance is due to the fact that its political agenda is that of emancipation. Poststructuralism is a broad set of theoretical positions that problematise the role of language in the construction of knowledge (Aitken & Valentine, 2014). Poststructuralist ideas received widespread attention through the work of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Barthes (Gavey, 1989). Poststructuralism involves a critique of metaphysics, that is, of the concepts of causality, identity, the subject, power, knowledge and truth (Foucault, 1988). In other words, metaphysics involves a division of philosophy that is concerned with the fundamental nature of reality. Furthermore, unlike the structuralist standpoints, poststructural feminist theory brought a new perspective. Instead of focusing on the structures, as in structuralism, poststructural feminist theory tries to reveal the inherent flaws in the structural stream of thought, and it emphasises the other sides of modern rationality – its peasant, female and colonised victims (Peet & Hartwick, 2009). Indeed, its political agenda focuses on taken-for-granted knowledge from the viewpoint of marginalised women.

3.3.1.3 Difference between structuralism and poststructuralism

There is a difference between structuralist and poststructuralist views on language and meaning (Zeeman et al., 2002). Structuralism sees language as a closed system and tries to fix individual texts to rigid linguistic frameworks, whereby underlying meaning is exposed. It seeks the 'facts' about texts and the deeper, underlying, hidden fundamental structures that support the texts. For poststructuralism, there are no facts, there are only interpretations. Another difference is that poststructuralists do not necessarily believe that everything is meaningless or that meaning can be derived by studying language structures, but they do believe that meaning is never factual or final. Poststructural feminism makes the primary assumption that language enables us to think, speak and give meaning to the world around us (Weedon, 1987). Also, this theory understands knowledge as contextually constructed, culturally produced historical artefacts of relationships where meaning is multiple, shifting, and often contradictory (Henwood, Griffin, & Phoenix, 1998).

3.3.1.4 Using the lens of poststructural feminism

Thomas (2002) highlight that poststructuralism is a way of thinking that is questioning some of the assumptions of structuralism. This scholar further acknowledges that just as poststructuralism questions the taken-for-granted knowledge, feminism questions and challenges dominant ways of understanding gender relationships and the effects of patriarchy on people's lives. As has been indicated above, that there are many forms of feminism theories, and intersectionality feminism, and feminist poststructural feminism have both been chosen to guide this study. They both share more or less the same feminist principles, which do not conflict with each other while providing different helpful lenses to analyse women's stories. Dual theories were used as a tool to understand and critically analyse the life stories of the informants who participated in this work. While there are different poststructural philosophers and they vary in their interests, emphases, and practices, they share certain fundamental assumptions about language, meaning, and identity (Baxter, 2016). It is for this reason that poststructural feminism was utilised; this theory is distinctive from other poststructuralist approaches in its political orientation, which "maintains an emphasis on the material bases of power, for example, social, economic, and cultural arrangements, and the need for change at this level of discourse" (Gavey, 1997). Besides this, poststructural feminist theory enables one to go the extra mile in unfolding personal experiences for emancipation, as Butler (1988) commented:

> Indeed, the feminist impulse, and I am sure there is more than one, has often emerged in the recognition that my pain or my silence or my anger or my perception is finally not mine alone and that it delimits me in a shared cultural situation which in turn enables and empowers me in certain unanticipated ways. The personal is thus implicitly political in as much as it is conditioned by shared social structures, but the personal has also been immunized against the political challenge to the extent that public/private distinctions …

In this sentiment, Butler encourages women not to be quiet and act as if nothing is wrong. Below I present some of the key aspects that guide analysis in employing the lens of poststructural feminist theory. These aspects include the impact of discourse in women's experience, and the influence of language, power relations, subjectivity, identity, deconstruction, and knowledge, as these play an important role in understanding the lived experiences of women.

3.3.1.4.1 Discourse

A discourse can be regarded as "a more or less consistent set of ideas" (Epston, Winslade, Crocket and Monk, 1996), and "… an interrelated system of statements which cohere around common meanings and values … (that) are a product of social factors, of powers and practices, rather than an individual's set of ideas" (Zeeman et al., 2002), including shared ideas among individuals. Discourses reproduce power relations, an identity which categories of persons gain and love from implying the discourse (Zeeman et al., 2002). It is through dialogue, through language and discourse, that conceptions of self are made known (Parker, 1995). Echoing this viewpoint, Baxter (2016) notes that in the context of language and identity, individuals have continued to make sense of conflicting ways of knowing, and hence of competing for ways of being, which are constructed and performed through language and discourses (Baxter, 2016). In this study employment of poststructural feminist theory helped me to generate shared narratives that were socially constructed; it further acted as the analytical tool to understand the experiences of rural working mothers, and to bring previously marginalised discourses to the fore (Burr, 1995). Derrida's deconstruction approach considers the ever-shifting relationships between different texts and discourses (Baxter, 2016). Foucault (1984) argues that language as a system does not represent human experience transparently and neutrally, but always exists within historically specific discourses, and these discourses are often competing – offering and serving alternative versions of reality and serving different and conflicting power interests. Such interests

usually reside within large-scale institutional systems such as law, justice, government, the media, education, and the family.

3.3.1.4.2 Language

Worldwide, human beings communicate with each other through language. Language enables people to share ideas and experiences, and to get an understanding of what the speaker is saying at that particular moment. Research studies demonstrate that the founding insight of poststructuralism taken from the structuralist linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1974) is that language, far from reflecting an already given social reality, constitutes social reality for us – meaning is produced *within* language rather than reflected *by* language (Baxter, 2016). Additionally, Qui (2014) highlights that according to Greek philosopher a linguist Aristotle, human language expresses not only natural feelings but also moral qualities that are not innate but social. This father of western philosophy thinks that human language is social and diverse; as such, the cognition of good and bad, right and wrong, and other moral qualities is the special feature of the human mind, but all of these values are social. Building on one of the earliest linguists, Sapir (2004) argues that language does not exist apart from culture, that is, apart from the socially inherited assemblance of practices and beliefs that determines the texture of ourselves. This scholar also notes that language has a setting: the people who speak it belong to a race or a group which is set apart from other groups by physical characteristics. In a similar vein, St Pierre (2000) echoed that language can never be everything; it is always implicated in cultural practices and always produced *in media res* (St Pierre, 2000).

From these perspectives on language, it can be argued, therefore, that many scholars have taken a stand on understanding the concept of 'language.' As this researcher points out, language is regarded as constitutive of experience and not simply representative of it (Weedon, 1987). However, language cannot be separated from the experience, because the way it is understood and expressed is reliant upon it (Weedon, 1987: 44). While the language is used as a tool for communication, poststructuralist philosopher Foucault (1977) postulated that language has the potential to function as an exercise of power over individuals, stripping them of their culture and experiences. As power has the potential to divide people into two groups (one powerful and another as powerless), language usage tends to privilege some and control others. For example, literature displays that it was the structuralism of the 1970s which exposed how women had been constructed as the opposite of men through binary oppositions inherent in the language (Landman, 2001). This binary tradition is still strong and

forms a kind of foundation for the many varieties of structuralism (Elbow, 1993). This scholar also argued that it was the poststructuralism of the 1990s which indicated ways to deconstruct these dualisms. In other words, language as having been used to discriminate women activist movements (such as that of feminist poststructuralism) finds ways of how to deal with this unnecessary oppression faced by women. Besides this, poststructural feminists also tend to view language as a vehicle through which differences between and within identity categories, such as gender, race and ethnicity, are created and realised (Morgan, 2007). This author adds that:

> In a language, in the system of language, there are only differences …on the one hand, these differences play in language… on the other hand, these differences are themselves effects. They have not fallen from the sky fully formed, [nor are they] prescribed in the gray matter of the brain.

For this reason, in poststructuralism, particularly through the work of Derrida (1982), deconstruction is used as a device to dismantle the differences caused by language. Superficially, in some cases a language acts as a regulatory force to pressurise individuals to conform to socially approved patterns of speech and behaviour (Baxter, 2016). In an attempt at gaining knowledge of women's experiences, poststructural feminism warns us that traditionally gendered language constitutes woman as the opposite of man, using romantic terms to verify the oppositional aspect of the relationship (Landman, 2001). This movement also has the primary assumption that it is language which enables us to think, speak, and give meaning to the world around us (Weedon, 1987). To poststructuralist researchers, language, and language systems are important, and one such system operating through language is discourse (Epston et al., 1996).

3.3.1.4.3 Power relations

Feminist activism and research aim to disrupt and transform social relations that oppress people along the lines of gender, identity, sex, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and ability under raced, classed, and gendered systems of patriarchal privilege (Cole, 2009). Poststructural feminism provides ways of examining dominant male instructions of realities that emerge from and serve male power interests (Frost & Elichaoff, 2014). For feminist researchers, this means the exploration of the power of patriarchy and its role in constructing social structures (Frost & Elichaoff, 2014). Feminism values and endorses women, critiques male thinking, challenges patriarchal systems and focuses on creating self-love and respect for all others and all forms of life (Chinn & Wheeler, 1985). Over and above this view, this

theory enables us to see ways in which cultural narratives and structures of notions such as humanism, critical theory, modernism, and scientism are produced and regulated (Barrett, 2005: 80). Another perspective holds that poststructuralism writings in feminism and education, especially those associated with the work of Foucault, have been interested in unmasking the power inherent in claims of knowledge and truth (Diamond & Quinby, 1988; Ball, 1990; Giroux, 1991; Nicholson, 1990). For Foucault, a discourse refers more broadly to the totality of utterances, actions, and events that constitute a given field or topic (Wylie, 2006). The exploration of women's experiences highlights their complexity and variation, as women draw on cultural, historical, political, and personal constructs to make sense of themselves and their relations to the world they inhabit (Frost & Elichaoff, 2014). Poststructuralists correctly warn, however, that power relations are always implicated when we formalise particular language/ identity correlations (Morgan, 2007). Such representations are always shaped by discourses, and are hence 'dangerous' in that they potentially reify the marginal positions and practices that they name.

3.3.1.4.4 Subjectivity

In the social sciences the terms subject, individual, agent, person or social actor are often used interchangeably; however, these concepts have different analytical meanings, and each is connected to different sociological approaches (Rebughini, 2014). In this work the concept of the subject and its related notion of subjectivity are explored. Feminist scholar Chris Weedon (1987) defines subjectivity as "the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individuals, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding herself concerning the world". Indeed, subjectivity is a central feminist poststructural theoretical concept that cannot be ignored, since this study is also guided by the life history methodology. This approach requires the researcher to not only analyse informants' stories, but the researcher should also disclose her standpoint on how consciously and unconsciously her experiences as a woman have shaped her. 'Subjectivity' has three defining characteristics: the plural, non-unitary aspects of the subject; subjectivity as a site of struggle; and subjectivity as changing over time (Weedon, 1987). The feminist poststructuralist claims that the personal is political, which suggests in part that subjective experience is not only structured by existing political arrangements, but in turn effects and structures those arrangements (Butler, 1990). In this study the term 'subjectivity' referred to that aspect of an individual's psyche through which the person identifies themselves and their place in the world (Weedon, 1987). Equally, poststructuralists have argued that individuals are not

uniquely positioned, but are produced as a nexus of subjectivities (Davies & Harré, 1990). This subjectivity can be viewed in terms of power relations that are constantly shifting, at times rendering them powerful and at others powerless. However, it is in the conceptualisation of a woman's consciousness, agency or ability to act for herself that feminist poststructuralism differs from both modernist and social constructionist versions of identity, by centralising her subjectivity as a site contested in discourse (Baxter, 2016).

One radical element of the feminist poststructuralist perspective on subjectivity is its refusal to accept the modernist view that all women are necessarily victims of patriarchy. This refusal is predicated on the broader poststructuralist perspective that subjectivities should not be conceptualised in binary terms as male/female, young/old, villains/victims and so on. This is because feminist poststructuralism appreciates the unevenness and ambiguities of power relations between males and females (Baxter, 2016). Besides subjectivity, poststructural feminism offered the researcher an opportunity to use poststructuralist theories of language and social processes to understand the impact of existing power relations and strategies for change (Weedon, 1987), from the point of view of rural women who are concurrently mothers, workers, and postgraduates. The potential of poststructural feminism is that it provides access to subjectification, construction, and issues of power and domination (Frewin, 2002) as experienced by black women. Poststructural feminism provided the researcher with an analytical tool by encouraging exploration of subjectivity in this research.

3.3.1.4.5 Identity

Researchers are still working on finding the definition of the concept 'identity' based on scholarly work. Kehily (2009) notes that a generally held assumption of late modernity suggests that 'identity' matters more now because we have more choice. The concept 'identity' refers to either: (a) a social category, defined by membership rules and (alleged) characteristic attributes or expected behaviour, or (b) socially distinguishing features that a person takes a special pride in or views as unchangeable but socially consequential, or both (a) and (b) at once (Fearon, 1999). Bauman (1988) provides a different conceptualisation of 'identity,' in the following manner:

> Everyone has to ask himself the question (who am I), (how should I live), who do I want to become- and at the end of the day, be prepared to accept responsibility for the answer. In this freedom, is for the modern individual the fate he cannot escape, except by retreating into the fantasy world or through mental disorders. Freedom is, therefore, a mixed blessing. One needs it to be oneself, yet being oneself solely on the strength of one's free choice means a

> life full of doubts and fears of error… Self-construction of the self is, so to speak a necessity; self-confirmation of the self is an impossibility.

As the focus of this work is on the experiences of women, 'identity' is one of the concepts (along with discourse, language and others) explored in order to understand how a woman views her selfhood. Human beings are characterised both by continuous personal identity and by discontinuous personal diversity, the same person being variously positioned in a conversation. We may want to say that the very same person experiences and displays that aspect of self that is involved in the continuity of a multiplicity of selves (Davies & Harré, 1990). Although the subject in poststructuralism is always socially constructed *within* discourses, Weedon (1987) argues that's/he "nonetheless exists as a thinking, feeling subject and social agent, capable of resistance and innovations produced out of the clash between contradictory subject positions and practices." In a study focusing on the identity of young females, Frazer (1990) highlighted that she interviewed adolescent girls to get a deep understanding of and experience of their social identity, and the social world and their place in it, as it is discursively constructed. In this way, Frazer wanted to gain the girls' experiences of gender, race, class, and their personal-social identity, that can only be expressed and understood through the categories available to them in discourse.

In distinguishing sex from gender, feminist theorists have disputed causal explanations that assume that sex dictates or necessitates certain social meanings for women's experience (Butler, 1988). To put it differently, gendered language need not be misused in judging women's experiences employing their physical body, something which does not occur when it comes to men. The poststructuralist linguist Judith Butler (1988) has extensively debated the issue of whether or not the materiality of life is fully constructed, characterised by her theory of acts of performativity and gender constitution. According to Butler, gender identity is a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo. In its very character as performative resides the possibility of contesting its reified status. Instead of accepting notions of the universality of difference, feminist postmodernism and poststructuralist approaches seek to highlight the variations in women's lives and identities, and to ask how they are perceived and shaped, both by themselves and by others (Frost & Elichaoff, 2014). Poststructural feminism was chosen as a tool for understanding the differences among women that may lead one to explore interactions between axes, such as gender, sexuality, class, race, and ableism, that provide more informed insight into how culture, history, and society shape their identities. Poststructuralism challenges the notion of

‘essentialism’ that describes ‘women’ as an identity category that is fixed and unchanging (Frost & Elichaoff, 2014). As an alternative, it recognises the social construction of realities and the risk of maintenance and perpetuation of constructions arising from power interests. Poststructural feminist theory further attempts to take into consideration the varying social constructs that make up each person’s identity (Ropers-Huilman, 1998). For example, it analyses the impact caused by the hierarchal position and levels of power in every different identity of the individual. In this sense, gender is regarded (and lived) by contemporary young scholars and activists raised on poststructuralism as something that can be bent, proliferated, troubled, resignified, morphed, theatricalised, parodied, deployed, resisted, imitated, and regulated … but not emancipated (Brown, 2005).

Gender is not a radical choice or project that reflects a merely individual choice, but neither is it imposed or inscribed upon the individual, as some poststructuralist displacements of the subject would contend (Butler, 1988). The construct of identity has been theorised in numerous ways; for example, through postmodern approaches such as feminist poststructuralism (Weedon, 1987), and queer theory (Butler, 1990). Notably, Norton (2000) often quoted the depiction of identity as “multiple and contradictory” and “a site of struggle”, which bears a close resemblance to the cultural “fissures, inequalities, [and] disagreements” described by Atkinson (1999). Reciprocally, identities are constructed by and through language, but they also produce and reproduce innovative forms of language (Baxter, 2016). Feminist poststructuralist theory has interesting parallels with the position of selfhood (Davies & Harré, 1990): recognition of the force of 'discursive practices', how people are 'positioned' through those practices and how the individual's 'subjectivity' is generated through the learning and use of certain discursive practices are commensurate with the “new psycho-socio-linguistics” (Davies, 1989; Potter & Wetherall, l988; Weedon, 1987). Baxter (2016) acknowledges that a poststructuralist perspective posits that an individual is never outside cultural forces or discursive practice, but always subject to them. For this reason,

> culture plays an important role in shaping each individual. As such, their identities are governed by a range of subject positions (ways of being), approved by their community or culture, and made available to them but means of the particular discourses operating within a given social context. If people do not conform to these approved discourses in terms of how they speak, act, and behave, they may be stigmatised by others with labels such as ‘weird,’ ‘a misfit,’ ‘a freak,’ or ‘an outsider.’

Poststructural feminism believes in women's lived, embodied reality and their subjective, emotional and cognitive experiences, since how individuals make sense of their lives is a necessary starting point for understanding how gendered discourses continue to structure social relations (Baxter, 2016). Additionally, Butler's (1990 [2007]) perspective on the relationship between language and identity is that "certain elements such as sex and gender that "we take to be 'internal' features of our psyche are ones that we anticipate and produce through certain bodily acts and, at an extreme, a hallucinatory effect of naturalised gestures" (p. xvi). Baxter (2016) argues that while a poststructural feminism perspective recognises identity categories such as 'woman' to be permeable, it does not go along with the view that individuals are just the passive, unstable, fragmented effects of competing discourses.

3.3.1.4.6 Deconstruction

Feminist theories are known for their principles and their fight for the rights of women of colour as marginalised, and experiencing oppression in many varying ways. The feminist movement therefore gives women tools and platform so that they will not suffer alone and encourages them to share their experiences. Deconstruction is one of the concepts reviewed which has been employed by feminist scholars in analysing women's stories – as was also employed in this work. Introducing the term 'deconstruction', Derrida (1976) seeks to dismantle the male/female binary (and all other binaries) within a language. Derrida (1976) critiqued structures that are held together by identity and presence using analysis called 'deconstruction.' Deconstruction is not about tearing down but about rebuilding; it is not about pointing out an error but about looking at how a structure has been constructed, what holds it together, and what it produces (St Pierre, 2000). Deconstruction seeks to undo all oppositions that, in the name of unity, purity, order, and hierarchy, try to eliminate differences (Culler, 1989). Poststructural feminist theory serves as a device of interruption and deconstruction of taken-for-granted knowledge (Parker, 1999). Lundy (2013) argues that Derrida (1976) was by no means an opponent or even outsider to the structuralist paradigm, but it what was due to his methodological approach of deconstruction that enabled him to differ from others. He *inhabited* structuralism, to deconstruct it from within. Derrida's (1982) theories of deconstructive criticism are a useful perspective on language and identity, because 'standard' identity categories such as woman, teacher, mother, wife, friend, scholar, writer, and so forth are only temporarily agreed by social contracts which individual speakers are usually compliant with (Baxter, 2016). This scholar also points out that such terms are always

open to contestation and redefinition, as the struggle for the ‘true’ meaning of each term takes place between social groups within power interests.

3.3.1.4.7 Knowledge

As indicated in Chapter One and at the beginning of this chapter, feminist scholars have pointed out that mainstream research was full of bias when it comes to analysing black women’s experiences. Because of this failure to recognise the importance of including women’s experiences in research, feminist researchers began to ask new questions and develop new epistemological frameworks and research methods that took women’s lives and experiences into account, and that valued women’s life stories as knowledge. In this vein, Foucault (1977) was concerned about people’s knowledge that had been regarded as low ranking, buried knowledge of erudition and those disqualified from the hierarchy of knowledges and sciences, being viewed as true by academics. In this case, Foucault backed “local knowledge, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges and the return of forgotten knowledges.” As a consequence, poststructuralists regard knowledge as unstable and informed by the social and material world (Frewin, 2002).

Poststructural feminist theory was used for this study to theorise the experiences of these working mothers because it helped the researcher to contribute to academic knowledge building, by producing different knowledge from that revealed by the positivist and critical approaches (Barret, 2005). The various knowledge and categories through which informants know themselves are culturally and historically specific (Wylie, 2006). Poststructural feminist theory has the potential and the incredible tool of pushing the researcher to ask different kinds of questions (Barret, 2005), such as: Which women? Whose experience? What can we learn from this experience? Whose story has been told? Whose experience has not been included and why? Because of these options the key question was not just about ‘What is culture?’ but rather ‘What does it do? What forms of knowledge does it enable? And, what does it diminish or hide? (Morgan 2007).

Foucault (1980) was particularly interested in theorising the relationship between knowledge and power, and how this constructs individual speech and behaviour. He argues that western knowledge is organised according to irreconcilable binary opposites, that are not natural but realised through discourses. Again, he questions the way that modernist theories of knowledge are encoded into binary or hierarchical oppositions such as mind/body, masculinity/femininity, theory/practice, and public/private, and posed these questions: What

types of knowledge do you want to disqualify in the very instant of your demand? Is it a science? Which subjects of experience and knowledge do you want to diminish? Research has demonstrated that in every case, knowledge is constructed to ensure that one pole of opposites is privileged over the other; for example, masculinity over femininity, rationality over emotion, science over art (Baxter, 2016). This author further acknowledges that this polarising and hierarchical ordering of constructs contributes to the formation of meta-narratives that are excluding in principle and normalising in character. With this in mind, this study has been guided by poststructural feminist theory and also by the principles of analysing data in life history research. This methodology provided the researcher. with the following set of four questions, as identified by a life historian Muchmore (2000), which served as a frame of reference during analysis: Whose voice needs to be analysed? Are the data relevant to this study? What possible bias may occur? Does the information that is included comply with the requirements for fair and ethical considerations? These questions are addressed in Chapter Six.

3.3.1.5 Criticism of poststructural feminist theory

Poststructural feminist theory has been applied to research in the social sciences and other sciences for over a decade (Dickson, 1990). Even if it becomes clear that feminist poststructuralist theory has been used because of its benefits, it does have some critics. It is certainly the case that many feminists have successfully applied poststructuralist theory and techniques to educational research, to shed new light on ways in which discourses and identities are perpetuated and taken up (May & Fleming, 1997). It is also argued that poststructuralism is useful for examining or deconstructing existing discourse and practice, but that it is incompatible with and inadequate for research which aims to develop or change such discourses or practices. It became evident that various researchers have queried the relevance and appropriateness of poststructuralism, and there are signs that such criticism is increasing Francis, 1999). In an attempt to address the weak points of poststructural feminist theory, this was not the only feminist theory that was used in this study. Intersectionality was also employed since using dual theories would minimise the disadvantages of each, thus allowing this project to contribute to knowledge building.

3.3.2 Intersectional feminism

The term ‘intersectionality’ is derived from the American English word for the crossing of roads, namely an ‘intersection’, which is equivalent to the British English word ‘junction’. It

has gained a lot of ground since the early 1990s as a term for 'interactions' between gender/sex and other sociocultural categories, power differentials and identity markers (Lykke, 2010). 'Intersectionality' is a key feminist concept used to explicate a multiplicity of socially constructed differences (Mojab & Carpenter, 2019). Intersectionality as a body of research is concerned even in its theoretical voice about the practical implication of its arguments (Hancock, 2007). In feminist theory, intersectionality has become the predominant way of conceptualising the relations between systems of oppression that construct our multiple identities and our social location in hierarchies of power (Carastathis, 2014). Worldwide, the concept of intersectionality has proved fruitful in law and policy, or theory and methods, as well as in research studies on specific inequalities (Bose, 2012). The work of Barbara Smith, Patricia Hill-Collins, and the Combahee River Collective are landmark texts in this effort (Taylor, 2017). In the 1970s the Combahee River Collective expressed that black women felt left out of the women's movement. They wrote a manifesto in which they stated that they experienced oppression based on race, class, and sex simultaneously (Van Witteloostujn, 2018). Additionally, the term 'intersectionality' was coined by the black feminist legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. She is one of the founders of critical race theory in the United States legal academy. Crenshaw utilised the concept of intersectionality to denote the various ways in which race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of black women's experience (Crenshaw, 1989). She had observed that feminists needed to take both gender and race on board and show how they interacted to shape the multiple dimensions of black women's experiences. Her assessment as a legal scholar pushed her to caution others about the impact of race, gender violence, and poverty within the American criminal 'matrices of domination' (Mojab & Carpenter, 2019), as they intersect or overlap to shape the experiences of black people.

Intersectionality can be considered as a theoretical and methodological tool to analyse historically specific kinds of power differentials and/or constraining normativity based on discursively, institutionally and/or structurally constructed sociocultural categorisations such as gender, ethnicity, race, class, and sexuality (Lykke, 2010). Intersectionality enables insight into how gender intersects with race and ethnicity as well as a social class in all areas of political, social, and organisational life (Ahmed, 2017). Because of this perspective, the connection between gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, and nationality is therefore examined "based on multiple levels to explicate various inequalities that exist in society" (Lanehart, 2009). However, it has become apparent that these multiple levels are not

independent of one another, but are instead interrelated forms of oppression that are manifested in multiple forms of discrimination. Concerning this, it is noteworthy also to mention that the focus of intersectional feminist theory is on the multiple differences and experiences of subordination experienced by women. This theory thus offered me an analytical tool to uncover other categories that might have an influence in shaping rural working mothers' experiences. Besides, the intersectional feminist theory has been employed in feminist works on how women are simultaneously positioned as women and, for example, black, working-class, lesbian, or colonial subjects (Brah & Phoenix, 2004). This theory foregrounds a richer and more complex ontology than approaches that attempt to reduce people to one category at a time (Phoenix & Pattynama, 2006). In this study, intersectional feminism was used to understand the experiences of rural black women as mothers and as students (Rooney, 2006; Taefi, 2009), and as a tool to challenge what they call "traditional race-class-sexuality-power arrangements" which favour men over women, whites over non-whites, and adults over children (Elliot & Mandell, 1995).

3.3.2.1 Criticism of intersectional feminism

Feminist theorists have been acknowledged for their contribution in reducing many societal injustices worldwide, and they have liberated women in many ways; for example, women are no longer only housewives, they have the right to vote, own properties, secure highly paid jobs, occupy some previously male-dominated jobs, and many more. While some scholars confirm that there are many feminist ideologies that are faultless and just (Bisong & Ekanem, 2014), others are concerned about the limitations of intersectionality – what it is not capable of doing, or does not imply (Garry, 2011; McCall, 2005; Bisong & Ekanem, 2014). Although intersectional analyses of gender have been widely adopted by feminist theorists in many disciplines, controversy remains regarding their character, limitations, and implications (Garry, 2011). In this respect, some critics allege that feminism has no place within communities of colour, that gender issues are internally divisive, and that raising such issues within non-white communities represents the migration of white women's concerns into a context in which they are not only irrelevant but also harmful (Crenshaw, 1989). In addition, McCall (2005) notes that it has been alleged that feminism claimed to speak for all women universally, and this feminism researcher has been acutely aware of the limitations of gender as a single analytical category. She continues that feminism is perhaps alone in the academy in the extent to which they have embraced intersectionality – the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations – as a central

category of analysis. Yet despite the emergence of intersectionality as a major paradigm of research in women's studies elsewhere, there has been little discussion of how to study intersectionality, that is, of its methodology. Expanding on this, Garry (2011) is concerned about the kind of analyses which might be useful in understanding intermeshed axes of oppression or facets of identities.

In this project intersectionality will be used not as a methodology, but as a theoretical framework, in order to gain an understanding and a full picture of why rural working mothers behave in the way they do in a higher education setting, while doing postgraduate degrees and concurrently being workers. I am confident that using intersectionality as a framework to guide this work will be of benefit in allowing me to answer the critical research questions, and also to document these black women's experiences. Critical experienced scholars have used this concept across a range of disciplines, and it was rarely criticised for almost 20 years (Garry, 2011). For this reason, I can conclude by stating that the theoretical framework of intersectionality is appropriate for this study, since it will allow me to see how rurality, race, gender and context work to shape the lives of the informants.

3.4 Rationale for the use of feminist theories

The major reason I chose feminist theories was to use its lens in analysing data in order to answer the research questions, on how rural working mothers as postgraduate students negotiate their life experiences. They have often been proved ineffective and would fall short of fully reflecting women's perspectives (Brooks & Hesser-Biber, 2007). If women's experiences are analysed using only theories and observations from the standpoints of men, the resulting theories will oppress women (Ezzy, 2002). It emerged from the literature that positivist research serves a given set of power relations, typically empowering the white, male-dominated research community at the expense of other groups whose voices were silenced (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). It is for this reason that two feminist theories were chosen to frame this study. The selected theories have the potential to enable the researcher to understand and interpret female subjectivities and identities that are informed by, but do not adhere to, traditional notions of what it means to be a woman (Taylor & Vintges, 2004). The feminist approach is an 'umbrella body' to which a variety of feminist theories (such as liberal, radical, socialist, intersectional, and poststructural) are connected, and tends to be explicitly political in its advocacy of social change and holds "that gender

relations are constructed as problematic and as related to other inequities and contradictions in social life" (Elliot & Mandell, 1995).

In this regard it is worth stating that the advantage of using feminist theories in this study is vested in the fact that a wide range of ideas, beliefs and standpoints would help me to better understand the phenomenon being studied in a meaningful way, being guided by the insights and the scholarly work of those whom I am following as a feminist. In other words, through the lens of intersectionality and poststructural feminism, I hope to understand the impact of power relations, race, class, and gender inequalities on black rural women's experiences. I acknowledge that while feminist theories differ a great deal, intersectionality and poststructuralism prompted me to find a space in which rural black working mothers could finally speak openly about their experiences as women and students simultaneously.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed in detail the theoretical frameworks underpinning this project. I explained the reasons why I chose feminist theories as opposed to others and presented an overview of feminist poststructuralism and intersectional feminism, which are employed as a frame of reference in this work. In the next chapter I present the research design and methodology chosen for this project, including the advantages and disadvantages and how these challenges will be addressed.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is organised into six sections. The first section discusses the research design, which is followed by the philosophical framework that underpins this study. The third section discusses the methodology that was utilised in conducting this research, and the fourth presents the data generation methods that were used in the study. The fifth section discusses the strategies employed in this study to ensure trustworthiness, and the last section presents the ethical considerations that guided the research process.

4.2 Research design

It is important to note that research activity always requires that, before engaging in it, informed decisions are taken to maximise the benefits. The process of evaluating and selecting the best research design appropriate for solving identified or given problems is delicate and requires well thought out strategies. This is crucial because "how research is conducted vary, depending on the needs and the specific requirements of each project" (Tummons & Duckworth, 2013). Besides, Maxwell (2013) writes:

> A good design is one in which the components work harmoniously together and which promotes efficient and successful functioning; on the other hand, a flawed design leads to poor operation or failure.

Research design can be regarded as the plan of how to proceed in determining the nature of the relationship between variables (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995). It provides a plan as to how the research can be undertaken. There are three research designs, namely qualitative, quantitative, and the mixed approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative research designs. A qualitative design is suitable "for answering questions about the complex nature of phenomena, to describe and understand the phenomena from the participants' point of view" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Conversely, a quantitative design is suitable for answering questions "about relationships among measured variables to explain, predict and control phenomena" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The above literature guided my selection of an appropriate research design for this study – qualitative research – because it aims at constructing detailed descriptions of social reality (Fouché & Delport, 2011). The qualitative design was chosen for its potential to "providing guidance, especially as study questions are fine-tuned, methods for ensuring variables are selected, and analyses are planned" (Liehr & Smith, 2000).

4.2.1 Qualitative research design

Creswell (1994) points out that a qualitative approach is an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem based on building a holistic picture formed with words and conducted in participants' natural settings. The focus of this work is on the experiences of rural working mothers pursuing higher degrees at a South African university: a qualitative design was adopted because it usually depends on written, spoken and observed data or behaviour, and allows for telling the story from the respondents' viewpoints, thus providing rich descriptive data (Rallis & Rossman, 1998). Moreover, the qualitative approach has the potential to produce in-depth, comprehensive data of both a social and personal nature. The qualitative approach allows one to understand a relatively small number of participants' frames of reference or their view of the world (Smith, 2008). It was also used because of its potential to describe and analyse my informants' individual and collective social actions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2007). As a consequence, the phenomenon under study was interpreted in terms of the meanings that people (i.e. the informants) assigned to them.

The qualitative approach also offered me the opportunity to choose between the two categories of data collecting methods, i.e., interactive qualitative methods or non-interactive qualitative methods. While non-interactive methods aim at investigating concepts and events through the analysis of documents (McMillan & Schumacher, 2007), interactive methods employ face-to-face techniques to collect data from the informants themselves. Given the research aims and the nature of this study, it becomes clear that both qualitative methods were used to gain a deep insight into the experiences of rural working and studying mothers. This decision was supported by the views of Denzin and Lincoln (1994), who point out that "a qualitative approach enables the researcher to employ different methods such as personal experiences, biographies, introspective interviews, and visual and historical texts that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives." However, it is imperative to highlight that qualitative design has its critics. Critics of the qualitative approach argue that it is "subjective and personalistic and that misunderstanding can occur because researchers are unaware of their shortcomings and because they treat contractor interpretation as useful data" (Stake, 2010).

I adopted a qualitative approach because qualitative methods would help me to answer questions about the complex nature of the phenomenon I was investigating, in order to describe and understand it from the participants' point of view (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

Further, I employed this design because it would allow flexibility in all aspects of the research process (Kumar, 2019). Also, a qualitative design was used because of it enabled me to use a variety of research instruments and offered me some freedom to make changes throughout the research process if the need arose. The focus was on exploring the respondents' multiple realities of the challenges, perceptions, attitudes, values, and beliefs, from their viewpoints. Lincoln and Guba (1985) support this approach, highlighting that the research tradition relies on the utilisation of tacit (intuitive and felt) knowledge because often nuances of multiple realities can be appreciated most this way. With this in mind, it is imperative to highlight that this study followed a qualitative design because its focus was on the way people interpreted their experiences and the world in which they live (Wicks & Whiteford, 2006). I was therefore able to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study. As proposed by McMillan and Schumacher (2007), my intent was "to use a design that would result in drawing the most valid, credible conclusions from the data yielded by the research questions". The flexibility of the qualitative design enabled me to use different data collection methods in an attempt to understand the phenomenon I was investigating.

4.2.1.1 Criticism of the qualitative research approach

While qualitative research has been hailed for producing thick (detailed) descriptions of participants' feelings, opinions, and experiences; and also commended for offering researchers an opportunity to interpret the meanings of participants' actions (Denzin, 1989), the approach also has some known shortfalls. For example, Richards and Richards (1994) point out that interpretation and analysis of qualitative data may be more difficult/complex. Berg and Lune (2012) commented that "qualitative research is a long hard road, with elusive data on one side and stringent requirements for analysis on the other." In an attempt to address these issues, I would like to admit that at first I was overwhelmed about the huge amount of data I collected, but the guidance of the data analysis model of Seidel (1998) led me to become confident in what I was doing. I would also like to mention that in adhering to the methodology which guided this study, I was aware that the collection of data would continue until data saturation was reached.

4.3 The main research approaches for the social sciences

Seven main research approaches are used in social science, as identified by De Vos, Strydom, Schulze, and Patel (2011): positivism, postpositivism, constructionism, interpretivism, critical

research, feminism, and postmodernism. In this study, only two of these approaches have been utilised – interpretivism and feminism – due to their relevance and appropriateness to this work. De Vos et al. (2011) add that the social sciences can be viewed as those sciences that deal with a particular aspect of human society. Echoing this sentiment, Neuman (2000) mentions that social science addresses a particular phase of an aspect of human society that involves the study of people – their beliefs, behaviour, interactions, and institutions. Maxwell (2013) further adds that each of these paradigms embodies very different ideas about reality (ontology) and how we can gain knowledge of it (epistemology).

The research paradigm has been extensively studied and interpreted by great thinkers (that is, philosophers) in many conflicting ways, depending on how people view and comprehend the world around them. The term 'paradigm' was coined by Kuhn (1970), who believed "that because of the shared beliefs of a scientific community, the emergence of a new paradigm might be stimulated by a discovery, but only when the professional community is led to re-evaluate its traditional procedures and alter its conception of entities with which it has long been familiar." In light of this, Baker (2003) describes a paradigm as "a pattern containing a set of legitimated assumptions and design for collecting and interpreting data; for example, the positivist paradigm and the interpretive paradigm." However, in this study – given the fact that I am researching women and doing feminist research – an interpretivist feminism paradigm was adopted. Before I present the interpretive paradigm, I briefly discuss the ontology and epistemology of feminism and the interpretive paradigm. Feminism has already been extensively discussed in Chapter Three.

4.3.1 Ontology

According to Grix (2002) the term 'ontology' is derived from the Greek words *ontos*, which means being, and *logos,* which means study: "Ontology then is the philosophical beliefs and assumptions about reality that question, for example, whether there are differences between genders, classes, and races". Further, Blaikie (2000) describes ontology as "assumptions which are claims about the nature of social reality; claims that are made about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other". Also, Grix (2002) acknowledges that it is not difficult to understand "how different scholarly traditions embedded in fundamentally different cultural contexts can have diverging views of the world and differing assumptions underlying their particular approaches to social inquiry". Feminist ontology seeks to come to grips with the cultural specificity of experience, and thus

with the medium through which all experience is channelled (Stanley & Wise 1993). As such, feminism is concerned with interrogating and challenging all cultural traditions (Pollitt 1999). The interpretivist paradigm is rooted in the idea that realities are multiple and socially constructed (Bryman, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). It therefore adopts a relativist ontology, where a single phenomenon can have multiple interpretations, and it argues further that there is no basic process by which truth can be determined (Hammersley, 2013). The interpretive paradigm enabled me as a researcher to obtain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon (that is, the experiences of rural working mothers pursuing higher degrees at a South African university) and its complexity in its unique context, not generalising the whole population (Creswell, 2009. Epistemologically speaking, interpretivism believes that knowledge is gained through a strategy that respects the differences between people and the objects of natural science, and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action (Bryman, 2016).

"Being" in this research refers to the fact that while I was eager to learn and compare the experiences of the participants in this study, some surprised me by demonstrating fearlessness and being willing to take risks, and to face and deal with the consequences. Since the interpretive paradigm seeks the understanding of meaning construction in social contexts, which involves the subjectivity of researchers, it is essential to ensure maintenance of standards of quality and trustworthiness. Although the strength of the interpretive paradigm is in exploring a given phenomenon and providing valuable information, its ontological assumption is subjective rather than objective (Mack, 2010). There are claims that results are more easily affected by the researcher's personal biases. For instance, I have multiple identities – as a researcher, mother, professional teacher, worker, wife, and postgraduate student concurrently. As a feminist, when I met the women who participated in this study I perceived them as caring, loving, respectful, and willing to share their ideas. I was also surprised that despite the many achievements they attained as rural women, this did not change them and they remained humble and down to earth.

I took the ontological stance that even if women have different experiences and challenges, these helped them to strive for their empowerment. However, I believe that it is impossible to be objective in any kind of research – even in the positivist paradigm that claims that research is objective and value-free. This is because, throughout the research process researchers make plenty of value-laden decisions, such as the selection of variables, actions to be observed, and

interpretation of findings (Bryman, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Notwithstanding this, an interpretive paradigm was adopted for this study to construct meaningful understanding, interpretation, and enactment of inclusive education as lived by teachers. The study's trustworthiness will be enhanced by ensuring credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the processes, data, findings, and conclusions (Bogdan, & Biklen, 2007; Bryman, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

4.3.2 Epistemology

The term 'epistemology' is derived from the two Greek words *episteme,* which means knowledge, and *logos*, which means reason (Grix, 2002). One definition holds that epistemology is "a framework or theory for specifying the constitution and generation of knowledge about the social world; that is, it is concerned with how to understand the nature of reality" (Stanley & Wise, 1993). These scholars state that "Given the fact that an epistemological framework spells out not only what is 'knowledge' and how to recognise it, but [also] who are 'knowers' and by what means they become so." An epistemological framework also illuminates by which means competing knowledge claims are adjudicated and how some are rejected in favour of another/others (Stanley & Wise, 1993). Furthermore, Mauthner and Doucet (2003) and Schwandt (2000) argue that epistemology in philosophical terms is strictly concerned with the theory of knowledge, especially with regard to methods, validation and possible ways of gaining knowledge of social reality. These scholars further add that the formal theories of knowledge are the sole determinants of research epistemologies. Moreover, a social inquiry is an important means by which theories of knowledge can be constructed through, for example, scientific, naturalistic, socialistic, positivistic, or feminist educational research (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003; Schwandt, 2000). For example, within feminist research Harding (1987) suggests that women have been systematically excluded as 'knowers' from masculine sociology, and therefore must establish a feminist 'standpoint' and legitimate female epistemological knowledge. Related to this, Stanley and Wise (1993) emphasise that a feminist epistemological position "should locate the researcher on the same critical plane as those she researches". She should analyse 'structure' (i.e. the structured and repetitive regularities and inequalities in social life), and particularly how such structures are defined as 'facts' external to and constraining upon people. These scholars further acknowledge that research based on feminist epistemology will take into account the intellectual autobiography of the researcher (see Chapter Twelve).

In this study, black feminist epistemology refers to the nature, theory, and production of knowledge grounded in the lived experiences of black women as a point of entry into the forums and constituencies where feminist 'knowledge' are produced and evaluated (Okeke, 2000). Life history research's primary aim is to "explore how individuals or groups of people who share specific characteristics, personally and subjectively experience, make sense of and account for the things that happen to them" (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). As this study was guided by the work of the above historians, it is therefore of paramount importance that I present my epistemological assumptions as a black South African feminist researcher. My first epistemological assumption is concerned with the way the women in my study demonstrated having multiple roles to satisfy, as mothers, full workers, mothers, and postgraduate students concurrently, in terms of handling their challenges. The second assumption concerns their powerfulness, even if they encountered several challenges. The third assumption involves the issue of gender roles, that were thought to be stumbling blocks, but was found not to be the case for these women. The fourth assumption is based on the fact that these women used education as a site of struggle and a space which allowed them to come up with strategies to address their challenges. Finally, rural black working mothers 'as knowers' used the university to voice their experiences, since one's experience gives one knowledge which is valid, yet which will be different from what other people know.

Given the above epistemological assumptions, it is helpful to note the point by Okeke (2000) that black feminist epistemology faces several challenges. For instance, it should not only deconstruct the labels imposed on black women in existing feminist literature, but must also resurrect and develop knowledge bases that place black women's experiences at the centre. Besides this, it must continue to ask questions about the origins of feminist knowledge, the locations of 'knowers' and subjects of inquiry, the grounds for knowledge claims, and their implications for the place of black women's experiences and their scholarship within the larger feminist mainstream (Okeke, 2000).

4.5 Methodology: Life history

I would like to indicate that as this study explored the experiences of black women as mothers and postgraduate students simultaneously, my entire framework is informed by feminist research. The term 'methodology' is defined as "a theory of how research is done or should proceed" (Harding, 1987). Expanding on this definition, Van Manen (1997) highlights that 'methodology' includes "the general orientation to life, the view of knowledge, and the

sense of what it means to be human, which is associated with or implied by a certain method". In this study, life history methodology was employed because it provided a depth and richness of information and insight that other methodologies could not (Sikes, 2006).

4.5.1 What is life history?

A life history is the story or account of a person's life, or particular aspects of their life (for example, what experiences influenced someone to become an activist for women's rights) (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017). It is important to highlight that there is a connection between 'life history' and 'life story': 'life story' is "the story we tell about life", while 'life history' is "the life story located within its historical context" (Goodson, 1992). Echoing this, Freeman (1993) insists that the rendering of lived experience into a 'life story' is one interpretive layer, but the move to 'life history' adds a second layer and a further interpretation. This implies that the fundamental assumption that underlies life history is that lives are not, and cannot be, lived in isolation either from other people or from social, cultural, historical and natural events, movements, trends and values in the world at large (Sikes, 2006). It was for this reason that I was motivated to use life history as a methodology to collect data, since it allowed me to understand the impact of the social, cultural and historical attributes that had shaped black rural working mothers' experiences.

4.5.2 The origins of life history methodology

For sociologists the main landmark in the development of life history methods came in the 1920s, following the publication of Thomas and Znaniecki's (1918–1920) mammoth study *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (Goodson, 2001). Exploring the experience of Polish peasants migrating to the USA, Thomas and Znaniecki relied mainly on migrants' autobiographical accounts, alongside extant diaries and letters; in the end, they were able to present a strident case for using life histories above all other methods (Goodson, 2001). Besides this, it is noteworthy to highlight that expanding this viewpoint, Atkinson (1998) indicates that life history research was first used as a qualitative approach by a psychologist for understanding human experience and how people construct their lives. This scholar further acknowledges that it has also been a primary methodology in anthropological fieldwork. Since its inception, life history methodology has been employed to study a group of people or a single person. This repositioning of the individual in anthropological studies, along with a new interest in life stories, corresponds to the rapid transformation of the poststructuralist world order (Frank 1995). This scholar further notes that, as a consequence,

turning to the person as the only subject able to speak for themselves makes sense not only methodologically but perhaps for the first time ontologically and therefore theoretically. Since then, life histories have been used in various contexts to understand how, why and when people move through periods of vulnerability and resistance (Davies, Singh, Tebboth, Spear, Mensah, & Ansah, 2018).

4.5.3 Reasons for the decline of life history in early sociological study

Despite its earlier popularity in several areas of the social sciences, the life history method or approach fell from favour in the 1950s, when positivist paradigms became dominant, before re-emerging within several fields during the 1980s (Lewis, 2008). The reason for the decline of life history methods was two-fold. Firstly, it was not that historians neglected this method; rather, they did not think of gathering life history documents or of making the technique part of their research approach (Becker, 1970). Secondly, it was due to the Chicago school introducing case studies and statistical techniques, and the life history method no longer being popular. However, by the 1980s matters were beginning to change markedly in many ways, which led to a re-embracing of life history methods. Undeniably, life history research is a paradigm where people, situations, events, and experiences are in focus (Rhedding-Jones, 2005), while statistics are also beneficial to other studies. Since then, life history has been used successfully by different researchers worldwide. For example, Germeten (2013) conducted a study on 'Personal narratives in life history research'; Connelly and Clandinin (1990) led a study on 'Stories of experience and narrative inquiry'; Lewis (2008) steered a study on 'Using life histories in social policy research: the case of third sector/public sector boundary crossing'; and Samuel (2009) directed a study titled 'On becoming a teacher: life history research and the force-field model of teacher development', and there are many more. Besides these studies, Dhunpath (2000) wrote an article on 'Life history methodology: "narradigm" regained'. This shows that the life history methodology has proven itself to have the potential to answer some research questions that might otherwise be impossible with other methodologies. In this study, it has revealed new knowledge and some interesting experiences of the informants which have not yet been documented in the extant literature.

4.5.4 Choosing life history methodology

Life history methodology was selected for this study because of its potential to allow its users "to think and look at the world for its blurry bits, its complexities and complications" (Samuel, 2009). Life history research was also adopted because it was the only methodology

that was able to help me in generating appropriate data in an attempt to understand the holistic picture of the lived experiences, challenges, dilemmas, complexities, and triumphs of rural working mothers. It was also used since life history research "preserves the integrity of individuals and accepts their experiences as credible" (Wicks & Whiteford, 2006). Supporting this sentiment, Sikes (2006) points out that researchers employ a life history approach "because they have a political commitment to give voice to and name silenced and hidden lives". Life history methodology was therefore adopted in this study because, like Bertaux (1981), I believed that several stories taken from the same set of socio-structural relations "would support each other and make up a strong body of evidence".

Besides this, life history research is distinct among narrative approaches in qualitative research (Wicks & Whiteford, 2006) – the narratives used are life stories. Interestingly, there is no context-free story. As a result, Goodson and Sikes (2001) point out that the interviewer seeks to place the individual narrative in its historical and sociocultural context. Supporting this, Wright (2013) confirms that context "adds meaning to the personal account even as the personal detail brings history to life." In this project, life stories of rural working mothers as postgraduate students were analysed in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the events that have shaped their lives, including cultural, economic, historical and educational conditions that have given rise to a particular event, to delve into the subjective perspectives and meanings that they ascribed to their personal experiences (Davies et al., 2018).

4.5.5 Rationale for the use of life history methodology

It is important to note why life history was chosen as suitable for this study over other methodologies. Several significant reasons left me with no choice but to consider it as the most appropriate methodology. The main reasons were derived from the scholarly work of Goodson and Sikes (2001). First, the focus of this study was on the experiences of rural working mothers; as a consequence, questions such as 'how many', 'who', 'where', and 'what kind' would be inappropriate to yield the anticipated data. Instead, life history methods allowed me to ask questions such as 'What are the experiences of rural working mothers?', 'What is it like to be a rural working mother?', and 'What does it mean to be a student, a worker, and mother concurrently?'. Secondly, the life history method helped me to understand how individuals negotiated their identities and made sense of the roles of the social worlds in which they live. Thirdly, life history acknowledges that anything that happens to people in one area of their lives potentially impacts upon and has implications for

other areas too (Goodson & Gill, 2011). In other words, through life history I was able to gain a full picture of why rural working mothers behaved in the way that they did. Fourth, it acknowledges that there is a crucial interactive relationship between individuals' lives, their perceptions and experiences, and historical and social contexts and events. Furthermore, I chose life history methodology because I strongly believed that stories that are divorced from historical, social and educational contexts could limit understanding of the experiences of these women. I had to obtain their full stories in their real-world contexts. In conclusion, the life history methodology was deemed the most suitable for providing me with a sound understanding of the socially constructed realities I sought to illuminate.

4.5.6 Criticism of life research methodology

It is also important to highlight the problems associated with life history research. According to Gardner (2002), a researcher does not simply 'give voice' in a straightforward way, but in practice, he or she decides what goes in and what is taken out of its account and makes crucial decisions about how the material is framed. Furthermore, Lewis (2008) also points out that there is the difficulty of generalizing from life-history data. Another issue involves 'contamination' of data within subjective accounts; i.e., those that are produced by informants and the researcher. Musson (1998) also points out that organising interview data into coherent themes is a challenge, meaning that it is impossible to over-estimate the heavy demand for the researcher's time that this creates. Executing the study, I was aware of the outcomes of collecting a large body of data and the time needed to analyse and interpret these data. I also took cognisance of the fact that the qualitative findings in this study would not be used for generalisation purposes. To address the issue of 'contamination', I used verbatim records of my informants' words. Also, I used multiple methods to select similar and dissimilar themes emerging from all the written, visual and verbal data to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the data and to avoid contamination.

4.5.7 Role of the researcher in life history research

As a qualitative researcher, I generally begin my work by recognising that the position (or world view) of the researcher exerts an enormous influence on the entire research enterprise (Austin & Sutton, 2014). I indicated earlier in this chapter that the qualitative approach does not have fixed procedures that need to be kept in mind. My responsibility in this study was, therefore, to avoid being static and instead to feel free to ask the pre-planned interview conversations (questions) and to seek clarity where necessary. I had to adhere to the fact that

life history research ought to honour and respect the narrative of the life storyteller first and foremost and, at the same time, be open to opportunities for dialogic encounter and collaborative interpretation between the researcher/listener and the teller (Goodson & Gill, 2011). Research roles found in the existing literature include those of complete observer, full participant, participant-observer, insider observer, interviewer, and the dual role of participant and researcher (McMillan & Schumacher, 2007). These scholars add that the roles differ from one another, but that the questionable roles are those of insider observer and participant researcher. It is therefore important to highlight that because of the nature of this study and the methodology and methods which were used, I had no choice but to choose the dual role of being the interviewer and an informant at the same time, since Oakely (1981) highlighted that the life history researcher is advised to share their own experiences and perceptions. My dual role required my constant self-awareness and my awareness of others, and I also had to be especially conscious about whose voice was being recorded as data, because the data contained my reflections on my own experiences as well as those of the participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2007). A separate chapter (my life history) is therefore included in this study report in adherence to the methodology I used.

I was guided by the prominent qualitative scholar who pointed out that "the researcher himself or herself is an instrument observing action and contexts, often intentionally playing a subjective role (self-driven perspectives) in the study, using his or her own experiences interpreting" (Stake, 2010). This was valid in the sense that the researcher herself was a woman, worker, mother, and postgraduate student, similar to the informants who participated in this project. Being guided by my questions I was therefore more interested in what the informants would yield than what I know, as we had similar characteristics. I was also aware of the fact that the roles of the researcher differ, depending on the purpose of the study and the context in which it is conducted.

Over and above these dual roles, in life history research researchers are expected to create a good working relationship with their informants. The concept of 'informant/s' is used in this project, after being given the option to choose from 'respondent', 'informant', 'participant', or just 'pseudonyms', as they do not have the same 'othering' and homogenising implications that the traditional research designations do (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). Besides this, life history research often requires more than one interview, which makes building trust an endeavour that occurs over a longer period of time than the 'speed dating' procedure described above would allow (Goodson & Gill, 2011). Therefore, the first reason for creating

mutual relationships was that participation in this study involved a considerable commitment on the part of the informants (Measor & Sikes, 1992; Goodson & Fliesser, 1994). Secondly, life history interviews took up many hours (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). Thirdly, informants were expected to share their life stories, which might require the revelation of many deeply personal and even hurtful experiences. Also, life history research required the researcher to be the sort of person that people wanted to talk to (Goodson & Sikes, 2001).

As a consequence, in this study it was my responsibility to explain the intentions of the study clearly, to allow the prospective informants to make an informed decision about whether they wished to participate or not. I ensured that each person who was approached was allowed to refuse to participate in the project if they wished, to ensure that the data collection sessions involved only those who were genuinely willing to take part and who were prepared to offer data freely (Shenton, 2004). I was also thoughtful about the challenges that might appear and hinder the generation of data. Indeed, the challenges embedded in life history research forced me to accept that there is no way to completely suspend power relations and stratification and other issues in the world; this kind of encounter forced me and my informants to confront these issues together in open communication (Goodson & Gill, 2011). This was not an easy task, but because of our multiple roles, communication was an ongoing process which continued until I was satisfied and confident enough that data had reached saturation. I tried my best to maintain a working relationship of trust between myself and the informants, by adhering to the methodology; this required me to keep on negotiating with them, and this indeed became a norm throughout the fieldwork.

I also had an obligation to remain vigilant and be able to identify any problem areas that might compromise my informants. As I was studying women, I had to be cautious about power relations between the researcher and researched. However, I can mention that I was very fortunate in that the informants I interviewed acted professionally and seemed to understand their roles, as they were also busy with their postgraduate studies. I also needed to know what to do in response to any ethical issues that might intentionally or unintentionally occur during the fieldwork. I did not observe anything of this nature, except that some informants would keep on reminding me about their various roles in the event that I wanted to meet them, and I had to wait until they were available. It became imperative to revisit the bond between the life history methodology, orality and the African women ways of knowing and learning, the next section will explore this.

4.5.8 The connection between life history research, orality, and African ways of knowing and learning

The potential of utilising the qualitative approach in this study is that it offered me an incredible opportunity to produce a thick (detailed) description of informants' feelings, opinions, and experiences; and interpret the meanings of their actions (Denzin, 1989). In light of this, the qualitative approach is regarded as an interdisciplinary field encompassing a more comprehensive range of epistemological viewpoints, research, and interpretive techniques for understanding human experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002). As such, life history methodology enabled informants to tell their stories on how they negotiate their life experiences as black rural working women. Indeed, the literature displays that feminist scholars employ the life history approach primarily to uncover the diversity of women's experiences and to project women's voices, into areas where they have previously been ignored (Ojermark, 2007). In an attempt to project women's voices, it is paramount important to discuss the connection between life history, orality, and African ways of knowing briefly.

South African people grew up with stories, and these stories define who we are, and through these stories we were able to be guided on what is good and bad. In other words, each told story has a moral lesson. Because of the crucial intention of telling stories, this has become a continuous activity from one cohort to the next. Parry (2020) argues that orality as a data collection tool may be as old as time itself, with communities, reminiscences about past events, and experiences shared through word of mouth from one generation to the next. The word 'oral' means that the information is handed down from one generation to the next through the oral channel, meaning all is communicated orally (Magwaza, 1993). One would say African black women in this study are not excluded from orality as means of passing knowledge. As such, a strong connection between life history methodology, orality, and the black African women's ways of knowing. In this study, this was evident when informants shared the meaning of the artefacts they brought, including stories generated through the timeline method. Furthermore, crafted poems were utilised as they conveyed a powerful message.

4.6 Strategies for collecting data in life history research

The study aimed to generate data from knowledgeable individuals. The research was undertaken using different data generation methods, as described in Figure 4.1. The diagram illustrates the qualitative interpretive approach adopted in this work, displays the feminist

theoretical frameworks and life history methodology utilised in this study, and also presents the data generation process. The diagram also presents a range of interconnected data collection strategies. In other words, Figure 1 exhibits all the interconnected facets of this study. In this study multiple methods (that is, a range of different methods) were used to generate data, namely grounded conversations, group conversations, and the timeline method.

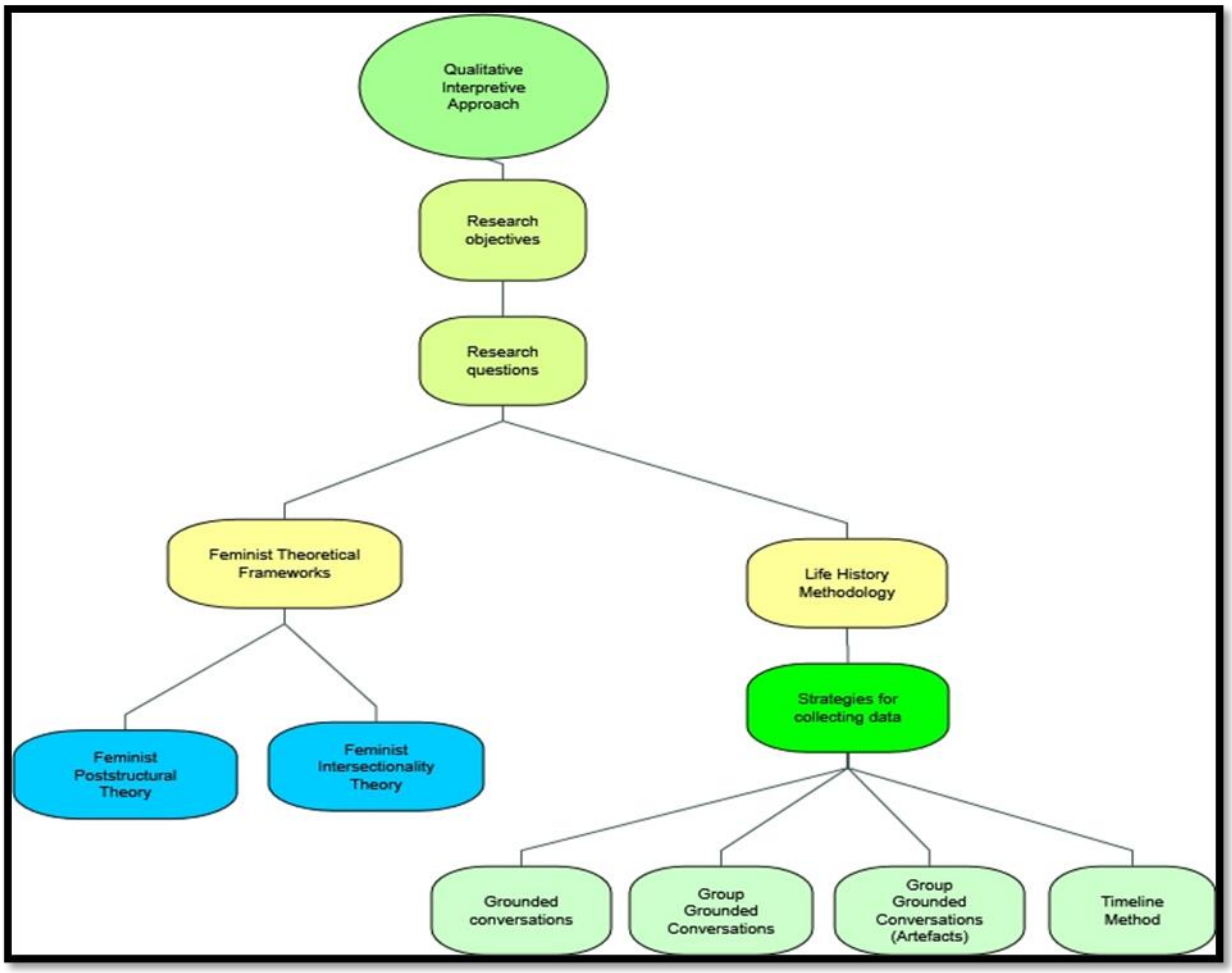


Figure 1: Data generation procedures used in this study.

Accordingly, the following materials were sought and made available: for grounded conversations, I used a writing pad and pens to record field notes and an audio-recorder to record all grounded conversations (one-to-one interview conversations) and group conversations. As agreed, to by informants, an audio-recorder was used in order to permit me to pay full attention while listening to the life stories rendered by the informants. Further, for the timeline method informants were given a timeline sample, but they were free to use any writing materials to compile their two-week journals. For the visual participatory method, the informants were asked to bring their artefacts.

4.6.1 One-to-one grounded interview conversations

Life history is a style of research often used in the interpretive paradigm, since the focus is on how people understand and make meaning of their worlds and experiences (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017). To understand the experiences of informants in this project, I had to use grounded conversations or one-to-one interview conversations interchangeably, as this is accepted in life history research, but not one-on-one interviews which is normally known. The reason for this is that in one-to-one interview conversations, informants have the privilege of narrating their stories. In life history research one-to-one interview conversation between the informant and the researcher is the most used strategy for collecting data (Goodson, 2001); Goodson and Sikes referred to this as a "grounded conversation" (Goodson & Sikes, 2001) (Figure 2). The focus was to obtain adequate data about the community's actions, perceptions, attitudes, constraints, and experiences (Neuman, 1997).

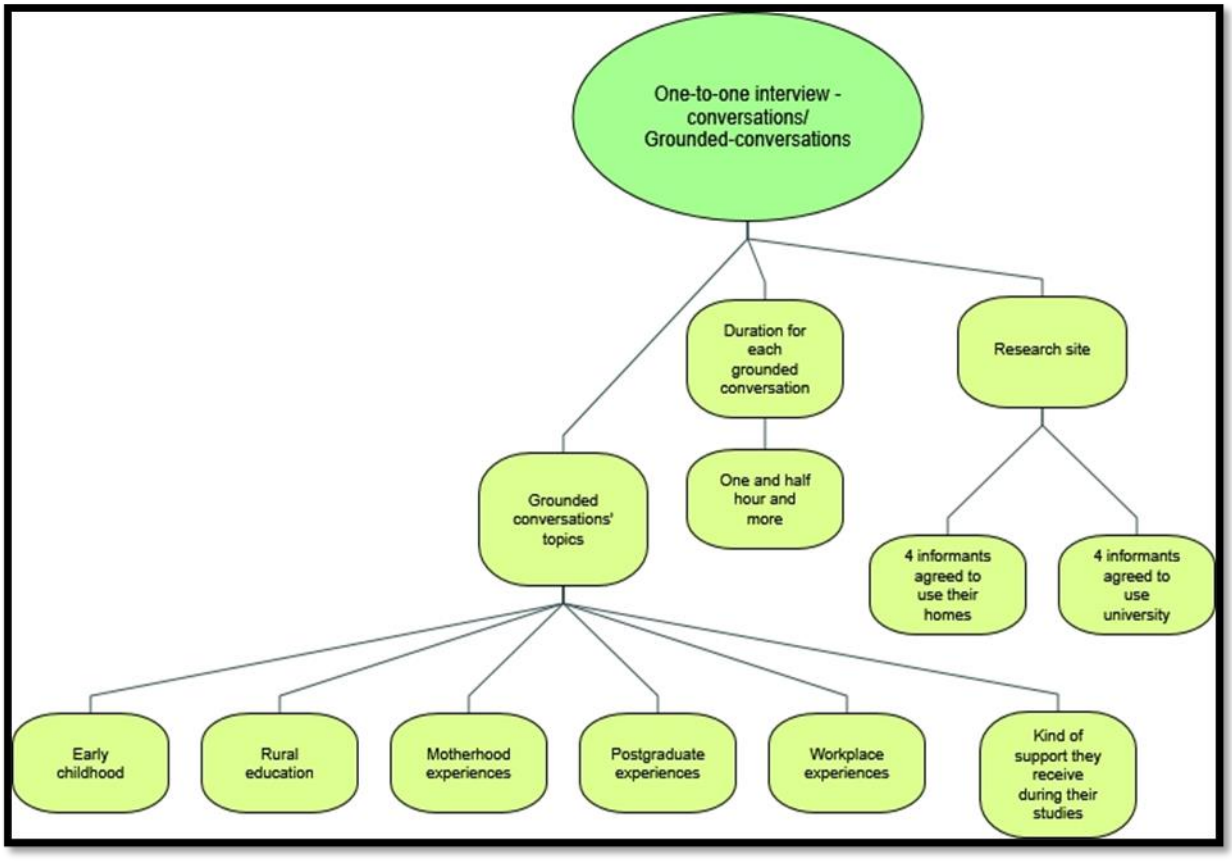


Figure 2: Grounded one-to-one interview conversations used in this study.

It is of utmost importance to note that this study was meant to have 12 informants, but instead I had eight informants who agreed to participate. Two informants withdrew as they deregistered, and another two made it clear that they felt participation was too much for them

due to their workload as workers, mothers, and postgraduate students. They believed that they would not have enough time to spend with me, as I was honest with them that generating data in life history research would take a significant amount of their time.

In preparation for the one-to-one interview conversations, I formulated pre-planned questions. These questions were designed to guide the conversations. All informants were asked similar questions, and questions were rephrased depending on the stories told by each informant. I developed grounded conversation questions around six topics: early childhood, rural education, motherhood, postgraduate and workplace experience, and the kind of support they receive during their studies. I conducted six one-to-one interview conversations with each informant at different times. Each interview conversation lasted at least about one and a half hours. Of the eight informants, only four agreed to use the university as a site to collect data, while the other four informants preferred to use their own private places. I had contact numbers for each informant, and before meeting my task was to check when the informant would be available. In some cases, even if the informant agreed that we could meet, occasionally I would find myself going home without engaging with them, since due to whatever emergency or their multiple roles and commitments, they ended up abandoning our appointment. Since I had similar characteristics to them, I would objectively accept their apology. For instance, one informant reported that she had a car breakdown on her way to the university, and therefore the appointment was cancelled.

I had also encountered some unexpected obstacles, such as family rituals, gatherings, church events, children's homework, parents' meetings at schools, attending to sick older family members, and many more. Toddlers get sick ever so often; if a child was under the weather, the informants would have no choice but to postpone the appointment. Four informants requested me to conduct one-to-one grounded conversations in their households, and I had to arrive an hour before the meeting to evade any commotion that might arise on the way. There was no significant difference between having the initiated conversations at the university or in their homes. As I indicated earlier, the informants were professionals and were good at managing their time. Having individual conversations helped me to understand their experiences. In some cases, I would find myself being sympathetic about their challenges, and what I learned from them is that they are extraordinarily strong black women.

4.6.2 Criticism of one-to-one interview conversations

Grounded one-to-one interview conversations were employed even though some known disadvantages are associated with them, such as, the fact that they are time-consuming, may compromise the anonymity of the informants, and may incur high travelling costs. Some scholars have pointed out potential dangers in the uncritical use of individual narratives for analysing social problems (Atkinson & Silverman, 1997). For example, while biographical work typically aims to offer 'the whole life', invariably it is impossible to explore an individual's entire life (Lim, 2011). To address these shortcomings, I adhered to the fact that I needed to be honest by explaining the nature of the study, and that it could stretch over a considerable period, and by assuring the informants that they may quit at any time (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). This helped me, as the informants were clear about what was expected of them. The travelling costs were minimal, since I conducted some of the grounded conversations at the university where all of the informants were studying. For the other one-to-one grounded conversations, I had to travel to the informants' homes. The anonymity of the informants was strictly maintained. With regard to individual narratives, I respected that life historians have to accept that people tell the story that they, for whatever reason, want to tell to the person who is listening (Sikes, Troyna, & Goodson, 1996).

4.6.3 Group grounded conversations

At its most basic, a focus group is a small group discussion focused on a particular topic and facilitated by a researcher (Tonkiss, 2004); "The group is 'focused' in the sense that it involves some kind of collective activity- such as viewing a film, examining a single health education method or simply debating a particular set of questions" (Kitzinger, 1994). In this life history research study, group grounded conversations are similar to the traditional focus group; the difference is that in this study the researcher asked questions that led informants to share their stories in a small group. Munday (2014) notes that feminists use a wide variety of methods and adapt them to suit their aims, goals, and research questions. In feminist research, Munday further acknowledges that group discussions between participants can make known explicit meanings and realities that were previously hidden, thus promoting a new and greater understanding of their social position as women. Besides this, scholars also note that in qualitative studies researchers use focus group interviews, because this method provides the researcher with a valuable tool for gaining insight into participants' opinions and experiences that may not be available through individual interviews (Krueger, 1994). Krueger further

describes the focus group type interview as "a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment." Equally, the purposively sampled group of people is interviewed rather than each person individually (McMillan & Schumacher, 2007). However, it is noteworthy to acknowledge that even though this study employed a qualitative approach, according to the life history methodology, Goodson and Sikes (2001) recommend group work or group grounded conversations instead of a focus group. The rationale for this is threefold: firstly, in group conversations people are more likely to be frank and open with people that they do not know than they are with friends or colleagues. Secondly, group dynamics make group conversations conducive in that accounts given by one person may jog others' memories about similar or contrasting experiences or perceptions. Thirdly, having a small group of people from different backgrounds and with different perceptions can mean that a wider range of questions is asked than if the researcher had been working alone (Goodson & Sikes, (2001). In this study group conversations were conducted, whereby a group of eight informants was interviewed (see Figure 3 below) in four sessions, to give the group of informants an opportunity to share their experiences as mothers, wives/partners, workers, and students.

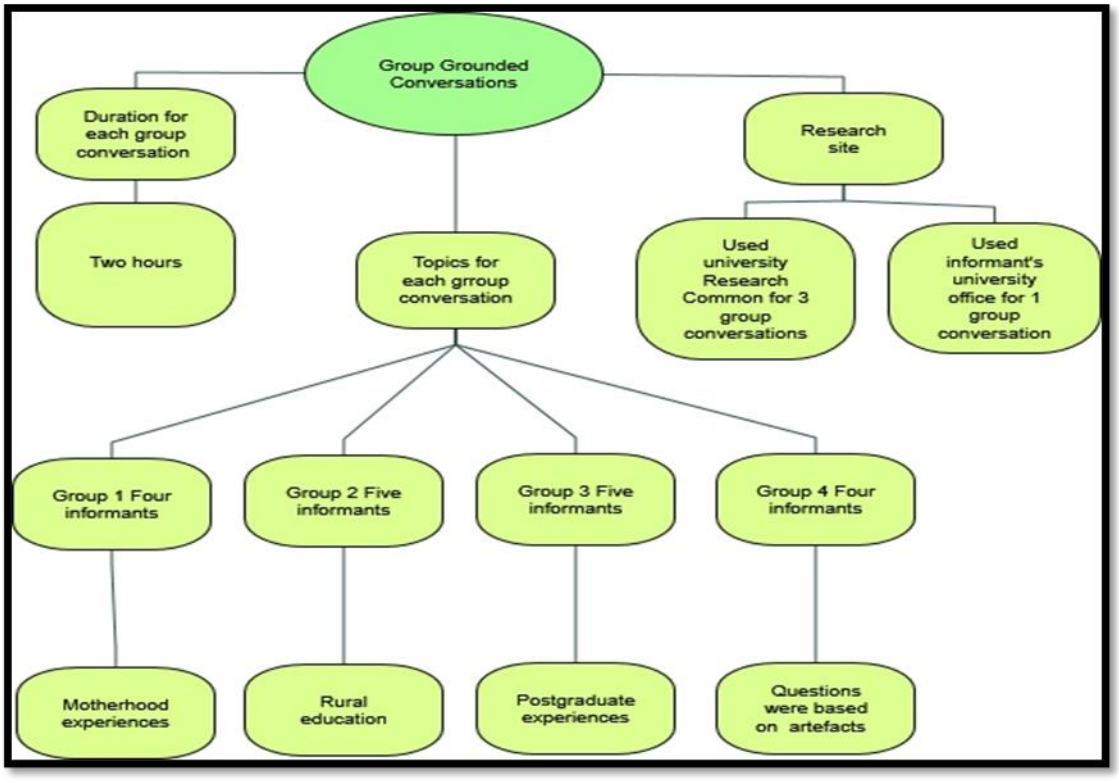


Figure 3: Group grounded conversations.

Group conversations were used in this project, which in my view produced concentrated amounts of data needed to answer the research question. With the permission of the informants, the group conversations were audiotaped. Because this study was conducted by a woman for women, I observed that the group of homogeneous women provided a stimulating and secure setting for members to express their ideas and views, without fear of criticism. I had pre-planned to have three group conversations. However, due to some interesting issues raised by the informants, I ended up conducting four sessions of group conversations. I followed the same procedure as I did during one-to-one interview conversations, whereby I found myself negotiating with the informants the times that were convenient to them to hold the meetings. During each telephonic conversation, it became clear that time remains a constraint. The first, second and third group conversations were conducted in the University Research Commons. The fourth group grounded conversation was conducted in one of the informant's university office. During the first group conversation, in which I hoped to generate data on motherhood experiences, only four informants participated in the University Research Commons. The Research Commons was designed to be used only by postgraduate students. It has a small separate room with a sofa for printing purposes, and a large room with desktop computers and enough space for using laptops, as well as two small rooms with desktop computers and a working station. It allowed students to sit in a line so that there was not that much tension and informants spoke freely without looking at anyone. Jaggar (2004) argued that through focus group interviews, "women's distinctive social position makes possible a view of the world that is more reliable and less-distorted [when they] talk about their sufferings as women", and their experiences or life stories.

While I was hoping to meet with all the informants, only four informants attended the first group conversation. Having four informants did not mean that I did not generate the anticipated data, but it would have been much better to have all of their viewpoints since they were coming from different backgrounds and did not all know each other. Each group conversation was almost two hours in duration. During the second group conversation only five informants participated, and the conversation was based on rural education. They were able to share how rural education helped and prepared them for the tertiary education level. I was fascinated to listen to their heart-warming conversations, and their facial expressions captured my heart, as they expressed how they were grateful for the support they received during their early rural education period. During the third group conversation I had only five informants, and the conversation was based on their postgraduate experiences. In this group

conversation the informants intrigued me, because they spoke about incidents that I was not familiar with, and by the way they talked anyone would see that these women knew why they are studying. None of them had room for regret – they were positive enough to complete their degrees, regardless of whatever challenge they came across. I listened attentively as they took turns in telling their stories and debating. In some cases, they would agree with each other and also disagree, and they supported their arguments. Next I present the last group conversation I had with the informants.

4.6.4 Group grounded conversation (artefacts)

Artefacts are described as "a non-interactive strategy for obtaining qualitative data with little or no reciprocity between the researcher and the informants" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2007). In life history research artefacts take the form of words, designed to give shape to some feature of experience (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). During the last group conversation, which I did not plan, I had four informants and the conversation was based on the artefacts brought by the informants. Morgan (1988) regards this as a collaborative activity that permits informants to yield insights that might not otherwise become available in a straight-forward interview. Equally, life historians frequently emphasise to their informants and in their published accounts that the construction of life history from a life story is a joint creation (Munro, 1998). Concerning this perspective, research has also revealed that people try to understand the world and act in it collaboratively, and they utilise both visual and verbal means to do so (Griffiths, Malcolm, & Williamson, 2009).

It is significant to highlight that I opted to use artefacts because visual representations act as a source of concrete evidence. The purpose of using a visual participatory method in this study was therefore threefold: first, it presents both non-verbal and written data; second, it is a highly efficient and ethically sound technique for collecting anticipated data to address the research problem; and third, there is a strong belief that the culture of the informants uses artefacts in diverse methods. In other words, since the informants would be familiar with visual representations, using them for data production allowed them to collaboratively share their interpretations, meanings, and the significance of their images. The potential contribution of this data production tool was that it allowed me to explore and understand the complex relationships and experiences of rural working mothers in ways that would not be possible through the use of verbal methods alone. It was used because it offered promising alternatives to traditional research approaches, that tend to over-rely on language as the

means of accessing interpretations (McCarthy, 2013). For this last group conversation, I was glad that I had asked the informants for permission to videotape them, because of the way they shared their experiences as they looked at each artefact.

Wicks and Whiteford (2006) assert that the purpose of the focus group [in feminist research] is to elucidate significant themes embedded in women's stories, and to identify the social, historical, political and educational factors that impact their experiences. I was anticipating that each informant would share the reason why they chose a particular artefact; however, it did not go as I had anticipated. Instead, they had conversations about each artefact, until all of them had discussed their artefacts. During the conversation, each artefact provoked them to speak about different settings, such as their social experiences, experiences of the apartheid system, and economic and educational experiences as black women. The informants brought five artefacts with them: a Zulu three-legged-pot, a Zulu mat, a sculpture of a Zulu maiden, a scarf worn by women, and a Zulu beer- drinking bowl. Informants were asked to explain the meaning each image held for them in terms of the research topic. All of the artefacts were displayed on a table in the office, with the informants seated in a circle. Watching each artefact, informants were able to speak out regarding what troubled them as women, and what had shaped them to become postgraduate students. Each artefact had meaning, and this is discussed in detail in the subsequent chapters. It became clear that artefact representation had incredible potential in helping me to gather additional data in an attempt to obtain a holistic picture of and life stories about the experiences of rural working mothers pursuing higher degrees at a South African university. Artefacts, as visual representations in this study, were regarded as evidence of reality and a source of new knowledge production.

4.6.4.1 Criticism of group grounded conversations

The disadvantage of group interviews may include that only active informants may voice their expressions, and passive informants may be inhibited by the active informants (Greef, 2011). Besides, Nyamathi and Shuler (1990) believe that findings cannot automatically be projected onto the population at large. To address this, I tried to allow each informant to voice her view. I did not do life history research for purposes of generalisability; there was no desire to project the findings onto a large population.

4.6.5 Timeline method

As indicated above, the semi-structured interview method was used as a primary source of data generation. Over and above this, it is important to highlight that the timeline method was

also employed in this study as a complementary method, because of its potential to provide an opportunity for linking the story with wider social, political and environmental contexts (Adriansen, 2012) It was also used because of its potential as an organising principle for informants' experiences, and to allow informants to note down phases of their life which may be productive to explore (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). Sikes (2006) emphasises that timelines are helpful "in that they can serve as a prompt to memory". In this study, the timeline was used since it offered an incredible opportunity to collect additional visual and textual data, which would not have been possible using other methods such as interviews or questionnaires. It also offered the informants the privilege of 'ownership', especially when they constructed their stories and reflected on them while being guided by processes of the timeline technique. The timeline was therefore used as a tool that provided me with a visual presentation of the main events that constituted unforgettable experiences for these rural working mothers. Informants were asked to use the timeline method, which served as a guideline in terms of writing down the events they had encountered in a logical sequence. They were given an example of the researcher's timeline, so that they would be clear about what was expected from them. They were asked to complete the timeline during their free periods, and to inform me when we could meet so that I could collect them. This process allowed the informants an opportunity to write down important information about their past lives, including both bad and good experiences as well as their achievements, while also being guided by the time frame of each event.

While I was hoping that all eight informants would use the timeline method, only four were able to complete them. Informants were requested to note information on the timeline sheets, based on their place of birth, family background, children, education experience, occupation, and future ambitions (Goodson & Sikes. 2001). I made it clear that using the timeline method was beneficial, in the sense that the informants were able to use it in a way that painted a clear portrait of their life stories. The employment of the timeline method was in line with the methodology for this study, of using appropriate methods in an attempt to generate anticipated data from the informants' point of view. All timeline sheets were analysed.

4.6.5.1 Criticism of the timeline method

The timeline data generation method is more or less the same as writing and keeping journals, diaries, and other personal writings. Some life historians have declared that they encountered a challenge when they expected teachers to write journals; not all teachers continued to keep

up their writing throughout the year (Bullough, Knowles, & Crow 1991). They pointed out that teachers found journal writing to be a source of increased anxiety and frustration, and by mid-year they stopped writing altogether. In this study a disadvantage of the timeline that I observed was that some informants were reluctant to complete and forward their timeline sheets. I made several attempts to persuade them to complete and send in their timeline sheets, but as time went by, I realised that prevailing upon them to do so was not going to be successful. This did not compromise the data that I hoped to generate. Before each one-to-one interview-conversation, I used informal conversation to generate some of this information. However, I would like to indicate that having all timeline sheets from all of the informants would have been more expedient than having only four of them.

4.7 Research context

The first step was to locate informants who met the criteria for this work, and the next step was then to identify research site. A clear definition of the criteria for site selection was essential, to the extent that the criteria should be related to, and be appropriate for, the research problem and purpose (McMillan & Schumacher, 2007). However, the life history research site is different from those of other qualitative studies, such as a case study, whereby the researcher has to observe and interview individuals in their natural settings. In life history there should be an agreement between the informant and the researcher where data would be generated. Besides this, the setting should help the participants to relax and feel comfortable and should be close to the natural context where the phenomenon under consideration takes place (Atkinson, 1998). The interview conversations and group grounded conversations were conducted at a university located in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) in Durban (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Map of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal.

It was important that for some one-to-one interview conversations I had to negotiate access, as I was going to enter informants' private worlds. Four informants suggested that I come and conduct conversations in their private places.

By a few years into the new democracy, the South African Government had envisioned and demonstrated a commitment to gender equality (De la Rey & Kottler, 1999). Indeed, the priority of the democratic government was to address the injustices and wounds of the past. Apartheid left South Africa with high levels of inequality, none more enduring than in the field of education (Van der Berg, 2005). The university accommodates full-time and part-time students. This university was formerly used by white communities only; blacks were prohibited due to racial segregation during the apartheid era. After 1994 all of apartheid's oppressive policies were abolished, enabling black students to participate in institutions that previously belonged to whites:

> When the former University of Durban-Westville and Natal came together in 2004, a key principle and core value the newly merged University of KwaZulu-Natal quickly embraced was to promote access to learning that would expand educational and employment opportunities for all (Borden et al., 2014).

Equally, the expansion of higher education has resulted in enormous numbers of students from historically disadvantaged communities gaining access to universities (Sikhwari, Ravhuhali, Lavhelani, & Pataka, 2019). With regard to this, universities were given the mandate to monitor students' performance, and HEIs were cautioned against opening access for disadvantaged groups for the sake of increasing student numbers (Ministry of Education, 2001). However, it was argued that in support of the Ministry of Education, universities were asked to admit students who would be capable of completing the education programmes in which they enrolled (Fraser & Killen, 2005).

In this project, the informants were among these historically disadvantaged students who succeeded in gaining access to higher education. They used this opportunity – which was unavailable before – to further their studies. By the time they enrolled, they were mature students between 30s and 40s, had full-time jobs, had children, and some were married. The premise of opening access to these adult students was that under-prepared students bearing the bruises of apartheid education could be healed by being given academic support as they were socialised into the dominant education culture (Dhunpath & Vithal, 2014). The informants in this study were fortunate in that the university offered them a variety of support to enable them to succeed. For this project, I did not request any access since the informants

visit the university regularly, and when they did so they would just inform me by indicating a time that we could meet. I used the university Research Commons for most of individual and group grounded conversations.

4.8 Sampling

Frequently qualitative research involves small sample sizes, since most such studies are conducted not for generalisability purposes, but to understand and interpret the phenomenon being studied. I was aware that the quality of a piece of research stands or falls not only by the appropriateness of the methodology and instrumentation, but also by the suitability of sampling strategy that has been adopted (Morrison, 1990). In qualitative research the typical way of selecting settings and individuals is neither probability sampling nor convenience sampling, but purposeful sampling (Light, Singer, & Willet, 1990; Palys, 2008). Probability sampling, where informants are selected from a large population to allow every member of the population an equal probability of being selected, was not appropriate for this qualitative study (Light, Singer & Willett, 1990). Besides this, I wanted to use purposeful sampling because of its potential to allow me to select informants who were knowledgeable about the research problem.

In locating informants, I experienced a challenge as most of the postgraduate students I came across did not meet the criteria set for participation. The majority of students I knew did not make it to master's level. I tried even those studying at other universities, only to find that none were doing master's or doctorate courses. I asked even some lecturers at the university where I am studying to help me to locate informants, but none were able to assist. It is important to note that I waited for a long period – until I realised that waiting would not solve my problem. I became angry and confused, because other students that I was doing my PhD with had already started generating data. I had thought that purposeful sampling would be the best choice for me; however, it worked well when I was doing my master's degree, but not for my PhD degree.

I then changed my mind and reviewed the literature in an attempt to find out what the life history champions would say. The book written by Goodson and Sikes (2001), *Life history research in educational settings: Learning from lives*, helped me to solve the problem of locating knowledgeable informants. Out of the six options for sample selection, purposive, opportunistic, convenience, homogeneous, extreme case, and snowball (Goodson & Sikes, 2001), snowball sampling helped me to find informants when I was about to lose hope.

According to Sikes (2006) snowball sampling permits the researcher to work with an informant who will, in turn, tell her friends or colleagues about the study, and they might then be interested in participating. My decision was correct: I was able to locate an informant (Elihle) and she also promised to check with other students who were doing a master's degree. She forwarded their contact phone numbers to me and I told them about the intention of the study and the reason why I was looking for informants. The profiles of the informants can be found in Chapter Six.

It is important to highlight that my selection of the informants was guided by the following inclusion criteria: 1) mothers; 2) employed; 3) postgraduate students; 4) in the process of studying; 5) live in or once lived in a rural area; 6) currently studying at a South African university; and 7) having received their early education at schools in rural areas. When embarking on the study I was cognizant that the sample size would be adequate only if sufficient data could be collected for saturation to occur, and when the varied data was both accounted for and understood (Morse, 1994). In life history research investigating a single informant is enough, but several life stories taken from the same set of socio-structural relations support each other and together make for a strong body of evidence (Bertaux, 1981). In this study eight knowledgeable individuals who complied with all seven criteria participated, and they yielded a strong body of evidence on the experiences of rural working mothers in pursuit of higher degrees at a South African university.

4.9 Preparing for data transcription and analysis

During data generation I tried my best to be well organised. I meticulously recorded and immediately stored the data obtained from each grounded conversation session, that is, the one-to-one interview conversations and group grounded conversations. I strongly believed that by storing data as soon as I had finished collecting them, I would save time and lessen the pressure of trying to find generated data a month or two later. In short, I used different files for each individual and group session. Data from the grounded conversations were labelled and stored in sub-files, and those from the group grounded conversations were stored in different sub-files. I was clear about the fact that all data sources needed to be subjected to comparable levels of scrutiny (Tummons & Duckworth, 2013). After generating and storing sufficient data in a manner that made for easy retrieval, the body of data was ready for transcription and analysis. The next sections will explain how verbal and non-verbal data were transcribed.

4.9.1 Transcribing the one-to-one grounded interview conversations and group grounded conversations

Transcribing interviews is probably the most laborious job a qualitative researcher will have to undertake (Tummons & Duckworth, 2013). These authors further acknowledge that there is no easy way around this, unless one can touch-type or perhaps pay a professional typist to complete transcripts of all the verbal recordings. In this regard, life historians such as Goodson and Sikes (2001) claim that even if someone else does the transcription, researchers should listen to the tape and follow the script to ensure that there are as few errors as possible. However, having a huge amount of data brought some challenges, because I was also a mother as well as working. I failed to ignore my workplace and home pressures. It became clear that I would to seek a knowledgeable person at the university who was used to transcribing generated data. Networking with others helped me to locate such a professional to do the transcriptions. However, I did not rely on the original transcribed data, as I did further follow-up checks to limit errors and omissions. A professional transcriber was hired for two reasons: first, I needed help with the large amount of verbal data that I had collected; and second, I wanted to use the informants' verbatim responses as evidence of what they had said about their experiences. To render the transcriptions more manageable I made a summary of each using keywords and phrases with notations as to where they occurred on the tape, as suggested by Sikes (2006). Making a summary transcript was an analytical activity in that it involved categorising the data right from the start. Having transcribed the data for all of the grounded conversations, the next stage involved transcribing the conversations around the visual representations (artefacts) that the informants had brought to the group grounded conversation session.

4.9.2 Transcribing conversations around visual representations (artefacts)

It became clear that transcribing information about the visual artefacts (see Figure 4.5) would not be the same as transcribing the verbally narrated information.

Figure 4.5: Artefacts as visual representations.

I typed up all of the audio responses referring to the artefacts and kept them safe and ready for retrieval purposes. I also typed up the field notes that described every artefact brought in by the informants. The field notes included a description of the texture and appearance of each visual presentation.

4.9.3 Data generated though timeline method

The timeline method was employed because of the belief that documents contain text (words) and images that have been recorded without a researcher's intervention (Bowen, 2009). In this project, timeline sheets were written by the informants and were treated as a form of document. Timeline sheets added written raw data, where informants were asked to write about any memorable, unforgettable, remarkable, or dreadful experience or event they could remember. They were also asked to include the key events specifically as a mother, a worker, a student, and a woman. In qualitative research document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Data from timeline sheets were not transcribed but were used during the data analysis process.

4.10 Turning transcription into poems

Dhunpath (2000) highlighted that life history methodology has its own sophisticated organising principles. This occurred in this study, the adoption of life history methodology enabled the researcher to present the findings in two ways, firstly, in a textual form, and secondly, in poetic form. In this study, presenting poems was not something new but the researcher followed the footsteps of the living historians. This was guided by the necessity of understanding "whose voice needs to be studied and expressed" (Muchmore (2000). The researcher was aware that poems evoke embodied experiences, effectively communicate emotional aspects of social life, and raise critical consciousness by cultivating empathy, compassion, and understanding for the situations of marginalised populations depicted in these poems (Leavy, 2015). In this research, the use of poems serves as a medium for representing data as well as attending to lived experiences as shared by the informants (van Rooyen & d'Abdon, 2020).

Poems were consciously included with the intention of sustaining informants' narrative voices being told in their own words (Jenkins, Narayanaswamy & Sweetman, 2019). To produce meaningful, emotive, and creative texts, research poetry is able to engage wider and more varied audiences than those typically reached by conventional academic outputs (van Rooyen & d'Abdon,2020). As such, one of the feminist principles include the emphasis and honouring of the informants' own words as generative of meaning and knowledge (Chander, Ansley & Ross, 2015). Also, poetry as a form of research is not only a different way of writing; it is a different way of presenting and viewing the world, metaphorically, symbolically and in a condensed form (Burdick, 2011). It is for the reason that research poems respect the lived experience of the research informant, and this is similar to other qualitative methods (van Rooyen & d'Abdon,2020). Expanding to this, Carter, Saunders and Bray (2018) note that the use of poetry is one means of conveying the voices of informants. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) maintained that this is one way of responding to concerns about truth and representation and the ways in which voices of participants were too often appropriated, overpowered, fragmented, over-summarised or even silenced in qualitative research use of art-based research has gained traction.

In spite of this, poetic inquiry bridges the gap between the "brainy" rigour of conventional academic writing and the "healing" power of poetry, with positive results in terms of increased self and interpersonal awareness, increased sense of validation in voicing one's

truth, and enhanced capacity to capture and reframe significant life stories (van Rooyen & d'Abdon,2020). It is hoped that employing poems in this study will be another way of revealing the findings through the life stories shared by the informants.

4.11 Strategies to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative life history research.

Trustworthiness is imperative in qualitative research. This refers to the logical accuracy and scientific adequacy of the research findings in terms of openness, scrupulous adherence to the philosophical perspective of the research approach, and thoroughness in collecting data (Burns & Grove, 2007). In ensuring trustworthiness in this project, I selected evidence of patterns by assessing solicited versus unsolicited data, identifying subtle influences among the people present in the setting, noting specific versus vague statements, and determining the accuracy of the sources (McMillan & Schumacher, 2007). Besides this, to ensure rigour and trustworthiness in this study the following four criteria were considered: credibility, conformability, dependability, and transferability. These criteria were addressed to promote confidence that the phenomenon under scrutiny was recorded accurately (Shenton, 2004).

4.11.1 Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research entails that the collected and analysed data are authentic and trustworthy. It refers to the authentic quality of the data in that they [the data] should portray what the researcher was looking for (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Qualitative research is valid to researchers, to whom it gives "an accurate and useful representation of the particular instance that has been studied" (Stake, 2010). In this study, credibility was achieved by conducting the inquiry in a manner that ensured that the subject was accurately identified and described (Schurink, Fouché, & De Vos, 2011). Also, credibility was achieved through the identification of human experiences as they were lived and perceived by my informants (De Vos, 1998). Improving credibility includes using multiple qualitative methods, and verifying interpretations with participants (Patton 1999), because each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality. Multiple methods of data collection and analysis provide more grist for the research mill. In line with this, I intentionally used a range of data collection strategies (grounded conversations, group grounded conversations, visual participatory method – whereby informants brought in artefacts – and the timeline method) in an attempt to ensure credibility. Gauging the trustworthiness of data was done at the time of each field experience (McMillan & Schumacher, 2007) and during the thematic analysis process. There are no simple formulas or clear-cut rules to direct the performance of a credible, high-quality

analysis (Patton, 1999). As a qualitative analyst, I repeatedly returned to the data to see if the constructs, categories, explanations, and interpretations made sense and if they reflected the nature of the phenomena. Using multiple methods of data generation, and by thoroughly inspecting the patterns and the themes that emerged, I was convinced that this project could be regarded as credible. At the same time, I am aware that this work will be scrutinised by other researchers.

4.11.2 Transferability

The results of research are transferable only if they fit into another particular similar context. Qualitative scholars view transferability in terms of generalisability, in which "the burden of demonstrating the applicability of one set of findings to another context rests more with the investigator who would make the transfer than with the original investigator" (Schurink et al., 2011). Given this, Maxwell (2000) asserts that "generalizability refers to the extent to which one can extend the account of a particular situation or population to other persons, time or settings." This scholar adds that for the naturalistic researcher, no true generalisability is possible; data will rather be interpreted in terms of the specific contexts in which they occur. This held accuracy in this study, and the fact that only eight informants were interviewed shows that the findings cannot be generalised and transferred to other contexts. In other words, I acknowledge that the knowledge generated by this study will not have relevance in other contexts. I agree with McMillan and Schumacher (2007) that the goal of most qualitative research is to illuminate what is unique and to understand the particulars of a specific situation in all its complexities. Echoing this, Morris and Burkett (2011) acknowledge that transferability indicates that relevancies can be transferred to similar situations, circumstances, and contexts. In relation to this, Seale, Wilkinson and Erasmus (2005) highlighted that transferability is achieved by providing a detailed, rich description of the setting being studied to provide the reader (other scholars) with sufficient information to be able to judge the applicability of the findings to other settings that are known. Additionally, McMillan and Schumacher (2007) point out that a body of scientific knowledge is built through the logical extension of findings rather than the statistical generalisation of such information. They further add that knowledge is produced not by replication, but by the preponderance of evidence found in separate case studies over time. Finally, Denscombe (2007) concludes that transferability does not necessarily prove that the researcher 'got it right', but rather that the researcher achieved consistency across techniques and that the findings are not tied to a particular method of data collection.

4.11.3 Dependability

Many qualitative scholars maintain that dependability refers to the stability of the data in the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). For this study, dependability was achieved through auditing, which consisted of my meticulous documentation of the data, the methods I employed, the decisions I made during the study process, and its end product (Seale et al., 2005). Additionally, Schurink et al. (2011) emphasise that the researcher needs to ask whether the research process is logical, well documented and audited. They state: "this process is called 'audit trail' and is based on 'dense' or 'thick descriptions', which implies a complete, literal description of the incident or entity being studied." By thoroughly reading and inspecting, my work, I am confident that the study is well documented.

4.10.4 Confirmability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stress the need to ask whether the findings of the study could be confirmed by another. Confirmability also refers to the degree to which the findings are a function solely of the informants and conditions of research and not of other biases, motivation and perspectives (De Vos, 1998). In this study, trail auditing was used to establish confirmability. This was also achieved by providing a methodological self-critical account of how the research was done (Seale, 1999). It is imperative to highlight that confirmability was also achieved through paying attention to the following questions during the data analysis processes: Whose voice am I listening to? Is this data relevant?, Whose possible bias occurs here?, and Is it fair or ethical to add this particular information? These questions served as guidelines to ensure the confirmability of this study and are addressed in Chapter Six.

4.12 Ethical considerations in life history research

Complying with ethical considerations in qualitative research is of crucial importance. Sikes (2006) insists that ethical considerations should be present in all researchers' minds and permeate all research endeavours. Equally, Goodson and Sikes (2001) insist that the ethical requirement of all life history researchers is that informants' rights as people, individuals, selves, subjects, and autonomous beings should be respected at all times. Furthermore, Cannella and Lincoln (2011), Christians (2011), and Fine, Weis, Wessen and Wong (2000) point out that attention to ethical issues is increasingly regarded as essential not just for ethical reasons, but as an integral aspect of the research. Since this research impacts upon people, I adhered to all binding ethics that prompt standards as prescribed by the university. To be allowed to listen to someone's life story is a privilege (Wicks & Whiteford, 2006), and

this compelled me to ensure that ethical practice was maintained. Therefore, as a feminist researcher I was ethically bound to pay attention to how I "word[ed] the world" (St Pierre, 2000). In brief, the only way I could achieve this was through respondent validation. In this regard, Bryman (1988; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) argues that respondent validation is "systematically soliciting feedback about collected data and conclusions from the people being studied." In this study, the informants' feedback and their interview responses were taken simply as evidence regarding the validity of the researcher's account (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Furthermore, informants were allowed to share their experiences during the data collection process. They were asked to reflect on their feelings regarding certain events and circumstances and to narrate how they viewed their experiences as mothers, workers, students, and women after studying for quite a long period. Strydom (2002) suggests that a research project must always be a learning experience for both participants and the researcher, whereas Stake (2010) states that life stories can be of value to many readers, yet getting closer is intrusive. However, I was warned that learning the next fact about an individual could be a violation of his/her privacy (Stake 2010). It is therefore important to highlight that one of the priorities of feminist research is to help women learn from each other; by doing so, it is hoped that their situations might improve. To achieve this in this study, the informants were allowed to view their transcripts in advance and to have their questions answered and any misinterpretations addressed, while I was cautious about the confidentiality and anonymity of the data and each informant.

4.12.1 Obtaining informed consent

The researcher will always be accountable for the ethical quality of the study (Henning, 2004). As such, it is important to obtain the informed consent of each informant after explaining the nature of the research project in advance (Hesser-Biber, 2007). Indeed, obtaining informed consent implies that all possible or adequate information on the goal of the investigation, the expected duration of the informants' involvement and the procedures to be followed during the exploration be rendered clear to potential subjects (William, Tilly, & Grinnell, 1995). Also, there needs to be an informed consent form that sets out all the overt procedures, so that individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of the facts that would likely influence their decisions (William et al., ibid). In this study I worked hard to ensure that the informants fully understood the nature of the research project and also fully comprehended the situation they were putting themselves in (Cohen et al., 2007). Moreover, informants were allowed to ask questions and to feel free not to answer

any question they might feel uncomfortable with (Hesser-Biber, 2007). Signed consent forms were collected before the commencement of the study and these were stored in a secure location so that they could easily be found if needed.

4.12.2 Protection from harm

Leedy and Ormrod (2001) believe that the researcher should ensure that informants are not exposed to any undue physical or psychological harm. Besides, Cohen et al. (2007) point out that the principle of non-maleficence, which means do not harm, is held as a guiding research precept. Goodson and Sikes (2001) argue that in the case of life history research, it is not always possible to predict the sort of harm that informants may experience as a consequence of their involvement. Everything we do in life can potentially harm someone, and therefore researchers should weigh up the risks (Babbie, 2007). Researchers need to comply with the ethical obligation to protect informants within all possible, reasonable limits from any form of physical discomfort that may emerge from the research project (Creswell, 2003). As such, I made every effort to do whatever it took to protect my informants from harm, by listening to their views and by thinking twice before taking any action that might in the slightest potentially cause harm. For example, I would ask myself whether I was an informant would I agree to this, trying to understand how the informant would view it.

4.12.3 Voluntary participation

A growing body of scholarship in education acquiesces that informants should at all times participate voluntarily and that no one should be forced to take part in a project (Rubin & Babbie, 2005). However, these scholars agree that this is not always the case, as such participation depends on the nature of the study. For instance, Strydom (2002) contends that if the researcher is observing public administration or people relaxing in a park, no permission is required. However, in this study, from the beginning to the end of this project I was guided by the university ethical considerations; these served as my source of reference in whatever step I took. I informed informants before commencement of this work that they were free to withdraw at any time if they wished to do so. I repeatedly reminded them before each interview conversation that participation was voluntary and that if they wished to withdraw, they were free to do so without any penalty.

4.12.4 Violation of privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality

Before a study commences, the researcher and participants must have a clear understanding regarding the confidentiality of the results and findings (Burn, 2000). Privacy entails sensitive information being generated by the researcher and being treated as such. Cohen et al. (2007) suggest that the greater the sensitivity of the information, the more safeguards that are called for to protect the privacy of the participants. These scholars indicate that the privacy of subjects can be affected by using apparatus such as digital cameras, video cameras, and microphones. However, if the subjects remain anonymous and are not exposed to risks, use of these kinds of media could be acceptable. In this study the informants were continuously asked whether they agreed to be audio-taped; due to their giving permission, all interview conversations were audio-taped. However, they were assured that their confidentiality would be maintained at all times, in such a way that readers would not be able to associate the informant with her story. Furthermore, all informants' information and their responses shared during the study would be kept private, and the results would be presented anonymously to protect the identities of the informants.

4.13.5 Honesty and trust

Life history research entails a long-term commitment, both on the part of the researcher and the participants. It further requires the active participation of the informants. Lincoln and Guba (1989) suggest that collaboration can act as an ethical safeguard. Goodson and Sikes (2001) argue that in a life history approach the strategies and techniques are concerned with establishing and maintaining a positive and trusting relationship between the researcher and the participants. However, they acknowledge that it is not always possible to predict the sort of harm that informants may experience as a consequence of their involvement. For this reason, I needed to behave with integrity at all times (Tummons & Duckworth, 2013). In this study, I consistently endeavoured to adhere to ethical principles, and I managed to establish a working relationship and mutual trust with the informants. I tried in every way I could to promote honesty during the research process. Relationships in research will be determined or limited by certain norms and expectations in the field (O'Reilly, 2009). Researchers are warned to give proper thought and attention to what they are doing, and to the potential difficulties that can arise (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). To address these concerns, my informants were well (verbally and in writing) informed about the intention of the study and were allowed to raise their concerns if the need arose.

4.13 Reflexivity in life history research

The qualitative research process requires ongoing reflection and responsiveness (Cole & Knowles, 2000). In this study reflexivity was taken as one of the important aspects that needed to be addressed. I recognise that life history research requires qualitative researchers to spend long periods in the field to obtain a holistic picture based on the life stories of the informants. This is because sufficient data cannot be collected with a 'smash and grab approach' where data collection is directed at a specific, brief task (Charmaz, 2006). For example, lengthy participant observation research among medical students enabled Becker (1970) to uncover an idealistic perspective, but also allowed him to understand the processes by which these different views were expressed in different social situations, and how students dealt with the conflicts between these perspectives.

Equally, I found myself spending a long period collecting a wide range of data in the form of textual, audio and visual representations that helped me to generate anticipated data. I was able to gain a deep insight into the challenges faced by informants and the strategies they employed to cope with their problems related to being mothers, workers and postgraduate students at the same time. While all grounded conversations were audiotaped, written accounts of the things I heard, saw, and experienced and thoughts that appeared were all recorded during each grounded conversation that took place. Indeed, field notes should be taken while the researcher is still in the field, or immediately after the researcher has left the field, to record keywords and actions exposed by the respondents during the observation and interview sections (Flick, 2009). I intentionally took field notes to capture feelings, emotions, actions, and facial expressions

I followed the notion that reflexive sociology is an important method (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) for acknowledging bias in social research. Reflexivity is premised on the idea that reality is socially constructed and knowledge is context-based and historically situated (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003). Also, it may be included in the process of selecting the topic, the population and the region to be studied (Probst & Berenson, 2014). This had happened in the selection of the problem to be investigated in this study. I have multiple identities – which were more or less the same as those of the informants. I spent my early years in a remote rural context. I shared similar experiences regarding the cultural, historical, political and economic background. Like the informants, my mother played an important role in ensuring that she changed my father's mind-set of underplaying girls' education. It took some time for

my father to realise the importance of education, but if my mother had not been not strong in this respect, his way of thinking would have caused irreversible damage in my life. Due to the educational experiences I faced while doing my master's degree, I was prompted to conduct a study exploring the experiences of individuals with whom I shared similar characteristics. I admit that sometimes I would regret my idea, as my challenges were unending and this affected my spiritual, physical, emotional and, worse of all, my mentality. Indeed, reflexivity demands a critical self-examination by the researcher, an "explicit self-aware meta-analysis" (Finlay, 2002) to understand the researcher-participant dynamic that influences knowledge production. The critical points that I considered when writing my field notes in order to minimise loss of data included: putting aside time to complete the notes; locating a quiet place to write; not talking about my observation before it was recorded; sequencing events in the order they occurred; and letting the events and conversation flow from the mind onto the paper (Field & Morse, 1994).

I was being guided by the university and feminist ethics in ensuring that I behaved acceptably. I was aware that when carrying out feminist research, the power relations set up by such practices can be problematic in that already marginalised voices can become obscured in the very processes of knowledge production that seek to understand them (Thompson, Rickett, & Day, 2018). I was aware that reflexive research requires a willingness to consider how one's background, personal values, and experiences affect what one can observe and analyse (D'Silva, Smith, Della, Potter, Rajack-Talley, & Best, 2016). In spite of this, the researcher's reflection involves projecting one's vision backward onto an action, an event, or an incident (Silberstein, 1998).

When I started conducting grounded conversations, I was not sure whether I would be able to generate enough data; however, the first conversations boosted my self-esteem. It was during this phase that I learned that the fact that we all came from rural areas did not mean and guarantee that our experiences and difficulties are the same. I noticed that my weak point was caused by the fact that I was working alone and did not drive. It appeared that the informants would leave the university late, something that I could not do because I was relying on public transport. My father's idea that as a girl I was not expected to reach home after six in the afternoon, ruined my whole life. I observed that during grounded conversations while informants presented their artefacts, they were more vocal about their life experiences as women, and more especially about some issues that had negative impacts on them. I noticed

that even though they were fluent in English, the artefacts led them to express their feelings in IsiZulu, and they made it a point to speak more about what hurt them as women.

Because I was collecting data from informants who were postgraduate students, mothers, workers and wives/partners, their multiple identities affected the collection of data at some points. I encountered difficulties in terms of the informants' commitments. For example, an informant would not turn up even if we had agreed to meet, and I had to reschedule the interview for another time. I had similar experiences while conducting the one-to-one grounded conversations and group grounded conversations, more so in conducting group conversations since all informants were full-time workers who worked in different places which were far from their homes and the university. Another challenge was caused by their work pressures and meeting deadlines. This meant that even though I had eight informants, not even a single group conversation was attended by all of them. However, despite the problems referred to above, I also noticed that all of the informants were willing and enthusiastic to share their experiences. Some surprised me by letting me know when they would be at the campus, which gave me unexpected opportunities to interview them. Reaching data saturation reminded me that I had to stop collecting data and start making sense of them. At the end of fieldwork, I felt that my study needed to be augmented and that the particular phenomenon that I investigated requires further exploration, either by me or by future researchers at different South African universities. Below I present a poem showing appreciation of the unusual opportunity life history research has offered me to insert my voice.

Life history

What a research methodology I admire?
It is so powerful,
I value it.
When on research,
one can be given the opportunity to insert her voice?
Life history research
enabled me to share my unheard stories
I grappled this opportunity with both hands
To penned down my experiences,
my tribulations, my errors, and my triumphs,
As a mother, as a black rural woman, as a wife,

as a worker, as a postgraduate student,

and as a feminist.

It is hoped my shared experiences will serve as a catalyst,

and enabled other women to think twice

about their educational goals.

It is hope that

my daughters out there

will not feel sorry for me

but they can pull up their socks and work harder than before.

It is hoped that my life history will

benefit other rural women to pursue education as it is their right to do so,

Writing my life history,

I have never fear to expose my challenges,

I have never fear how others will interpret

but

I believe that unto them,

Rural educated women out there can push the boundaries

and climb the ladder,

And recognise that Master's degree is doable

PhD is attainable

Only the sky is the limit!

4.14 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed in detail the research design and theoretical frameworks underpinning this study. I presented the methodology suitable for this study and I briefly gave the rationale for choosing a particular methodology. I then discussed the role of the researcher, the data generation methods appropriate for this study, the strategies for enhancing the trustworthiness of this study and the ethical issues that were taken into consideration. I concluded this chapter by discussing reflexivity in life history research. In the next chapter I present my life history and the rationale behind its inclusion.

CHAPTER FIVE

MY LIFE HISTORY

5.1 Prologue

This chapter presents my life history. It describes in detail the life challenges I have encountered as a rural working mother, and portrays my role and my social well-being as a Zulu married woman. It also presents the non-stop challenges of my personal experiences of motherhood. Finally, I describe how I managed to cross the boundaries that enclosed me and the strategies I employed to deal with my concurrent dilemmas as a rural woman, a feminist, a mother, wife, worker, and postgraduate student. Life history requires me to share and reflect on my concurrent life experiences, and I have augmented the life stories of the informants who participated in this study. I have noticed that this autobiographical writing offered me a space to reveal my life history – something I had long been waiting for. I became conscious that critical autobiography indeed serves as a therapeutic and cathartic way of expression; it healed and brought social change and emotional peace in my life. It is envisaged that this autobiography will enable readers to learn not only from the experiences of my informants, but also from mine. Before I write about my early childhood in a poor rural area, it is important to give a short outline about the place where I grew up. This is because my life story is intricately connected to my experiences in the rural area.

5.1.1 Rationale for presenting my life history

Many researchers and authors view the importance of presenting a researcher's autobiography in many differing ways. For example, Atkinson (1990) emphasises that since the 1990s, it has become common practice among qualitative researchers to write themselves into their research, on the grounds that personal and background information will enhance the rigour of their work by making potential biases explicit. According to Sharkey (2004), autobiographies in research are derived from oppressive ideologies and, in this manner, "the voices that until now were practically never heard at all are now heard loudly and clearly, not only as narratives but also on the critical level." Ball (1990) suggests that research biographies should be compulsory because they provide readers with more evidence by which to evaluate research accounts. Moreover, Ezer (2009, p. 61) maintains that 'critical autobiography' is a tool that enables the 'other', whoever he or she may be, to make his or her voice heard and to achieve an understanding about his or her identity and position in the personal, social and professional world in which he or she lives. This scholar comments as follows: "When it becomes a systematic examination of the writer's own life history within

the social, cultural and political context, critical autobiography becomes a research tool (p. 82).” It is for this reason that I was motivated to include my life history in this project. However, it is important to highlight that I do not only present my life history, but I also reflect on my concurrent life experiences as a mother, a wife, a worker, a feminist and a postgraduate student, to augment the experiences of the informants who participated in this study. Autobiography in research allows individuals to talk about their life histories, their successes and failures, achievements and losses, hopes and fears (Wang & Brockmeier, 2002, p. 46). Interestingly, “autobiography has been used as a research form and it lies at the core of feminist research” (Ezer, 2009, p. 81).

The autobiography that I present in this chapter includes the cultural, social, historical and educational factors that have influence my life experiences. In this regard, Goodson and Sikes (2001, p. 73) acknowledge that those who advocate autobiographical strategies for professional development have the following potential benefits: 1) the benefits accruing from space to reflect; 2) the benefits from engaging in self-reflection; 3) the benefits from learning about theory and lived experience; and 4) the therapeutic and cathartic benefits in times of crisis. Indeed, I agree with the latter scholars as I noticed that the autobiographical writing offered me all of the above benefits. Interestingly, finding a space to reflect on my life history was the benefit I had long been waiting for. I became conscious that critical autobiography indeed serves as a therapeutic and cathartic way of expression that healed and brought social change and emotional peace in my life. Moreover, I concur with Harris (2005) that critical autobiography has come to represent one of the ways individuals can tell both their personal and professional stories, which is what I do in this chapter. It is therefore used as “a form of narrative research which clearly constitutes important evidence in documenting a [my] life” (Ezer, 2009, p. 81). It is important to highlight that it is not only the writer who benefits from writing his or her autobiography, but it benefits the reader as well. Supporting this sentiment, Skilleås (2006, p. 269) maintains that “reading autobiographies is a unique way to learn from other people’s experiences and reflections”.

Various researchers agree that autobiographical writing is organised into three sub-genres, which are confession, apology and testimony. Skilleås (2006, p. 269) explains that it is through reflexivity that “the confession becomes particular relevant to our interest in it, and the exposure to this sub-genre may at least act as spur (drive) to the painful examination of one’s own life and personalities” (p. 271). On the other hand, Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p.642) point out that personal testimonies “as emergency narratives, can mobilise a nation

against social injustice, repression and violence…", which can also be said of the individual experience. Finally, in the sub-genre of autobiography as apology, the author presents his or her versions of events and typically sets out to put the record straight. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) concur, highlighting that autobiography as a testimony takes its toll on our emotions because it is not like fictional literature. In this study, autobiography was employed as a testimony sub-genre for the reason that it created a platform for reflection on my experiences, my challenges, and my achievements as a working mother with a deep rural background. It is envisaged that this autobiography will enable readers to learn not only from the experiences of my informants, but also from my life history.

5.2 Growing up in a rural community

Living in a poor rural area was not my grandparents' intention. I can recall vividly when my grandmother spoke about how white people removed them from their beautiful place, Mthonjaneni near Melmoth, to the far end of the world where there were no cars, no schools, and no shops. Even today, my rural community is still experiencing poverty and disadvantage. It has scarcities of basic infrastructure for sanitation, proper roads, and fresh running water, transport, and ICT. The only remarkable thing which one can point out is the installation of pre-paid electricity after 23 years of democracy. It is also important to highlight that while few workers reside in a small, poorly developed township, some black people working in Melmoth still come from rural 'reserves' where their homes are situated, and they return to their homes after work every day. My grandmother mentioned that what they like about that isolated area is to "watch a variety of beautiful birds singing charmingly." As an African man, my grandfather's homestead was built like those of his neighbours. The walls of each hut were constructed of mud with small windows and the roof was covered neatly with thatched grass. He planted aloe trees right around his homestead as a fence and the gate was not far from the kraal.

Building houses required some creativity in terms of the shape and the size of each house, depending also on the purpose of that particular house; for example, granny's hut, a hut for young people, and so on. During those days African houses did not adopt a western style, which meant that one big house could not be divided into different rooms for specific purposes. It was pretty good to live in my rural community. There were no criminals. People in the vicinity were kind and loving, and caring and sharing was a norm. For example, if one family does not have cows for milking, those that have enough may just offer them milk to chase away hunger. They will not expect anything in return until the family's conditions

improve. Ploughing and clearing the weeds from the fields was not one's man's job. One would just make a Zulu brew and invite others, then clearing would be done without any excuses. Fetching water and firewood was done by females. One would shout and inform others, so that they would go as a group. Washing was also done with this kind of enthusiasm when community members would just harmoniously form a group and go early in the morning to wash clothes in a big river. While the rural community was so organised, one could witness this during the cultural events. However, there was only one bad thing that was done by the community at large – education was not taken seriously.

5.3 My twin sister

In this photograph (Figure 6), my twin sister and I were with our dad; it was taken in Durban in 1967. During those days photographs were in black and white, as cameras that could take colour pictures had not yet arrived. Sadly, sharing our life did not last long. My twin sister died when she was 18 months old. A Zulu community buries a loved one quickly, before the body decomposes.

Figure 6: My father, my twin sister and I in 1967.

My twin sister's body was not taken to the hospital for a postmortem examination, as the hospital was very far away. There was also no mortuary available near the homestead. As a result, my sister's little body was laid to rest without being screened to determine what had caused her death. IsiZulu people take the observance of their customary rituals seriously. This means that my parents had no choice but to follow the proper way of burying my twin sister, which was a traumatic experience for them, which involved putting the live twin in the grave before burying the deceased one. Even when I was very young when it happened, the loss of my twin sister affected my life in many ways. There is nothing I can remember about her. It is important to highlight that it took me a very long time to deeply understand my situation. At first, I was wondering why my sisters were not so close to me. My mother was the only person who understood my feelings and meant the world to me. Our relationship was very strong and unconditional. Sadly, the death of my mother in 1989 was a double tragedy in my life. It opened a new chapter in my life. I was very lonely and I felt as if I had lost my pillar of strength and a true friend. My mother was the only individual who loved me dearly, in such a way that we were best friends and had a relationship of mutual love, trust, and respect. I learned in a hard way that my mother was the only individual I trusted, even though I had four sisters. I ended up learning all the hard work due to our bond. Her death traumatised and tormented me in many ways. I also learned that the cause of my suffering was not known to anyone in my family. It was just a secret within me.

Secret

Secret, how long I have to wait?
You hide something crucial to me, and
I didn't know what causes it
I have suffered loneliness
I fail to figure out what went wrong
Tell me, how long I have to wait?

Secret detaching from you is impossible
If I walk, I have a feeling that I need to walk with someone
If I laugh my laughter is incomplete
If I cry, I feel so much pain
Secret, what is wrong with me?
Tell me, how long I have to wait to know the truth?

Secret why are you driving me crazy?
Am I normal?
Deep down I have a feeling that I miss someone special to me,
I miss someone who would dearly love me
I miss everything about you

Tell me, how long I have to wait to know the truth?

I was wondering my dear twin sister, what was wrong with me.
Through our lifetime bondage, you are still close to me.
You are very close to my heart,
Close to my mind,
Close to my soul.
Secret, how long do I have to wait to know the truth?

In essence, my life without my twin sister was miserable. Lack of information contributed a lot to my suffering. It is therefore no wonder that I used to feel lonely and often felt like crying, and when I talked to my sisters I would feel that they sometimes did not understand me. When I was young my sisters used to tease me and sometimes wore my clothes without my permission. If I noticed that they were wearing my clothes, I would go straight to my mother and cry bitterly. Even if my mother intervened in an attempt to put a stop to this, they would tease me again because I used to cry easily; they failed to understand my situation. Unlike my sisters, I was and still am extremely sensitive. Even my children sometimes do not understand my personality. I remember my eldest daughter saying to her father, "Maybe mom is crying now; she is so sensitive." There is one thing I can say about my personality, I am very kind and helpful by nature. I respect myself and every single person regardless of age, status, class, and gender. I am not good at arguing with people. I am not aggressive; I would cry rather than argue with those who are good at it. I like peace, and my mother trained me while I was young that if we hurt each other, we needed to confess before the last evening prayer. She would say, "How can you pray having a grudge with your sibling?" Embarking on this project helped me a lot since I learned about twin personalities and the issues they have to face. I have noticed that it is not that I am mad at my situation but that I have always missed someone very important in my life. I deeply missed the natural bond between my twin sister and I and the kind of relationship we would share, comparing that with our other sisters.

5.4 My early childhood

My parents were unable to live with us as their children, because they were working in Durban. However, we did not miss our parents that much because our granny was the best mother. She was very good at cooking and singing. I can remember every afternoon we would gather in a special room where prayers were said. My grandmother was a member of the Anglican Church. Before prayer, she would open an isiZulu Bible and read certain verses and then she would explain what God wanted us to know. My mother also inherited the love of God from her and she embraced us with it. Praying at night was a family norm and granny

would assure us that God is listening to our prayers, even if He took time to respond. We learned to play in harmony with other children and to say sorry if we hurt each other and to do home chores without being begged to do so. She relied on crops such as fresh mealies, yams, sweet potatoes, peanuts, and fresh sugar beans. My granny's homestead was not big since she was living with her children and her grandchildren only. My granny took us to school in January 1972. I can recall the teacher asking me to put my right hand on my head and touch my left ear. Unfortunately, I failed to touch it. My granny was told that failing to touch my ear was evidence that meant I was not yet ready for school. She was told to bring me the following year. My sister, on the other hand, was accepted and she started her first year at Mfanefile Primary School. My sister did not stay long at Mfanefile since she was often unwell. For this reason, she was taken back to Durban where both our parents worked. She then continued her schooling in Durban. My mother at that time was not married. She married in 1972. Sadly I left my granny to live with my father's parents.

Moving to a new home required a sort of adjustment. Even though my paternal grandparents were loving and caring, I preferred Mfanefile because of many benefits: the bus stop was not far, the 'well' where we fetched water was not far, and the area itself was much better. I was not asked to choose, but I had to adjust and live with my grandparents. There was an incident that I will not forget. It was in 1978, and my grandparents were not at home. It was around midnight, the time to milk the cows. My male cousin had just come home. He was older than me. He found out that I had eaten the sour milk ('*maas*') from his calabash (a container of a strong shell with a small hole at the top to allow one to fill with or pour out '*maas*', closing it with a small matching lid). I admitted that I had eaten the '*maas*' because I was very hungry after fetching firewood from the forest, which was very far from our homestead. My cousin was very angry. It was a coincidence that there was a damp cow skin in the old bathing tub outside the house. The intention of keeping it was to make a long whip that they could use to control the cattle in the veld. He went outside, took out the skin, and cut it neatly into three layers for a short whip. He then tied the thongs to a short stick with a string. He came inside while I was still alone. He lashed me badly, and I tried to apologise, only to find that it was too late. He could not control his anger as he was also hungry.

Unfortunately for him, he did not know that my mother was on her way home from Durban. On her arrival, she was shocked to see me in that state. She could not believe it. She asked politely, in her soft voice, unlike mine, "What has happened?". I told her the whole story and

it was tense inside the house. In Zulu culture, boys' responsibilities are not the same as girls'. As early as six years of age, boys start looking after the cattle. In the morning they would take the cattle from the kraal to the veld to graze and bring them back at around 11 o'clock for milking. They would then take them back to the veld once again until sunset. As the sun sets, they would bring them back to the kraal. As a boy, my cousin was excluded from fetching water, collecting firewood, cooking and cleaning the house by smearing fresh cow dung on the floors. I was the only girl responsible for these chores. In retrospect, the metaphor of an octopus is a good one to describe my life at that time. An octopus has eight tentacles, and I assume it can handle many things simultaneously. Yes, an octopus lives in the sea, but the one I am talking about seemed to be lucky enough to live on earth with people.

An octopus in a big family

How do you do it? You wake up early;
You are the last to sleep
You are the first to know what needs to be done
Yet no one recognises that,
Even though, you are young.
Octopus, how do you do it?

When the family wakes up,
You are the one to provide breakfast,
When people are hungry,
They ask you when the food will be ready.
Octopus, how do you do it?

When woods are finished,
People wait for you to collect them from the forest,
When water is finished,
People wait for you to fetch water far away from home,
Octopus, how do you do it?

Do you ever get time to rest, do you ever get time to study?
Who cares? You are always busy, where do you get strength,
What keeps you going all day long?
Your multi-tasking does not break your limbs,
Tell me, how you survive,
Octopus, how do you do it?

Everything that people around would want, they knew exactly that there was someone who did not feel tired, did not complain, who was always energetic and flexible enough to comply and accommodate their needs. I had to do this and that, even if I had no stamina. My life was

miserable. I am saying this because my cousin would use water without regard for the effort it took to haul it to the homestead. Instead of washing his clothes in the river, he would use the water which was reserved for cooking, bathing, drinking, and cleaning. I ended up losing my hair on the crown of my head because I had to carry a 25 litre container filled with water over a long distance, sometimes twice or thrice a day. It was worse in winter. As the water level in the river was low, the entire community experienced a shortage of water. This meant that I had to wake up early in the morning in an attempt to be the first person to reach the river.

However, I was fortunate in that I never experienced sexual abuse by members of my extended family or my community. But the reality is that I did experience physical and emotional abuse. The perpetrator used every opportunity he had because of the absence of my mother. Nevertheless, I did not blame my mother for the challenges I encountered, since the issue was not that she abandoned me. She nurtured, hugged, washed and loved me so much. She wiped my tears and promised me that a day would come when we would have our own home. She left me behind because the government of the day failed to offer black workers opportunities to stay with their families while working in urban areas. Only white people and other racial groups had that privilege, but black persons were excluded.

5.5 My early rural education

I started schooling in 1973. My grandmother enrolled me. During my first year at school, I can remember vividly using a framed slate and slate pencil. The slate had two identical sides which allowed us to write on both sides. The advantage of using a slate was that it allowed the text or scribbling to be erased and written over and over again. Since the school did not have running water, we normally used to clean the slates by spitting on them and rubbing them with our fingers or jerseys. The disadvantage of the slate was that it was easy to break, since as learners we walked on a rocky road. During mathematics we did our counting outside the classroom; teachers would ask us to collect stones as counting objects. The teachers would try their best to make us understand what we were expected to do. For example, when doing addition sums the teacher would say, “Mr Makhathini had 20 cows. He went to the auction sale (*endalini*, which was a well-known concept during those days) and bought 10 cows. How many cows does Mr Makhathini have?”. The tricky part of this method was that we were not allowed to bring our counting objects (stones) into the classroom. By the time we entered the classroom, only a few managed to remember and use the method successfully.

I would like to mention that schooling in the rural area was not enjoyable. As a young learner, I witnessed how several children dropped out because of schooling conditions. Another factor that motivated dropout was that during the 1970s even parents in our rural community were not clear about the importance of education. Moreover, the methods used by unqualified teachers were limited, and teachers failed to re-examine their strategies when they realised that learners were not coping. As a result, learners failed tests and their standards (i.e. grades) because they lacked comprehension of the teaching content. For example, I can recall clearly that whenever we were given tests, the next thing that was going to happen was corporal punishment. Failing a test meant that we had to be punished severely. The teacher would call out the names of all those who had failed and ask us to stand in front of the class. The teacher would then tell us to touch our ten toes, and she would give us no fewer than three lashings. I can still remember the painful hiding I received on my left hand, as it was the norm to be given the lashes on the right hand. Because of the dreadful conditions, some learners lost hope and quit trying to save their lives because what we were experiencing was unbearable. We were not given hidings for tests only but for oral work as well.

However, in those days the teaching style was mostly based on rote learning, thus leaving no room for learners to explore and find meaning on their own. Corporal punishment was the only strategy used by the teachers to 'help us learn'; I was therefore well-known in my class throughout my primary schooling, because when given a hiding I would cry as bitterly as if there were no tomorrow. However, I am glad that in spite of all the adverse conditions of schooling in the rural area, I did not think of quitting, even if my half brothers and sisters could not bear the pain of walking long distances to school and of being physically punished when failing tests. In as much as I acknowledge the adverse realities of rural education, I do have some good memories which might paint a clearer picture of the kind of education I was expected to master. I enjoyed oral work much more than written work. As old as I am, I can still remember some Zulu rhymes and poems (such as *Mina ngiyithiphothi* (I am a tea-pot), *Ngineminwe emihlanu* (I have five fingers); *Izinkanyezi* (The stars) is one of the poems I enjoyed reciting.

I would like to acknowledge that the true meaning of this poem (The stars) might have been lost in translation, but someone familiar with the Zulu language will understand the full effect of it. The words of this poem refer to the role played by the stars in bringing light at night. In

my young world, stars were everything to us. They brought joy to us as children at night. Starlight allowed children to play hide and seek without being scared of the darkness. Their light gave us the opportunity to listen to fairy tales being told by our elders, and sometimes it permitted us to retell the fairy tales. This poem reminds me of the special experience of relying on the stars to brighten the footpath at night. During those days transport was very scarce. People in my community used buses that would be available only at certain times. To reach the bus on time, we were forced to leave home early because of a long distance before we reached bus stop. As the stars appeared, we could see each other even if it was at night, but disappearance of the stars would cause havoc. We would struggle to find our way. It would take us long to reach home without the help of the stars bringing the light at night.

5.5.1 Going to school in a rural area

My deepest fear was to face reality which was beyond my potential. In essence, the fear I am talking about can destroy one's future, can make one withdraw. That is why I am saying even now that I cannot tell how I survived. I was so lucky that even if my domestic chores occupied most of my time, just like that of all the other rural girls in our community, my grandparents excused me from them in the morning. One of the reasons for my exclusion from some of the chores was that I had to walk a long distance to school. On my way to and from school, I used to find myself crying. I was scared and had no one to go with.

How did I survive?

It's another day;
once more I will be haunted by the taste of this atmosphere.
I admit I grow more scared every time,
I meet this particular intersection which seems to be daunting.
I have a fear of being alone facing the giant as short as I am.
How did I survive?

This fear cripples me,
like how the lion roars with anger, failing to catch prey.
It's hurting, it's traumatic.
My blood rushes, like how water rushes in the river.
How did I survive?

While those accompanying herd of cattle had whips on their hands.
I failed to find an appropriate weapon.
The weapon I believed was my pen and my book.
However, my weapon failed to conquer my fear.
How did I survive?

This fear didn't stop me from going to school.
Reaching school, I failed to tell my story to my teacher.
I failed to tell even my friends and my parents.
It was indeed an untold story.
How did I survive?

This poem 'How did I survive?' reflects my feelings as I walked alone to school. It was rare to find older people going to town so that I could be more comfortable knowing that someone was following me or walking with me. My biggest challenge was that of crossing a river covered by tall trees. I was scared and would feel that the river and the forest were more powerful and hidden, something that I could not explain or visualise. My footsteps became a problem on their own. I was afraid of snakes. I often remembered the day I was walking with my mother when suddenly a snake appeared in a tree close to us. When my mother looked up, she was shocked; the head of the snake was facing down and its tail was wrapped around a branch. My mother said we were so lucky; the snake would have bitten us if she had not looked up. When looking down I noticed the trail on the ground that the snake had made when it crossed the path. Some snakes were difficult to spot as their skins are brownish, like sand.

Going to school was not enjoyable, but it was worse on Tuesdays and Thursdays since cattle from different areas had to be dipped, and they used the same path (gravel road) that I had to use when I walked to school. The road was steep, and facing a herd of cattle going down is indescribable. The herders would lash at them with long whips that made the cattle run faster and faster. A herd of cattle would include small calves, cows, oxen, and bulls. Bulls were very dangerous and I was afraid of them, since bulls when they fought no one could separate, and surrendering could not be its option. I was alone facing the beasts and the world at the same time. Even today I fail to imagine how I made it. This happened twice a month when cattle were dipped and given some injections. I remember the feeling of danger and hopelessness as my young, short body tried to dodge the herd of cattle. Every encounter was a traumatic experience that I had to face for almost seven and a half years.

5.5.2 The challenges of my schooling in rural areas

One rationale for paying black people such extremely low wages was the assumption that the wives and children remained in the reserves and secured their subsistence from the land. Black contract workers received low wages from their white employers, which did not help them support their families. For this reason, my mother did not depend on my father's wage;

instead, she relied on the crops she cultivated. My parents could not afford to buy shoes for me for almost the entire seven and a half years I spent in primary school. The condition of the road at that time was very bad. It was rocky and it was worse when I had a sore on my foot. In winter I often did not feel like going to school because it was bitterly cold and often there was frost on the ground on the way to school. I had to walk almost two hours before reaching school. My biggest problem was that only a few children from my community attended the same school due to the dangerous river and the long distance.

The community met and discussed the danger of allowing young children to attend the school that was so far away. They reached an agreement to stop all young children from going to school; instead, they liaised with the Principal in terms of books the community could use. Two families sacrificed their huts to serve as school premises; my mother was the first to offer her house, followed by one of our neighbours. Two teachers were deployed by the Principal, one for Grades 1 and 2 and the other one for Grades 3 and 4. This action was the best option, but it made things worse for me. I was no longer in the junior primary; therefore, I was compelled to carry on, on my own. Moreover, I had a mandate to teach some young children who were schooling in my home. After school, they would come and I would teach them. They were younger than I was, and one of them was my young brother, Sazi. When asked to draw a picture, he would draw and say '*imoto yami sisi'* (meaning my car sister). Instead of drawing a mother or any other picture, he would draw a picture of his car. Another challenge I faced was that there was no transport available. The only two learners from my area who attended my school were my cousin and I. My cousin lived far from my home. I was still young and would walk to school alone. Over and above this, I cannot say how I survived without even carrying lunch to school.

I received my primary education at Mawanda Primary School from 1973 to 1980. I spent almost eight instead of seven years in primary school. When I was doing Standard 1 (Grade 3) in 1975, I had a terrible foot disease. The outer skin of my feet peeled off until I could not walk at all. I crawled like a baby once again. My mother was not at home. Since I was young, I did not realise how bad the foot condition was and only informed my mother when it was too late and the condition crippled me. I couldn't walk, and I also failed to talk about it to my grandparents. It was as if I had a 'hidden sickness'. No one in the family seemed to think about it or tried to help me. Even my dad, who used his taxi to carry people from Durban at the end of each month, failed to recognise the impact of my suffering. I suffered a lot without

voicing my pain and how it affected me. It took time for me to realise that I was indeed alone 'in the dock'. One day my dad came, and I gave him a letter to give to my mother, explaining my sickness. Upon hearing the news, my mother came as soon as she could. She was hurt and angry and blamed everyone for not informing her about my condition. The next day she went to her sister (with whom she shared the same clan name) who was living next door to us, and she told her about my problem. She gave my mother hippopotamus fat (*amafutha emvubu*). The fat healed me. It was a miracle, because I was not taken to hospital. However, by the time I was able to walk again, it was too late for me to be promoted that year. I had missed too many lessons. At the beginning of 1976, my granny made a point of taking me back to school. Even though there was a tendency to encourage girls to drop out after learning how to read and write, this trend did not affect me, and I continued my schooling.

In 1979, while I was doing Standard 4 (Grade 6), my father surprised me by meeting with my Principal. Not only was it his intention to find out about my educational progress, but he also wanted to know which books the school was using. During those days what my father did was unusual. Parents were not involved in their children's schooling. They only got involved when it came to school fees. My dad's action got me into trouble. From that day the Principal treated me differently. He taught me in 1979 and 1980. If he asked a question and noticed that I did not know the answer, he would hit me severely, saying I was disappointing my father. Corporal punishment was the solution for teachers if the child was struggling. Applying different teaching and learning methods that would help learners to learn the content was never an option. However, with the help of the books my father had bought me, the teacher's hidings became minimal.

5.5.3 Semi-rural secondary education

There was no high school in my rural community. The only secondary school was far from my home and there was no transport available so that I could attend that school. This secondary school also had a bad reputation as its pass rate was dismal. This meant that my parents were compelled to find a school for me far from my homestead. As a result, I was enrolled at Entembeni High School in 1981. This was a boarding school, meaning that learners from local surroundings and from afar were accommodated. My elder sister, who had received her primary education in Durban, joined me for the first time. However, we were day scholars since my father could not afford to pay boarding school fees. My father negotiated with a family who was living next to the school. Fortunately, we were given our

room. I faced some grave challenges in this school as I attended class with other learners who came from urban areas and whose educational background was much better than mine. I would be telling a lie if I said everything was fine. No one had told me that I would have to work hard – much harder than I had ever worked in my life. As young as I was, I kept my parents' wish to further my studies alive until I reached Standard 10 (Grade 12), even if in my community no one reached that level. This is not a joke; wherever I went, I carried a book in my hands. It worked well for me. I was in that school for only three years.

In 1984 we transferred to a high school near Eshowe. This school was far from our homestead and was also a boarding school. In this new school, local/rural girls were discouraged from doing Maths and Physics. I chose Biblical Studies, Needlework and Clothing, and Business Economics. In those days, learners who came from urban areas were encouraged by their parents to do Maths and Physics. Some learners chose History, Agriculture, and Geography. Competing with learners from urban areas was also a real challenge. The difference in my education had been caused by the fact that in rural schools most teachers were unqualified. However, the support I received from my dad was amazing. Despite his illiterate background, he managed to open an account at Adams and Griggs book shop in Victoria Street, Durban. By doing so, I was able to get different ideas from different authors and understand the content of my work much better.

Two incidents occurred that I shall never forget. The first one happened after the Easter holidays. We were supposed to return on Easter Monday since it was a holiday. In my rural area, there was only one bus which went to Melmoth after 2 o'clock because it was a holiday. The bus took an hour to reach Melmoth. This means that by the time we arrived at Melmoth, it was too late to take another form of transport to Eshowe and from Eshowe to Entumeni. On Tuesday the Principal noted that several learners were absent, and recorded their names. After the assembly the next day, the Principal asked all learners who had been absent to remain behind. He told us that he was shocked to see that we had not come to school on Tuesday. However, he did not ask us to explain our non-attendance. As this was a boarding school, many learners had been on time because they had come from urban areas while others had come from semi-urban areas. However, some who came from other rural areas surrounding Eshowe had not experienced the same transport problem as we had. Without being given a chance to tell our stories, the staff of 28 teachers were waiting for us with sticks. The teachers had no mercy for any of us. After a severe and humiliating beating, we

went straight to the toilets. Teaching and learning at school that day was disrupted as many of the learners had watched our humiliation. One learner commented: “Of all three, Welile’s sisters who were also [beaten], Welile was the worst experiencing pain and was crying bitterly.” Indeed, the pain was unbearable. After two days, our hands were green and it took us approximately a month to recover. It was painful because it seemed to me we had to pay for living in a rural area, a price learners from urban areas never had to pay.

The second incident happened in 1985 in the same school. I was in Standard 10 (Grade 12). We had a good English teacher who was highly proficient in spoken and written English, as if English was her first language. Even the way she walked, sat and dressed, one could conclude that she adopted some European style. She would encourage us to speak in English, but something was very challenging to us since the majority of learners found difficulties when it comes to English as a second language. The worse part of it was that we did not receive enough vocabulary when we were young. Her tricks of teaching English did not help me that much, because of the large numbers of learners in class, and time was another factor. There were no debate activities, something that would have helped to support me during my educational journey. Out of all teachers who taught me English as from Standard 6 to Standard 10 (that is, Grade 8 to Grade 12), she was the best. Unfortunately, it was too late to learn the English language since she came when we were doing Standard 10 (Grade 12), and the teachers were working hard pushing the syllabus preparing us for the National Examination.

In spite of this, she tried her best to go the extra mile to teach us English. One day she chose some learners to dramatise *Julius Caesar*. This was our English prescribed drama book. She wanted us to understand it in a more meaningful way, and most importantly I think she was giving us a chance to speak the language. During those days, only Model C schools had access to educational multimedia and other useful resources, but for us in our semi-rural school we were relying on the prescribed book only. I was among the learners who were chosen to dramatise *Julius Caesar*. Some of the characters were Cassius, Mark Anthony, Soothsayer, Casca, Titus and others. Due to time constraints we could not dramatise the whole book. But I still remember that I was Brutus, the loyal friend of Julius Caesar. Someone was not supposed to do anything wrong to his best friend. Some of the cabinet ministers were jealous of Julius Caesar’s leadership style. I was then told about what will happen if we can kill Caesar; as a result, I took part in ensuring that we win him and kill him

in a senate. When Caesar was stabbed he called my name loudly, saying *et tu Brute*, meaning and you Brutus. Our job was to memorise the text and be able to dramatise the story as it was in the text. The English teacher chose one group in each class. Of the four classes, our class did exceptionally well. We were then asked to dramatise and showcase our talents to the other three classes. I was excited, particularly because I came from a rural community and my educational background was very poor compared to that of the learners from urban areas. Despite these apparent setbacks, my performance was wonderful and it boosted my self-esteem. Even if I regret my role today of being a killer, killing a visionary leader, I console myself by saying in fact it was a play.

5.5.4 Tertiary education in urban areas

Owing to the legacy of apartheid education, I was unable to engage with career choice discussions in a productive manner. Given the limited educational opportunities for the black section of the population during the apartheid years, teaching, nursing and becoming a police officer were the only available careers. High-paying job opportunities were reserved for the white section of the population. It was as a result of this legacy that many black students had to choose to be a teacher, a nurse or a police officer. Even to apply in those days was not easy. This was even worse for rural students, because of the subjects we took at school. Applying was hectic, but giving up was not an option at all. It took me two full years to be accepted at a college of education. My parents were so supportive. I remember my father during his off-duty days. He accompanied me to several colleges without fail. He strongly believed that one day I would be accepted. The issue was not my results, but it seemed that the apartheid government underestimated the number of colleges and the number of students who qualified to further their studies. In 1987 I received a letter of acceptance. It was a breakthrough and I was ready to start. However, entering a class at the college I realised that it was as if I was in the wrong place. I struggled a lot trying to fit in. Not knowing what to do, I pretended as if I was not a victim of the apartheid system. This poem spells it all out:

Apartheid

You made a big mistake
You caused huge damage
By putting me where I didn't belong
You assume my role in my community
You assume the knowledge which you thought was perfect for me
You fail to give me a chance to learn and express myself
It clear that all accumulated all my schooling years was not enough
Other students are doing well
But for me, I am just a disgrace
Coping is a challenge
Coping is stressful
I became a stranger in my country,
Only perseverance will give me hope

I worked hard and I passed my first year and my second year as well. During my third year at college, I was very stressed. I did not want to disappoint my father by failing. I had noticed that my performance was not good. While all third-year students went on a trip to Cape Town, I remained behind. Two things were important to me. First, my father as a pensioner had no money for excursions. Second, as a rural student, I found hardships while other students were doing well; my performance was at risk. As a result, I used my time profitably, day and night. I was always studying. My year-end results were rewarding. I managed to get two distinctions. My father was very happy and I thanked him for the moral support and unconditional love he had offered me during my studies.

It took me 16 more years to study once again. This happened because of motherhood experiences as I was also married. In 2006 I enrolled at one of the distance-learning institutions. I received an Advanced Certificate in Education, but it was not easy at all as I encountered various challenges. Fortunately, the university encouraged students to form study groups. Forming groups had their pros and cons. Some students were not focused and some were on maternity leave and they found it hard to come to the university. Being patient, I ended up finding students who were self-directed and self-motivated just like me. In short, forming study groups benefitted me in many respects. Whenever I came across a challenge, I would just phone some students and find out when they would be available so that we could meet for a discussion.

In 2007 I enrolled for a B.Ed. Honours degree. The course was very challenging, but the support I received from my children made things much easier for me. The head of the family

at that time was overseas. This meant that my household chores and the responsibilities of being a wife were minimal. I told myself that I had to use that time fruitfully. As a hard worker, I completed my degree in the same year. Furthermore, in 2009 I also enrolled to do my Master's degree in Education. I encountered several challenges. One day, while I was in the lecture room with other students, a lecturer called out the names of some students. My name was amongst them. When the group stood in the front, the lecturer loudly announced that all these students had failed the assignment. I did not believe it. I was deeply hurt. How on earth could a lecturer embarrass us like this? After the lecture, my eyes were red and I put my assignment in my bag. My performance was very poor. I got only 36%. I do not know how I got home. When my daughter opened the door, she noticed that my eyes were red. She asked, "Why are you crying?" My response was, "I failed an assignment." Then she asked, "Why are you studying?" I failed to answer her because she was still young. Even if I would want to disclose my educational goals, I thought she would not understand at that time because she was still young. My higher education obstacles led me to compile a short poem about education:

Education

Education, they say you are the key to success,
But why do I find you so hard to understand?
I find it hard to pass you. In and out of time I fail you,
Thus I lack confidence in you.
Is it because of my inability?
Is it because you are not written in my home language/
Is it because I missed the "Royal English" due to the apartheid regime?
Is it because I was taught by teachers that are not taught to teach?
Is it because of their low rankings in education?
Is it because of the way they received it and their intellectual side understood it?
Or is it because the only thing they needed to be a teacher was Standard 6 at that time.
At that time, of apartheid, you did not need to go to university to be a teacher.
Education, what you are all about?

In my ignorance,
I do not even know what you stood for.
In that same essence, I still know that you are a weapon.
A weapon that I can use to fight back,
Break every chain that the enemy tied me with intentionally.
My enemies are poverty, subordination, discrimination,
and to be an invisible human being.
Poverty as it is - is my greatest enemy that allows me
to acknowledge my hunger, yes my hunger for education as old as I am.

Education is that what you are all about?

They say I am supposed to be a critical thinker.
I need to speak and write like a PhD student.
But, how can I when I was separated from you?
You are supposed to spark a flame within me to be a writer,
an activist in my own right.
But, how am I supposed to do this?
With my inferior education, I have acquired during the time
I was ready and able to learn. But I was not fortunate because I was black living in a rural area
Education is that what you are all about?
How am I supposed to achieve anything if I am bound by the
chains of apartheid as a black rural woman?
Education, just open some avenue for me, and teach me a new lesson that,
You are indeed a key to success!

For me, education is the only tool that one needs to overcome boredom and to emancipate oneself. It is difficult for others to understand my motive to emancipate myself, but I find education to be a healing therapy. I use it to deal with my barriers as a rural woman.

5.6 Becoming a parent

I married in March 1992. Starting a family was very painful. My first trauma was when my first-born son died after only three days. After his death I had a miscarriage; another baby boy. I did not know what to do, since my mother was no longer around. In June 1994 I was lucky to give birth to a beautiful baby girl. I named her Thobeka (meaning 'be humbled') and Phumzile (meaning 'she relieved me'). Names are given to children based on historical events, and/or experiences. My child was named based on my feelings and my circumstances at the times of her birth. After her, I had three more miscarriages. Of these three miscarriages, one broke my heart and left me with an image that I shall not forget. I was six months and two weeks pregnant when my water broke unexpectedly. My husband rushed me to the hospital. However, it seemed as if it was too late. I gave birth to a stillborn baby. The doctor at Parklands Hospital put my child on my chest for more than an hour. He told me that he could do nothing since his plan to insert a suture (*Shirodka*) had not worked. A suture is a special device used by gynaecologists in an attempt to stop miscarriages. I had to be taken to the theatre before the doctor could insert it. It was a terrible experience. I cried, wiped my tears, closed my eyes, looked at the child on my chest and cried again. She was beautiful, with black curly hair around her head. But she was not breathing. During that time, she was my baby alone because my husband, due to cultural beliefs, was not allowed to see such a small infant. The image of my dead baby is therefore mine alone.

The pain was unbearable. I asked myself what was wrong with me. I had four sisters who never experienced what I had gone through. I later remembered a Zulu proverb which says: '*isitsha esihle asidleli'* (one cannot use a beautiful bowl; it just breaks easily). Indeed, my daughter was the most beautiful. I named her Nokuthula since she was so quiet and still. My special angel was not breathing, no symptom, and no sound that there is a newborn in the room, only the physical body. Indeed, what I was expecting was impossible. It would be a mystery to have an angel and live with it. Angels they do a wonderful job by being the messengers of God. My angel, I assume, was to tell me, it is okay mah, you will have children in future. My angel was there to comfort me, to say God is great, since all our blessings come from Him. The secret behind them is just the day and time. I was grateful to see her face, even if I was in pain and my heart was broken. Maybe I can say I was wrong, I was missing my twin sister, who would just face me and tell the truth, crying would not help since all children belong to God. Indeed, I thank God for giving me a once-off chance to see her, as my gift, being put on my chest to cherish our love, to say I was waiting for you. You have been troubling, moving the way you like, kicking just like any unborn one. Having three children whom I had no vision of, I was grateful to welcome her and to say goodbye.

In 1997, while I was two months pregnant again, I resigned from work because I did not know the cause of my problems and my dad did not know how he could help me. In June 1997 my water broke early, just like before. This time a suture was used to prevent a miscarriage. The same doctor examined the baby and found out that the child was breathing. However, it was too early for the baby to be born. I stayed in an isolation ward for four weeks, where I was monitored now and again to save the baby. One day the doctor noticed that there was an infection, and I had to choose between an epidural and Caesarean procedure. I chose an epidural injection, since I had no choice; normal birth pains would not occur. Not long after the epidural injection I gave birth to another beautiful baby girl. I named her Londiwe (meaning 'God saved her') and Thabile (meaning 'I am very happy'). She was put in an incubator and discharged after two months.

In 2005 I was again pregnant. This time I told myself that I had had enough suffering. This time I had a feeling that God would be with me during the pregnancy and I had faith in Him. I strongly asked Him to intervene. I said, "With Your mercy, Lord, I will have this baby without visiting the clinic and doctors." It was a high risk, especially to the unborn child.

Later I had to visit the gynaecologist since I was unwell. The doctor asked for the clinic card, and I told him that I did not have a card. He was puzzled and became interested to ask the reason behind this. Then I told him my story. The doctor was amazed to hear my story; he even called his assistant to hear my testimony. However, he was so kind and allowed me to inform the hospital that I had been seen by him. He suggested that I should go to McCord Hospital since by that time the hospital was servicing both patients with medical aid and cash payments. When I was at McCord, the truth came out that I did not have a clinic card and I had not been tested for HIV. If I had seen any doctor, testing for HIV would have been the first thing they would do. As a result, the hospital followed the proper procedure, which included counselling, testing me for HIV, and waiting for the results so that the hospital would not put a child at risk of being infected. I waited for six hours before the results came. After the results had arrived, I was allowed to breastfeed my child. I named her Nothando (meaning 'God has love') and Gcinile (meaning 'she is my last born'). Starting a family was very painful. However, I enjoyed living with my three daughters and seeing them grow, after losing five of them.

5.6.1 Crossing the boundaries

As a working mother with deep rural roots, my challenges have been immeasurable. However, I would like to point out that the role played by education in my life has been unbelievable. It was not easy for me to pursue my studies as a married woman. Within the Zulu culture, women have to get permission from their husbands for whatever they want to do. It might happen that if a wife wants to study and the husband does not approve of it, it will be the end of the story. Some of the other rural women I know did not make it. While women are bound by cultural beliefs and values, these beliefs discriminate against women. Men do not ask any permission from anyone if they wish to do something. I applied at UKZN and I was accepted. I then informed my husband that I have to attend after hours because I was working. He could not approve of it. In 2006 my husband went to work overseas. It seemed as if the gate was opened and I taught myself that it was the time to cross this boundary that held me back from study. I used that opportunity. The decision to study was the best choice I ever made, as I am doing my PhD at present.

5.6.2 What kept me going?

My painful experiences of an inferior education through apartheid, which was crafted for black learners, taught me many unforgettable lessons. Being taught by unqualified teachers

from my early years worsened the situation. It is important to note that what made things even worse was the community I grew up in. Even after more than 20 years of democracy, the situation is still the same and the chances for improvement are still very slim. The community still lacks proper infrastructure. People do not have toilets; they just squat behind aloes and short bushes or among tall grasses to relieve themselves. The area is like a desert. While many people can now count on what the democratic government has done for them, in my community people still fetch water from the rivers used by their great-great ancestors. There is no clinic nearby; only one primary school was built recently. These experiences taught me that living in a rural area is like living in a forgotten area. Even if people are now free to vote, their votes failed them from being proud as a South African citizen.

Studying prompted me to ask myself this question: "What is it that I can do, since apartheid education and my historical background robbed me of opportunities in so many ways?" In an attempt to answer the question as an educational practitioner, my teaching philosophy will be based on the principle that doing justice to young learners will be the right thing I can do. Constructivist theory opened my eyes as to what I should plan and present to my learners, bearing in mind that my teaching and learning activities should encourage learners to be more active while constructing their knowledge, including activities based on real-life experiences and that encourage social interaction among learners. From the word go, I wanted to make a difference in the lives of those young learners under my supervision. My ambition was to work hard to create a conducive atmosphere for them. At one stage I believed that my schooling journey and its associated experiences were beyond my control. The motto that drives me is that of doing social justice and to strive to make a difference to every learner that I teach.

5.7 My workplace

Searching for a job can be a daunting process, yet finding it brings joy. I was so glad to find out that my application for a teaching post at Montobello Primary School was successful. It was early in January 1991 when I received a call that I should start my teaching career. Montobello was a private institution during those days. The school was governed by the Roman Catholic Church. It had a boarding school facility for primary and high school learners. Learners living in that area were also accommodated. Since I was living in Durban, I was offered a room in a cottage that was next to the school. The school supplied learners with stationery. There was mutual trust and a good relationship among the teachers. The learners

were taught to be well-disciplined at all times, and they were guided to understand the importance of respect for each other. Every Friday morning, the school would start a little late since all learners and teachers had to go to the Cathedral to worship and honour God. The appointed Father (priest) would conduct the morning service with the help of the nuns (Sisters). It is noteworthy that teaching there was a blessing. Going to church regularly changed learners' attitudes. They were well-behaved, respectful and controllable.

After my wedding in 1992, I left the school. My husband and I at once were invited to a special party at school. My husband managed to arrive on time. Learners were divided into two groups; the first group sang wedding songs on behalf of the bride and the other on behalf of the groom. The celebration ended when we were given a present and a speech, wishing us a lovely union. I worked there for only two years. In 1993 I managed to secure a temporary post in Umlazi and a permanent one later on. Losing five children was beyond my control. I resigned in 2007, trying to save my baby, indeed it helped. My daughter is 21 years old now and my last born is 13 years old. I enjoy looking at them as they grow.

5.7.1 My sewing business

After the birth of my second daughter in 1997, things were tough since I was not working. There was a severe shortage of teaching posts in KZN, particularly in urban areas. I had learned basic sewing skills in high school and thought I might secure a job in this industry. I started sewing clothes, but at first it was not promising. But as time went on, people started to recognise and admire my designs. Initially I enjoyed sewing clothes for infants and young children. People then asked if I would sew for them. I gave it a try and it went well. My business grew so fast that, instead of sewing whatever I felt like, people gave me different orders and that changed the way I operated. The money I received from the clients was sufficient to cover the basic needs of the family, including paying the home loan.

I learned many lessons during those days. I ended up having 14 industrial sewing machines and three shops. I hired young women to help to make garments that I sold in the shops and for supplying other shops as well. The business was very promising, to the extent that I would say, "I dressed the nation!". From October each year I was often compelled to sew for 24 hours a day to complete the orders. I used to hire young ladies from my rural area. I felt so good about taking that decision, because they were able to support their families and themselves, even if they did not earn a lot of money. In those days I learnt to be a good

listener and to be a counsellor; someone whom they could trust if they encountered problems. I even went the extra mile. If they became sick or did not know where to go, I was there for them. Our relationship was good. They learned different sewing skills, through which they were able to find jobs in other big factories in town.

One lady came and confessed: "Thank you, *sisi* (sister), you helped me so much. Where I am working right now, I do not have a problem when it comes to the speed and quantity that I am expected to produce each day. It is because of you that I can support my family." This was a testimony and I could not believe it. However, I used to tell them that what we were doing was a two-way process. Respecting each other was a norm and ensuring that we finished each day's work became a mission. In retrospect, I am proud to know that by the grace of God I was able to run three successful clothing shops without capital, without a business mentor, and without proper business management skills. But the secret was that when I designed a dress, I needed to be cautious about the result. I was strict about the appearance; I wanted to produce professional work. I did not want to sew something where people would question the quality. Instead, I preferred to take my time, as long I was happy about the result and my clients were satisfied. I was in this business for almost 10 years. I stopped when people were no longer interested in buying my designs, because of Chinese and other merchants that had arrived with some cheap and poor-quality products.

5.7.2 Working in a multilingual context

In 2007 I returned to work as a teacher. It was a challenge to work in a multilingual context for the first time. I had been trained in a teaching college which did not provide me with the skills to teach in a multilingual context. Worse, I was someone who had once received inferior education, and now I was faced with a new setting that required an autonomous and competent teacher who knew what it meant to teach in any school. In other words, the pressure was obvious.

Starting in a new setting where I was expected to use different teaching methods, something I was not familiar with, caused a lot of frustration. It was worse to find out that the person (HoD) I was told to get help from, was reluctant to help. I went to her one day. However, I was unable to say what I wanted to tell her because I burst into tears. She asked me what was my problem. I told her that I did not know what to do. My actions touched her heart and then she showed me bit by bit what I was expected to do. I would like to note that I was not mad,

but I wanted to empower myself. It was for these reasons that I felt so uncomfortable and not competent enough, regardless of the fact that I was a hard-working person. It was at this moment, when I cried with frustration, that I remembered my father buying books for us. I subsequently went to different bookshops looking for appropriate books that I could use to teach my learners. In the meantime, I also learned the hard way how important it is to network with other teachers in neighbouring schools. Networking worked well for me. I also realised the importance of having a computer and a printer. I bought the equipment, not because I had enough money, but because I was under pressure and I wanted to do my work efficiently and effectively.

Within a few months, my situation gradually changed. However, while I was teaching that class, I encountered another problem. The learners were very wild and unruly. One teacher confessed that their behaviour stemmed from the fact that they had been without a teacher for quite a long period. But their behaviour was unacceptable. As a new teacher, I found it difficult to talk about my experiences with anyone at school. Most of these learners were black, like me. I was not allowed to use corporal punishment. This problem worried me for some time. One day, while I was thinking about strategies I could employ, something came into my mind. In the morning, while they were expecting learning activities, I told them they were not going to learn because of their terrible behaviour. For example, when I left them to go to the office, I would not reach the office because someone would be screaming behind me: “Ma’am! Ma’am, they are fighting!” or “They are talking in class”. I would then have to rush back without completing my business in the office. It was too much for me. I told them if they were serious about learning, they need to come up with classroom rules so that I could pin them on the wall where everyone could see them. I told them that they need to comply with the rules since they had formulated them. On top of this, I realised that I needed to sponsor some of my learners, because some of them came to school without having pencils and pens. I bought some stationery items and some nice treats to reward those who behaved well in class. Within a week, their behaviour changed.

Another strategy I employed was to love them and praise them for their effort. I told them that I will not accept any work of the lowest standard. I worked hard to accomplish this. Coming to school before 7 in the morning every day motivated my learners. Another strategy I used was that I did not stop carrying on with my studies. Studying helped me a lot in terms of going the extra mile in search of new teaching trends. It worked well for me. I was very

happy to see that within a short time I was able to fit in and I believe I became a competent teacher. One might call it was a breakthrough.

5.7.3 My current workplace

Keeping on studying, even if the DoE does not recognise higher degrees but just gives a 'thank you' that is a small token that does not increase one's notch salary, paid off for me. After completing my master's degree, I kept on applying in an attempt to secure a post in the higher education sector. I couldn't believe it that my dream would come true. Being a hard worker and having a reliable professional mentor, I was able to cope better than I thought. Lecturing was my ambition and it was prompted by the Ward Manager, who pronounced that I am not fit to be at school anymore, rather I will be fine in educating pre-service teachers. Being a PhD student helped me in many ways, by using the knowledge I acquired while studying and by motivating me to pursue a better career that has an improved working environment but not compromising the quality of work. My new workplace opens many doors for me, which I wouldn't experience at my previous work as a teacher. My new workplace provided me with many opportunities, such as attending conferences, and attending workshops planned by various stakeholders, such as my Department at the university, other Faculties within the university and other universities as well. I was awarded an opportunity to present a paper at UKZN for the first time in 2017. I also presented at the SARAECE (South African Research Association for Early Childhood Education) Conference in Pretoria, where I was awarded the 'Research book' for being the best novice presenter. I am also confident that I will be able to write many academic articles to contribute to knowledge building.

5.8 My first visit to the United Kingdom

During school holidays I visited my husband while he was overseas. I went there in June 2008. I applied for leave without pay because I did not have enough days to qualify for paid leave. I enjoyed my short vacation there and could not believe what I saw and experienced. The crime rate was low in comparison with South Africa, so the police did not carry guns. I was shocked to see a vehicle driven by an unarmed white lady transporting money. The environment stole my heart. Public transport seemed well organised, so few people drove their cars to work. I found the working conditions there better than in South Africa, and low-level jobs paid a living wage that enabled people to buy cars. Healthy food was much cheaper than junk food, and the health services were excellent, with no congestion.

If I did not have children, I would not have considered returning to South Africa. Only the weather troubled me. I was not familiar with such rainy and cold weather. Going out meant I had to carry an umbrella in my handbag because rain could appear at any time. My husband was working in Manchester. I was a registered master's student at that time. I had enough time to visit the library and book shops. I was surprised to learn that reading materials were everywhere. For example, I found fascinating reading material in places like train stations, bus stops, next to the shops, inside the shops, and so on. I am talking about free informative material such as newspapers, booklets, tabloids, and many more.

Two things I picked up in the library. First, I was given a library card to use whenever I wanted to loan a book. There were plenty of books available, and I am not exaggerating. Second, I was asked to join reading groups if I wished to. I was told that participants loan books, read them at home and meet to discuss what they have read. Unfortunately, I missed that because my second daughter became ill and I could not bear to live in the UK while she was unwell. I felt guilty at being away from home and failing to take full responsibility for supporting my child as a mother. I went back to South Africa while I was still on leave. Before I left, I went to the bookshops. I was shocked when I found that teacher resources were so plentiful, starting from preschool to higher education. I bought several of the latest books which were relevant to my school curriculum. The books I bought were very helpful, and I am still using them. They also have links with different websites. I bought some of the books without knowing that they would be helpful for my master's dissertation as well.

5.9 The impact of having it all

When I was young, I observed women in my community doing their non-stop chores. In 1977 I would watch my mother going out early in the morning to the field and coming home around 4 o'clock or even later in the afternoon. In those days people in my community did not have watches. They relied on the radio or else they were guided by the position of the sun to tell the time. Even when I went to school, I can remember that I relied on the shadow of the hill following the sun's position to tell the time. Coming back from the field was another hectic time for African Zulu-speaking women. Since there was no electricity and no taps during those days, they were forced to fetch water before or after sunset and to prepare food for the entire family. On top of this, they were expected to do more additional duties compared to what was expected of their male counterparts (their husbands). My mother was not excluded from these various women's chores, as she was a housewife. I learned a lot from her. It became clear to me that cultural gender roles and community expectations failed

women in most cases. While education was a key to success, it nonetheless failed to minimise women's roles, regardless of its benefit in ensuring financial independence and autonomy in the workplace.

After the birth of our first daughter, I was on maternity leave. I do not know what was wrong with the child at night. She cried a lot and was unable to sleep at all. Even if I used '*enteress*', a medication used to prevent bad spirits from attacking infants, it did not work for my child. My husband would carry her for a short while and then would simply pass the baby back to me and go to sleep. It was hard for me when I went back to work in 2007. Upon introspection, I was not feeling competent enough to teach successfully. Studying at the same time was the best option that I could choose. However, studying as a mother and a worker was not easy for me. Managing time was impossible. At work I had to meet deadlines; i.e. submitting my lesson preparation on time, developing learners' assessment, compiling reports, being ready for parents' meetings, and many more. Moreover, the university expected students to meet the due dates for assignments and be ready for the exams. On top of this, family and my child wanted me as a mother. One day the lady who was looking after my daughter had gone away and she did not come back as she had promised. I went to the nearby nursery school and I asked them whether they could keep my child for a day. They agreed and treated her as a visitor. I paid the fee and left to write my exam. I reached the university five minutes before the door was due to be closed. I learned that I had taken the right decision at the wrong time since I was a student and a mother simultaneously. But I did not blame myself.

Gradually, I noticed some improvements in my teaching practice, even if it cost me a lot. This meant that I had to split time among other roles that I had to fulfil. As a student, things were not easy. I encountered learning barriers. For example, due to knowledge deficiency, I was often unable to submit my assignments on time. The reason for my failure was caused by my earlier educational background. At the same time, my ambition did not allow me to quit studying. I wanted to emancipate myself. As a result, trying to balance life caused a lot of frustration and stress. While I was focusing on my studies and trying to overcome my weaknesses at work, it sometimes happened that one of my children fell ill and I would find myself feeling guilty as a bad mother. I had to deal with the situation on my own. I also had to attend parents' meetings while still having to do unpaid domestic chores as usual. Often having to sacrifice my sleep did not make things better.

As time went on, I told myself that because I could not live without work, I could not stop studying. It was impossible to change my status as a wife, a caregiver and a mother. Therefore, I would only do what I was capable of and ignore other roles. “After all,” I told myself, “I am a human being and have only two precious eyes and hands.” I learned the hard way ‘to disconnect’ from people even if I loved them. This was the best strategy I could use in an attempt to cope with my work and the pressures of studying and being a mother and a wife at the same time.

5.10 Letters from my children

My job of being a teacher requires one to be well organised. At work, learners brought sick notes if they were absent from school. Being a class teacher, I am responsible for keeping these letters. At the outset I used to put them in a drawer, and then later I changed my mind and now I put them in an A4 envelope. I found myself doing the same even at home. My children use to write love notes. I kept them safe because they gave me strength, and I assumed that they meant what they said. Like, if they say ‘I love you, mom’, I would tell myself that they mean it. At home I have a shoe-box where I used to keep their Mother’s Day and birthday cards and so on. While I was perusing these with a smile, three letters touched my heart. The first one was written by my last born after we had a fight when her marks dropped at school. She is doing Grade 8 now:

> Hello Mummy, I am very happy mom that you realised that I didn’t do well at school. I am so happy that you are studying but I’m not happy at the same time because you are always busy and spend less time with me. For example, I asked you to help me with my Maths because I was studying for AMESA [Association for Mathematics Education of South Africa] but instead you asked my sister to help me. I asked you to help me with my Afrikaans poem but again you asked my sister. Even during the holidays, you can’t help me, because you are always busy. How come mom you can shout at me for my bad marks while you know you didn’t have time for me? Okay, mummy, I love you, you are the best mother I have ever know, Gcinile Nothando Msimango, 3 October 2014.

I received another letter from my two other daughters, it reads thus:

> Dear mom, I just want to say I’m so proud of you, really I am. You’ve achieved so much in your age, wisdom, knowledge, understanding and much more. You could be doing something else with your time, something that isn’t productive or effective than what you do as old as you are. I get inspired when I go to Edgewood, because I see older people make a difference in their lives, in their families, that’s wonderful, I hope youth learns from the elders, so what if you don’t have the best of both worlds, you’ve

finally achieved something others couldn't or failed to do so. But you've stayed and fought.

Well done, mummy, Love Londiwe Thabile Msimango, 7 July 2014.

Dear mum

Out of over the flow of happiness, I write you this letter to tell you about my feeling today. You are not our role model only, but you showed us the way. You taught us that it is not about the age, but it is about dedication, commitment, and knowing exactly what one wants to achieve which is important. You make us think twice about how powerful education is in one's life. I think what you are doing is phenomenal, especially at your age. I'm blessed over in abundance to have had you to single-handedly teach us what it means to be a black woman through your struggles of life you have been through. You taught us a good lesson that no matter what, as Nelson Mandela said 'nothing is impossible until it is done.' I would like to encourage you that the spirit that drives you to persist, even if it is tough for you, but I've been watching you – giving up is not what you want. In 1966 your mother named you 'Welile', she had spoken out your legacy into your journey as a human being. I'm glad you followed it.

Good luck mummy, I love you,

Thobeka Phumzile Msimango, 8 August 2014.

5.11 Why I regard myself as a feminist

I am a feminist

I use my educational power to succeed,

So I'm not powerless.

Empowering others is what I like most.

I choose to liberate

Than to oppress.

I am a feminist

I am an activist

I choose to include than to exclude.

I am a negotiator, but I'm not an abuser.

I am a peacemaker;

I fight for equality.

I am a feminist

I am a teacher,

but I'm not a racist.
I'm a caring person,
Discrimination is not in my veins.

I am a feminist
I choose to motivate
I aspire to see my daughters and sons shine
wherever they are
Then to discourage and demotivate them.

I am a feminist
I like to share knowledge,
I dislike being self-centred.
I work well with others,
Humanity is my way of life.
I am a feminist!!

The above poem spells out my stance as a feminist. Feminist scholarship reveal that the development of feminist research cannot be understood outside of the development of the feminist activist/ movement itself (Parry, 2020). In the words of Musindarwezo (2018) feminist principles help in addressing the structural factors that perpetuate inequality, with the potential to respond to the real needs and interests of all people, including marginalised women, men, boys, girls, transgender, and inter-sex people. For many years, women's different lives and accompanying difficulties and experiences have been devalued, neglected and ignored as a starting point in researching their plight (Harding, 1991). It is this direct discrimination against and marginalisation of women that led Brooks and Hesser-Biber (2007) to acknowledge that women are often left out of scholarship and research samples all together and that research topics consistently fail to take women's activities and experiences into account.

When I started teaching I was not aware that my teaching practice was informed by the feminist principles. I can recall that I used to find myself worried about young learners who were badly struggling. I felt within me that what learners were demonstrating maybe revealed my ineffectiveness somehow. At the same time, my conscious did not allow me to 'ignore what I was observing,' ever since I started teaching. Noticing that my learners lacked some

stationaries, I would use my money something other teachers were reluctant to do. The driving force to me, was to ascertain whether my learners were copying or not. For this reason, I felt there was no way they could demonstrate that without a concrete evidence as I was passionate about achieving my teaching outcomes. As such, attending to learners learning barriers would probably pave the way for accomplishing my teaching goals and my targets. As a result, I would, therefore, invite their parents and informed them as early as possible about their children not coping with their school work. But there was no policy during my early teaching career guided me as a teacher to involve the parent, and during my training there was no such awareness, and even when the principal called the parents meeting teachers were never part of it. When I was doing my Honours Degree specialising with Inclusive Education, a new page was opened to me. Inclusive Education equipped me about the importance of accommodating all learners regardless of their gender, ethnicity, learning abilities, sexual orientation, and creed. It taught me to adapt the curriculum in order to suit the learning needs of my learners. This strategy worked well for me the following years.

In tertiary education, I attended 'Strengthening Novice Supervision workshop.' I was exposed, for example, on different postgraduate supervision models, the role of the supervisors, and most importantly the unintentional actions of exclusion in supervision. Like some other black female academics, I found myself following their steps by wearing different hats on top of being a teacher, such as: a university mother, a counsellor, and a mentor to the students under my supervision in an attempt to help them reach their academic potential, especially male and female students at risk of failing. I agree with Maya Angelou when she pronounced these powerful words:

> "You cannot control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide to not be reduce by them. Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud. Make effort to change things you do not like. Be certain that you do not die without having something wonderful for humanity"

A sense of humanity is called 'Ubuntu' in IsiZulu and is regarded as an African philosophy. A person with 'Ubuntu' is generous, hospitable, friendly, caring, compassionate, and shares what s/he have with others (Makoba, 2016). A spirit of 'Ubuntu' can serve as a driving force in promoting social justice in education (Lefa, 2015). Indeed, this is what I believe on, something at the end of the day that can make me smile, knowing that I have make a mark on my students' life. It is always my dream to make a difference and see them achieve their

aspirations. I would then console myself that I have done my work. Knowing that these students want to be successful in life and prove to themselves and their families that they can do it (Wilde, 2013), but without the unconditional support this can be impossible.

Intersectionality and poststructural feminism theory were employed because of many reasons I have mentioned elsewhere. While these two feminist theories were opted to inform this study, they also cultivated a space for self-reflection, self-actualisation, cultural identity and professional identity for me a researcher. Both theories were used as a lens to understand why I behave the way I do as a rural working mother, a wife, and a postgraduate student concurrently. Intersectionality is concern about the overlapping dilemmas of class, gender, and race in shaping black women's experiences. The intersectionality feminist argues that the events of social life are shaped by many factors in diverse and influencing ways, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other (Collins & Bilge, 2016). This has been confirmed by hooks (1987) who argued that sex, race, and class oppressions are interrelated and multifaceted. I'm not excluded to this, as my experiences are shaped by my historical, educational, cultural, economic, and my status of being a black woman, and a mother. Due to this, I therefore, regard myself as poststructural feminist, as I was able to dismantle the cultural and patriarchal structures that became a stumbling block to me as an educated woman. Indeed, societal barriers to women's achievement, advancement, independence, and autonomy have inhibited the full participation of women in African society at all levels (Sackeyfio, 2013). As St. Pierre (2002) alluded that the poststructural feminist theory offers critiques and methods for examining the functions and effects of any structure. Through the post-structural feminism theory, I was able to ask different kinds of questions (Barret, 2005), such as: which women, whose experience, what can we learn from these experiences, whose story has been told, whose experience has not been included and why? Through these questions I was able to understand the historical and contemporary experiences of other rural working mothers as postgraduate students and for my students as well.

Over and above, there is a number of International, African feminists of all races, and South African feminists that help me to understand what it means to be a feminist. I have been inspired by the 1956 united South African women of all races who march against 'pass documents' to be carried by black women wherever they go during the apartheid era. My feminism is also motivated by the '*Feminism is: South Africans speak their truth,'* a collection of South African feminists' work edited by Jen Thorpe (2018). Also, it has been

enthused by the informants' mothers those that they were educated or uneducated, they pushed the informants to be what they are today. Their mothers refused their daughters to be defined about the places they grew up in. I am deeply indebted to activists like Pumla Gqola, Vuyiseka Dubula, and Gugulethu Mhlungu, including all the black feminist rural working mothers interviewed in this study. They have enlightened and encouraged me to defy any obstacle on my way, now I know what to do when I encounter challenges as a black woman. Indeed, the beauty of feminism theory it opens many platforms for the marginalised black rural women to voice out their concerns in an attempt to get solutions or be healed.

5.12 Epilogue

I have made every effort to recall my past experiences as frankly as possible and to describe them as they occurred. My personal experiences as a working mother with a deep rural background motivated me to conduct this study, to try to understand other rural women's experiences. Learning to overcome my challenges as a woman was not easy. I thank God for always being there when I suffered and that He blessed me in good times. I always knew that when things were tough, I had to seek help and share my stories with others to heal myself. Now that I have completed my critical autobiography, I can indeed declare that I have resolved my anger caused by the apartheid regime. I look forward to green pastures if all goes well.

It is important to note that I find it difficult to turn away from the ghost of apartheid. I have noticed that whatever obstacle I come across, I still vividly feel the bonds of those injustices tying me. The people I live with often do not feel or understand the pain of the multiple challenges I have encountered. I have learnt to break those bonds and to accept what life offers me at that particular time. Moreover, I feel so honoured that I was privileged to live partly in the lifetime of the late former President, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. Mr Nelson Mandela taught me many unforgettable lessons. I have learned that the struggles that persons with authority put me through did not destroy my humanity. Even if they dismantled my human dignity, took away the privilege of achieving a better future, painted a wrong picture about my capabilities, undermined my willingness to learn and robbed me of the best weapon I could use to survive, I have at last learned the hard way that putting the past behind me is the key to moving on with life.

Now I have peace within myself, and I am glad that, in spite of and regardless of everything, I am proud to be an educated black mother and feminist in South Africa. As I am now

working in higher education, I feel so honoured. I work hard, not forgetting where I come from but striving for excellence while teaching pre-service teachers. Even if took me long to finish my PhD, at last I made it. The red gown comforted my soul, dried my tears, and healed my pains I endured through my struggles as a rural working mother.

CHAPTER SIX

INFORMANTS' LIFE HISTORIES

> "Postgraduate degree made me view the reality of the world and in a way, it has opened me up physically, emotionally and spiritually. I never understood why people behave the way they do before but having pursued the degree that I am pursuing, I now understand that there is more to the behaviour of a person" – Sibusisiwe, one of the informants in this study

6.1 Introduction

The use of the interpretive approach in this study aimed at understanding how informants make sense of the phenomenon. Babbie and Mouton (2001) insist that the interpretive approach maintains that all human beings are engaged in the process of making sense of their worlds and continuously interpret, create, give meaning, define, justify and rationalise daily actions. In this study I spent a lengthy amount of time listening to the informants' life stories. Life historians believe that the stories that informants tell about their lives can give important insights (Goodson & Sikes, 2001) into the phenomenon under study. In line with the interpretive approach, life history acknowledges that there is a crucial interactive relationship between individuals' lives, their perceptions and experiences, and the historical and social contexts and events. The strength of life history is that it provides depth regarding how the informants negotiate their identities (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). Therefore, I attempt in this chapter to present a rough sketch of who each participant is – the experiences of eight selected rural working mothers in pursuit of higher degrees at a South African university – by analysing their life stories. Through the lens of feminism, I was able to interpret the women's experiences that they shared through obtaining stories told from their own point of view. I adhered to what Coffey (1999), as a skilful life historian, and an advocate noted: that life history acknowledges that different projects will have their own features and requirements and each researcher is likely to have their own style and a unique emotional engagement with any particular project. Guided by the aims of this study, I therefore used informants' verbatim responses as evidence of what was told. It became my job to preserve and report their life stories exactly as I had received them (Muchmore, 2000).

Although I anticipated using Seidel's (1998) qualitative analysis model, through extensive reading and perusing the literature I came across Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis model, and I found that these two models have similar characteristics. They both require the researcher to read and reread data thoroughly in order to make sense of them through coding,

which is the process by which raw data (such as transcripts from interviews and field notes) are gradually converted into usable data through the identification of themes, concepts, or ideas that have some connection with each other (Patton, 2002). While Seidel's (1998) qualitative analysis model is cyclical, it involves a process of noticing data, collecting more data if needed and thinking about them. While both models have similar characteristics, Braun and Clarke's (2006) qualitative thematic model has six logical steps, and because of the vast amount of data, I opted to use the thematic model. This chapter has been organised into three sections. The first part will explain the six steps of thematic analysis as identified by Braun and Clarke (2006). The second section will look at the principles of analysing data in life history research, and the last section presents the backgrounds of the informants who participated in this study. Before discussing the analytical process, I briefly explain the six steps of thematic analysis that I undertook.

6.2 Thematic analysis

In qualitative research data analysis is one of the procedures that needs to be undertaken with care, since it is central to credible qualitative research (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The purpose of data analysis is to interpret and represent information in a way that makes sense and which tells us something about the world [of the respondents] (Sikes, 2006). This is often a long process that requires patience, careful thought, concentration, quiet time and space (Tummons & Duckworth, 2013). Indeed, life history research requires one to spend a great deal of time in order to present a credible life story. Wicks and Whiteford (2006) insist that there are no rules or formulas for analysing life stories, and so researchers are largely guided by the form and the nature of the data. Many methods are used by researchers to analyse data, one of these being thematic analysis. For the purpose of this study, and knowing that there is no formula for analysing life history stories, I opted to use thematic analysis as a tool to enhance and establish trustworthiness and credibility during the data analysis process. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. They further point out that thematic analysis involves searching across a data set – be that several interviews or focus groups, or a range of texts – to find repeated patterns of meaning. Supporting this, Cohen et al. (2007) note that data analysis involves organising and evaluating data in terms of informants' definitions of the situation, and then "noting patterns and themes." Indeed, thematic analysis is a very useful way of analysing data "as it draws together all the relevant data for the exact issue of concern to the researcher and preserves the coherence of the material" (Cohen et al., 2007). I therefore

chose Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis tool as it proves to have enormous benefits in an attempt of dealing with large amounts of data, and is in line with the life history methodology used in this study. Also, the specific procedure employed, such as the line of questioning in the data gathering sessions and the methods of data analysis, should be derived, where possible, from those successfully utilised in previous projects (Shenton, 2004).

There are many reasons that I can point out as to why I chose thematic analysis over other methods. Firstly, its flexible step-by-step process allowed me to identify and summarise the key features or themes that emerged from collected data. Secondly, this method was used to highlight similarities and differences across the data set (Aronson, 1994). It was purposefully used because it allowed me to collate all the relevant data from various data streams, such as interviews, observations, and field notes, to provide a collective answer to a research question (Cohen, et al., 2007). Thematic analysis has the potential of promoting core skills that will be useful for conducting many other kinds of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Over and above this, thematic analysis was used since it is a flexible and useful research tool that can potentially provide a rich and detailed account of data.

The six thematic analysis steps as identified by Braun and Clarke (2006) are: becoming familiar with the data; generate initial codes; search for themes; review themes; define themes; and write them up (Figure 7).

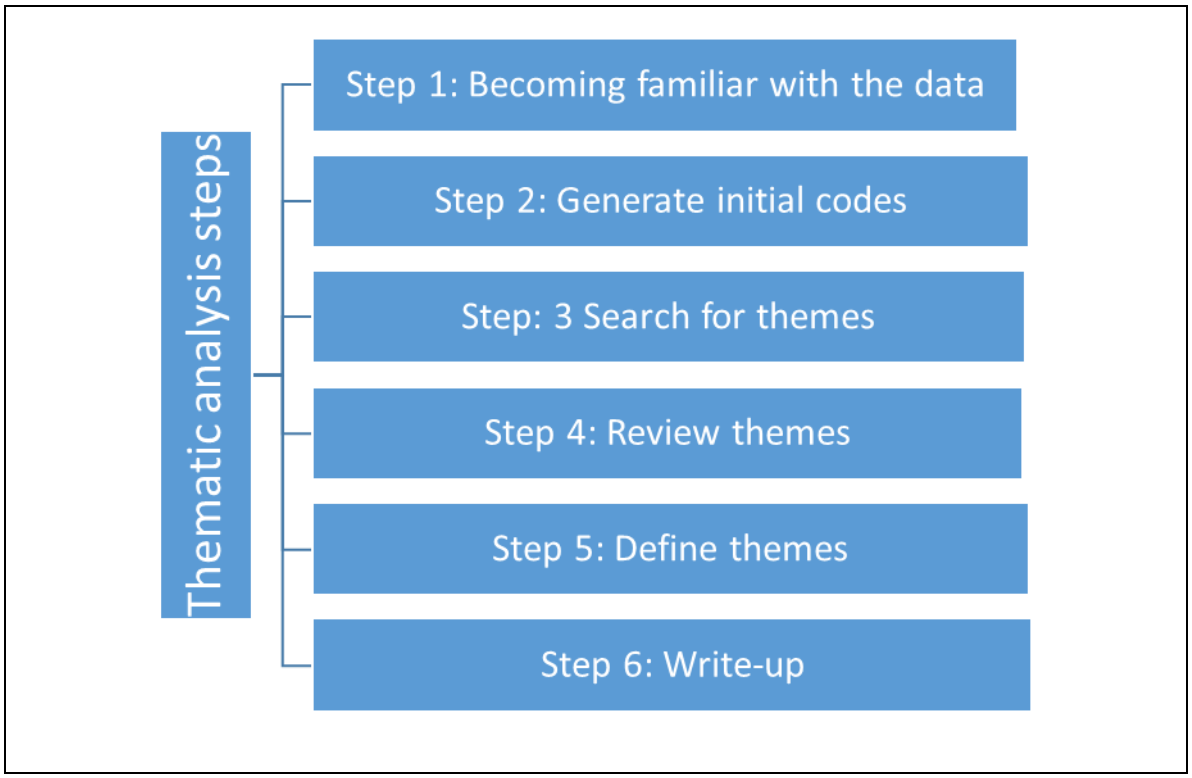


Figure 7: The six steps of Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis model.

A description of transcription of the data was presented in Chapter Four. Using different data generation methods, I gained data from one-to-one interview conversations, group conversations, timeline texts, and artefacts (that is, visual images). In this chapter I present the data analysis in conjunction with the profiles of the informants. While carrying out the study I had noticed that the data that I generated had reached saturation, but I was rather overwhelmed by the extent of it and did not know where to start. This was because I was analysing such data for the first time. However, I was greatly relieved and fortunate to be able to be guided by Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis method, which has a logical sequence that is easy to follow. Below I briefly present each step, starting with familiarising myself with the data.

6.2.1 Step 1: Familiarising myself with the data

As I indicated in Chapter Four, the qualitative approach is an inquiry process for understanding a social or human problem based on building a holistic picture (Creswell, 2003). It also involves reporting multiple perspectives, identifying the many factors involved in a situation, and generally sketching the larger picture. I had generated a huge amount of data, so familiarising myself with that was a crucial step. As I chose to use a life history

methodology, data were generated through life history methods: one-to-one interview conversations, group conversations, the timeline method, field notes, and another group conversation where informants were asked to bring in artefacts. I immersed myself in the information, to the extent that I familiarised myself with the depth and breadth of its content (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Goodson and Sikes (2001) make the point that life historians tend to the view that analysis begins as soon as they start working with an informant.

During this stage I found myself listening to the tapes and rereading raw data obtained from the informants. I made summaries before the formal analysis began, as suggested by Lacey and Luff (2001). I also adhered to Maxwell's (2013) assertion about summaries and memos: "they do not only capture a researcher's analytical thinking about the data but also facilitate such thinking and stimulate analytical insights. Re-reading offers me an opportunity to get a sense of what has been said in a more meaningful manner." Employing different data generation methods benefitted me in many ways, and I was able to obtain enough raw data to distinguish similar and dissimilar responses. This was also of great benefit, since I was allowed to explore more than one point of view on the phenomenon under study (Tummons & Duckworth, 2013). Having thus obtained and noted down some indication as to what was going on in terms of what I had read, I then moved on to the next stage of the data analysis according to the Braun and Clarke's (2006) method.

6.2.2 Step 2: Generating initial codes

The second stage of data analysis involves the generation of initial codes and identification of themes. I started by organising all the data at hand by putting together all one-to-one interview conversation transcripts, group interview conversation transcripts, the timeline texts, and group transcripts whereby informants brought artefacts and shared their experiences. Organising data in this manner helped me to double-check that I had printed out all of the transcripts in order to identify initial codes. Coding is an almost universal process in qualitative research, and generating initial codes is a fundamental aspect of the analysis which helps to break down raw data to make something new (Elliot, 2018). This scholar further adds that coding is a way of indexing or mapping data, to provide an overview of disparate data that allows the researcher to make sense of them concerning research questions. Coding is the process of analysing qualitative text data by taking them apart to see what they yield before putting the data back together in a meaningful way (Creswell, 2015).

Selecting the codes was not easy at first, because it required me to read the transcripts thoroughly; there was no short-cut to coming up with themes. I managed to identify similar and dissimilar patterns. It surprised me that I was at last at the stage where I had to identify a feature of the data that appeared to be interesting to me (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this study, I could not list all of the codes due to the amount of data. I used my draft exercise book to highlight all of the patterns from the data set. The next paragraph will present the third stage of the thematic analysis.

6.2.3 Step 3: Searching for themes

I used open-coding, which means I did not have pre-set codes, but I developed and modified the codes as I worked through the coding process (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Some of the patterns I identified can be seen in Table 3 (in no particular order).

Table 3: Some of the preliminary themes found in this study

empowerment	former Model-C	Factors strengthening resilience	
family matters	apartheid education	writing challenges	
rising above all odds	lifelong learning	motherhood consequences	
use of technology	a lot of sacrifices	appropriate knowledge	
children's work	mothers doing social justice	conflicts	
challenges in HE	time constraint	adapting to HE	
motherhood memories	motherhood challenges	family matters	
lack of confidence	giving-up	study environment	
full-time worker	role strain	education is evolving	
sources of motivation	overloaded	support structures	
mothers' survival strategies	academic writing	community events	
house chores	communication	sharing information	
cultural beliefs	lack of support	persistence	
rural education	dealing with pressures	English as a second language	
power relations	discrimination	multi-tasks	
influence of race, class, and gender	lack of job opportunities	ill-treatment	
	negative attitude	gendered language	
failure to detach	girl child	women experiencing	
no balance	language barrier	oppression	
learning conditions	feeling guilty	patriarchal practices	
long distance	childhood upbringing	working hours	
poor living conditions	knowledge deficiency	cultural stereotypes	

Having finished the coding, I then used Microsoft Word to list the patterns, without focusing on the similarities and dissimilarities, as can be seen in Table 6.1. This allowed me to compare and regroup the patterns and identify miscellaneous patterns. I anticipated getting a full picture of the themes, as they would guide me to analyse the raw data and to interpret and answer the research questions, which is the main objective of this project. Braun and Clarke

(2006: 20) argue that some of the initial codes identified may go on to form main themes, whereas others may form sub-themes or be discarded. It is natural to have a set of codes that do not seem to belong anywhere, and it is perfectly acceptable to create a 'theme' called miscellaneous to house these, possibly temporarily (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic process "involves grouping together items and units into related clusters" (Cohen et al., 2007). Some researchers agree that analysis is exciting because 'you discover themes and concepts embedded throughout your interviews" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Austin and Sutton (2014) point out that coding is the process by which raw data (e.g. transcripts from interviews and focus groups or field notes) are gradually converted into usable data through the identification of themes, concepts, or ideas that have some connection with each other. These could be certain words or phrases used by different participants and drawn together to allow the researcher an opportunity to focus the findings in a more meaningful manner.

6.2.4 Step 4: Reviewing themes

Reviewing themes allowed me to double-check and identify the main common themes in an attempt the check whether they make sense (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). This phase involves two levels of reviewing and refining themes. The first step involves reviewing at the level of coded extracts, reading all the collated extracts from each theme and checking whether they appear to form a coherent pattern (Braun & Clarke, 2006) (Table 4).

Table 4: Themes at the end of step 4

Theme: Impact of culture	**Theme: Influence of apartheid**	**Theme: Educational experiences**	**Theme: Social experiences**	**Theme: Resilient women**
Cultural stereotypes Cultural beliefs Power relations Childhood upbringing Gendered language Patriarchal practices	Rural education Apartheid education Women experiencing oppression Influence of race, class, and gender	Challenges in a higher education institution Language barrier Knowledge deficiency Support structures	Mothering Motherhood challenges Motherhood memories Motherhood consequences Mothers' survival strategies Role strain	Factors strengthening resilience Sources of motivation Adapting to higher education Education is evolving Lifelong learning Empowerment Mothers doing social justice Rising above all odds

The second level requires a similar process as the first, but with the entire data set. Adhering to this suggestion, I used Microsoft Word to make this process more practical by displaying

patterns, and also to keep checking whether emerging themes would help in answering research questions based on the experiences of rural working mothers as students. Miles and Huberman (1984) suggest that careful data display is an important element of data reduction and selection. In a similar vein, Braun and Clarke (2006) point out that, "a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research questions, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning with the data set".

6.2.5 Step 5: Defining and naming themes

Defining and naming of themes tends not to be difficult since in step four the coding of patterns was reduced to get to the main themes that could guide me throughout analysis of the data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) the theme names need to be punchy and immediately give the reader a sense of what the theme is about. The themes of this study appear in Figure 8.

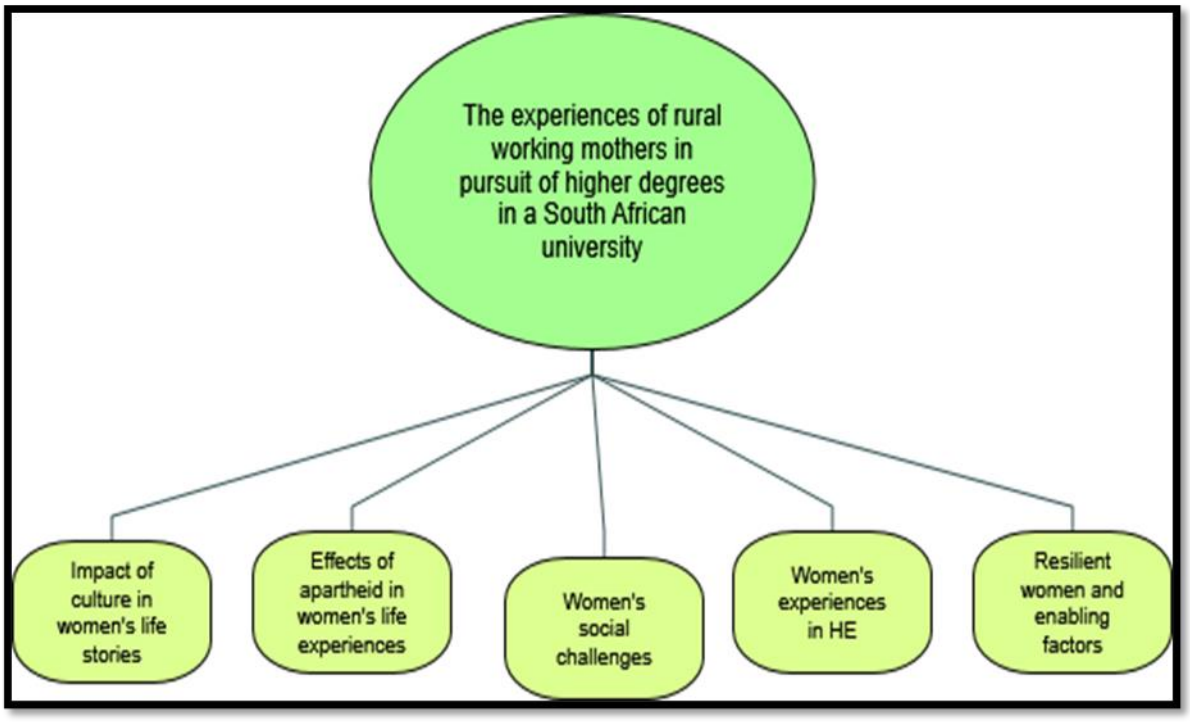


Figure 8: Map of the themes that emerged from the data.

King (2004) suggests that a solo researcher may consult outside experts to determine whether the themes are sufficiently clear and comprehensive. I agree with this, and this was helpful to me since the expert is someone who is more knowledgeable, a scholar, and also familiar with the research activities. The expert was given a sample of the themes in order to offer suggestions, and make recommendations or modify the thematic map developed. The

assistance I received led to a well-developed thematic analysis (Figure 5.2). This is the final thematic map that guided me during the analysis process.

6.2.6 Step 6: Writing up and producing the report

This was the last step in analysing the data, guided by Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis method. This stage begins when the researcher has a set of fully worked out themes and involves the final analysis and write-up of the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is a crucial stage, since many decisions are made as to how far informants' words are left to speak for themselves, and how much commentary and analysis there should be (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). These life historians cautioned me by highlighting that this research can have an emotional effect on all parties involved; as such, it became my responsibility to adhere to the principles that guide data analysis in life history research. Braun and Clarke add that this is the final opportunity for analysis to ensure that the themes answer the research questions and allow for the production of a scholarly report of the analysis.

After analysing and reflecting on the collected data, I invited the informants to view what I had interpreted and documented. For reporting purposes, informants were given the chapters that described the themes that emerged from the data, meaning that they viewed five chapters. They were then informed that after the writing up process and editing of the thesis they would be given an opportunity to view the whole thesis. During the writing-up process, as a feminist I was guided by my personal experiences, the life history methodology, and the university's ethical standards. Before the execution of this work, all informants were notified about the objective, and how the data would be used and presented. In brief, the informants were told that a complete thesis would be printed and that the information would be published. This was to give them a clear indication that the information they would yield would at some stage be in the public domain, but their identities would remain inviolate.

In line with this, Goodson and Sikes (2001) are of the view that life history accounts need to be readable and accessible, thus enabling researchers, informants and readers to gain a recognisable impression of how particular lives are lived and expressed in day-to-day contexts. Moreover, presenting a dissertation to participants brings several potential benefits to a researcher, many of which are common to the publication of journal articles (Murray & Beglar, 2009). These potential benefits include enhancing my professional profile as a researcher and as a postgraduate student. Presenting my thesis to my participants will help me to reflect on my ideas. It will also generate feedback that may help clarify my thinking and

improve my future work. Furthermore, it will provide me with valuable opportunities to network with others in the profession who share similar interests.

6.3 Criticism of the thematic analysis approach

The thematic analysis method has been praised for its flexibility and for being accessible to researchers with little or no experience of analysing qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, these critical scholars were also able to identify the limitations of the thematic analysis method: scanty or unconvincing analysis, where themes do not appear to work, where there is too much overlap between themes, or when they are not internally coherent and consistent. In spite of this, advocates for this approach insist that regardless of these potential limitations, the method has the potential to allow information to be both described and interpreted for meaning (Roberts, Dowell, & Nie, 2019). Moreover, thematic analysis is useful for summarising key features of a large data set, as it forces the researcher to take a well-structured approach to handle data, helping to produce a clear and organised final report (King, 2004).

It has been found that there is a dearth of thematic analysis of academic articles in the existing literature. For this reason, critical scholars allege that the lack of substantial literature on thematic analysis (compared to grounded theory, ethnography, and phenomenology, for example) may cause novice researchers to feel unsure of how to conduct a rigorous thematic analysis (Nowell, Morris, White, & Moules, 2017). Some researchers also contend that while thematic analysis is flexible, this can lead to inconsistency and a lack of coherence when developing themes derived from the research data (Holloway & Todres, 2003). In an attempt to minimise the shortfalls of thematic analysis, I used the six steps of Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis model as described above. This process allowed me to move backwards and forwards and to select patterns or themes that emerged from the raw data/interview scripts. I now present the principles of analysing data in life history research,

6.4 Principles of analysing data in life history research

Cassell (1982) argues that a skilful life historian understands that harm in qualitative research is most likely to occur not in the course of daily interactions between the researcher and the informants, but during writing and disseminating the data. In this regard, Johnson (1982) adds: "the literature is filled with instances of researchers who have caused anger and dissension among those whom they have studied, simply because of the ways in which they

have written and disseminated their findings." In line with this idea, Lacey and Luff (2001) further insist that "many reviewers consider 'respondent validation' of qualitative research to be a mark of quality, and as a way of demonstrating rigour." For this reason, as already noted in Chapter Four, the informants in this study were given transcriptions of their interviews for correction and approval before the data analysis process. No changes were required.

When deciding what to include and what to leave out, I was guided by the following principles identified by life historian Muchmore (2000):

- Whose voice needs to be analysed?
- Are the data relevant to this study?
- What possible bias may occur?
- Does the information that is included comply with the requirements for fair and ethical considerations?

A brief discussion of these four guidelines is presented below.

6.4.1 Whose voice?

This study has been informed by feminism, which cautions me to be sensitive and critical when it comes to analysing the generated data. This is also in line with life history methodology that requires me to be careful during this stage. Scholars maintain that as most studies have been conducted and written by men, vital parts of women's experiences have been missed (Higgs & Smith, 2002), meaning the voices of women were ignored. This was supported by Brooks and Hesser-Biber (2007) who concurred that indeed mainstream social science research was male-dominated, as such lacking accurate representation of women's experiences. They further add that because women were often left out of scholarship and research topics, such research consistently failed to take women's activities and experiences into account.

In this study, it became my responsibility to take note of the voice that needed to be included. The principle of 'whose voice' alerted me to the fact that women's voices had to be heard. As a consequence, I focused on my informants' verbatim responses, to ensure that the authenticity of their views and perspectives was maintained. I therefore had to let the data speak on its own merit in order to avoid contamination.

6.4.2 Are the data relevant?

Aligned with life history methodology, feminism is deeply analytical and reflective (Higgs & Smith, 2002). I used it as a powerful tool to make a critical and informed decision on the importance of relevant information that would serve the purpose of the study. Using varied data generation methods in collecting life stories of the informants led me to accumulate a huge body of data. At first I was astonished and confused as to which data I should include or not. Being guided by the principles of analysing life history research I realised that I had to reconsider this principle of 'Are the data relevant?'. As a result, I searched all the data generated by the different methods, and was then able to select the information that was appropriate and relevant for inclusion. I used my informants' verbatim responses as evidence of the relevant information that would address the research questions.

6.4.3 What possible bias may occur?

This principle cautioned me about the possibility of being biased during the data analysis process. Stake (2010) insists that bias is "ubiquitous and sometimes undesirable." In order to address this while adhering to the life history methodology, I spent a long time in the field generating data "until saturation occurred and variation was both accounted for and understood" (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). Furthermore, in an attempt to minimise bias, in this study I used interrelated data generation methods that yielded text, audio, and visual data. Then I compared and contrasted data, thus reducing the risk of systematic biases due to a specific method (Tummons & Duckworth, 2013).

6.4.4 Does the information that is included comply with the requirements for fair and ethical considerations?

Driven by my personal ethics and the feminist ethos that promotes social justice, I tried my level best not to breach the informants' privacy. Indeed, Stake (2010) warns that life stories can be of value to many readers, but getting too close to informants' private world is intrusive. I was also guided by the university's ethical guidelines which serve as standards and a basis upon which each researcher ought to evaluate his or her own conduct (Strydom, 2011). In other words, it became my responsibility to honour the privacy of all the informants (Stake, 2010). This principle constantly reminded me to double-check whether the information I was analysing and interpreting was suitable for inclusion in the study. I was therefore required to continuously revisit my personal and the university's ethical standards.

My informants had families and lived in communities that were close to them; for this reason, their names and the names of the places associated with them were protected by means of pseudonyms. Information that I considered unsuitable for inclusion in the study was eliminated. Thus the confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity of the informants are maintained throughout this study report. The next section presents the profiles of eight rural working mothers who pursued higher degrees at a South African university.

6.5 Profiles of the rural working mothers involved in the study

> The construction of self begins with the material circumstances of particular bodies, marked by sex, race, abilities, and sexual pleasure, growing up in material circumstances such as riches or poverty. These material conditions interact with social and political circumstances over lifetimes which begin in babyhood and go through changes of long adulthood. (Griffiths 1998)

Before the grounded interview conversations, I met each informant on different days, trying to understand their different experiences, personalities and ambitions, including their multiple identities as mothers, workers, and postgraduate students. Meeting the rural working mothers who were also postgraduate students was an unforgettable and enriching experience. As I indicated in Chapter One, my desire to conduct this study stemmed from the personal experiences I endured as a postgraduate student, worker, mother, and wife coming from a rural area. By employing a life history methodology and feminist theories, I was able to obtain a clear understanding of the challenges faced by these eight rural working mothers as adult learners. The life history approach enabled the informants to tell their stories in an unbridled and honest manner, and this in turn yielded rich information about their specific life experiences, memories, and interpretations (Samuel, 2009).

All of these women worked in different environments in and around Durban. One of them was employed in a university setting, while seven worked in different settings in the DoE, such as primary schools, high schools, a Further Education and Training College, and an office-based environment. However, all of them currently or had previously worked as educators (Table 5). I was lucky to have two groups of master's degree students: the first group included those in the first year of their master's study in 2014, and the second included those in their second year of master's study in 2014. The informants were thus quite clear about what being a participant in a research project entailed and they all understood that no study could be conducted without obtaining data. Having said this, they asked me to be patient since they were working and also had to meet their own study deadlines.

Table 5: The time informants had spent in an educational setting

Informant*	Level 1 Educator (years)	Level 2 (HoD) (years)	Tutor/ Lecturer (years)	Office-Based (years)	Total (years)
Aphelele	15	0	6	0	21
Lulama	7	4	3	0	14
Elihle	10	15	0	0	25
Luyanda	13	0	0	5	18
Amahle	16	0	0	0	16
Aphiwe	15	0	0	0	15
Bongeka	10	0	0	0	10
Sibusisiwe	10	0	0	0	10

*All the informants' names are pseudonyms which I selected and assigned randomly. HoD, head of department.

I now present the profiles of each informant.

6.5.1 Lulama

I met Lulama as a member of our first PhD cohort in January 2013. At first I refrained from telling her that I was struggling to locate informants for my proposed study, as I realised that we were all in the same boat and I knew exactly how much time I would need to collect the data for my study. While we were in our fifth cohort doing an oral presentation, we were asked to share our difficulties as postgraduate students. I used that opportunity to inform the house that I was struggling to locate informants. After my presentation, Lulama amazed me by saying "Please include me as one of your informants". She invited me into her office where she gave me her contact details in order to arrange a time and venue for generating data. Our first meeting was based on collecting more information about her profile. She said:

> I was born in 1977; my mother always had homebirth because my parents were poor and could not afford to go to the hospital. The home village woman assisted my mother in giving birth. I am really not sure when I was born, in my baptism certificate is written 8 December which I ended up using for my ID. However, my mother told me she gave birth to me the day before people on the farms go to buy food for Christmas. On the farm people always go to town on the 24th so it means I was born on the 23rd of December, really I have no idea how the 8th came about. When I asked them, both my parents confirmed the 23rd because

something terrible happened that day. On the day I was born my father had to go to town to buy some clothes and food for me and he was attacked and nearly died. So I believe I was born on the 23rd then.

I can also mention that in 1985 I started to look after the farmer's cattle and earn my first salary which was 50 c while I was only eight years old and not schooling because school was too far from where we stayed at the farm. In 1987 I started school while I was 10 years old and fit to walk a distance to and from school. I was not the only child in class who was tall and some other learners too had a similar problem. In 1986 I was admitted to hospital suffering from cholera and was discharged after my recovery. In 1988 my dad was in an accident, he fell off the bicycle. He was admitted to the hospital. Strangely, while in hospital for an accident they discovered he got TB. He ended up being in the hospital for 6 months.

It was a really difficult time for us since my mother was the only parent working on the farm and she had to support a family of six, and my older sister who had already dropped out from school to work on the farm and so she assisted in supporting us as well. When my father got out of hospital he was given a letter to hand to the boss. Since my father was illiterate he did not know what was written in it and none of us was that educated to understand English by then. We later found out from the boss that the doctor instructed him to give my father a less strenuous job and as a result, he was fired because he had no job for him, and we needed to move from his farm. At the beginning of 1989, we moved to another farm. Fortunately, the new farmer adhered to the doctors' orders. In 1991 my father was again in a bicycle accident and this was terrible, he was in ICU for a week but he recovered; ever since, he was not in a state of good health. In the same year, I was badly attacked at the farm and I can still remember that incident even now. In 1994 my father passed away on the 27th of December at home. It was the first time seeing a dead person. It was a painful experience. My father was everything to us.

In 1996 I started my Grade 10 at St Augustine College [pseudonym]. The school was run by nuns. In 1998 I worked hard and passed Std 10 (Grade 12) with an exemption. The following year my grandmother passed away. In 1999 it was then my first year at the tertiary level doing a Teaching Diploma. In 2001 I won the first prize in storytelling and had to represent KZN province in Johannesburg. It was my first time being in a plane and meeting some well-known celebrities playing in most South African favourable soapies. In 2001 I completed my Diploma and I had to look for a teaching post. In 2002 I got a job at Sunnydale Combined at KwaSuka [pseudonym], employed by the SGB [school governing body], and graduated for the first time. I was actually the first graduate in my family.

In 2003 I got permanently employed. In 2004 my best friend left to study overseas and at the same time, my nephew passed away. I also registered for the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE). In 2005 I got married and completed the ACE certificate. In 2006 I received the ACE certificate and enrolled for B.Ed. Honours and got pregnant with my first baby. In 2007 I was diagnosed with a terminal disease and on the following year, I lost my baby at birth. I also completed my first degree. In 2008 I received my degree and my best friend returned to South Africa.

In 2009 I registered for master's Degree and was promoted to an HoD [Head of Department] post at my workplace. In 2012 I graduated for my master's degree, got a job at the tertiary institution. I was employed as a Psychologist [pseudonym] tutor at the university till to date,

but I'm not happy with the position of being a tutor as opposed to being a lecturer. Lecturers get 40% teaching time and the rest is reserved for publishing. I have been awarded tutor status which means I get less money but the job is the same as that of a lecturer. Nevertheless, I also hold a certificate for a University Education Induction Programme. This certificate enabled me to gain knowledge on how teaching is done in higher education institutions. I had also gained more knowledge of the important aspects of assessment in higher education, curriculum development, and supervising research in the higher education sector.

In 2012 I registered for my PhD and in the same year stressful experiences of my marriage life started. In February 2015 my supervisor told me that my thesis had been approved. I was so happy; in April 2015 I graduated for my PhD. Now I'm no longer Lulama but I'm Dr Lulama Zungu [pseudonyms]. I therefore hold the title of 'Doctor of Education'. My interest is in pursuing a scholarship. I want to do more research and publish academic articles. I had already published three papers based on my PhD topic with the help of my supervisor. I am hoping that one day I will be employed as a permanent lecturer in a higher education institution.

In life, I like challenges because they make me grow. Personally, I consider myself a helpful person but I hate it when I'm being taken advantage of or when I'm being used. In other words, I don't like it when people abuse my kindness. I love to help Grade 10, 11, and 12 learners from my rural area by giving them extra lessons. I also assist learners from my church with university application forms, especially those who find it difficult to collect them on their own. I also help them by forwarding bursary forms to them.

I can also mention that I'm very punctual and I regard myself as a well-organised person. I like going out with my friends and I enjoy being in the company of people where I can laugh and forget about work and other problems. I like sports as my hobby but because of the heavy load of being a wife, a worker and a postgraduate student, my 'laziness' in this regard is due to time constraints. But even though I lack time to do sports, but I make it a point that I visit a gym every day if possible.

6.5.2 Elihle

When Elihle and I met at the university in January 2014, I was very happy to see her again as we had studied at the same Teachers' Training College for almost three years, where we had shared the same desk. We met at the university while she was registering for her master's degree. She gave me her contact number and I contacted her in May 2014 as I was anxious to locate informants. She agreed to be an informant and would also attempt to locate others. When she was asked about her profile Elihle said:

> I was born in 1965 in a deeply rural area in KwaZulu-Natal but the hospital was situated in Durban. My father was a policeman and my mother was not working. My mother used to look after us and did everything that a woman was supposed to do up until she joined her husband in Johannesburg. While other children from the neighbourhood did not attend the school, my parents took education seriously even if the school was too far. Working in Johannesburg it

opened my father's eyes and he saw the need to keep us to school because of the cost of living. Both parents realised that to live a better life, you have to be educated.

For me, there is one thing that I didn't like while I was still young, that when I grow up I should depend on my husband. As from my tender age, I had the idea that of hating to depend on someone. Even if I was told that as a girl or a wife I need to be submissive, but sadly I was not taught to be independent, so that needs to be challenged. Worse part there was no room to say no, because as we grew up knowing very well that there are things that you should do, like making everyone at home happy because of my status as a girl. I really didn't like that. But the bottom line, refusing I would get severe punishment. As a girl, I had no choice to do something different from what other girls used to do.

When I was seven years old I started my Sub-Standard A at Mawisa Primary school. In 1975 I felt sick – as a result I didn't finish my Standard 1. I had to repeat the same class the following year. In 1980 I passed my Standard 5 and I got a certificate. I enrol at secondary school and in 1984 I was very happy to hear that I managed to pass Standard 10 (Grade 12). But during the following three years I couldn't further my studies because I was very ill. In 1988 I was accepted at the Teachers' Training College. However, I met a tragedy when I lost my grandmother in 1989. My granny was everything to me since my mother was in Johannesburg. In 1990 I found some difficulties when I was studying and grieving the loss of someone who was so special to me. In 1991 I graduated and managed to secure a teaching post as a qualified teacher.

I work hard trying to put into practice what I had learned at the College. In 1993 I got married. I got my firstborn the following year, 1994. In 1995 I got my Higher Diploma in Education (HDE). In 2010 I received my B.Ed. Honours degree in Management. During my career, I had held a number of positions. For example, I had been a facilitator of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) in UMkhanyakude District, and a facilitator of early childhood development in Isihlahla [pseudonyms] District. In 2000 I got a Head of Department (HoD) promotion, the post I'm holding to date. My current position required me to monitor teachers' work, offer development courses if the need arises, and listen to teachers' concerns. In 2004 I lost my sister-in-law. In 2006 I enrolled and received my Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) certificate. In 2014 January I enrolled for a master's degree.

Personally, I'm a very kind and approachable individual. I like tennis and reading if time allows. I enjoy doing something for my community, such as identifying learners who are facing learning problems, and I would take the initiative of being a 'Soul Buddy' for such struggling individuals. I have the ability to involve all stakeholders in an attempt to resolve learners' problems. I love to take initiative to empower other women in my community. I like to encourage other women in my church by saying "Nothing is impossible". I believe that 'finding a way out' when one faced with a challenge is the only solution. However, the fact that I'm kind did not mean that people need to undermine me. I really hate to be treated unfairly at work, and I found it hard if teachers undermined my position. I'm hoping that one day I'll have an office as a Deputy Chief Education Specialist, where I'll supervise Subject Advisors, conduct workshops, and monitor the curriculum.

6.5.3 Aphelele

I met Aphelele at one of the universities in KZN, where we were doing the same course. The university gave students the opportunity to form study groups, but it was not easy to get to know all the students doing the same modules. The main office would print out the names of those students who agreed to be contacted by others if the need arose. Just like me, Aphelele's deepest fear was that of being a failure. In January 2014, when I was walking at the university, I met Aphelele. We exchanged our contact numbers. Struggling to locate the informants, I then called Aphelele and informed her about the topic of my study and its criteria set. She surprised me: there and then she asked when we should meet and hand over the first set of interview questions. She also identified two more informants that were willing to participate. Later on we had our initial meeting. Fortunately, she was aware of the procedure of conducting research since she was doing her second year of her aster's. When asked about her profile she said:

> I was born in 1969 in a deeply rural area in KwaZulu-Natal and it is still today. My mother was very responsible but we didn't see it at that time, because we looked at her as a harsh person. But if you look at it now, that woman was a caring mother, I can say. I remember I was in primary when she first got her pension, it was around about R80, but we used to live on it. She had no income at the time and we relied on our brothers. So our brothers were looking after us up until she got her pension at that time. As a young girl, you know, I was the youngest at home. And I remember my mother gave birth to me when she was 48. Therefore, I hated it [laughs], honestly, I hated it because the other children were laughing at me, 'Oh your mother is a granny, she's old'. I didn't like it, if I can be honest.
>
> Fortunately, there was my sister-in-law, she was supposed to be my mother then, I can range her at my mother's age. So I used to tell my friends that my sister-in-law was my mother and that one was my grandmother. So I didn't like her at all at a younger age. It was like she was humiliating me then. Why did you give birth to me at your age and all those kinds of things? So but I loved her.
>
> My mother used to discourage us to drop out of school because she used to tell us that it never worked for her. She used to say, look at your aunt she's got this, she's got that, but look at me, I've got 9 children but I've got nothing and my husband just went away. So if you're not educated, just forget that you'll ever make it in life. She used to tell us that.
>
> As I've mentioned before, I had elder brothers with wives and so we used to look up to them that OK, this is what we are doing, and my mother is also happy about this and we are also happy then; we knew that this is how we have to do things in life. What we were doing [as] we grew up as siblings, we used to do work together, so there was nothing that was totally out of our way unless maybe when there were children, my nieces and nephews, that when they come back from school. We had to look after them and then it was the time for the exams, we had to look after the cattle, so other than that I would be lying. Because the only person that was there that was running the show was just my mother.

In life, I can say that I don't like people who misjudged me; instead, I prefer to be accepted for who I am. Personally, I'm very kind, approachable, disciplined and assertive, but I leave no room for anyone to undermine me because of my status as a woman. I'm that kind of person who always goes straight to the point. I'm well organised and realistic, and I always open to constructive criticism. I like my work and I dedicate time to excel in all that I do. I enjoy reading, socialising, to be involved in constructive discussions, going to church, and to watch sports. I like listening to music and going out with my family to different malls. I'm a member of a Board of Trustees and also as a member of the Community Policing Forum (CPF) in my area. I'm also an activist and a feminist. I participate in a charity organisation in my community.

In order to achieve my mother's dream, I worked hard to accomplish good results. I have a Primary Teachers Diploma (PTD), a Higher Diploma in Education (HDE), an Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) certificate, and an Honours degree specialising in Inclusive Education. On top of these qualifications, I also have a Project Management certificate, an HIV and Counselling certificate, an Events Management certificate, and Assessor and Moderator certificates. It is within my veins to encourage others to chase their dreams and to involve them in constructive debates. I enjoy encouraging students to read a lot, as I believe it is a sin to go to bed without having read something. I had been an educator at a public high school before and I moved to a new job.

I have to love my job because in it I learned that I have a gift for unearthing different blends. When my kids first went to school, I was so excited that I could assist them with their school work without hassle. I am a teacher by profession. Currently, I'm a Senior Lecturer, hoping to locate an international job that will pay well than what I'm earning. I enjoy assisting students in the higher education setting, especially those with a rural background. My position as a senior lecturer is equivalent to that of an HoD. I supervise junior lecturers by encouraging them to excel in what they are doing. I also encourage them to study so that they will always view things [in an] open-minded [manner].

On 14 April 2015, I received my master's degree. My interest is to pursue my PhD, but I don't want to rush it, I want to make sure that I choose the topic well and read a lot before registering and defending my PhD proposal.

6.5.4 Amahle

Aphelele informed Amahle that I was struggling to locate informants. She told her the topic and the criteria that informants needed to meet in order to participate. Amahle agreed to be a prospective informant. We met at the university while she was struggling to do the corrections to her master's dissertation before submitting it to the internal and external examiners. When asked about her profile she said:

I was born in 1975. I started Sub-Standard 1 in 1983. In 1989 I passed Standard 7. I would also say that I grew up in a big family. My mother and my father were churchgoers. My father was very quiet and concerned about church matters at all times. He was a leader at the church but not a priest. My father was not educated and was not working. He used to do handwork

things like hangers, turning wood into usable equipments, and sell them to the public. He was also good at ploughing vegetables. So that is how we survived.

I think that my parents were very active because the family at that time, we were almost the same, but mine was somehow labelled as rich as compared to others. During those days most fathers were working but not mothers. But for us, we did not struggle, that's because my mother and father were active, I'll say. The fact is that they were both not employed, but they had always things to sell to people in order to get money. The richness of the family also depends on the number of things that they owned. So we were 9 as siblings, we had enough houses around the area, we also had a big house, which most families did not have at that time. My father also owned livestock, so that was also referred to as being rich because we never went hungry because the cows provided *maas* and milk. As a matter of fact, I don't eat *maas* now; I don't drink milk because we had more of that at home.

It was like a norm to treat our parents with respect, but my father was funnier than my mother. My mother was very strict; on the other hand, my father loved helping us with homework, especially IsiZulu. Though he was not educated, I assume at that time IsiZulu language that we studied at school was the common thing they knew as men, like the colours of the cattle and all those things, so he'll assist us with homework. We used to play with him as well. It was fun. My mother was very harsh and she would give us some hidings for minor things. We were 5 boys and 4 girls. While we were young my mother would encourage us to practice for the choir and render musical items on Sundays.

I think comparing the things that are happening now, during that time we were very free as young children. We did not have any burdens to carry. Our parents provided us with everything that we needed at that time, even though it was not like we had everything that we wanted, but the things that we needed they provided us with. We knew our duty was to go to church, go to school and do house chores only. I think we were also at a similar level as others, in that we were not exposed to many things, especially technology, but that did not affect us especially our upbringing because at that time it was OK to be like that.

In 1993 my dad became mentally disturbed. In 1994 I completed my Matric with an exemption. In 1995 my dad disappeared at the institution for mentally ill patients. In 1996 my beloved sister passed away. In August 2000 I was lucky to give birth to my baby boy. In 2001 my parents-in-law died while preparing for my wedding, hence the wedding was postponed for 2002. When my son was one year and five months old I got married in February 2002. In 2004 I was also blessed to receive a baby girl in March as my special gift from God.

What I can say, I had been interested in becoming a teacher even when I was young. I was inspired by my Grade 4 female teacher who liked to dress in matching colours. I thought being a teacher meant one could afford to wear what one liked. After matric, my parents could not afford to help me further my studies. My parents were poor, even if my father had livestock and the community perceived him as a rich person, but in reality they were poor. Living in a rural area where there were no job opportunities makes things worse. Instead of the teaching profession, my parents wanted me to become a nurse because my older sister was already a nurse, and at that time she received an income while she was studying, unlike when training to become a teacher. But I didn't want to be a nurse. I ended up looking for a job as an unqualified teacher, and in this way I saved money. The following year I could afford to pay my study fees. I insisted to be a teacher because I thought that as a teacher one had the

opportunity to open learners' minds and assist them in having a clear understanding of better opportunities they could be part of after completing their studies.

In nature, I'm a hard-working person and I had obtained a number of qualifications such as a 3-year Teachers Diploma (PTD) that permits me to be a qualified teacher. In 2005 I received an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) specialising in School Management. In 2007 I also received my first degree. I was awarded a B.Ed. Honours degree specialising in School Management. In the same year, I had an unforgettable experience of owning a house for the first time in March 2007, and we moved in with joy with my family to that new home. Later I received an Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) certificate. In 2010 1 I had a miscarriage, my daughter survived for only one day and died thereafter. In the same year, I won the ticket from a particular South African newspaper for the World Cup. The match I watched was between Australia and Germany, which I watched at Moses Mabhida Stadium at Durban.

In 2009 I was also lucky to give birth to my third child, a son. In 2012 we bought a second beautiful house in a better place and we moved in in December 2012. In 2013 we woke up with the sad news of the passing away of my brother. The following year in 2014 another tragedy struck when my mother passed away. During that time, I was busy finalising my master's dissertation. My supervisor played an important role in understanding my situation, comforting me and giving me some advice on what I should do and when. With his moral support, I was able to submit the dissertation for examination, the thing which would be impossible because of the way my mind was so disturbed. In 2014 I passed my master's degree and graduated in April 2015 specialising in Educational Leadership and Management. My intention is to pursue my PhD degree.

I think that by participating in this study I will learn a lot, since it will be the same journey I'm interested in embarking on. Personally, I can say I'm approachable, ambitious, assertive and decisive. I'm someone who has the ambition to help where possible. I'm always willing to learn in order to increase my knowledge. However, I don't like people undermining me because of my status as a black woman. I know myself; I'm just short-tempered in some cases. I can also mention that, I think this study can help other rural women because I believe this study will serve as a wake-up call, especially for those that encounter some difficulties. Women will learn how others rose above their challenges and the choices they used in order to survive.

I'm a secretary at the church and I also hold the position of Secretary of the Teachers' Union in my workplace. I like to sing and to listen to choral and gospel music. During my spare time, I enjoy doing crossword puzzles from different magazines and newspapers, at which I'm very good. I considered myself as a helpful person. At my church, I love to help those who battle financially. For example, if they have conferences, I would do the catering free of charge. I also do free catering for my friends if they have special events.

My interest is to become a lecturer at the university after receiving my PhD degree. But there is something that puzzles me in most cases, I don't like the state of South Africa. The way I look at it, those that are poor remain poor and those that are rich become richer. In addition, one can get something one may need by being connected with certain people who have influence. Moreover, education is being undermined, because even if one has a high qualification, but if you are not connected to certain people who have certain positions in politics, one gets nowhere. For example, I have a Master's degree in Leadership but chances

are slim since I'm not politically minded and not connected to those in higher positions, and the opportunities for employment are scarce.

6.5.5 Bongeka

I met Bongeka in the company of other master's prospective informants at the university while they were busy working on their proposals. Aphiwe and Elihle told me that Bongeka was also interested to participate. During my conversation with her, I observed that she was very smart and well-mannered. She was aware that our first meeting will be based on her profile. She said:

> At first, I wanted to be a lawyer but because of the circumstances in my family I ended up going to a Teachers' Training College, as it was cheaper. I was lucky having supportive parents even if they were poor. One thing I appreciated was that they made every effort to give me enough stationery and books whenever they could afford it. Despite traditional beliefs in my rural area where the community still felt that girls should not be sent to school, for the reason that one day they would get married, my parents sent me to school and encouraged me to study. For this reason, I am very grateful. If I figure out surviving without education, really my life will be miserable.
>
> My mother was a till packer and my father at that time was earning a pension since he was unemployed due to his blindness. What I like about them was their unconditional love and they treated me as a teenager, even today when I'm a mature person. I like my father; whenever I bought something special for him, he would call me by my clan names and I would feel great. I'm really proud of him, he instils the kind of love I found it hard to explain, even if he can't see me because he is blind. He is still very strict, even now. I knew that I would be wasting my time to ask to visit my friend because as soon as I asked my dad, he would say different things as if he was waiting for my request. This shaped my personality because I'm a grown-up adult but I don't have time to visit my friends except when we do our studies.
>
> I had a 3-year Teaching Diploma (PTD), a Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com.) degree, and a B. Ed. Honours degree specialising in Management and Leadership. The source of inspiration for becoming a teacher is that I love teaching. At my workplace, I enjoy helping learners, especially those who proved that they were willing to learn. Currently, I'm a first-year master's student. I want to work hard in order to finish my master's in two years' time.
>
> I'm teaching History [pseudonym] at a high school level, which I find very strenuous teaching a large number of learners in each class. I don't want to talk about marking. Besides teaching, my interest is in investing in property, but studying is my priority. In my school, I have noticed that some learners are struggling with comprehension, and because of this I then rearrange extra remedial lessons for them if time allows.
>
> I like to go to church and to listen to the choir. I like to visit places of interest if time permitted me to do so with my daughter. As a mother, I don't regard myself as a bad mother because I'm studying. I tried hard to spend time with my child and to listen to what she had to say. My ambition is to obtain my PhD and to work in an office-based environment as a Curriculum Designer."

6.5.6 Aphiwe

I had not met Aphiwe before, but Elihle introduced me to her as she was also doing her master's degree. We met at LAN 5; this room has many computers and is open for 24 hours a day. They told me that they worked long hours at university, and would only leave the university by four o'clock. I could not believe that some students worked at the university till that late. Aphiwe told me that they were very busy but that she was interested to participate. Asking about her profile Aphiwe said:

> I was born in 1974 in a deeply rural area. I started schooling in 1981 when I was seven years old. Living in our rural community, we tend to enjoy it because visiting urban areas was rare. Our aunties were living in urban areas because they were working as domestic workers. We used to visit them, but not for a long period of time. It was just for a day or two because my parents were very strict, we were not allowed to go and visit someone. We were supposed to be at home all the time.
>
> My mother used to look after the field, then she would hire some people to come and help in the field, then we sold the product together. My parents were very strict, they don't take nonsense, they were well known in the area that they are very strict in such a way that even if they are passing in a car, seeing a girl and a boy just standing, this thing with flirting of a girl and a boy. They will come out with this *sjambok* and just hit them. They were well known that you mustn't do anything that is not good in front of those people. And the way that they used to help other people, because I remember there were families that were very poor in the area; they used to come home, they'll share food with them, which may be the product that we have in the field, they'll just give them and we used to have many cattle.
>
> Another thing I can say: even if you don't like, you were forced to respect them. You will not be begged by them. You knew that it was your responsibility to respect them. The way we treat my father, he was like a king at home and my mum like a queen. My mum was a little bit friendlier than my dad; sometimes we just chat with her and play with her, but my father you wouldn't. Even if you were supposed to go ask for a school thing, just thinking twice, how am I going to approach that man, he was like a lion. But when I look back now, I think women or girls were treated as slaves. It is like there was a slave for … I don't know. I can say girls become slaves for the boys, because at home the boys were not doing any dishes, the boys were not cooking, and the boys were not doing even their clothes. We were supposed to wash their clothes, clean their houses, cook food and give to them.
>
> I think by then it has this bad effect on us, because it was like we were their maid because there was nothing that boys do so much. What they do was to drive their cows, going out, going to fetch some water, all those things. But girls got punished if you deny doing the orders given to you. You had to follow that order. We look to our older sisters. Our older sisters used to do all the things that I mentioned to you. Then when we grew up, we followed them. Then we look to our mothers, even in the area like when our mothers will talk to us. They'll make examples of another girl in the area that 'look at someone, look at who's doing 1 and 2', then we know that we have to be like someone who's exemplary in the area.

While I was 11 years old in 1985 my mother passed away. Two years after my mother's death I had an unforgettable incident. I can't tell how I survived the lightning. It was in the afternoon and the weather was bad outside. It was totally dark. We were sitting in the house when the lightning strike inside the house. I really don't remember how I survived.

In 1990 there was political intolerance, which lasted for seven days. I had to stop going to school because it was a war and people were dying. In 1992 I completed my Matric. Getting into higher education was a challenge. I struggled to get money to go to university. To the extent that I had to redo my Matric, which I passed it for the second time in 1995 after spending two years at home without studying. In 1993 we received sad news about the passing away of our beloved father. My father was everything to me, since my mother died while I was young. My father didn't look for a step-mother. He preferred to look after us and taught us everything that other men would not do. He taught us to refrain from having a lot of friends and to stay at home. As a single parent and a male in particular, even drinking Zulu beer he couldn't join other community members. Instead, he taught us how to make a Zulu brew and he drank alone at home.

In 1997 I managed to be accepted at the Teachers' Training College of education. While I was doing my third year I became pregnant and gave birth to my baby boy. At the same year, I completed my Teaching Diploma. In 2000 it was my first graduation and I was very happy. In the same year, God bless me with my second child. It was a girl but she couldn't survive, she passed away. She was a stillborn.

In 2002 I started working as a temporary teacher. While I was enjoying myself as a novice teacher, my sister passed away after the amputation of both legs. She couldn't bear the pain and she later died. In 2003 while I was employed as a temporary teacher, I was able to secure another part-time job as a waiter. After a year I got married. In 2004 I bought my first car. In 2006 I was again so blessed I gave birth to my third child, a beautiful daughter. During the same year, the birth of my daughter brought more happiness when I was permanently employed.

In 2007 I received my Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) specialising with Maths. In 2008 I worked hard and received another certificate. This was an Adult Basic Education and Training certificate. I did it on purpose to understand the appropriate methods of teaching adults, especially those who had limited knowledge or left school before the fourth class. While I was studying, God again blessed me with my last born, my baby girl.

In life, I have encountered some challenges and some rewards. For example, at the workplace, I was so happy that in 2009 I achieved an 86% Matric pass rate in Maths Literacy [pseudonym]. While I was still celebrating my achievements, in the same year we were so traumatised at work. Two learners stabbed another learner; that learner died in front of all the teachers and other learners at school. It was a terrible experience, especially for us as teachers to counsel learners. Life consists of bad and good circumstances.

In 2010 I received my 2nd ACE certificate specialising in Maths Literacy [pseudonym]. Because of the passion I have towards learning, I rewarded myself with my 2nd car. The car made things easier for me to reach places without any hassle. In 2013 I got my B.Ed. Honours degree. I couldn't wait to enrol for my master's degree; however, during mid-year in 2014, I was involved in a car accident. This disturbed me even at night, I had sleepless nights.

> Personally, I'm very helpful and supportive. During my spare time, I like to take my children to different sports activities, and I also take them to UShaka Marine World and at the beach in Durban. Besides making my children happy, I like to make a difference in people's lives. For example, as a Maths teacher I helped learners who encountered challenges. I also assist the children of parents who are close to me. I see myself as an Educational Leader in the future. It is my intention to help others; to empower them, more especially to be an example in what I am doing. Knowing where I come [from] and where I am going motivates me.
>
> I can also mention that I'm a very kind and soft-spoken person, but I get frustrated and irritable easily. I hate it when someone undermines me because of my soft voice. I can raise my voice if the need arises as a teacher or as a mother or when I'm very angry. My son is grown up now but he is still respectful and very obedient. Whenever I'm stressed or free, I like to read the Bible and to play netball. I consider myself as a helpful person. If a colleague at work did not have transport, I would often help them out. In life, there is something that I really don't like. I don't like seeing a woman being undermined in the workplace. I like to see female leaders to not manage very strictly because some of them want to prove themselves [sic]. I hate to be an authoritarian leader. My wish is that a female leader should always be firm, proactive, humble and approachable, and at the same time she should know what she is doing. I think one would then enjoy her leadership status.
>
> I can say that my job is stressful. It is common to find learners who lack support from their parents, and some of them do not have parents. This required one to give them love and to take on the role of being a 'parent', while the Department of Education (DoE) would only burden teachers with a lot of paperwork. I argue that if the DoE would reduce the paperwork, maybe teachers' work would be more enjoyable.

6.5.7 Sibusisiwe

I did not know Sibusisiwe at all. A fellow student whom we met when we were both doing a master's degree and met again in our first PhD cohort, identified Sibusisiwe as a prospective informant. Fortunately, Sibusisiwe met all the criteria set for the study and she was also willing to participate. Her interest was driven by the fact that she also wished to pursue a Doctoral degree. When I met Sibusisiwe for our initial meeting, she said:

> I'm happy to be back at the university after a gap year recovering from an unfortunate experience. In fact, I was born in a deeply rural area not far from Durban. Growing in a rural community taught me many lessons. I remember when I was young the rituals that were observed, of which I don't think are being done in urban areas. It helps us to learn how the relationship between a boy and a girl was handled in rural areas. It was not a secret, but it was a guided relationship. Besides that, we had elders where every month where you are being checked if you are still a virgin or not. So that also contributed a lot. So being proud that I'm still a virgin, I'm in a relationship with somebody and able to stand with other virgin girls is what counted. I love my rural area. If someone can ask me which place I prefer to live in, I think I would choose the rural area life. It's so peaceful, I love it.
>
> My parents, especially my mom and grandmother, are the people I grew up with. My father died when I was two. My mom and grandma were very strict parents. For example, I wouldn't go to school without telling them that now I'm going. I couldn't just disappear.

They had a specific time when I had to be back from school. If school finished at 2 pm, I had to be home by 2:30 pm otherwise I would be in trouble. If I was late, they would ask me where did I pass and what was happening and why I was late. For example, when there was a function we would be told a day before, so that we can report at home.

My mom was working for a woman doing laundry and fetching water and cleaning the house for someone. She then moved to the urban area and worked at the bakery. She was not earning enough because she was using it also for travelling to work, but it was helpful. At home, I used to stitch everyone's clothes if it tore. I also tried to help them with their homework after school. I would sit down with them to find out how was their day, and where did they struggle; I would try and help them as if I was the teacher. That is where I developed the love for teaching, otherwise I would have become any other professional. At first I wanted to become a medical doctor and I had qualified for selection. However, I couldn't pursue this career because of a lack of finances at home and there were no bursaries available.

Growing in a rural area was enjoyable but somehow was oppressing, especially to the girls. As a young girl, if a man wanted you to marry his son he would call you *umakoti wakwami* [future wife]. And everybody would know that he intends for you to marry into his household, and eventually you would end up getting married in that household. If I did not want to get married to the Hadebe family, for example … I wanted to get married to any other family from anywhere else but in the rural area. If I'm abiding with this belief, I would have not been able to get married where I wanted to. Also, rural people especially men, believed in polygamy. It's OK for a man to have more than one wife, but it's not OK for a woman to have more than one boyfriend. I'm different, I don't like to share a man. I like a man to belong to me. This disturbs me as soon as I know that I'm sharing. For me, that's just nonsense.

I love my family, but I don't have close personal friends. I like going to church and to read novels if time allows me. As a high school teacher, I spent a lot of the time marking and accommodating my fiancée at the same time to bring life to our relationship. I love to empower myself. In the past few years, I have obtained a different qualification, such as a Bachelor degree in FET [Further Education and Training] Education, and a B.Ed. Honours degree. I'm currently pursuing my master's degree. I also had obtained HIV and AIDS and Counselling certificates as well. Personally, I'm very kind in nature, and I'm an approachable person. I consider myself as a sympathetic, reflective, supportive and outgoing person. I see myself somewhere in an office doing exactly what I'm studying for, that is to be an Educational Specialist.

I then fell in love with a teaching career because of the innocence in the learners and because behind every profession there is a teacher. My interest is more in Educational Studies; it envelopes the things that were not known to me. I [now] understand learners much better than before. I like to bring a word of advice to those [who] share their difficulties. I like to help orphans and child-headed families and to try to lessen their burden. I am more comfortable when I see myself helping learners with their homework, and especially matric learners with Life Sciences during weekends. My job is challenging; as a subject and class teacher, I'm expected to manage my learners' study programmes, communicate with the family members of each child who experienced educational problems, and more specially to encourage learners.

6.5.8 Luyanda

A fellow PhD student in the same doctoral cohort as I gave me Luyanda's contact details, as she seemed interested in being a prospective informant. When I met Luyanda for our interview, she told me that she was quite familiar with the difficulties one experienced when trying to locate informants. She had a similar problem, but knowing the objectives of her study and by being patient, she felt that she could cope. She made it clear before we started that she was someone who did not like to be disturbed while focusing on her studies. I assured her that the methodology I would use was not a hit-and-run approach; I would have to negotiate ongoing access and reach consensus about when we could meet. She felt comfortable with this process and agreed to participate. During our informal conversation, I found her approachable, kind, and passionate about her work and her studies. I respected her as someone who enjoyed helping youngsters.

She described herself as follows:

> I enjoy watching television, listening to debates on political issues, and reading motivational and spiritual books. I had worked as an educator at a high school level, but now I am employed as an office-based Education Specialist. I had previously been a part-time tutor for the Upward Bound Enrichment Programme at a higher education institution and a Grade 12 Co-ordinator for Economics.
>
> I like to go to the gym and church. I see myself as a doctor with my own practice. Currently, I am working with people in crisis. The more I listen to them, the more passionate I am and willing to help them work collaboratively with different stakeholders in addressing various social ills, and I created awareness of issues such as child and drug abuse, autism, dyslexia, and parenting skills. My motto is: 'To be a complete citizen is to serve the community with one's whole life.'
>
> Over the years I have acquired several qualifications: a Diploma in Human Resource Management, a B.Ed. Honours degree in School Guidance and Counselling, a B.Ed. Honours degree in Inclusive Education, a B.Paed. degree, a Certificate in Business Administration Management, a Sales and Marketing certificate, a certificate as an Accredited Assessor, and I am currently pursuing my master's degree.
>
> My job is to offer support to learners with psychosocial problems and I had to create awareness of their plight as part of the intervention programmes I had to develop. My job also entails giving support and offering recommendations to educators through workshops. I work collaboratively with sister departments such as the Department of Education, the Department of Health, the Department of Justice, the South African Police Services, non-governmental organisations, non-profit organisations, and other stakeholders in trying to address social ills and to promote an effective learning process.

6.6 Conclusion

The profiles of informants involved in this study were presented. Prior to this, I explained how data were analysed and presented the five themes that emerged from the data. These themes were: a) the influence of culture in women's life experiences, b) the impact of apartheid on women's experiences, c) women's social experiences, d) the experiences of adult women in higher education, and e) resilient women. Next, a chapter is spent on each of these themes, from Chapter Seven through to Chapter Eleven. I also discussed the principles of analysing data in life history research.

In the next chapter the first theme which emerged from this project, which is based on the influence played by culture in these women's life experiences, is presented.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE IMPACT OF CULTURE ON WOMEN'S LIFE EXPERIENCES

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter Six I indicated that five themes emerged from this study. This chapter presents the first theme, namely the impact of culture on women's life experiences. The other four themes are dealt with in the subsequent chapters. Worldwide, each person belongs to a group that shares common values and beliefs, or culture. Culture is something that no one can detach from; therefore, it is through culture that we understand ourselves. Culture can have a vast impact, especially on women due to their gender. Culture is described as a set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviours shared by a group of people and communicated from one generation to the next (Matsumoto, 1996:). In each group, culture plays a significant role in shaping young people to inherit the values and ethos of experienced elders. As they grow older, they will comprehend how they should conduct themselves as men and women. In another perspective, each adolescent individual of each particular group will be groomed in a manner to ensure that he or she can be expected to differentiate between good and bad deeds. The literature reveals that human development takes place in a given cultural context, it is affected by culture, and affects its culture (Albert & Trommsdoff, 2014).

7.2 KwaZulu-Natal rural contexts experienced by the informants

Before unpacking the impact of culture in rural working mothers' experiences as postgraduate students, I examine the setting that they grew up in: that is, rurality as a context. In South Africa the DoE (1997, 2002) is concerned about the impact of the rural environment:

> the context of poor people in rural areas remains unchanged. We cannot argue that the urban context is free of the challenges or dynamics found in rural environments, but we can suggest that one of the defining characteristics of rurality is its intensity. For example, even though there is poverty in the urban context, the fact that there are better support and infrastructure and a better chance of obtaining assistance (in the form of social services), such support often either absent or inaccessible in rural areas, owing to the distance, poor transportation, and neglect (DoE, 1997, 2002).

Cultural and social context play constraining and enabling roles, because this is where the action occurs, where characters are formed and live out their stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). All of the informants' names are pseudonyms which I selected and assigned randomly.

I also made it a point to maintain the confidentiality of the informants when referring to the rural areas where they grew up. All of the informants spoke IsiZulu as their mother tongue. They had all grown up in different rural areas in KZN, and were working in different educational settings in and around Durban. It is important to mention here that the comments of the informants are offered verbatim, and that the slight linguistic inaccuracies reflect their authentic language usage. However, such inaccuracies do not impede meaning or understanding.

The context is important in illuminating our understanding of the 'lifeworlds' of the research informants and the myriad of influences upon them (Heidegger, 1962). Moreover, qualitative research approaches are context-specific and capture context-bound narratives (Wicks & Whiteford, 2006). In this regard, Morojele (2012) clearly states that human experience is both determined and limited by space and place. It is because of these viewpoints that early childhood contexts (that is, the rural areas) of the rural working mothers participating in this study were considered. Indeed, their experiences cannot be understood in isolation of the contexts where they grew up. However, this would not be possible without the help and guidance I was offered by feminism theory, which pushed me to ask questions such as: Do rural working mothers experience rurality in their early childhood in the same way or differently? Equally, intersectionality as a feminist framework of analysis was a powerful lens through which to understand how women's social (early childhood) location was determined by various intersecting identities that have cumulative effects over time (Davies, 1981).

For this study, the context involved the place of birth, childhood upbringing, and cultural experiences. However, Timmis et al. (2019) note that in South Africa space is a deeply political and historical issue due to the displacement effects and continuing legacy of apartheid. Regarding the remoteness of rural areas, De Gennaro and Fantini (2002) make the following observation: "being rural as opposed to urban is an attribute that people easily attach to a place based on their perceptions, which may include low population density, an abundance of farmland, and remoteness from urban areas."

The context as a rural place in this study does not cover all rural areas in KZN but only indicate the places where the eight informants grew up. Informants came from different rural areas, and as such, rural contexts should not be essentialised and homogenised (Roberts & Green, 2013). In understanding rural areas in KZN, one needs to know that there is

undeniably a relationship between race and geography; this is called "geography of race, in which white populations hav[e] more geographical space than people of colour" (Gordon, 2015). The majority of black people reside in rural areas, with lack of opportunities and where poverty is inescapable. When informants were asked to tell their stories about the rural places where they grew up, they pronounced as follows:

> **Sibusisiwe:** I was born in a deeply rural area at Mazweni in Malwa. My family moved to Silahleni when I was two months. It is a very rural area such that neighbours are very far apart and a family has a big land to itself. Some of the lands are used for planting, some for burying and some for grazing cattle and goats, chicken. Deep rural areas, this means there is no electricity and no running water. We fetched water from the river. We used the basins to collect water from the running river and put in buckets. For firewood, we go to the forest and it was very far. So we would wake up very early in the morning to fetch the firewood. We did not have a cemented floor and so we use cow dung to keep the floor neat. We use grass to thatch instead of roof tiles which is nice and warm. It feels like a ceiling board.
>
> **Amahle:** I was born in the rural area of Zambithi where there was no electricity, no proper built schools, and no running taps. I was brought up by church-going parents who were very strict with both girls and boys. Going to church was a must.
>
> **Aphelele:** I was born in a very deep rural area, called Mseleni, a rural area of … yah that was rural at that time and it is still today. As we grew up there we were… because everything was there and we didn't know about anything else apart from everything that was there. So that was it. I would say I was born in a large family, I was the last born, and I grew up in a single-parent home. So my mother was the only person who was there. Yah she was so cultural and she liked education, she wanted us to be educated because of her background. In her family, she had three sisters and one of the sisters was a teacher, and being a teacher she didn't assist them with anything. Therefore, what she had was absolute[ly] hers. So she decided that we need to be educated because nobody is going to share education with any other one. So as we grow up and we went to school, we didn't have much but we were not different from other children. The only difference was that we didn't have a father, they had fathers. Although if I'm looking at us at that time and them, there was not much difference and our elder brothers were looking after us. So we grow up in a cultural home where respect was very important. Yah so that was it.

The above narratives paint a clear picture of the context in which Sibusisiwe, Amahle, and Aphelele grew up. Like all of the other informants in this study, the different rural areas where they grew up had some similarities. For example, they all described their rural context as a place that lacked proper infrastructure, and this led to suffering since everything thing was strenuous, such as fetching water from the river and collecting firewood from the forest which was far from their homestead. This is supported by Cole and Knowles (2001), who revealed that lives are never lived in isolation of social context. Also, Amahle mentioned how

her mother was motivated to push them to go to school after realising that her educated sister was independent. Learning respect was also instilled while they were young. Furthermore, Bongeka conveyed the following:

> I was born in Sakhizwe. It's a small location with many entertainments like soccer, netball, and playground. I was brought up by both parents. Life was not easy as my mother was forced to leave work and look after him who was sick. But most of the time I remember when my mother found a job again, as there was no means of income. I spent more time with dad and he helped me do my homework even though he was unwell. My parents were renting a room at Sakhizwe then because of other circumstances that forced them to move out of my father's family. We were forced to leave Sakhizwe. They bought a site at Zizonke. It was not easy at first as we were coming from Sakhizwe. There were no tarred roads and well-maintained streets, I had to learn to fetch water. Life was very difficult and other houses were made of mud. The easy thing we did was to go to the nearest dam when it was too hot, we'll do washing, swim, and bath there.

Bongeka's story was different from those of the other informants: she was born in an urban area with all the necessary facilities, but unfortunately they did not stay there very long. Indeed, during apartheid Africans who were surplus to labour needs or who were no longer fit for employment were forced to return to the African territory of their birth or of the ethnic unit to which they belonged (Blaar Coetzee, *Speech*, 8 November 1967). Bongeka's parents had to leave the urban area as her parents were not working and could not afford to secure a property. Her parents bought a site in a rural area. She was then able to identify the differences between living in a well-maintained urban place and the remote area. Instead of a serviced swimming pool, she would find herself using the nearest dam for swimming.

The other informants were born in rural areas:

> **Elihle:** I was born in a rural area in Sangomana where there was no electricity, no well-built schools, [and] no running water, but it was good to be brought up there. We and the neighbours were like a family. We treated the people from the other neighbours as brothers and sisters because that was the way of life in the rural area.

> **Aphiwe:** I was born in a rural area in Ehlanzeni. It was a place far away [from] town. I can say it was a deeply rural area because there was no electricity, the roads were gravel. We used wood to make fire, we go to fetch water. We look after the cattle and all those things. It was like that. Boys were not so many like us the girls. Sometimes we had to look after the cattle because there were so many and the goats, all those things.

Lulama's experience differed from those of all the other informants. She said:

> I was born in Elangeni, that's where we were living on the smallholding. Okay … the smallholding that we lived on was the smallholding for Mr Somtseu, so that's

> where I was born. I was supposed to be born at home and then went to the hospital after … my mother only went to the hospital after she giving birth I was home born … hmmm. Honestly, on the smallholding, my mother used to give birth by herself but my grandmother was there on that day, so my grandmother was there to [help her] give birth. Hmmm. I think in my mother's case, the issue of going to hospital they do home birth and then I think because I was too fat that's why she had to be taken to the hospital afterward, because there was some complication, but of my sisters never went to the hospital.
>
> Both those issues, because of transport and money, so during that time mostly they do home birth so they know how to cut the umbilical cord and whatever. So when someone is feeling the labour pain they know who to call, who's going to help out with the whole procedure. So, the combination of money, being far from town … transport, everything, so as I am saying most of us were home birth. I was living on a smallholding from as a young child up until as a teenager. My father worked there, my mother worked there, my older sisters who did not go to school also worked there, even me during holidays I worked there. I grew up on that smallholding seeing how difficult things were. One day we came across a python. When the farmer wanted to shoot it, he looked at it, he said it had eaten something; he then dropped us and left. But what I'm saying is that working there wasn't safe.

Supporting Lulama's sentiment, Luyanda commented that:

> I can say parents were oppressed by the owners of the smallholdings because they didn't have a word. It means you as a father, you had to conform to whatever the owner is saying. They were not receiving payment for staying there, because the owner will say I've given you land, you've built your house in that particular land, therefore you have to work for me and your kids too have to come and work for me. And once in a month because the owner they were making this mealie meal, they were giving them 80 kg for the entire family and maybe 5 litre or 10 litre milk for feeding, which means the food that they eat must come from the smallholding. It is either the milk or the mealie meal that they plough coming from the farm. So that's the kind of life.

The above captions paint a clear picture of the context which informants experienced while living in rural contexts. They all mentioned that growing up in a rural area had both negative and positive effects on their lives. The positive effect was that they enjoyed their early childhood years as the relationships among the people were mostly warm and supportive. Even though houses were scattered and neighbours lived far apart, this allowed them space and separate land for growing crops and burying their loved ones close to their homesteads. They also had enough land that the community shared for grazing their herds, such as cattle, goats, sheep, and donkeys. A negative effect was that of hardships in terms of fulfilling their basic needs. They had to work hard to survive. It became evident that the living conditions were harsh compared to other informants' rural contexts. Lulama's story demonstrated that her family lifestyle was different from others, since her family did not own the land;

therefore, the owner of the land treated them as slaves, and requested anyone from the family to work for him. This confirms an earlier finding by Turok (2011), who noted that white farmers paid low wages to their black workers who worked and lived in inhumane conditions, with racial prejudice accompanied by brutal enforcement towards those who resisted.

However, living on a smallholding did not benefit all family members, such as increasing their standard of living – instead it just exploited them. Luyanda commented that people living on these smallholdings received food from the owners of the land, so that the remuneration would be less because of the support they had received. Besides this, Lulama indicated that they came across a python; fortunately, it had recently eaten and was not looking for a meal – but who could tell what would have happened if the python had been hungry. This suggests that living on smallholdings was perilous. Collection of firewood from the forest might lead them to encounter various species of wild animals roaming around.

While seven of the informants experienced the hardships outlined above, Luyanda had a different story to tell:

> I was born in the deep rural [area] of Umfolozi at Vukani, not far from a place called Sithule and it's not far from Ekuthuleni. Where I was born, as I've explained, is a deep rural area. There is only one bus that comes in the morning, takes the people to town and comes back in the afternoon. We were using a generator and we were using a fridge that worked with paraffin. So you can imagine, we had to fetch some wood for making fire. So that's the kind of life where I was born.

Luyanda's comments made it clear that not all people who lived in rural areas were so poor that they lacked modern facilities. Luyanda indicated that both of her parents had been school principals. She mentioned that during those days the principalship was associated with a privileged position. She remembered that only her family owned a television, and how the young people of the village, even those as old as 20, would visit them to come and watch television. She mentioned that this was a communal form of living. She also remembered how personal matters often became a matter of public interest. For instance, their living room was not treated as a family sanctuary, but instead it accommodated all of the neighbours all the time. Seekings (2003) found that a large number of teachers live and work in rural areas, and this means that almost half of the semi-professional class is in rural areas. Indeed, it would be surprising not to find teachers there, as they were trained to serve their community.

Since Mr Verwoerd announced in 1955 that "there is no place for the Bantu in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour" (Christie, 2006), in adhering to this

black people did not force their way to live in white people's areas, but instead enjoyed living in their reserved arears. They lived harmoniously with each other in rural areas. Katongole (2001) articulated that Ubuntu governs the norms of conduct and criteria for achievement and is characterised by a profound sense of communal life, which articulates itself in a complex network of social and kinship relationships. Also, Ubuntu meant humanness founded on values of compassion, empathy, sympathy, sharing, defence, compassion, equality, reciprocity, and interdependence (Kamwangamalu 1999). Luyanda was proud that her parents played an important role in assisting the community at large. For instance, when a community member received a letter from a relative who was working in an urban area, the entire community would attend when her mother read the letter out loud to the recipient. However, although Luyanda regarded her family as well-off, her experiences of fetching water and firewood were the same as those of all of the neighbours in the area, who had to do likewise.

It became apparent that poverty and having only dirt roads in rural areas limited the residents from obtaining modern modes of transport. All of the informants mentioned that only one bus arrived to transport residents to the nearest town in the morning and to return them home in the afternoon. Laber (1999) noted that black persons who lived under apartheid were exposed to conditions that were more horrible than anything anyone could ever possibly imagine (Laber, 1999). It became a particular struggle when a sick person had to be taken to a clinic which was situated far from most homesteads. However, those few community members who had private cars, like Luyanda's father, would lend a hand in transporting the sick and the bodies of deceased persons.

The narratives made it clear that life in rural areas was generally very difficult. If they wanted to bath, wash clothes or swim on hot days, they had to walk to the river or the nearest dam. However, I observed one thing that was common to all of the informants – they praised the way that community members treated one another. They all mentioned that living in a rural area was an enjoyable and enriching experience when they looked back on it. Most people in the community had a sense of humour, and sharing was the norm. Whatever people had, they would share without fail.

Melkote and Steeves (2001) acknowledged the rural areas as "contextually small, mostly a rural community where people almost know each other, where interpersonal relations are close with strong group solidarity and kinship ties." Besides, these women enjoyed living in a rural area because it was less noisy, they had large yards, and it was a welcoming place

compared to township life. They all agreed that in the townships there is no privacy as the houses are so close to each other.

7.3 Childhood upbringing in rural areas

South Africa has a history of marginalisation and exclusion based on race, land dispossession and domination of imperialist economic power through seizures of mineral wealth (Oyedemi, 2018). Due to this, there are estimates that just over 22 million people in South Africa live in poverty (Aliber, Kirsten, Maharajh, Nhlapo-Hlope, & Nkoane, 2006). Poverty and inequality in South Africa have racial, gender, spatial and age dimensions (Triegaardt, 2006). Therefore, the concentration of poverty lies predominantly with black Africans, women, in rural areas and among black youth.

Regardless of this, in all communities, childhood upbringing becomes the responsibility of the parents and older people with a burden of inescapable poverty. Parents play an important role in the lives of young people, which has been confirmed by the informants in this study. When they were asked to tell their stories about how they were brought up, informant stated as follows:

> **Bongeka:** I was brought up by both parents. My parents are very loving and the best thing they did was to send me to school and church. They had no money to take me out and going to church became a hobby for me. I remember joining the church choir at the age of 12 years. I attended both Sunday school and the church choir. My parents were not educated but they made sure we had everything needed for school. My mother used to buy English books so that I could read as a child.
>
> **Sibusisiwe:** At a very young age, I was brought up to know that I am a woman. I had to fetch the water. I was taught at a very early age how to cook before I was even 10 years old. They woke me up early to fetch firewood in the forest. When we came to the forest, because I was too young I was unable to collect wood by myself, so they collected and tied it for me and put it on my head. Then we would walk back home. We had several resting stations because I would get tired.
>
> **Amahle:** We did not have freedom as children; we had to listen to what our parents told us. We couldn't ask why certain things were done. That was the way of life. The lifestyle then was that when an adult asks you something you don't question as it is the case with the current generation. For example, it was a must to go to school, the church; as a girl, we couldn't attend the funeral but we didn't know why. We only understood that when we were old.

The above comments made it clear that even though parents were concerned about their children's spiritual life and took them to church, girls had to work very hard since cultural socialisation played a fundamental role in shaping the young women and their roles in the

society. When they were still young girls were taught the importance of helping their mothers with domestic chores in preparation for their future roles. Culture and traditions are cited as key reasons why men do not share family duties with women (Patel, 2014). Also, fetching water and collecting firewood, cleaning and cooking were among the other duties that needed to be performed by young girls. Besides this, they also highlighted their concerns about the fact that the treatment girls received differed from that which boys received.

This was a factor that affected African female enrolment, in that their families are often more protective of their daughters and frequently are unwilling to expose them to potential dangers as they travel to and from school and interact with male teachers and classmates. For example, girls were not allowed to visit their friends or to attend weddings and funerals, but there were no such restrictions for boys. They talked animatedly about gender roles and mentioned how boys' duties were lighter than those of girls. Boys had to take care of the cattle, but nothing else would be required of them. They could visit their friends, play for long hours, and when they were hungry they would come home where they expected to be served by the females. Besides this, girls had to be checked that their virginity was intact on a regular basis.

In African culture, this identified discrimination against women is seen in the traditional injunction upon young women to abstain from sexual intercourse before marriage, whereas there is no restriction on young men or older men marrying younger girls (Igbelina-Igbokwe, 2013). With regard to this, Sibusisiwe affirmed as follows:

> Community members were more concerned about girls' virginity testing. They would be presented to a congregation of girls who are still virgins and to young men so that they can see these are the girls who are ready to be proposed to. Once you have had a child you are not allowed to be part of this ceremony. However, boys are allowed even if they already have a child. Boys are allowed to sit together at functions – those with children and those without – whereas girls with children are not allowed to sit with those without [children] at functions.

It was also evident that the informants have unforgettable memories about virginity testing as young girls. Historically, virginity testing was used to determine the suitability of women for marriage, but it also reflected societal stress on abstinence from sexual activity on the part of girls and young women (Mhlongo, 2009): "Virginity testing restores what is known as ancient Zulu respect for Zulu girls, literally, the womb of the nation, to reinvest aspects of Zulu tradition which were eclipsed by colonialism and Christianisation and to contribute to the development of self-respect, self-esteem and pride in the Zulu people, particularly the

youth in the modern environment" (Kaarsholm, 2006). This shows that the pride of Zulu people, especially men, is placed more on protecting girls than boys for their future benefits, as men receive more cattle when their daughters get married and a mother receives only one cow from the son-in-law. The informants seemed to resent the monthly checking of their virginity by older women, a practice that did not apply to boys. Mothers would send their daughters for this examination for two reasons. First, they were afraid of the embarrassment and stigma when a girl was no longer a virgin, as the entire community or village would know and she would no longer be treated as a girl, but as a disrespected woman. Second, mothers had to ensure that a girl did not fall pregnant, because this would mean that the father of the girl would not receive the full 'bride price'. Besides this, the girl would be labelled as 'loose' and disrespectful; the boy who fathered the baby would not experience any adverse consequences. Girl protection was also the burden of the mother, not the father.

On the positive side, they indicated that living in big families helped them to learn to share whatever they had. Rather interestingly, the informants felt that the way they were brought up in their families and their communities encouraged a sense of humanity in them. They also mentioned that living together with extended family members taught them a sense of belonging; every member belonged to the family. As a result, 'caring and sharing' was practiced regularly. This is what South African Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1999) pronounced – that humanity emanates from one being part and parcel of a tribe in which "I am, because we are" (in IsiZulu *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*). For Tutu (1999) individuals possessed the 'spirit of Ubuntu' as a "generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate" person.

This was how the informants were brought up in their different remote areas. While 'Ubuntu' or humanity values people as a community, rather than as individuals, the very same concept underscores the importance of agreement or consensus (Maluleke, 2012). In a study conducted by Meyiwa (2014), she found that coexistent with the positive values of Ubuntu, are the seemingly opposite practices of burdening women with care duties. In other words, while the community instilled the culture of 'Ubuntu', they failed to recognise the damage caused to the girl-child in name of 'Ubuntu.'

7.4 Cultural beliefs

Every social grouping in the world has specific traditional cultural practices and beliefs, some of which are beneficial to all members while others have become harmful to a specific group

such as women (Maluleke, 2012). Ramphela (1998) expressed that "culture is like an umbrella under which some people like to hide from the rain, and also to shade themselves from the sun, but sometimes you need to fold it." It is culture that enforces gender inequality in communities; while cultural beliefs are supposed to benefit everyone in a society, they can be regarded as a root cause of women's oppression.

Equally, people so often use 'culture' as an excuse to oppress and intimidate others when it should be used to bring people together (Mooi, 2012). Undeniably, gender inequality exists in most, if not all societies, and this inequality systematically disadvantages women (Whisnant, 2002). When the informants were asked to tell their stories of the impact of culture on their life experiences, Sibusisiwe explained as follows:

> The community expected girls to observe special ceremonies and rituals; for example, if the girl had her first period, she would be put in a house for a few days and an animal would be slaughtered and there would be some Zulu dancing. The girl would be given a word of advice in terms of how she should behave at this stage. Another ceremony that happened included *Ukuvezwa*. Once a girl is seen to be ready to be engaged, a ceremony would take place. All the girls in the same age group were called together and an older girl called *iqhikiza* (a grown-up lady who sometimes had a boyfriend but sometimes not) would give them advice. Once a girl has been proposed to, she reports to the older girl that she has been proposed to by so and so and until you fall in love with this man … And you craft a necklace called *Ucu* made out of grass and you put it around the neck of that boy. The boy will take the necklace to the Head boy. Then there will be an evening gathering called *ushukela* (sugar) where girls and boys come together. The girls will bring biscuits and the boys bring sugar and some fruits. They would be sitting and eating together in an open place, singing, and dancing. The event is done to congratulate the two who are engaged. From there they would go to the boy's place and put *iduku* (a white piece of cloth) at night which is seen the following day. The *iduku* shows that the boy has won the girl.

Bongeka remembered one ceremony that shaped her life as a Zulu woman:

> My family sticks to the rules. I remember when I was growing up, I was not allowed to visit friends and they were not accepted fully in my family. I still have some memories. I was told not to involve myself in sexual relationships until I turned 21 years. My parents told me they would do '*umemulo*' – 21st birthday – meaning that it would be a ritual for thanking me as a good girl. So those were good memories of my culture.

The above accounts demonstrate how culture favours males over females. It was evident that education was not regarded as a priority for girls, as I have indicated earlier. This discrimination was not only perpetrated by the fathers in the homesteads, but the culture itself to such an extent that young girls would find it impossible to escape. Young girls were put in

the spotlight in such a way that what is supposed to be treated as confidential and private became a public issue. If a girl experienced her first period, everyone would know about it in the family. It was impossible to hide the fact if the girl was locked in a room for a few days, while the very same person was expected to fetch water and cook. This cultural belief restricted the girl to be placed in isolation and an animal would be slaughtered. Family members would share the meat and dance, celebrating in advance the wealth that the girl would bring to the family in future through the bride price.

Bongeka also commented about being denied permission to visit her friends, to ensure that there would be no chance of her becoming involved in sexual relationships. A study conducted by Mhlongo (2009) revealed that in Kenya premarital sex is taboo and there is pressure on young women to maintain their virginity until marriage. Families and communities try and keep young women and girls ignorant about sexual matters (Mhlongo, 2009). Le Roux (2006) found that the practice of virginity testing has been carried out in KZN since the early 20th century (Le Roux, 2006). The verification of a girl's virginity enables her family to demand a larger *lobola* than the normal bride wealth at marriage, with an additional cow to be given to the girl's mother. Indeed, the intention is not to safeguard the young woman for own benefit, but because she might not get married when she is known to have a child, and the father would suffer. Even if a young woman did get married, they were still under the spotlight as a new bride:

> **Amahle:** As a bride, I don't wear short skirts or short dresses, and leggings and any trouser or jeans. You are not allowed to shout in the yard and you cannot have manicures and earrings. My culture also expects me to look after my kids, ensure that the house is clean even though I am working and studying, but these are still all my responsibilities, including cooking and looking after my husband. It is not always easy.
>
> **Lulama:** For me, I didn't wear the scarf and no one said a thing so I just carried on. I only wear it for important functions. However, I have to wear '*doek*' because I know that my father-in-law would say something. For me, you are not allowed to stand on the father's side of the big house because of *amadlozi* (ancestors) or at the corner, you can't stand there, you have to kneel. You are not allowed to just stand in the yard; you have to move to where you want to go.
>
> **Elihle:** Just to add, for example, if you want to wear shorts, it wouldn't be acceptable in our culture but white [people] can do that. A white pregnant woman can wear [clothes that show her] stomach out, but it wouldn't be acceptable in our culture.

Regarding the subservient position of wives in the presence of their in-laws, Luyanda stated:

> I observed that when you give food to the in-laws, some have to kneel. When you talk to them, you have to use the third person.

The above comments revealed that while certain cultural practices were adhered to, the informants resisted others. Culture imposes oppression upon women in a disguised manner. Marilyn Frye (1984) as a feminist regarded this oppression as a 'system' of interrelated barriers and forces which reduce, immobilise, and mould people who belong to a certain group, and effect their subordination to another group. It was also evident that women in South Africa are impacted by a patriarchal culture that oppresses them on a variety of levels (Allen, 2018). It is these visible interrelated barriers that led these women to fight back and opt for cultural deconstruction through their actions. For example, most informants in this study believed that culture was pivotal in shaping them to become the women they are. Indeed, the desire of their male partners to sustain domination and oppression within the personal relationships of women is an important connection between feminist theory and South African history (Allen, 2018).

However, it was plausible that these women took a stand and challenged those traditional cultural values and practices that they believed were oppressive. According to the informants, culture was no longer a tool to control them; instead, they took control of a set of values and norms that guided their development. Although the traditional setting and aligned married women's gender duties were convenient for a rural environment and a woman not involved in formal work outside the home, a number of these duties have been transferred to non-traditional and non-rural settings (Magwaza, 2009). Besides this, women's oppression involves a structural inequality, which is reproduced by everyday practices and embedded in the taken-for-granted norms and rules of society and the consequences of following those rules (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). Empowerment, on the other hand, entails freedom from internal and external sources of oppression and liberation from class exploitation, gender domination, and racial discrimination (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996).

Surprisingly, these women took the stance of deciding what was appropriate for their lives and what was less important. For instance, Lulama knew that as a bride she had to wear a scarf, but as an educated woman she challenged the custom and seemed to get away with it. She further indicated through our informal conversations that refusing to wear a scarf

> … as an educated person she waited to be called but no one dares to punish her. If the bride failed to comply with what was expected to do, it was just easy to be sent home and to bring a goat as a fine for her deed or misbehaviour.

As brides, the informants were also familiar with the dress code they were expected to adhere to. In line with this, Erasmus-Kritzinger (2003) notes that the need to make a profound difference is only possible if all women can do so in their own way, using their resources and being rightly acknowledged. The promotion of freedom and the eradication of oppression requires a deconstruction of societal 'givens' (McCallum, 2005), and the development of socially just, inclusive practices which enable people to question and challenge their positioning, as well as give a voice to the marginalised (Kaye, 2000).

The informants resisted cultural exploitation and adapted their dress depending on the context. For example, when they visited their in-laws, they knew what was appropriate to wear, but when they were in environments where they felt more at ease, they would dress more comfortably:

> **Luyanda:** Both my parents were educated, but my mother knew that she would have to submit. My mother did not wear trousers at all, because it was unacceptable in my community for women to wear trousers. My mother would teach us how to respect, including respecting other people from our community, respecting any other elder person that you met outside your home, and also how to respect my father.
>
> **Amahle:** My mother told me, 'Because you live in the world, you have to approach life the way other people are looking, but make sure you know that these are my views.' And some things were happening at home. My mother used to say, 'This is my house, in my house, these are the views even though they can be different from the neighbours' views, but if you are living in this house, these are the views.' So those are the things that I like about my mother.

From the above information it was evident that Luyanda's mother was not concerned about the community's expectations. She made it clear that while the community had their views, she as a mother held her own views, which she believed would benefit and shape her daughter's way of life. Most parents wanted their daughters to acquire domestic skills and to learn how to behave like women, as this was their traditional role and destiny. However, the informants all admitted that this traditional view clashed with their parents' ambition – and this conflict made them what they had become. If they had abided by community beliefs, they would never have achieved what they had. Culture is also perpetuated by factors such as

stereotypes, power relations, and the use of gendered language in a patriarchal society, each of which is discussed below.

7.5 Stereotyping

A stereotype is a kind of generalisation linking a group to one or more general traits (Blum, 2004: 156): stereotypes "are cultural entities widely held by persons in the culture and widely recognised by persons who may not themselves hold the stereotype". These stereotypes can be divided into two categories, namely: 1) those which are positive or desirable, and 2) negative or limiting and degrading stereotypes. In this study, the informants agreed that gender stereotypes affected them negatively as black women, particularly as their 'voice' (i.e. their opinions and wishes) was negated and ignored in favour of that of men. As Lulama explained:

> And another thing: as a black woman, you don't have a voice. Society doesn't expect you to have a voice. Or in your family, if there are family negotiations they won't expect any suggestions from a woman. When you make a suggestion that seems to be very good, they would say you are a talkative woman. It is acceptable for men when they make even wrong decisions in the family just because they are men. They are expected to have a voice.

While informants were presenting their artefacts, it also became clear that culture promotes gender stereotyping. Elihle highlighted that:

> What you can learn from my two artefacts is that they are too discriminative because these two mats are different and they are used by two different sexes, which are male and female. But as I've mentioned before, the women make these things but they must use the cheap one. It's a burden on its own.

The findings revealed that women's opinions did not receive the same respect as those of their male counterparts, nor even were they given an opportunity to air their voices – they are being silenced. It was evident that the stereotypical positioning of women as cultural entities was still discriminative, as Elihle commented that women made mats, but the one made with expensive grass was for the exclusive use of the male partner. In this context, feminism as an intellectual activity "gives women new knowledge of social life, the power to think about their circumstances, and the power to act upon them" (Ramazanoglu, 1989). Being an empowered professional woman is seen as an appropriate goal for any individual who has been subjected to discrimination, such as black South African women, and it is regarded as crucial to liberate individuals from oppressive structures and beliefs (McCallum, 2005). For

this reason, inherent in the many feminist definitions is the belief that the individual can effect change and improve their social lives (McCallum, 2005). As educated women, the informants agreed that culture had 'demoted' them to undesirable stereotypes. However, they were grateful that education had empowered and enlightened them:

> **Luyanda:** Impact of gender still exists. We still have stereotypes. Our president, for example, is male. They have never recognised a woman as a president but we have so many intellectuals who are capable and can be better presidents, like Nkosazana Zuma. We have other young ones like Lindiwe Mazibuko, but there are stereotypes even in churches. I have [not] heard … of women pastors. I have never seen an institution headed by a female chancellor and there are few female professors. At least there are some female MECs [Members of the Executive Council] now, but only when I start seeing female presidents in the world and female chancellors, will I believe that there is change.

From the above viewpoint, it became evident that the informants believed that gender stereotypes still existed and that these promoted gender inequalities and the oppression of women. Luyanda identified three different institutions that she believed still supported gender stereotypes, namely national government, universities, and churches. Most of the informants agreed that women now hold positions in the South African Parliament as Ministers, but they were not happy to see that after more than 20 years of democracy, the nation as whole was still biased as it failed to recognise that women are also capable of holding the highest positions in State, such as that of President. However, the informants consoled themselves with the fact that they would use education to air their views in an attempt to enact social change.

7.6 Power relations

Although power is no longer seen as having a structured relation to an unidentifiable set of material, as something to be identified within particular cultural ways (Yates, 1993), power relations have the potential to "hold up the body, mark it, train it, torture it and force it to carry out tasks" (Foucault, 1979). Those wielding power can control others in varying ways, and even get those who are powerless to be involved in activities that are not in their best interests (Hansen, 1993). In this study most of the informants commented that power relations hindered women from being free and from doing what they wanted to do just because they are women:

> **Aphiwe:** I think apartheid has impacted on how power is misused because women were not even allowed to head a house. For instance, if you lost your husband you had to go to 'KwaMuhle' (it was a public office dealing with the segregation of Natives in Durban) where you chose a hat. They would hang different hats on the

> wall, and then a woman had to go inside and choose one hat. Whichever hat you chose, the owner belonged to you. I think apartheid had an impact on women because women were taken like something without value.
>
> **Aphelele:** In the family, as we've already said, women are just powerless. They just have to go with the flow. Men will prescribe what will be done and the women have to follow.

The above comments are in line with Foucault's (1977) assertion that power relations have the potential to force others to perform a task they do not wish to, but because they are powerless, they end up doing it. Aphiwe commented that black women were prohibited from owning a house after losing their husband. Losing a husband is traumatic, and while a wife was grieving, those who had power would chase her out and tell her to go to KwaMuhle. KwaMuhle meant that the woman would be asked to choose a hat without knowing who the owner was, and she then belonged to that owner. Women were not allowed to own houses either, in urban or rural areas. If a woman wanted to procure a piece of land in a rural area, she would be required to bring a male relative who would then qualify her to be allocated a piece of land, which she had to pay for. As a wife, a woman was instructed what to do and she had to obey her husband, with no power to stand up for herself if she disagreed. Indeed, the woman is "constituted by the tradition as the Other, who is mute, powerless, outlawed, ahistorical, and absent" (Lowe, 1993). Women as powerless objects implies that cultural norms expect women to be submissive and conform without being allowed to voice their opinions: further explained:

> **Elihle:** Being a woman is like being a slave, because you have to satisfy all the families and you have to spend more time at work where you get paid, and then come back and do all the unpaid work which includes everything from domestic to talking and counselling. As a woman, you spend less time satisfying yourself as you have to start with other people first and you are the last.
>
> **Lulama:** Just to add on that, while you are expected to be subordinate, you are also expected to be a superhuman [person] that can wash, study, cook, look after the children and look after this old child who has so many rules, when he just sits there and does nothing. It makes you sometimes become angry that you are a woman.

The above excerpts display the women's caring role as being orchestrated by culture. While culture confines women regarding how to behave like women in their homes and in the community, it also enslaves them by instructing them to take care of others. Women's caring skills are the skills of an oppressed group that has been charged with the responsibility of serving other's needs, from a position of little power or authority, and whose survival has

depended on doing this well (Whisnant, 2002). However, in this project, the informants agreed that in Zulu culture women are powerless and men misuse their power to oppress them.

While families benefitted financially by having working mothers, these mothers found it hard to be treated unfairly and as if they are 'superwomen'. They indicated that moving to urban areas relieves them of some of this burden – especially of the role of caring for everyone in the homestead. In urban areas the pressure on the women was not as severe as in rural areas, as they were responsible only for their immediate family. All of the informants lived in urban areas, and they felt that more modern tendencies allowed them to communicate with their husbands about their concerns. Moreover, they were also able to employ domestic workers who took over many chores, and some bought washing machines to alleviate their laundry duties.

Even if historically, women in South Africa have been oppressed solely because of their gender, and they have consequently been the victims of many types of mistreatments and discrimination (Lenser, 2019). The women in this study had resilient hearts. Education provided them with the weapon to challenge patriarchal customs and the status quo. As a result, they were able to find a way to make it through. Education opened their eyes and opted them to wait for no men to dictate what they should do and not to do because they are women. As Nikkhah, Redzuan, and Abu-Samah (2012) agreed that power relations between man and woman is not static or rigid, but it can change over time when women gain power.

Through education, they were able to understand the impact of power-to, power-over, power-with, and power-within. They then chose the one which was suitable for them as postgraduate students, mothers, and workers concurrently. Power-over means power over other people, enforcement of one's own intentions over those of others, and is thus only conceivable in a social relation (Göhler, 2009). Power-with refers to collective action, recognising that more can be achieved by a group acting together than by individuals alone (Nikkhah, Redzuan and Abu-Samah, 2012). Power-within refers to intangible assets such as self-esteem and self-confidence (Mosedale, 2003). It relates to how an individual can recognise through analysing their experience, how power operates in their lives and gain the confidence and change the present situation to a better one (Williams, Seed & Mwau, 1994). In this study, these postgraduate students opted for power-within because of its potential to enable them to persevere through, despite their challenges and barriers they encountered as rural working

mothers. Education as a site of struggle helped these women to change their situation. This finding is also supported by Nikkhah, Redzuan, and Abu-Samah (2012) who found that the NGOs have played their roles in developing the power-within among the Iran women through their functions such as developing individual ability, educational functions, awareness building, and mobilizing of women and become empowered.

7.7 Gendered language

Language enables people to communicate and express their thoughts. It is through language that cultural values, norms, beliefs and traditions are being transmitted and administered. Despite this, language is not only used for communication but also acts as a vehicle for society's cultural and social structures (Gaine & George, 1999). In this study informants shared different stories on how language is used and occasionally misused in their rural communities. They felt that people tend to use gendered language in rural areas, language that discriminates against women and rarely or not against men.

Lulama referred to the language of degradation by saying:

> Having done what is expected of you by marrying, it does not give a woman any crown. Instead, there are two words are being used: the bridegroom (*umkhwenyana*) is big, whereas the bride (*umakoti*) is someone who should be energetic, ready to serve everyone, moving around, doing different things and [she is] always reminded when she has to do something. If you choose not to marry, they call you names as if you were a loose person, such that you see yourself as a bad person and end up getting married for the sake of it. And then you stay in a loveless marriage because you would get labelled with more names. As a woman, you end up doing things that you would not normally do because you do not want to be given degrading names.

In this regard, Amahle stated "The man is not given all of the names that women are subject to." Supporting these viewpoints, Luyanda said:

> It shows that in the communities, there is segregation between males and females. It starts with the titles; a little boy is called a Mr, a married man is a Mr, a divorcee is a Mr, but with women, they separate Miss and Mrs ... This means that there is no balance in the society. A divorced man is looked at the same way but a woman receives negative remarks.

The informants agreed that the community at large discriminated against women in many painful ways. The importance of feminism arises from it offering a language, a vocabulary and a grammar for naming, analysing and challenging discrimination, sexism, and misogyny (Bell, Meriläinen, Taylor & Tienari 2019). They informants believed that the use of gendered

language was aimed at oppressing women. They felt that the community devalued the dignity of both married and unmarried women. A sore point for them was that while the community has many degrading words and expressions to describe women, words used to describe men are likely to express prestige. For example, the words widow (female) and widower (male) mean that two individuals, a female and a male, have lost their loved ones. But a widow feels the pinch of losing a husband in many painful ways. For example, depending on the wishes of the family, a widow would be expected to comply with a new dress code by wearing a black dress and her late husband's jersey or jacket and jewellery as well, but the same 'rules' do not apply to a widower. A widow has to grieve for a whole year and is prohibited from having an affair, which does not apply to a widower. Moreover, after the mourning period a widow would still be called a 'widow', even if she remarried someone else, but this does not apply to a male.

With regard to this, feminists argue that whenever the generic uses of the pronoun 'he' may or may not be used in contemporary discourse, for the authors of most historical works of philosophy 'he' meant exactly what it said: the moral agent, the hero, the soldier, the citizen, the man of virtue, are all explicitly and unselfconsciously conceived as male (Whisnant, 2002). In other words, men would keep their status quo at the expense of women, because the society, state and public sphere empowered men to dominate. In spite of this, Aphelele further explained that:

> Let's say you divorced because of being in an unhappy marriage. If you are remarrying, the new in-laws look at you differently, even if you are marrying a divorced man. Even with *umdlezane* (the word used to label a mother who has a newborn baby). It is my child and his child, but only the woman gets the name.

Bongeka said:

> When a woman lost a husband, she has to follow the cultural practices. The woman is then called a widow. As a widow, she has to wear black clothes for three years and that oppresses women, but the man is not subject to this.

The issue of gendered language seemed to be a touchy subject for the informants, as negative name-calling referred to women and not to men. As a consequence, some unhappy females would stay in a relationship just to avoid being called hurtful names. A bride also has to be constantly reminded about what to do and what not to do by her partner. She has to be very careful of the language and words she uses. For example, she is not allowed to call her father-in-law by name. Also, after giving birth to a new baby, certain degrading words are used to refer to the mother, whereas no such degrading words are used to refer to her partner. To free

themselves from all these degrading names, most of the informants had acquired properties in urban areas, where they resided at the time of the study. However, they adhered to certain cultural customs, such as visiting their extended families in rural areas for special occasions or during holidays.

Relatively speaking, language arises from the needs of people in their world. However, when race and gender are inserted as variables in language development, power relations take on an additional meaning. In this study, the informants were not happy about the way gendered language was used. They believed that the community at large used gendered language to victimise women. They felt that language contributed significantly to the degradation of women through the use of particular words and expressions. In this vein, Luvuno (2004) believes that language is used "as a tool to put societal patriarchy into practice and to make patriarchal dominance a natural thing where women are discriminated [against] and treated as inferiors." Gerrard and Javed (1995) echo this sentiment, highlighting that the discourse of language is important concerning oppression.

In this section I highlighted some of the experiences of rural working mothers, where in some cases they would find themselves being called by problematic, biased names.

7.8 Survivors of a patriarchal society

Patriarchal society is identifiable by male domination and produces visible hierarchical structures of oppression. Its mandate is that of empowering men and at the same time disempowering the subordinates. As a consequence, patriarchy characterises a system whereby women are kept subordinate in several ways (Bhasin, 2006), and serves as a tool for men to control women. Indeed, the domination over women is reflected right from the process of contracting a marriage, during which a man pays a bride price for his wife, which makes her the property of her husband (Ademiluka, 2018). In this study, most informants pointed out that patriarchy contributed significantly in shaping their life experiences as black Zulu women. For example, Luyanda's extended family still reside in a rural area, while she is working as an education specialist in an urban area. She stated:

> The nature of our society is that women work hard but the credit is given to men. In rural areas, working women are expected as persons who take care of the kids and to ensure that their husbands, as their kings, are well taken care of. As a result, these are the things that make some of the rural women not participate in higher education.

Sibusisiwe commented as follows:

> Males don't do anything at home, they are like kings. For me, even if I come home tired from work, after a long day and somebody has been home the whole day, he still expects me to serve him and his family as soon as I arrive. They live like kings at my expense.

Lulama supported this sentiment, saying:

> Working hard saving to buy a car, when I bought a car they call it his [car]. But for me, I bought a car because of my work purposes, I can't survive without a car. My work requires me to attend workshops, present academic articles, having classes late, so there was no other way. My work pushed me to have transport.

From the above information, it became evident that patriarchy and cultural expectations are so deeply entrenched that the education and achievements of women seem to be akin to the achievement of their husbands. Women serving their families in rural areas worked extremely hard under difficult conditions – but they did not receive any credit. Everything they owned automatically belonged to their husbands and families, as in the case of Lulama's car. It is a combination of different spheres that work together to oppress women.

A patriarchal system gives absolute priority to men and limits women's human rights (Sultana, 2011), or they just turn a blind eye when it comes to women's progress. Women's subordination does not cease at home; in public sites such as government or the state, patriarchy is used as a strategy of exclusion, segregation, and subordination, and in private sphere patriarchy is based on household production as the main site of women's oppression (Walby, 1990). This shows how powerful patriarchy is, and escaping it requires the employment of different strategies. The informants outlined other aspects of patriarchy:

> **Aphiwe:** Another thing that is coming to my mind about the role of patriarchy in our lives, I think our parents, the community at large contributed to this. In most households' fathers are taken as kings of the house. I think that is why everything good belongs to them, or they are just following the bible philosophy that says 'Man is the head of the house, therefore, he [should] be treated like a king'. I think that Christianity together with our culture leads to that … I don't know.

> **Aphelele:** In my area, there was nothing that was expected of a girl. The elders had nothing to share with regards to school or advice about careers. We were just expected to drop school and go look for a husband. The husbands, it's just that we were resisting. Older women would argue over some of the girls [that] they wanted as their sons' wives. There was nothing like when parents say they want you to be a nurse or a teacher. In some cases, girls are just taken in captivity into a forced marriage.

The above information shows the strength and pervasiveness of both patriarchy and cultural socialisation in the lives of rural women. These women acknowledge that the patriarchal

culture cared very little, if at all, about women (Dubula, 2018). Due to this, it cannot be denied how difficult it was for these women to fight for their rights and identities as workers, mothers, and as students. Patriarchy and cultural socialisation were meant to keep them in a cage. Aphelele mentioned that they were not safe as young girls, since they could be taken by force to marry someone without their permission. After the girl has been carried to the man's family hearth, negotiations for bride price between the families of the bride and the groom would then follow (Mwambene & Sloth-Nielsen, 2011). The kidnapping of girls into forced marriages violates women's and children's rights. This cultural practice took place in rural areas and affected women. Besides culture, even the Holy Bible itself contributed in women being the prey of patriarchal institutions. If a man violates a virgin, it is "viewed as a property offense against the woman's father,'' if her father refuses to marry her daughter off to the violator, the latter must pay money to him to "compensate the girl's father appropriately for the reduced price she would fetch, given the loss of her virginity" (Jacobs, 2012).

Aphelele concluded by saying:

> By leaving my rural area, I wanted to change everything for the sake of it because I grew up in a rural area; [I was] schooled there and I started working there. I wanted to see something else besides the rural life that I already knew. For selfish reasons, I wanted to work in a better place, with better people, and in a well-resourced place.

Like all other informants, Aphelele vowed to challenge patriarchy and cultural expectations by doing the opposite of what the culture would expect from her as a woman. Mooi (2012) echoed this sentiment after observing how much damage cultural practices sometimes cause to women as subordinates: "I am not going to allow anyone to suppress me in the name of culture. I always have been respectful of observing cultural practices, even those that seem illogical."

The women failed to hide their unhappiness, as has been indicated above. After experiencing hardships in the rural areas these women resisted the pressure to get married at an early age; they broke the rules governing and shaping young women identities, stopped being regarded as caregivers, and wanted to claim their power by choosing education to open new avenues for them. As Dubula (2018) states: "My feminism hopes to be a deliberate practice and process that continues to resist patriarchy in more ways than one, it forces me to resist gender inequality. It enables me to understand our experiences as women." For these women, one way of resisting patriarchy was to move to urban areas and work in a better environment.

Indeed, their relocation to urban areas was driven by these unfair practices. However, as they still held the traditional custom of respect for their parents, they made a point of ensuring that their parents understood and accepted their reasons for relocation. These women also perceived the absence of electricity as a barrier to their professional development, and another challenge that prompted their escape was the absence of HEIs in rural areas.

7.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented the places where these women grew up and the role played by culture in shaping their life experiences. It discussed how cultural expectations, traditions, and practices oppress women. It further explained cultural stereotypes, and how power relations and gendered language led them to be survivors of a patriarchal society. The next chapter discusses the effects of apartheid on the informants' life experiences.

CHAPTER EIGTH

EFFECTS OF APARTHEID ON WOMEN'S LIFE EXPERIENCES

8.1 Introduction

All of the informants in this study were born and grew up during the apartheid regime. Their life experiences were deeply shaped by their historical, cultural, economic, rural, and apartheid education. Education builds one's character and plays a significant role in transmitting one's culture, beliefs, and values to others in society (Ramana, 2012). It also helps in creating innovations and meeting the growing needs of every nation. These are some of the reasons that have led women to embark on education since they were young. In the preceding chapter, I presented the influence of culture on the life histories of women who participated in this study. This chapter is organised into four sections. First, it unpacks the influence of rural education on the life experiences of the informants. Next, it presents the impact of apartheid education as experienced by these black women. It then discusses women's oppression due to the apartheid system. Finally, it examines the three interrelated categories that affected these women: race, gender, and class.

8.2 Rural education

The findings of this study showed that rural education had both negative and positive impacts on the life experiences of the postgraduate students who participated in this project. They all received their early childhood education in rural areas and had been exposed to and were survivors of Bantu Education. It was evident that segregation of races resulted in the neglect of black schools in particular, where most teachers were either unqualified or under-qualified. This can be seen from the teaching strategies employed by teachers during those days. It was apparent that in most schools' teachers usually stood up at the front, and the students sat passively at their desks (Christie, 2006), without being involved in the construction of their knowledge at all. This was experienced only by black learners, as teaching and learning activities were different in the white schools. Educational segregation and inequality were "strictly enforced in black schools", and "the implementation of different curricula, pedagogies, investment and resources for different racial groups formed diverse identities and subjectivities" (D'Amanant, 2012). Informants were asked to describe their earlier education stories: explained that:

> **Elihle:** There were a few schools and there was overcrowding. We came to school in turns; for example, the school started at 8 am until 3 pm. Grades 1, 2 and 3 would start at 8 am and they would go home maybe at 11:30 so that the others

> could start learning from 11:30 up until 3 pm. There were not enough teachers; there were not enough classrooms, so that was the arrangement. So maybe this week we'll come at 8 and go home at 11:30 and the following week we'll come at 11:30 and go home at 3 pm.
>
> **Luyanda:** There was another challenge.at that time, when I was attending school it was SSA (Sub-standard A, Grade One) and SSB (Sub-Standard B, Grade Two). It was SSA and SSB in the same class. There were two classes; the one class will face the one direction, and the other one will face the other direction. Sometimes the other teacher will be teaching and you'll find yourself looking at the other side. So those were the challenges, and they were having this small chalkboard that was folded, not these big chalkboards, so a teacher will wait for everyone to write – and what about those who are so slow to write? So before the teacher continues, the teacher will just wait for those: 'Have you finished?', 'Yes', and then the teacher will continue. So you know what, at some stage I just feel that maybe those teachers they were aiming [for] maybe at the end of the day I'll finish this lesson. Sometimes it won't happen and they were not having the teaching resources.

It was evident from the above that informants in this study have different perspectives based on their early education experiences in rural areas. Like all the other informants, Elihle succinctly conveyed that there were few schools, and the classrooms were overcrowded. She also mentioned that they took turns in their multi-grade classroom. In this regard, Crouch and Hoadley (2018) noted that although some gains were made in the retention of children in primary school, the quality remained dire. However, in some provinces there was a significant reduction in the number of double-shift schools (Crouch & Hoadley, 2018). The finding of this study regarding the double-shift system was supported by Hartshorne (1981), who found that double-shift schooling in South African black schools was propelled by different factors, such as lack of funds and overcrowding. While in 1969 the apartheid government attempted to increase enrolment in primary schools, the government also tightened the funds for black schools (Hartshorne, 1981). Therefore, the double-shift system was used due to the shortage of teachers; in some situations, staff was encouraged to teach in more than one session (Bray, 2000).

It was apparent that informants had to attend for half a day; for example, some would start at 8 in the morning and left at 11 o'clock, and others started at 11:30. The following week they changed around: those who attended the morning session would attend the afternoon session, and vice versa. Elihle also indicated that there were not enough teachers or classes. Luyanda corroborated that they shared one class with other grades, and this disturbed them and made them lose focus as they often looked at the other teacher who was not teaching them. Even

the chalkboard was small, so the teacher had to wait for some learners who were not quick at writing. While learners had to attend half-day, teachers had the challenge of not being able to get through the day's work. Lulama also voiced as follows:

> While the owner of the smallholding wanted us to look after his cattle and my mother put her foot down, that we have to go to school. So what was going to happen now as we had to take turns? So one week I had to look after the cattle while the other three goes to school, then the following week it's going to be the other one, so we were taking turns like that …. and because of the teachers, they were very supportive, they would make sure they will bring us up to speed with the work of the previous week. My father didn't say anything much but it was my mother who put her foot down that we must go to school. Then because my mother was forcing the issue that we are going to go to school, the owner of the land wanted to kick us out from his land. So that's why we had to make that arrangement of taking turns of looking [after the cattle] because he wasn't prepared to hire anyone to look after the cattle because we were living on his place.

The above sentiment demonstrates how while all of the informants were schooled in rural areas, their experiences differed due to the conditions they found themselves in. It was apparent that Lulama had a different experience than others due to the rural area she grew up in. She revealed that she attended missionary school from the first grade until she completed Grade 12. The missionaries provided education for black learners at a time when there were few government schools (Christie, 2006). Missionaries were the only group that gave much attention to educating blacks (Christie, 2006). The colonial government was not necessarily acting for the good of the black inhabitants, and often they thought in racist terms and practiced exploitation.

It was apparent that attending the mission school brought some unavoidable challenges. One of these challenges was the need to walk a long distance to and from school. This finding was supported by Dladla (2012), who found that the lack of transport and the distance travelled by the learners to and from school were regarded as the barriers that prevented learners from attending schools. Another study by Davies (1990) found that in many places, children had to walk several kilometres to and from school; they were tired, and often hungry before they even started the first lesson of the day (Davies, 1990). Absenteeism was common, caused by sickness or by the farmers' use of child labour.

Besides this, most children never completed primary school, and of those who did, the chances of going on to secondary school were very slim (Davies, 1990). It was evident that many obstacles were encountered by people living on a white man's smallholding. As these

smallholdings were far away from school, this disadvantaged young children from enjoying their right to education. Lulama mentioned that due to the school being far away, her father denied her from attending school from when she six until she was ten years old, when she was enrolled in the first grade. Her family encountered a challenge when Mr Somtseu, the owner of the land, requested them not to go to school but instead to look after his cattle. He threatened to chase them away from his land if they did not comply. A different study revealed that farmers who were mostly of German origin were very conservative; they not only offered very little support to the schools (with one or two exceptions), they were often overtly hostile (Davies, 1990). Many resisted the idea of black children going to school beyond Standard 4 (about six years of schooling). During the busy times on the farms, children were expected to work, thus interrupting their schooling (Davies, 1990).

In this study, it was apparent that Lulama's family did not accept Mr Somtseu's idea, as her mother opposed the idea of not sending her children to school. They then made a plan, which worked well for them, as they were not ready to relocate. Instead of not attending school at all, they agreed that they had to take turns: they had to look after the cattle for one week, and then attend school for the following week. Lulama further commented:

> Because I went to school when I was 10 years old, because of the distance, so my father said I was going to fail because of the distance, so that's why most of us we had to go to school when we were already 10 years old. So then he felt that we can walk the distance. But as time goes by we left that land, but my father was impressed with the fact that I came to the first position, so he also started to be supporting our idea of education.

It was apparent that at school the teachers understood full well the challenges encountered by parents and children residing on white men's farms. This led teachers to support learners with whatever they had in their possession. Teachers were able to organise notes for the child who was at home, in an attempt to close the gap of being absent. Lulama mentioned that she coped well regardless of her obstacles, and at the end of the year was first in her class. In relation to this, Christie (2006) observed that the church had done a lot of good, in instilling values and beliefs of Christianity. The missionaries were humane people who spread the Christian faith among the African tribes. In other words, the reactions projected by the teachers, as they were also Christians, showed that they had a sense of humour and were dedicated to their work, supporting the learners as part of their work. The experiences of other informants supported Lulama's story: articulated that:

> **Amahle:** The teachers who taught me were trained. I only discovered now that in the olden times they could teach with a two-year certificate. Most of them are upgrading now. I think another thing is being a Catholic school, the Catholic nuns had that issue with education, so they would scrutinise the teachers that they employed. It was a government school in a private property, so they had a say on who was to be employed. It's only later, I don't know how it changed, where the department could send a teacher there, [but] the nuns they had to have a say on a person who is coming to the school; so how they negotiated that with the government, I don't know. It was them who interviewed the person, you see, not like now, but now, yes, it's still a Catholic school. I don't know how things have changed, because the government is sending teachers, but during that time the nuns had a say who's going to teach in that school.
>
> **Aphiwe:** Firstly, the schools were too far. We walked long distances going to school. Another thing is the teachers issue. I remember there were subjects that we were supposed to do, Physical Science, but we couldn't because we don't have a Physical Science teacher. Teachers are so scarce because they don't want to go and work in a rural area. The benefits of schooling there were we focused on schooling because there are not many things that distracted us. We used to go to school, we learn and then we go home, unlike in urban areas. There is this thing for we do not benefit a lot, because we don't have libraries, we don't have laboratories. We used to do everything that we were supposed to do in the lab – we just look at the teacher demonstrating in front of you, because we don't have labs. But it is good because we do get good results, even though in rural areas.

The above information displayed a huge difference between the schools managed by nuns and black schools managed by the government. Amahle had a similar experience as Lulama. They were both taught by qualified teachers. Amahle mentioned that nuns were in charge of employing and interviewing teachers. These missionary schools were built on private land. Later they were permanently controlled by the DoE. Aphiwe shared her experience of rural education. She stated that the school was too far away, so they had to walk long distances. She also indicated the challenges they encountered, with scarcity of teachers due to the lack of infrastructure, which disadvantaged them.

While white education was progressing smoothly, black education faced several challenges, such as shortages of money which caused the system to suffer in many ways, including they're not being enough schools or teachers (Christie, 2006). Also, there were subjects that could not be taught due to the unavailability of knowledgeable teachers, and the fact that there were no libraries or laboratories. In spite of these challenges, Aphiwe commented that the teachers were concerned about their education, and the fact that there were no distractions benefitted them. Also, Sibusisiwe explained that:

> Learning in my rural area was beautiful and peaceful. We didn't have desks; we used to sit on benches and we enjoyed that. We were learning and we didn't have, especially in lower classes, individual classrooms. We had one hall which was divided by boards. We would have three teachers talking in one room. What happened was that the teachers made sure that, during their periods, they were in the class, because if not we would be distractive to other classes. We would then go and peek at what the other classes were doing, so that by the time we attend that class we would be cleverer, so we thought. It was really nice and quite controllable. At that particular time, it was understandable and enjoyable. The first years were the first ones in, [then the] second years and then Standard 1. On the way out we would jump from our classes to go and listen to what the second years were learning, and this was good because we were highly competent and we wanted to be better in performance. The teacher used a blackboard and we used slates to write on. The teacher would mark our work and record our marks. We would wipe the slate and use it again. For tests, we wrote the answers on slates and when the work had been marked and recorded, we were allowed to take it home to show them [our parents] how we performed.

It was evident that informants encountered more or less the same challenges in the rural schools. Like some other informants in this study, Sibusisiwe also mentioned that the school lacked proper furniture and other teaching equipment. Teachers were provided with small blackboards, and learners used benches and slates. Learners could write on both sides of the slate and the teacher would mark them and keep records. Learners were allowed to take the slates home and cleaned them for the following lesson.

Sibusisiwe also mentioned that she was taught in a school hall. It was a multi-grade class, with Grade 1 (Sub-Standard A), 2 (Sub-Standard B), and 3 (Standard 1) in the same class, and each class had a teacher. A study conducted by Taole and Mncube (2012) revealed that multi-grade teaching was used mainly because of a shortage of teachers and of physical resources. However, in the case of the informant, multi-grade teachers were utilised due to the unavailability of classrooms. The implications were that if learners, who did not attain quality education in primary schools due to multi-grade teaching, would get into secondary education institutions, they would not have a good grounding. This, in turn, has implications on access and success in the institutions of higher learning (Taole & Mncube, 2012). This was also true in this study. Full details of the informants' educational challenges are discussed in Chapter Nine.

8.3 Women and apartheid education

In Chapter One the role played by Bantu education during the apartheid years was discussed. During these years, the schooling system provided black learners with the minimum standard

of education necessary for menial labour (Thobejane, 2013). It was based on a curriculum that extolled ethnic pride and racial identity, and located the educational experience of black people in the rural setting (Nkomo (1984). During the apartheid era schools had the role of either enhancing or challenging socialisation into inequality (Msila, 2007). The latter propelled the United Nations (2015) to compile the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which spells out as follows:

> Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

In this study, informants highlighted the impact of apartheid education on their life stories:

> **Lulama:** Apartheid education taught me to learn and memorise things and not critique them. Now at the postgraduate level, I find it difficult when I have to critique things. When you ask me for my opinion, I was taught my opinion doesn't count. So I struggle to put my opinion and that [is] what makes us look incompetent. So it made it difficult for me to generate new knowledge. That's what Bantu Education did for me. It caused me to struggle with learning at university.

> **Luyanda:** You know sometimes it was not even easy to ask. I was lucky because my mother was a teacher, so if there was something that I don't understand then I'll ask my mother. What about those other learners that are coming from illiterate parents? So sometimes the system fails them, not because they were dumb or whatever, but because the teachers, the situation they found themselves in, makes them irritable, makes them not easy for the learning process to take place. So they were very irritable and they were always using this corporal punishment. It wasn't a free class at all because we were always afraid. It disadvantaged us in a way that we couldn't make changes in our education and our lives.

From the above excerpts, it became apparent that apartheid education deprived black people in many ways. Lulama pointed out that apartheid education provided them with unqualified teachers who were not fit to teach. Unqualified teachers forced them to memorise and offered them no room for asking questions. She claims that apartheid education led them to suffer in higher education and be treated as if they were incompetent. This finding was supported by a report by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2016) on challenges facing teachers in Uganda, where teachers felt that:

> … it would be great if the curriculum were revised to nurture children's talents and interests early on because our current curriculum tends to encourage dependency

> on rote learning and memorisation instead of nurturing children's creativity, critical thinking skills, and imagination [qualities] which spark innovation.

Another study, conducted by Bergmann and Mohammad (1998), revealed the negative impact of rote learning on primary school learners. The findings revealed that the level of schooling starts from Class 1, where it is made mandatory for these clear minds to learn facts and figures by rote learning. This gets them ready for examination purposes, rather than building their problem-solving skills. The impact on skills learned is so acute that after completing primary level, the learner cannot compete with the international standards of literacy. It was also apparent that teachers did not allow them to ask questions. In our study, Luyanda confessed that whenever she had a question, she would ask her mother, who was a teacher. However, she noted the pain of other learners who failed to get any support from their parents since they were illiterate. She indicated that the system underplayed black learners and treated them as if they were dumb, and could not speak and understand.

The system also disturbed and affected the teachers, who as a consequence used corporal punishment every day, that led some learners to dislike school. A study by Morrell (2001) found that many reasons propelled the use of corporal punishment in schools. For example, the introduction of Bantu Education in 1955 exposed black children who had hitherto largely been outside the education system to school beatings. Unlike white girls, African girls were not exempted from beatings. In black schools this was used by confused, over-worked and under-qualified teachers who were unlikely to voluntarily to give up corporal punishment when they considered it their only means of keeping order in class. As a consequence, respectful relations between teachers and students were not possible in the context where corporal punishment was used (Morrell, 2001). It was also apparent that the use of corporal punishment demotivated some black learners, as the atmosphere in their classrooms was always tense. The informants further outlined how apartheid education disadvantaged them:

> **Sibusisiwe:** Apartheid education discouraged many people. I have met several of my former classmates, they have become aunties [as they drop out from school without proper qualifications they couldn't find proper jobs], others stay at home as housewives, others reached matric and others did not and are just working but never continued to study. The apartheid system never encouraged us all to figure out the reward of education.

> **Bongeka:** To add to what Luyanda has mentioned, teachers teaching with Grade 12 as their highest qualification had a negative impact. I was in a Science class in Grades 10 and 11 but changed to a general in Grade 12 because the teachers couldn't even explain their subjects, and when you asked they would get angry and embarrass you in class.

> **Elihle:** I think the type of education that we received has [had] an impact on our life challenges. The apartheid education that we received was not good enough for these days. We just received the education that will get us nowhere. Even if we did Science classes, there were no resources to do the experiments, and I can say the resources were too limited; we had no libraries, and we had no laboratories.

It was apparent that the apartheid regime was successful in infusing its ideology as the survivors of Bantu Education pointed out how it affected them. It became noticeable that escaping their educational challenges seemed impossible, and they indicated that some of their classmates could not make it and withdrew from school during their primary schooling. Indeed, the National Party politician Mr J. N. le Roux (Christie, 2006) commented as follows:

> We should not give the natives an academic education, as some people are too prone to do. If we do this, we shall later be burdened with some academically trained Europeans and non-Europeans, and who is going to do the manual labour in the country? I am in thorough agreement with the view that we should so conduct our schools that the native who attends those schools will know that to a great extent he must be the labourer in the country.

For these reasons, black people received inferior education, so that they would be constricted to being a labourer for white people until they died. It was obvious that the apartheid system was racist, and did not view blacks and whites as equals (Phillips, 1999). It was apparent that the adapted curriculum was controlled in black primary education only. Bonner, Delius and Posel (1993) pointed out that even the few mission schools that were successful, like St Peters, were unable to hide the fact that they were little more than poor primary schools with high dropout rates. The main idea of modifying the curriculum was to prepare natives more effectively for their future occupations (UNESCO, 1967).

In spite of this, Phatlane (2008) commented that at the very least the secondary school curriculum remained formally the same for all matriculants regardless of the type of education they had received. It soon became clear that this was part and parcel of the apartheid policy, which was designed to confine and isolate the black section of the population from the economic activities of the country (Phatlane, 2008). As such, the informants indicated that some black learners dropped out, some became ‘aunties’ (as they were robbed their right of having quality education) they were not employed, and others managed to reach matric level but could not further their studies. This was to be expected since a central aim at the outset of Bantu Education was to get students through four years of schooling, which was seen as adequate to prepare them to be semi-skilled workers (Phillips, 1999). Bongeka raised her frustration about being taught by teachers who had matric

certificates only. These teachers contributed to forcing her to change her subject of choice due to a lack of knowledgeable teachers in black schools. This painted a clear picture of the impact of being taught by unqualified teachers; certificates and qualifications usually indicate that people have undergone training so that they can do certain jobs, and they have some form of documentation to prove this (Christie, 2006). It was also the intention of Bantu Education to ensure that black learners did not reach Grade 12. Bonner (1993) commented that Mr Hendrik Verwoerd as the father of the apartheid system wished to limit how high a black man could climb in the educational and professional world. Besides, the lack of adequate numbers of trained teachers for senior classes (Horrell, 1967), there was also a low standard of equipment in whatever science laboratories existed, with Bunsen burners, scales and microscopes in short supply (UNESCO, 1967). This situation handicapped the African who wished to continue on to higher education in science (UNESCO, 1967).

It can thus be concluded that the different challenges encountered by black women in this study were an indication that blacks were prevented from reaching their full potential and success in life. In this vein, Magwaza (2009) pointed out that as a black woman having secured a job in a higher institution:

> … because you are black you must have struggled all your life before joining prestigious institution, and must, therefore, appreciate your position or consider yourself lucky; your education and background are comparatively inferior and [supposed] inferiority and struggles beset you, or is it because I have come a long way, therefore I have to suffer.

Postgraduate students in this study had come a long way to be where they are today; however, the hurdles they faced did not deter them, but instead motivated them to work harder until they succeeded. It was apparent that these were strong, focused, and self-directed women who wanted to utilise education to liberate themselves. They did not want Bantu Education to reduce them, their mentality and physically into hewers of wood and drawers of water (Christie, 2006). However, it did still impact their options:

> **Amahle:** When I look at myself now, I think I would have achieved more in life. I wouldn't have been a teacher. I would have been able to think about other careers, know what other careers are available. But because I was restricted in my thinking, not that I regret, but I think I could have been an engineer if I had an opportunity.
>
> **Aphiwe:** To add on that, that is what I'm realising now – how much I love working with electricity. I definitely would have been an electrical engineer had I been exposed. I was only exposed to a teacher, nurse, etc. careers. We didn't know anything about the university. All we knew was that the New Town University was for white people. All we knew was teachers, nurses and police colleges. Even where you live, back then we thought if you lived in a township such as

> KwaMashu, Umlazi, etc., you were a better person. We never thought that you can live in places such as Westville or Kloof. We thought those places were for whites only.

The above information illuminates the educational experiences and their impact on the lives of the informants. It was evident that the apartheid system failed these women in many ways. There were not even given the opportunity of selecting careers of choice just because they were black, and the parents contributed to this because they could not afford to send them to private schools with better resources. It was apparent that the informants blamed the system for driving them to become teachers, as they felt that the engineering sector would have been the best for them.

They indicated that their educational challenges were driven by racial issues and their status as black women. During earlier years, boys and girls didn't have equal experiences at school, and they didn't have equal chances in life after school either (Christie, 2006). For work, women often get jobs in food and textile factories, and do cleaning and domestic service. In the professions they are teachers, nurses and social workers; these are the caring professions, with a lower status than professions such as being doctors and lawyers (Christie, 2006).

In addition, residential areas were restricted according to race. Many different oppressive policies were implemented during apartheid, and these were meant to control the movement of black people in urban areas. For example, the Natives (Urban Areas) Act No. 21 of 1923 stipulated that blacks were allowed in urban areas as long as they were ministering to the needs of whites (Christie, 2006). The Promotion of Bantu Self-governance Act 66 of 1959 provided for the separation of black people into eight different ethnic groups, each with its own Commissioner-General, who was assigned the task of leading these groups to national, self-governing units (Booyse, 2013), since there was no place for the Bantu in the European community, as articulated by Verwoerd in 1955. Another policy was the Bantu Authorities Act, Act No. 68 of 1951, the objective of which was to keep Black people permanently out of the urban areas, and the Group Areas Act, Act No. 41 of 1950, the primary aim of which was to make the residential separation of races compulsory. In other words, the informants were prohibited from living in places like Kloof and Westville during those days.

A study by UNESCO (1967) on the effects of apartheid on education, science, culture and information revealed that there were challenges in providing black students with engineering courses. The apartheid government claimed that in terms of instituting training for engineers at ethnic group colleges, only five African students had declared their desire to study

engineering – and that before any serious preparations could be made for this faculty to be added to the ethnic colleges, all five students had changed their minds (UNESCO, 1967). This suggests that the apartheid system tried by all means possible to deprive black students from participating in well-paid jobs, by ensuring that they were not exposed to the subjects reserved for whites. This was one of the specific examples of education being used to exclude people from jobs (Christie, 2006).

8.4 Women experiencing oppression as a consequence of apartheid

Oppression is regarded as the social act of placing severe restrictions on an individual, group or institution. Typically, a government or political organisation that is in power may place (formally or covertly) restrictions on oppressed groups so that they may be exploited; in this way, such groups become less able to compete with other social groups (Barker, 2003). In this study, most of the informants agreed that the apartheid government played a crucial role in enforcing oppression on black people, and women in particular:

> **Elihle:** In the past, black women were not recognised as people who can do something effective in life. They were just there to produce babies only. Concerning career opportunities, I believe that the education that we had is a cause for black women to be under the supervision of other races, because of the education and the experience that we had.
>
> **Lulama:** On that note, for me, I felt it wasn't just apartheid but also the oppression of women by men. They believed that your duty as a woman is to go and get married. And they believed that if you are an educated woman, especially in the rural areas, *uzobaleka uye eThekwini* [you'll run away to Durban]. For me, it was not about apartheid education, yet it impacted negatively and it failed to enlighten the minds of the people, if you can see most women who are not educated are women from rural areas compared to those who came down from the townships. So it was not a matter of education. It was a matter of culture, of not believing that women should be educated and then *bazobaleka baye eThekwini* [they would run away to Durban].

It became evident that even though the informants had differing feelings about the impact of oppression on their lives, they all agreed that oppression prevented them from achieving their potential. They indicated that many factors contributed to oppression and that affected them. They stated that during the apartheid era, the government played a pivotal role in ensuring that black women in rural areas suffered oppression. Young (1980) noted that the "marginalization of women and thereby [their] functioning as a secondary labour force is an essential and fundamental characteristic of capitalism."

Apart from the government, the informants also felt that cultural stereotyping and religious bias were agents of oppression. Analysing a book by Khaled Hossein (2007), *Thousand Splendid Suns,* on the oppression and resilience of women during the Taliban Era, Bernardin (2019) noted that women all over the world face many problems, like gender discrimination, harassment, child abuse, trafficking, etc. They struggle both physically and mentally. Women are oppressed and they struggle a great deal to come out of this. This was in line with the findings from this project, as it became evident that women experienced oppression in many ways. It was found that their oppression was instigated by the state, capitalist structures, and cultural patriarchal society.

Bernardin (2019) elaborated that even though women are active today, they are still tortured by the patriarchal society; only a few use their inner strength, others follow stereotyped qualities. This strength helps them to handle the suffering which they are subjected to, and to overcome their subjugation. Men have an inner fear that women, who are perceived to be mentally stronger, could rise above them, so from the ancient times men kept women as slaves through physical might (Bernardin, 2019). In spite of this women demonstrated that they were courageous and fought back to liberate themselves. The informants also referred to the stresses that women placed upon themselves:

> **Aphiwe:** I think women also oppress themselves. That's one thing because we just aspire to be Goliath. As I would say, we crave to do everything and we don't covet to delegate. We don't think that people can do it the way we can do it, especially when there are males around. I don't know whether we [want to] please them or what, but that is in our minds.
>
> **Aphelele:** Especially with education, it shapes our thinking because we know very well that we are always oppressed. Therefore, we know that we have to rise above oppression. We know we have homework for thinking critically. Even if there is a debate on a table, we can attend that debate because we have to be seen as educated people.

It became clear from the above that the informants used education as their weapon to deal with and overcome oppression. Aphiwe did not take lightly the fact that sometimes women oppress themselves by not asking others to help them, especially with home chores. Bernardin (2019) pointed out that women are not supposed to be silent: if they are quiet about their suppression, there would not be any liberation. Through education, these women were able to devise strategies to distribute their workload and relieve their stress. They agreed that, as postgraduate students, they used education as a strategy to rise above oppression:

> **Bongeka:** For me, I think being oppressed made me strive not to be oppressed. That's what inspired me to study. I realised I cannot be dependent on my entire life … I need to be an independent person. The oppression made me try to lift myself. Somehow, I'm being respected even though I'm a woman because of what I have achieved. For me, education became my escape route.

It became evident that these women worked hard at striving to relieve themselves from the bondage of oppression. Indeed, education enlightened the informants' minds and empowered them to think critically. The fact that they acknowledged that they were being oppressed served as a stepping stone to deal with the pressures on them. This finding is similar to that of a study by McCallum (2005) on beyond equality and difference: empowerment of black professional women in post-apartheid South Africa. The findings revealed that empowerment is an essential expression of individualism and self-determination, since it embodies the belief that the individual can effect changes and improve their lives. This individually oriented definition presupposes the importance of constructing one's self as unitary and independent. The 'unitary self' is a support of the logic of the 'same', which entails the exclusion of otherness and difference (McCallum, 2005). It was evident that these women were thankful that education had created a platform for discussions about prejudice and oppression and helped them to find ways of overcoming their challenges.

8.5 Three interrelated categories that affected women because of apartheid and patriarchal control

Women's experiences cannot be understood in the separation of gender, class, and race, as these three categories normally intersect in shaping their identities. Gender, race, and class interact to shape the multiple dimensions of black women's experiences (Crenshaw, 1989). As such, these multiple categories are not independent of one another; instead, they are interrelated forms of oppression that are manifested in multiple forms of discrimination (Lanehart, 2009). In this study, it was evident that the informants had the same opinions that gender, class, and race had an impact on their life experiences as black women:

> **Elihle:** Subordination I think it made blacks to be under other races and be at the bottom of the pyramid. We have to submit to all the other races. That meant that being a black person meant that you had to be subordinate.

> **Lulama:** Because of the low class of our parents and the place [where] we grew up, we ended up receiving an inferior education. So that we will always be servants; we did not get the skills to be a boss because you will never be one. You would look for a job from a white person who will always be the boss. That is what I and most of us learned, unlike the current generation. All we knew was that we would have to finish school and look for a job. Somehow, somewhere,

> someone must employ me and become my boss. We were never taught to think we could be employers ourselves.
>
> **Aphelele:** In the families that we came from, I don't know if I could call it third class, but we were underdeveloped; our parents were not working and we didn't have any resources and we had to use whatever was available at our disposal.
>
> **Elihle:** To add on that, as blacks the education that we received was to be able to understand our boss or be able to answer the phone of the boss, greet and understand the instructions given by the boss. And being a lower class, our parents could not afford expensive schools. We had to attend the education that we were given by the government which was minor education. So class plays a big role because it depends on how much you do have, to get a better education.

The above sentiments paint a clear picture of how gender, race, and class shaped rural women's experiences. It was the status of being in a lower class which led the parents of the informants to be less fortunate. For this reason, some of the informants' mothers had to become servants for white people. Lulama had indicated that the whole family worked for a white man who failed to pay them a living wage. When the white man threatened to chase them away from his land, they were forced to carry on looking after his cattle by taking off from school to save their lives. Since the whole family worked for this white man, it did not improve their wages; they were still poor. It became clear that escaping the jaws of poverty was impossible due to the very low wages black people earned from their white employers.

The government also used education as a strategy to subvert and oppress black people. For example, during the introduction of a new compulsory subject in white schools in 1972, Dr A. L. Kotzee commented as follows (Christie 2006):

> … we are only three and a half million whites, and for the time being we still have to render many services to other population groups in our country. If we wish to ensure our future we shall have to realise that each one of us is a key person holding a key post, no matter what it is. This holds for every pupil entrusted to our care. We cannot afford to lose a single one on the way

From this perspective, it became clear that the state employed different strategies to ensure that black people became subordinates for whites, as can be seen above. According to Christie (2006), skilled jobs and certain unskilled jobs were reserved for white workers and most unskilled work was done by black workers – at a very low rate of pay. As a racist society, blacks in South Africa had no chance of sharing equal status with whites, as they were less educated. Avoiding the degraded education designed to keep them as subordinate to whites was also a huge challenge in black schools. In spite of this, it became apparent that the status of being in a lower class also contributed to being the victim of inferior education.

There is a link between schooling and social class; for example, children of richer parents had better schooling opportunities than children of poorer parents (Christie, 2006). Education is influenced by people's social class, and it also helps to shape social classes. There is no doubt that education has a role in class formation (Christie, 2006). Indeed, a girl's future political power is often directly related to her family's socio-economic status and her parents' attitude to education for girls – and in particular to higher education (O'Neil & Domingo. 2015). While lower-class status tends to replicate itself through inferior education and cultural expectations, mothers of the informants vowed that their daughters did not need to suffer as they had. However, it became clear that regardless of parents' efforts and ambitions, they could not afford to send their daughters to good and expensive schools. As a result, the informants indicated that the education they received prepared them for nothing else but to be servants for other races. Elihle highlighted that they were supposed to learn to answer their bosses' phone calls. Aphiwe commented:

> I think the class that I'm in played a big role, because I remember that after matriculating I couldn't get a job. I just sat at home for the whole year and then decided to go back to school to redo my matric, because there was nothing that I was doing. After redoing my matric, I passed again but still stayed at home in the following year, because I didn't have the money to go to university. I had reached the age at which I could work at a white man's house as a housekeeper. Because no one had gone to university before, no one worried about it, but I wanted to break that deadlock and go to higher education.

While many learners could not reach matric (Grade 12), Aphiwe indicated that completing matric did not open any doors for her because of the social class she found herself in. Passing matric was also a burden because her parents could not afford university fees. She decided to redo matric, something that did not happen with other races. Her race pushed her parents to reside in a rural area, in a place where the level of poverty was high and there were no opportunities. A study by Rehbein (2018) on social classes, habitus, and socio-cultures in South Africa revealed that the white social structure under apartheid did not include the lowest classes, while the non-white structure became very slim toward the top. Up to 40% of the population were poor Africans living in rural areas (Rehbein, 2018). This showed that the low class status of their parents affected these women, and contributed a great deal in shaping their life experiences. In terms of gender, the informants elaborated as follows:

> **Elihle:** As blacks, there were subjects that were not supposed to be done by boys or girls. For example, boys did Agriculture and Woodwork and girls did Home Economics, which included cooking, cleaning, and sewing.

> **Sibusisiwe:** Gender played a role in my life experiences, because if I were a boy I would be very far in life, but because I am a woman, I'm still trailing behind everybody else. However, I am hoping that one day I will reach where I want to be. It is only because I am a woman that I had to take care of other things before I continue.

It was apparent that sexism and women's subordination were employed during the apartheid era. According to sociologist Cock (1980), the education of black women was largely aimed at socialisation into domestic roles, both in their homes and as servants in other people's homes. There was also an issue of discrimination, where black boys and girls had different subjects; the subjects for girls were designed to prepare them for the future world as wives, servants, and housekeepers. Besides this, the textbooks give stereotypical views of the different roles of men and women in society, and boys and girls had different schooling experiences and did not have equal chances in life either (Christie, 2006). For example, History and Typewriting are often seen as 'better' subjects for girls.

Sibusisiwe pointed out how her gender as a female deprived her. She indicated that even if boys were also black, gender inequality did not affect them that much compared to girls. Amahle commented that:

> As a bride, when the family is observing a certain ritual, you have to be earlier than everyone else in comparison with your sisters-in-law who arrive at any time. You have to ensure that you do everything. As a superhuman, I have to work from morning till sunset.

Aphelele added the following:

> When you go to work, you know that men will always undermine you simply because you are a woman. The fact that you are an African woman always puts you at a disadvantage, because you are rated as someone who is inferior and living in a society where you are inferior as well. Before you enter higher education, you are judged by the results you got in your matric, and to excel in matric you have to study hard, but sometimes as a girl you wouldn't be allowed to leave home and go study somewhere, and you would lose a lot of information while others were discussing [it]. At times, for example, there would a boy who could help you with Maths but you would be seen as just following the boy for a different agenda.

It became evident that these women were being undermined in the workplace, regardless of their status of being educated and having the same qualifications as their male counterparts. A study by Holmes and Flood (2013) exploring the role of workplace equality in preventing men's violence against women, findings revealed that work, and by extension the places where work is conducted, are a highly gendered part of human culture. Men's relationship

with work, and the meaning of work for men, has been linked to the formation of men's identity and sense of place in the male world. Work has also been one of the most significant ways in which men have built and maintained dominance over women in most cultures (Holmes & Flood, 2013). As such, the division of paid work often intersects with women's greater burden of parenting and domestic work. To the extent that men's interpersonal power over women is exercised and reproduced at work, it increases men's sense of license also to exercise power over women in the 'private' domains of relationships and families. It is for these reasons that feminist activism and theory have involved a thorough critique of the gender inequalities which disadvantage women and privilege men.

In spite of this, the celebration of cultural rituals also contributed by exploiting the women, as they were required to do 'bride's work' of serving the whole and extended family. They were then regarded as the only people in the family who were energetic. According to a study by Magwaza (2009) on the experiences of a black South African woman, findings revealed that although the benefits of women at work are there for all to see, there persists some reluctance towards completely freeing them to pursue their careers and accepting that their successes involve some curtailments on both social and family availabilities. Magwaza further pointed out that upon realising that her efforts in maintaining her 'Zuluness' were not enthusiastically appreciated, she then decided to do only what she felt was strictly possible, and she admitted that it was a liberating decision.

It was evident that informants were concerned about being undermined in all spheres of life, as black women, as African women, and they also experienced discrimination and gender inequalities. Working with other races led them to feel like they were being undermined, because of the poor residential area they came from. The results of this work demonstrated that the challenges encountered by these educated women were driven by different interconnected factors, such as their race, social class, and gender.

8.6 Conclusion

The informants in this study all felt that apartheid education had failed them, in many differing ways. As a result, they experienced difficulties in HEIs while pursuing their postgraduate degrees. They indicated that instead of moulding them to be critical thinkers, apartheid education taught them just to memorise knowledge. In other words, it limited their chance to learn with understanding in order to remember what they had learned at a later stage. Their difficulties were exacerbated by the fact that the teachers who taught them had

not been properly trained to teach, and therefore lacked sound knowledge of the teaching and learning content.

CHAPTER NINE
WOMEN'S SOCIAL CHALLENGES

9.1 Introduction

The fundamental assumption that underlies life history is that "lives are not, cannot be lived in isolation either from other people or from social, cultural, historical and natural events, movements, trends and values in the world at large" (Sikes, 2006). It was also true in this study: informants' responses demonstrated that the social experience played an important role in influencing their life experiences as rural working mothers and postgraduate students. To understand their social challenges as women, I first present their experiences of motherhood.

9.2 Motherhood as a social construct

Women have different roles, and one of these is that of being a mother or a guardian in a family. This role cannot be performed effectively without some lessons from experienced individuals. Since motherhood requires one to assume the primary role in nurturing her children, motherhood is socially constructed in the sense that there is a mutual and friendly social interaction between mother and child. Motherhood is a life event for women that is idealised in dominant cultures (McClintock-Comeaux, 2012). Mothers are important to their families because child-raising responsibilities are part of their assigned role (Arendell, 2000). However, motherhood in some cases can become a site of frustration if this role is not executed properly. The family is consciously foregrounded as a site of extreme value and importance, while simultaneously being a site of intense frustration (Pillay, 2017). When informants asked to share their stories about how they view motherhood, they changed their tone and their facial expressions painted a clear picture of their feelings. It became evident that what they were about to share evoked some pain; also, they were louder than in the other conversations I conducted with them. Informants relayed their experiences:

> **Aphelele:** To me to be a mother, I will say it is more like to be a slave. You know, because you are just a worker who is working countless hours. To be a mother means you have to be caring, you have to accommodate somebody. It means you have to come second because those people that call you a mother have to come first because you have to take care of them, you have to prepare for them, you have to make sure everything is fine for them before you look after yourself.
>
> **Aphiwe:** To be a mother sometimes is like being a slave of the house because you have to make everybody happy in the house, you have to look after the house people, cooking, make sure that everything is in [good] condition.

> **Amahle:** As a mother, it looks like you have to do everything. You're a cooker, you're a cleaner, you're a teacher, you're a pastor, you are everything, and you are a judge sometimes. There are no specific roles. You just have to be an all-rounder. You have to counsel them, you have to play the psychologist, you have to be a priest and pray to them. Ehhh you know you've got a lot of things when you become chef, you wash, you cook, you clean for them, you make sure that everything is in order, the homework is done, the bag is packed, you make sure that it is unpacked in the afternoon with all those remains in the lunch box thrown in the bin if they can't be eaten anymore. You just have to make sure everything is in order. You check if they brought back everything they take to school and also check if they are carrying the correct things or if they have taken other people's things. So you can't describe your roles, they add up every day – you just have to do everything.

From the above comments it became clear that the informants in this study found it difficult to describe a 'mother's role', since the mothering role is not a straightforward activity, for example, to nurture young ones. It includes a number of responsibilities and personality traits such as patience and perseverance. The mothering role required these women to be kind and caring in order to satisfy the needs of everyone in the family. These women regarded themselves as slaves in the family, because some slaves are paid little or not paid and the working hours are unspecified. The activities they found themselves doing, such as being the caretaker, chef, priest, psychologist, teacher and cleaner – as well as being workers – led them to be confused as to how they could describe their roles as mothers. They felt that their mothering role was endless since new roles were added every day.

The painful part of their responsibilities seems to be trying to make everyone in the family happy, and thus neglecting themselves. The 'working' mother is characterised as a 'supermom' (Paré & Dillaway, 2005), who often puts others first so that her own needs suffer (Covington-Ward, 2013).

> She is a woman of inordinate strength, with an ability for tolerating an unusual amount of misery and heavy, distasteful work. This woman does not have the same fears, weaknesses, and insecurities as other women, but believes herself to be and is, in fact, stronger emotionally than most men, that's why she is a superwoman. (Wallace, 1990)

Indeed, the 'supermom' image and the very label itself suggest that when women work outside the home, motherhood should still be their primary duty (Paré & Dillaway, 2005). In this study rural working mothers compared mothering with being a slave, someone who was

legally the property of another person; also, in the past slaves used to be forcefully overworked without any fair compensation. They regarded themselves this way because of the pressure the family put on their shoulders just because they are mothers. As Aphelele clearly put it, the needs of the people who called them mother should come first. These emotional feelings led Joanna Clark (1970) to assert that "at every institutional turn, I was reminded that I am a mother and I was abandoning my children, even when I tried to leave them with their father." Clark decided that she needed a break from her children to save herself from physical exhaustion and an emotional breakdown (Matta, 2013). On top of the mothering role, Amahle also mentioned other roles of being a chef, priest, psychologist, judge and carer – all to be performed by the one person in the family that is a mother. Other informants communicated as follows:

> **Elihle:** To be a mother involves lots of things; you are a caregiver, you are a parent, a nurse, a social worker, you have to take care of children; even your husband becomes your child to you when you are a mother.
>
> **Bongeka:** For me, to be a mother means you are on guard 24 hours a day. A mother is a caregiver, a giver and an all-rounder in the house and outside the home.
>
> **Luyanda:** A mother is not just a person who has given birth before, because there are women who have never given birth but are the best mothers. To me, to be a mother is to have adequate and relevant parenting skills. Not only having them but also to practice those skills. One of these includes tough love. You have to teach a child in a way that will make you proud when that child is an adult. You taught the child values and how to be independent so that the child will not be dependent on you but be able to stand on his/her own.
>
> A mother is the first teacher of a child because a child acquires most things from their mothers, which include socialisation. If a mother is not there for a child, the child would not learn about the ethics of care which should be learned from the socialisation with one's mother. In most cases, it is the mother who is always there at home since most fathers are not there during the day. This means that the child spends most of their hours with their mothers, especially at the childhood stage. So in essence, a mother is a very important figure to a child and the child learns what the mother has taught.
>
> I would say that a mother is somebody with many responsibilities. This includes raising a child and making sure that he/she becomes something special in society. This means that the values that you instil in a child as [you] socialise with the child are very important. Correcting the child is very important, while parents [should] keep in mind that those children do make mistakes. The role of the mother would then be to help them learn from those mistakes and help them learn that they need to evaluate their life as they grow so that the child will be able to plan. A mother assumes all of these roles in the upbringing of a child.

From the above, it was evident that women's mothering experiences were more or less the same. While some informants demonstrated the traditional role of mothering, some reflected role frustration. Concerning this role frustration, McEreath (2009) explained how motherhood has changed her life, saying "motherhood has affected everything I do, professionally, and personally, and not getting caught be not impossible, but damaging- to my job, my writing, and my life."

The women in this study viewed motherhood as a burden to them, because 24 hours a day they had to be on guard for everyone, as if they did not have their own issues and life. The list of their mothering roles is infinite, and included parenting skills, as well as the roles of being a teacher, nurse, social worker, and babysitter for the husband as well. In line with this finding, Pillay (2017) admitted that the family is consciously foregrounded as a site of extreme value and importance, while simultaneously being a site of intense frustration. It was also apparent that these women as mothers were expected to show that they care for, love, and respect everyone. Correcting children's mistakes became part of their role, as well as allowing them to learn from their mistakes.

While their focus was on their children, their care of their husbands seemed to categorise the latter as 'big children'. It was evident that caring for the whole family was an unavoidable activity, because the traditional culture expected women to be nurturers who perform a caretaking role in society (Bradley, 2000). As such, Luyanda pointed out that a mother was not only someone who gave birth to a child, but could be any woman who had appropriate parenting skills and was able to mould a child until he/she could stand on his/her own feet. Even if informants envisioned a 'mother' as someone in charge of ensuring that her children become good citizens, they also focus on instilling values and respect in them as they grow up. The informants agreed that mothering was not easy, and they found it difficult to say whether they were good or bad mothers. Sibusisiwe added:

> Well, you are a good mother because if you are 100% a good mother, you may need to leave your family at times to go to work and work for the family. When you go to the university to study, you have to ensure that you have fulfilled all your duties, ensured that everyone is okay, everything is running smoothly in the house and that they have everything they need before you go.

The above information demonstrates the attitudes of the women in this study. For them, being good or bad mothers was not the major issue, since they were supporting their families

financially. As such, their absence from home did not mean they absconded from their duties to their children, it was just that they had to meet other obligations as well. A study by Brown and De Casanova (2009) found that some women accepted some cultural ideals of motherhood while challenging others; they rejected the notion that mothers should not work outside the home and instead felt that women should contribute to their families economically, and that bringing in an income was part of what made a 'good' mother.

9.2.1 Motherhood challenges

Women experience motherhood challenges as stressful and worrying, and not enjoyable, and they encountered motherhood challenges every day due to their multiple roles. Pillay (2007) concurred that balancing two lives is not feasible as an approach to motherhood and work. Most of the informants indicated that the source of their motherhood challenges was their multiple roles. Undoubtedly, women with children, whether single or partnered, had a higher risk of personal stress (Maclean, Glynn, & Ansara, 2004). These researchers also mentioned that the distress, stress and chronic stress levels of mothers, regardless of employment or marital status, are staggeringly high. Also, there is strong evidence that parenthood tends to be a particularly stressful experience for working-class mothers (Reily, Entwisle, & Doering, 1987; McBride, 1988).

When informants were asked to share their life stories on the challenges they had encountered as mothers, it became apparent that the question provoked some unwelcome emotions. Aphelele articulated that:

> As a mother, I have encountered some challenges. OK, firstly I would say my twins were a handful; they were too much because they were too expensive. I couldn't even afford to be given the discounts even if they were sick, even with the medical, aid everything was just double, double and my children were very sickly. I had to look after them and at the same time, when I'm from work, I had to take one to the doctor and I had to make sure that if one is sick I had to take both, because I knew if I'm taking one today, tomorrow I have to take the other one. So even if they were doing things, you know, you are walking in town and you have to look after two children at the same time. One will run in this direction and the other one will run in that direction. So I was like a mad headless chick [laughs]. So it wasn't easy. But if I'm flashing back the memories, I will look back and say at least I did it.

From the above it became clear that motherhood brought different challenges, which they were expected to live with. Multiple roles entail obligations that may produce overload and strain which, in turn, lead to poor physical and mental health (Goodie, 1960). For example,

Aphelele's motherhood challenges were disturbing and she had a high level of anxiety. It was apparent that while expecting a child brought mixed feelings to parents, having twins added even more pressure. Normally, parents optimally attach to one infant only; however, ambivalence and anxiety may result from the stressful nature of raising twins (Joseph & Thomas, 1996). Aphelele indicated her stressful journey of handling twins, including paying for medical aid, taking them to the doctor, and buying clothes. Fortunately, she had identical twins: studies demonstrate that if twins are identical, it is easy to treat them as a 'package,' providing them with the same clothing, toys, and quality of attention (Benirschike, 2004). Besides this, unexpected things may occur with twins. For instance, unequal attachment may occur if one twin is sicklier or is hospitalised for longer, and the parents may initially form a stronger attachment to the healthier twin. For this reason, it is preferable to discharge both twins at the same time (Minde, Perrota, & Corter, 1982). Indeed, the twin situation is always triadic, because when the primary caregiver is involved in the care of one infant, the other infant is physically present and waiting to be held or fed, or present on a psychic level, in that the primary caregiver knows that when they are finished with one baby they must perform the same routine again with the second infant (Joseph & Thomas, 1996). In essence, the parent has to attend to both twins alike. This includes different activities such as bathing, feeding, dressing, and visiting the clinic for immunisation, to name a few. In spite of this, bonding with twins is crucial. As similar as they may appear physically, emotionally they are different, and to grow up as happy and secure individuals, their differences need to be supported (Haider & Hussain, 2009). Aphelele also mentioned that while she had stressful experiences of raising twins, she also had unforgettable memories about them. Expanding on Aphelele's story, other informants discussed their experiences:

uttered that:

> **Sibusisiwe:** Of course, there are challenges, especially at her age where adolescence is at its highest. I have to ensure that I'm fully there with her and talk to her at each day, because it is the stage where boys become more important, and I can see this in what she puts in her profile pictures.
>
> **Aphiwe**: Our experiences when we were starting our family, we had our children when we were not married but after that, we got married. The challenges that I have is just that we didn't have our own home, then we had to live with the in-laws. Then we struggled to look for the house, because that time I was working far away with him, we ended up being in a letting house. My motherhood challenge is the house chores, like sometimes I've seen that, as I'm a person who likes cleanliness in the house, sometimes I fail to do a thorough cleaning. I just do here

> and there, that is what I feel, and my kids – I usually take them away but I don't have time. if I can tell you, it was just last year September when I take them out. I don't have time even to take them to the park.
>
> **Luyanda:** Firstly, I can say it is challenging to raise children. The kids I am raising are not biologically mine. My sister was the one who was raising them. I first had to find out the things that they had learned. Having previously lived alone, I had to adjust my things. I have to go to the gym after work and do my studies. My first challenge was balancing these things now that I had to cook for the kids, make sure that they do their homework and finding that for a spiritual retreat as a family. Sometimes when the little boy cried, I didn't know what to do. I enquired with friends who had kids and I applied some of their advice. This didn't always work. I gained experience and learned from what other mothers are doing. My relationship was also affected because I don't have a husband but a boyfriend. I lived with the kids but it would happen that I would need to go out for the weekend, but I wouldn't be able to if I don't get someone to watch the kids. So I had to sacrifice my time for the sake of these kids. I even had to adjust the time that I come home to be with the kids.

It was apparent that while these women progressed professionally, they also sought to reflect on traditional gender roles through caring for their children. Fulfilment of their multiple roles led to them experiencing time constraints. These women have more or less similar motherhood challenges. Most of their challenges involved raising teenagers; as Sibusisiwe commented, she had to be vigilant and have time to check what her daughter posted on social media. This finding was supported by Hoskins (2014), who found that the period of adolescence can be difficult for both parents and offspring; therefore, understanding the importance of maintaining high-quality parenting is particularly essential. The influence of parenting during adolescence continues to affect behaviours into adulthood; this paper therefore reviews research that focuses on the influence of parents on their adolescent offspring (Hoskins, 2014).

Aphiwe's motherhood challenges were different from those of the other women. She had to live with her in-laws, even if she did not like it, because they were still searching for their own space. She pointed out that home chores were problematic, and that she had the challenge of not enough time to do the cleaning. Time challenges inhibited her from even taking her kids out for entertainment. Luyanda's story demonstrates that balancing different worlds was challenging. For her, motherhood challenges brought unhappiness since they affected even her relationship. There was no relief from being a guardian, since motherhood is a 24-hour role. This led her to experience frustration and confusion, and she found herself

networking with inexperienced women. These findings were supported by Connelly and Ghodsee (2011) who spoke about the experiences of academic mothers and acknowledged that it was plausible that in other contexts these mothers would find some resonance with their ideas. They suggested as follows:

> … [k]now what you want; be prepared to make trade-offs; … let some of the housework go undone; … let some child care go undone; … You don't have to attend every high school debate. You might even let your child turn in his (sic) assignment without checking it first.

These suggestions were meant to open women's eyes so that they need not find themselves being chained by their mothering role, but sometimes could let other things go. It was apparent in this study that these postgraduate students ended up utilising different strategies to overcome their challenges. This included sacrificing their time, and coming home earlier than before they had children.

> **Amahle:** Discipline becomes an issue because the children of nowadays have that freedom of questioning their parents, which we didn't have during our time. My kids always ask [us] to give reasons for the things they are not allowed to do. When I grew up, we had certain chores that we had to do, but my kids are very lazy. As I tell them, for example, the girl is supposed to wash dishes, but she never does that and I have to shout before she does that. My sons are supposed to sweep the yard, but they don't do that. They like watching television, so discipline is an issue.
>
> **Bongeka:** To be a single parent mother is challenging for its right; even though I can manage to do everything for my child, at times I find that she is missing her father who is not contributing anything to her life.

The above information showed the frustration triggered in these women, as they were experiencing ill-discipline among their children that might have been prompted by their absence from home while studying late at university. In relation to this, Lush and Vredevelt (2011) pointed out that anyone who has children knows that parenting is stressful. Time constraints were a huge challenge for these women, that contributed to children's ill-discipline. Amahle pointed out that the behaviour of the children led her to shout at them about undone chores, which was something she was not expecting to do. She further indicated that her children frustrated her when they questioned everything – which she was not allowed to do while she was young. Bongeka further articulated that her motherhood challenge involved the fact that she was a single parent, and had to do everything by herself; the child felt displeased remembering her father, who was not supporting the child.

9.2.2 Women experiencing role strain

Women's multiple roles, which they could not detach from, led them to feel that there is an elephant in the room, and some family members turned a blind eye as if they did not exist. These multiple roles steered women to encounter role conflict [or strain], due to pressures within one role that are incompatible with pressures with another role (Kopelman, Greenhaus, & Connolly, 1983). In as much as some women are willing to execute these multiple roles, it becomes impossible due to time restrictions. Besides, many adults have to function in several roles; women in particular find it difficult to cope with their multiple patriarchal determined roles as workers and as mothers, as both require a lot of energy. Many factors contribute to role strain, and these may include a set of compound tasks that it is impossible to address simultaneously (Greenhaus & Bentell, 1985). This means that role demands will not be met if a person is physically absent from a role or is mentally preoccupied with another role. In this study, the informants experienced role strain in differing ways. Narrating their social challenges, women in this study evoked some emotions:

> **Sibusisiwe:** Our multiple roles affect us women. They do because, for example, my fiancé would want to eat no matter what time I come home. He doesn't want food prepared by someone else but me. Secondly, if I'm at work and there is a function that involves women, I feel that I'm missing out because there is a lot to learn that uplifts us as women when we come together. Also as a working mother and as your children grow, they start to do things their way because you are at work and you realise that it is because you are not there.

> **Luyanda:** You know we do encounter social challenges as women. But you have to create a balance. The society will expect you to come home, cook and do all the work, which affects me but when the girl turned 13, I taught her how to cook so that even if I'm not at home, they will be able to eat. I also taught the boy how to make an egg and sandwich and switching off the stove after they finish. I tried to forget what society will expect and I taught them the basics and teach them how things work in my family, not in society. This is how I tried to bridge the gap that is there. Between work and study, I have to make sure that I balance. I work hard and follow my timetable, even though sometimes I have to work overtime, but I always take at least an hour for my study. It's all about planning for me.

> **Bongeka:** Sometimes it does affect me since I am working full-time. I find myself having to be a supermom, having to cook, clean and look after my child and help her with her homework. I also have to look after my parents who are old.

From the above it became evident that women's multiple roles had an impact on their life experiences. There is nothing natural about their roles, as they are determined by patriarchy. However, as these women carry on advancing their knowledge and working at the same time,

this taught them some lessons. They did not wait for anyone else to address their challenges. They employed several strategies, such as teaching their children the importance of sharing house chores, so that they could strike the balance. Communicating a belief that women can be agentic, Ryan (2001) argues that women are all competent and capable of agency and that they know what is best for themselves, each one in her own situation. For this reason, every moment of power and resistance devises its strategy.

Concerning devising appropriate strategies that would enable women as workers, students, and mothers to cope with their multiple roles, it becomes apparent that holding a conversation with family members may have a positive impact, especially regarding unequal gender roles. However, it might be noted that women may not always be able to make changes in their relationships with their husbands or partners as fast as they would like, but they often can make changes in their relationships with their children and friends (Ryan, 2001). Equally, Gqola (2018) emphasised that "children need to grow up knowing the value of a full life for all genders, to take this as the norm, to understand that love and work are human endeavours that are chosen and negotiated every day."

Sibusisiwe related how her multiple roles affected her; firstly, her fiancé preferred food cooked by her; secondly, she felt uncomfortable for not attending workplace events; and thirdly, she felt guilty when her children embarked on doing certain things due to her absence from home. The line between responsible parenting and the self-sacrifice that our dominant culture expects from women on the one hand, and belonging to yourself and harming your child through inattentiveness on the other, is sometimes marked on a sandy, not a rocky shore, and each wave blurs them further (Gqola, 2018). Other informants expressed as follows regarding role strain:

> **Lulama:** When I get home, I do what I'm expected to do and wake up as early as 1 a.m. to do my studying and I finish around 6 a.m. and prepare to go to work. I have to put a strain on myself to manage. Studying is not easy; you have to put pressure on yourself.
>
> **Aphelele:** Yah, my little one is having problems at school. He is not coping with the grade he is in and I think if it was not for my studies, I would be able to assist him and speak to the teacher, let's decide otherwise. But now that I had to push my study, I think there's something that I would have done. Yes, I think there's an impact. As I've said, most of the things I didn't do when I was focusing on my studies; but you know, it was not easy because I still have a lot to do myself.

> **Amahle:** Studying affects the family in the sense that I'm not always there for them as I would like to be. I don't have as much time to help my kids with their homework anymore. I have to rely on my husband and I have noticed that he is not as patient as I am with the kids. My daughter has dropped in performance from 80% to 60%, and I think that it has everything to do with the fact that I wasn't there to help her. I am guilty of that.

The informants admitted that they experienced difficulties when trying to balance work and family responsibilities. Trying to balance these multiple roles created conflict. Referring to the experiences of women in academia, Pillay (2007) argues that the notion of balance implies elements of equilibrium and harmony to which the experiences of academic mothers do not attest – and this can be said of postgraduate students as workers and mothers concurrently. However, it might be concluded that working mothers are very strong people, as they are regarded as supermoms. Indeed, 'supermoms' can switch effortlessly from high-powered career women to attentive mothers/homemakers without sacrificing jobs or children (Demeis & Perkins, 1996). As a consequence, they ended up sacrificing their time, because they had learned that they could not steal time from work or family life. Their bodies got used to going to bed at odd times, and instead of studying at home most of the informants studied in venues at the university, which is open 24 hours a day from Monday to Sunday.

Aphelele was deeply concerned about her sister's son who was struggling at school, and she felt guilty as she was unable to assist the child at all times. As a Senior Lecturer at an HEI and she had a very heavy workload, and as a master's student she encountered difficulties meeting deadlines because of time constraints. These are some of the reasons that led feminists to argue that, whether or not a particular gendered division of labour is appropriate, necessary, or just, the patterns of moral reasoning and response that emerge from and support women's labour are important and complex (Whisnant, 2002). Understanding and evaluating these patterns is crucial to a full understanding of morality and is the primary aim of feminine ethics.

Amahle experienced similar problems to those of Aphelele. When her child received a report card, she noticed that his performance had dropped. It worried her that she did not have time to help her kids with their homework, because then she would have been able to identify if the child needed extra support or further clarification. Indeed, living in two worlds frustrated the women. Elihle also experienced role strain, which she explained as follows:

> Sometimes I have to be in a church where I am a member of the women's league and I have to be there and take part in whatever they are doing. At the same time, I have to be a student. Sometimes I have to choose between the church and my school work and choosing which one is important is very difficult. I also find that I can't attend events that my family or neighbours are doing because I have to study. This makes you look like someone who has changed, which is not true, because you are just doing what you have to do. When you are doing a postgraduate degree, you have to be focused.

Lulama corroborated this, saying:

> There are challenges. Studying while you are working is not easy and worse if you are a married woman because there are those expectations that you need to fulfil as a married woman. This is even worse if you are married to someone who is not an academic, and doesn't understand why you have to come and have books with you all the time while you have to go away on weekends.

It became evident that the informants' conflicting roles created a lot of unavoidable stress. Rothbard (2001) argues that role strain creates a negative emotional response to stress, which could result in depression or other negative effects. Like the other informants, Elihle's problem was that of being focused on her studies as a master's student. Coursework had its pressures and writing her dissertation was challenging, to the extent that she spent her evenings at the university. Lulama also experienced strain as an adult learner. She found studying while being married to be hectic and she tried to balance married life and community expectations. However, despite her efforts, clashes occurred within the family. A study by Thoits (1986) revealed that even if women do experience difficulties, roles and role requirements should give purpose, meaning, and guidance to one's life and thereby reduce despair as well as disordered conduct.

9.2.3 Mothers' survival strategies

These black women proved to earn the title of 'supermom', due to working tirelessly hard, and they then devised some crucial surviving strategies. One of the strategies Joan Morgan (2017) described is that of 'retiring': "by the sole virtues of my race and gender I was supposed to be the consummate professional, handle any life crisis, be in the dependable rock for every soul who needed me … retirement was ultimately an act of salvation." In this excerpt, the disturbing realities of the superwoman stereotype are clear, which black women internalise as an image that they uphold or try to live up to (Covington-Ward, 2013). The black women in this project resisted upholding the stereotypes infused by their patriarchal culture. Instead, they used education as the only weapon to fight back, challenged the cultural

expectations which serve as a watchdog over all of their actions. As an academic mother, Sackeyfio (2013) acknowledges that cultural expectations and norms legitimise a woman's role and status in society, so that educational credentials and professional career achievements take second place to marriage. These were among the reasons that informants opted for implementing survival strategies. Poetry is a different way of presenting and viewing the world metaphorically, symbolically and in a condensed form (Burdick, 2011). This is true in this study; the poem below displays the succinct analysed data on mixed perceptions demonstrated by informants regarding being a good or bad mother. They opted for the label of bad mother because of the rewards of pursuing higher degrees.

A good mother or bad mother

Am I a good or bad mother … it doesn't matter!
My circumstances pushed me to be like this
I can't claim to be a good mother,
Since I fail to support my children with their homework
But I support them financially,
I compromise my things for them

Going to university till 2 am
Is self-sacrifice, which is enough
I'd rather be a bad mother
So to answer my supervisor 'When are you submitting?'
'Yes, it is impossible to steal family time'
Because Childline would say 'You are a bad mother'
The community at large would ask 'How can a mother do that?'
My in-laws would be angry
Because I left children unattended
But my Master's pushed me to leave them,
PhD is my sky limit!
I claim to be a bad mother for a good cause!!!

The above poem has been constructed from depictions in the informants' transcripts. Burdick (2011) argued that "poetry as a form of research is not only a different way of writing; it is a different way of presenting and viewing the world, metaphorically, symbolically and in a condensed form." The informants were vocal about their challenges as mothers and students concurrently, but encouraged each other not to give up on their studies. Instead, they accepted the negative remarks they received from their families and others, viewing them as bad mothers. Indeed, 'having it all' is a matter of setting priorities and figuring out what must get done versus what could be done (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012).

Black women in higher education must write and talk about their experiences and their survival strategies (hooks, 1989). In striving to overcome their motherhood challenges, informants were determined to 'have it all.' The informants talked enthusiastically about the different strategies they employed as working mothers and postgraduate students concurrently:

> **Amahle:** I have someone who is helping me with house chores like cooking and cleaning sometimes because I am not always at home.
>
> **Luyanda:** I ask for advice from friends, colleagues and consult books because you cannot do things alone. I also listen to programmes like *Great Expectations* which have empowered me a lot, because they taught about mothering children, the problems children have and psychologists who explain things. So this is where I gained the love of working with the community and children that are not my own.
>
> **Elihle:** As I have mentioned, mothers have many responsibilities and because I have grown-up children at home, my children and I help one another.

It became apparent that the informants employed different strategies to address their challenges as working mothers. Most informants communicated with and involved their family members, especially in sharing home chores. Indeed, if a mother feels as if everything is hers to handle alone, then it will be much more difficult to get everything done (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). The decision to seek support from others and to share responsibilities has a great impact. It is undeniably a fact that parenting under adverse conditions develops inner strength and coping mechanisms, fuelled by the adage that one must learn how to 'make a way out of no way' to survive (Sackeyfio, 2013). This is what the informants in this study did. They agreed that sharing their responsibilities would make things better and alleviate their stress level. Luyanda further mentioned that over and above the help she received from a psychologist and friends, she also read motivational books and watched inspirational television programmes that provided many helpful ideas. Other informants articulated that:

> **Bongeka:** I've got ageing parents but prayer keeps me going. My sister also helps, otherwise I wouldn't make it.
>
> **Sibusisiwe:** I have developed some strategies. For example, I have learned that I have to do my work at the university, so I just leave home behind. When I finish my work, I then go home. I ensure that I don't take my school work home unless it is urgent.
>
> **Aphiwe:** I told myself one thing: that whatever I want to do, I'm going to do it. In such a way that at times I don't meet my in-laws when they are having their gathering, because I told them that I can't because I'm a postgraduate student. I

> don’t have time for pleasure, I’m studying. Sometimes they do not take that nicely, but I have to make sure I know what I want.

Most of the informants drew on religion that involved soulfully and consciously using their spiritual life as a survival strategy, as they were raised to do. In this vein, Lush and Vredevelt (2011) maintain that sometimes our needs can be satisfied through natural means, while at other times the supernatural touch of God is required. Bongeka made it evident that her faith and prayer kept her going. Another strategy that they used was being self-disciplined. This meant that they had to know what they were capable of doing at what time, and resisting unimportant things that might interfere with their studies. Also, Sibusisiwe mentioned that separating her workload made a difference for her. For example, she would do school work at school and university work at university, and at home she would only be faced with her domestic chores, so that she and her family could spend quality time together.

9.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I explained and described in detail the women’s social challenges. These challenges emanated from different aspects of their lives, such as motherhood and role strain, which had an impact as they had multiple roles, being mothers, full-time workers. and postgraduate students concurrently. I also included memories which they held about motherhood and the survival strategies they employed as adult women.

CHAPTER TEN

EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION

10.1 introduction

The experiences of non-traditional students and traditional students are varied, and for some students their experiences are the root causes for them dropping out since they fail to handle them in due time. In South Africa, just like other international countries, non-traditional students are students who have different roles; subsequently, they combine the two roles of being an adult learner and full-time worker concurrently. Also, women with heavy combinations of work and family demands were more likely to return to school than those who did not, as a desire to secure a college degree and improve their employed status superseded the combined challenges of raising a family and attending college (Deutsch & Schmertz, 2011). While male students in higher education often focused only on their studies, working female students – as has been shown in this study – also have a primary role as stipulated by the patriarchal society of nurturing and raising children. In this chapter I present the experiences of rural working mothers in pursuit of higher degrees at a South African university, but I will start by unpacking how these women view rurality as an asset.

10.2 Rurality as an asset in black women's educational experiences

Rural areas include all traditional communal areas, farmland, peri-urban areas, informal settlements, and small rural towns where people have a few possibilities to live from the land. Hlalele (2014, p. 462). Over and above this description, generally, rurality is conceptualised on the basis of what rural areas 'do not possess' and in many cases 'will never possess.' Rurality as an asset brings a lens of understanding the educational experiences of learners who had been offered education in rural schools. Given the fact that rurality has a particular shape in South African history of ethnised homelands, which is powerfully raced, classed, and gendered that still haunts us in all parts of society and in particular ways in the university today.

In light of this, the literature demonstrates that the problem with rural schools is that they fail to provide a relevant education (Dieltiens, 2008). According to the Nelson Mandela Foundation (2005) rural schools in South Africa suffer the lack of resources, lack of proper infrastructure, water, electricity, and most importantly difficulties in attracting qualified educators. Dieltiens (2008) argues that "these conditions engender poor academic performance and often leave rural learners without the skills and knowledge to function on

equal footing in the democratic dispensation." In this study the term 'rurality as an asset' meant the kind of education regardless of and despite all known rural educational challenges, and hindrances, but these women view education as the only source to success.

One would say, even though the apartheid system wanted to keep black people in rural areas so that they do not become professionally productive, the narratives of these postgraduate students show that they have urgency that enabled them to break the structures that attempted to inhibit their educational progress. The positive side of rurality as an asset, is that through their own urgency these women were able to re-shape the narratives that apartheid, cultural stereotypes, and patriarchal practices tried to impose on them because of their vulnerability as black women including their subordination position. By re-directing, re-positioning, re-imagining their lives, rurality gives them the opportunity to strive for freedom, autonomy, and break all boundaries paving their way to move to higher education institution far away from their homes. By so doing, these black postgraduate students find tactics of crossing the bridges and re-imagining themselves and they did that successfully by maintaining their focus of achieving their educational goals regardless of all the challenges they encountered as black rural women. I argue that, even though apartheid wanted to position these women in positions of vulnerability, powerlessness, the narratives suggest a gigantic and trailblazing of rural space as an asset.

10.3 Women's educational experiences

South Africa has a history of marginalisation and exclusion based on race, land dispossession and the domination of imperialist economic power (Oyedemi, 2018). For this reason, scholars like Timmis, Mgqwashu, Naidoo, Muhuro, Trahar, Lucas, and De Wet (2019) claim that students from rural contexts are one of the historically under-represented groups entering higher education, who have experienced unique forms of disadvantage as a direct result of coloniality and the continuing legacy of apartheid. Indeed, some of the challenges that the black women students faced arose from this legacy. The inescapable discrimination faced by black students during the apartheid era can be equated with what is depicted in Maya Angelou's 1983 poem 'I know why the caged bird sings'. The cage can be seen as a strategy to suppress black people. Here are the first three stanzas of this poem by Angelou:

I know why the caged bird sings

A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind

and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wings
in the orange sun's rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of the things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

The above poem displays the influence of race discrimination that privileges white people against blacks. Historically, black people have suffered the most educational disadvantage in comparison to white, Indian and Coloured South Africans (Mabokela, 2001). As a consequence, education was one of the many facets of South African society that served to perpetuate the segregationist ideologies of the apartheid regime. The hierarchical structure served not only to separate but also to instigate unequal development of the different race categories (Dolby, 2001). The first stanza is based on the freedom experienced by white people, and it can be concluded that to them the sky was the limit, meaning there were no restrictions. The second and the third stanzas display the emotions and experiences that black people felt, being jailed in the secured and controlled cage. This cage controlled their movements, aspirations, intellectual capabilities, and location, meaning they could not move any further as they were restricted and bound to move only inside the cage. They therefore stayed in the same position with their clipped wings and tied feet.

However, the lines *The caged bird sings with a fearful trill* can be equated with the degraded education imparted to blacks. This demonstrates the impact and brutality of apartheid on the lives of black people. Apartheid was a full-scale architecture of power that functioned on multiple levels: it divided the territory and social space as well as the population of South

Africa, based on imposed ethnic and racial identities, creating a hierarchical and oppressive political system (Rönty, 1966). Despite this, it became apparent that they used this inferior education as their only weapon, that led them to be heard and freed them from the cage. In this study, it surfaced that regardless of being caged, these women used their reduced education and worked hard to free themselves from the cage, by completing their matric and then enrolling at the tertiary institution to further their studies. They decided to use the higher education setting as a site of struggle and to negotiate their educational and life experiences. The informants told their stories of what prompted them to re-enter higher education:

> **Bongeka:** I used to believe that studying is just for younger people only; later I learned that even as an adult and a teacher, you have to be a lifelong learner, so that is why I decided to re-enter higher education. After completing my B.A. degree at Bird University, I was tempted to do Honours, but the university where I studied matched with an Eagle University and it was going to be difficult to attend at Bird while I was working in Dalton because I had to attend classes. I decided to study here because I found that at Swallows University there are no supervisors at master's level. And even if you do, you find that your supervisor is in Ohlange which makes it difficult to see each other if there is a need. Currently, I've not yet seen my supervisor but hopefully, because I've emailed her and she said she's on sick leave, I will see her after the 16th of January. I believe that I'll see her as soon as she recovers.

> **Aphelele:** We finished our first Teacher's Diplomas when we were very young and along the way we found that there was no one to call a role model who was furthering their education. Therefore, there was no platform where possible career options were discussed; instead, people often asked why we concerned ourselves with studying. For instance, a Principal would say, 'Look at me, I am less qualified than you, but I'm still a Principal.' This left no people to look up to. At the same time, there were no incentives, and if you wanted to approach a certain career you had to sponsor yourself. We also had children that had to go to a school whose education we had to prioritise, as they needed primary education, but it looked like just a privilege for us since we had basic education and jobs. With the financial constraints, it made less sense for us to study. Even though we're at school working, we didn't see anyone coming with new knowledge to encourage us to want to study further and be knowledgeable like the other person. All of these things made us take the idea of studying for granted; but as time went on, we realised that we were holding ourselves back.

> **Aphiwe:** I re-entered higher education so that I could find better job opportunities and status. I am upgrading myself, educationally. I'm doing Curriculum Studies and I want to have more knowledge on why our education system changes the curriculum now and then. My interest is in the teacher's experiences on the changing curriculum when teaching Maths. I chose this university because of the facilities, and the availability of supervisors at any time, and that it is closer to me.

> I studied at Swallows University. I found that you would make appointments but couldn't find a supervisor and doing a postgraduate degree at such an institution was not good for me because the facilities are not available. It is better at New Town University because the times of going to the university are suitable for me, as I can go there after hours and for longer hours, including afternoons.

From the above comments, it became apparent that furthering their education was due to many reasons. For example, Bongeka indicated that at first she thought that studying in higher education was meant for younger students, as she had already received her three-year Teachers Diploma, like all of the other students. There was also pressure from their families who were residing in rural areas to support them, since poverty was inescapable. Another debilitating factor for rural women was that there were people who were lucky enough to occupy high positions without the appropriate higher qualifications. Such people would discourage ambitious women from studying further. Moreover, the government also played an important role in discouraging women from studying, as it failed to recognise their higher qualifications and prevented them from earning salaries based on the type of qualification they held. Indeed, research demonstrates that previously the salaries of married women were seen as 'pin' money, supplementing those of their breadwinner husbands (Walker, 1998). For this reason, teaching was deemed especially suitable for how it prepared women for motherhood (Walker, 1998).

The trend of black men as the sole wage earners within a household and women as the caretakers was previously established as a cultural norm in traditional South African cultures (Allen, 2018). In spite of this, among the challenges they encountered were a lack of role models and no career options in rural areas. So studying was not priority. As they were teachers, they decided to study to be lifelong learners and to acquire new knowledge and new teaching trends. As I indicated in Chapter Six, some of them were high school teachers and others were lecturers. They intentionally chose New Town University because it was more appropriate than any of the other South African universities, since it has supervisors and that permitted them to make appointments for consultations. This would help them to achieve their educational goals. The informants indicated as follows:

> **Elihle:** We could not attend because higher education institutions were not near; even if we had to attend [class] at about 4 o'clock, when you got there it would be late because they were far from us. I then chose this university because it was the nearest institution, but New Town University was not for black people, it was for whites. As a result, blacks were not exposed to it.

Sibusisiwe: I re-entered higher education later in life, because it was the challenge of being an African woman where there are expectations of how far you can go with your studies and then do other work of being a woman at home. I then wanted to get an understanding of the world I'm living in. Higher education widens your thoughts and understanding and it helps me to view the world differently. I have grown a lot in this institution, from my first degree which I did here. I discovered that the institution is very rich, especially in its research and programmes. It motivates and changes my personality. A programme that I enjoy is the study that I'm in at the moment, especially the assessments in Environmental Studies. I find it very interesting and an eye-opening for me, the opportunity of being able to present something. For example, I had to present a study of career: how one is motivated towards his/her career, physical, emotional and social state, and it is very interesting.

Luyanda: When I was doing my junior degree, I intended to eventually change my title and be a Doctor. I have been driven by that dream. After raising my kids, I decided that it was time to enrol again. It is one of the recognised universities and I am a product of New Town University. I did my junior degree in New Town University in Lamont and I received a rich education, so I decided to choose New Town University again. I studied at Swallows University but I didn't feel comfortable there. I only studied there because I was working at Escort and it was the only institution that I could access, otherwise it wasn't my choice. Sometimes I would get 100% in the assignments. This gave doubts and it wasn't challenging enough for me. Looking back, when I was doing my junior degree they were always talking about critical thinking. The education that we receive teaches us to have a broad mind and critically look at things, even in our daily situation. I cannot accept anything that I am told by a person because I now know that everything that is said or designed by a man is subject to change, as long as you can support the reason for the change. I have experienced that studying requires a lot of money, but there are other alternatives like Eduloan if you don't have the money to study.

In the above the informants articulated that due to racial segregation policies in the apartheid era, many black people were prohibited from their studies at institutions near them. For this reason, they therefore enrolled in Teachers Training Colleges, which were more accessible at that time. After 1994 educational policies were reformed and the gates were then reopened to all racial groups to further their studies at institutions of their choice.

In this regard, it can be argued that mature students often see education as a catalyst for change in their lives and feel a tremendous pressure to succeed (Shanahan, 2006). Also, Elihle mentioned that she enrolled at New Town University because it was the nearest institution; in the past it was for whites, and blacks were not allowed to study with white people during the apartheid era. She also mentioned that she chose New Town University because it was more appropriate than other universities. Sibusisiwe further indicated that she chose New Town University because she believed that it would help her to broaden her thoughts and grow professionally. They all indicated that New Town was a fully resourced

institution and also students were allowed to present their work and be critiqued by students and supervisors, and this benefits students in shaping their research work.

Like all of the other informants, Luyanda re-entered at a later age, after having kids. She was the only informant who did not have exposure to other universities, since she had also completed her undergraduate degree at New Town University. However, she maintained that she was grateful to study there since it has a good reputation when comes to research output and is a leading university in KZN. She commented that she was not comfortable to study at Swallows University, since the institution lacks contact-time sessions as it offers distance learning. She preferred New Town University because it taught her to think critically. Adding on Luyanda's sentiments, Lulama voiced as follows:

> When I graduated as an undergrad, I graduated with a diploma. At first, when I did ACE, it was just a matter of getting an equivalent qualification with a degree. Once I did my ACE, I had an edge to carry on until my master's, after which I wanted to take a break. I completed my master's in 2011 and I wasn't even sure if I would pursue my PhD, because I felt that there was too much work when I did my master's and I was starting to be lazy. In 2012 I got a job at the university as a tutor and then my master's supervisor motivated me to carry on doing my PhD. And being in a university environment, especially at New Town University, and hoping to stay – which I am – I have to have a PhD because that is everyday communication saying that people must register for their PhDs. I then decided to carry on and do my PhD.
>
> I'm the type of person who gets conditioned in a place, so because this is the institution where I did my undergrad, I just developed a connection with the institution. Honestly, it can be bad sometimes because you don't get to explore the context of other universities. I wouldn't know how the other universities operate because I've been with New Town University since my undergrad. When doing my postgraduate degree, I would work with the supervisors here and it would be easy working with people that I already know. Also, besides Swallows University, the other universities are quite far and even though I worked far from New Town University when I was still at school, it was still in the province. I am a person who prefers interaction instead of contacting my supervisor through email like at Swallows University where it is distance learning.

From the above it became evident that all of the informants were eager to grow professionally. New Town University was chosen for its suitability in helping these women to take up the opportunity to study. In Teachers Training Colleges they received a three-year diploma which was not equivalent to the undergraduate degree; as a result, seven informants ended up doing an Advanced Certificate in Education to acquire the status of having M+4, which closed the gap of not having an undergraduate degree. Lulama was fortunate as she

was employed at the university and was motivated to do a master's degree; her supervisor also encouraged her to do a PhD, which she received within a short period of time.

10.3.1 Women's experiences of being adult learners in higher education

In an attempt to understand the life experiences of the informants, they were asked about their feelings of being adult students in higher education, and commented as follows:

> **Aphiwe:** The experiences of adult learners are different. Sometimes it depends on the family that you have. I think that some families support each other, but others do not and you are on your own when you have other responsibilities at home. Like me, for example, as a *umakoti* [bride] my in-laws don't understand why I don't come [to visit]; instead, I remain studying when there are rituals or other ceremonies because I am a *umakoti* and I have responsibilities such as cooking and other things. When you are young, you don't have the responsibilities of an adult; you just look out for yourself, unless you are an orphan and living in a family headed by children. The mind of a young learner is still fresh and they understand easily, but adults forget and in some cases are stressed by the family. It is not the same when you are young; you have a chance to choose whether you want to have a boyfriend or not, and if you choose to have one and forget about your studies, it is your own choice. An adult doesn't have much of a choice. Take me, for example, I can't dissolve my marriage because of my studies.

> **Bongeka:** An adult learner, in my view, is somebody who is a go-getter because it is not [easy] to spend 8 to 10 hours on campus, be a mother full time and be a colleague at work; so you have to push to reach the level that you need to achieve. You are expected to perform other duties at home and university as well and you need self-motivation.

From the above it became clear that the experiences of adult learners differed from those of younger learners. Young learners have an opportunity to choose what they want to do; they also have no responsibilities besides taking care of themselves. Aphiwe said that even in class, the mind of young students is fresh so they learn fast, unlike adult learners. It also became apparent that only those young students who might have challenges as orphans or living in a child-headed home might have to struggle. It was evident that adult learners found coping in higher education as a challenge because of their multiple roles, such as that of being a wife, which has its pressures. It is not to be denied that these students are older and typically balancing jobs, families, and school, facing different issues than their traditional counterparts (Bidwell, 2014). Also, time management is a significant issue for adult learners, as they struggle to find a balance between maintaining their family and financial obligations while still performing well in school (Ross-Gordon, 2011).

In spite of these obstacles, it became apparent that Aphiwe would not dissolve her marriage because of her university responsibilities. However, she said family members find it hard to understand why an '*umakoti*' [a bride] is not able to attend family rituals because of her university pressures. Bongeka had a different perspective on adult learners, seeing them as self-motivated individuals because they cope in higher education regardless of other life pressures, and do not quit. Aphelele further mentioned that:

> I think adult learners face the same experiences as me, as I am struggling to cope to meet the deadlines because I have not been doing this for quite some time. I have discovered that when you start, you worry until you understand exactly what it is that you have to do, but ultimately this opens their minds. I spoke to one of my group members who felt like she had been lost or wasn't in the right place. She was completely confused and started to ask people what qualifications they had before, which is to say that everyone experiences the same problems as I did. This sometimes led us to question ourselves, whether are we going to make it. We rather feel that we do not have the necessary skills required for what we are doing.

The above sentiments make it clear that the pressure that adult learners experience in HEIs sometimes drove them crazy, causing them to behave in ways that they were sometimes unable to explain. What led them to this position was the impact of the education they as black learners received when they were young. Due to this, their admittance to schooling and the quality of that schooling has differed markedly. Apartheid education was deliberately designed to stifle intellectual development and opportunity for generations of black children, and Bantu education in particular was marked by gross inequalities, savage political repression and crushed hopes (Walker, 1998). It therefore became clear that re-entering higher education after more than 10 years created uncertainty and confusion. The fact that one informant doubted whether she was 'in the right place' makes it clear that she felt lost and uncertain how to proceed, while she had to cope with other responsibilities at the same time. Indeed, there is evidence that for disadvantaged pupils, the gaps between what they should know and what they do know grow over time (Spaull, 2013). This means that as time goes on, children fall further and further behind the curriculum, leading to a situation where remediation is almost impossible in high school since these learning gaps have been left unaddressed for too long.

This confusion and uncertainty seemed to be pivotal in the challenges these adult learners experienced. It also became evident that the experiences of adult learners in HEIs were not the same. While some students tried to understand what they were expected to do as adult learners, others found more challenges besides having to learn module content, such as

learning how to use technological processes and becoming computer literate by learning how to use different types of computer software such as EndNote.

10.3.2 The language barrier

Part of the stress and the educational challenges faced by women was caused by the language used in higher education. Many factors (such as poverty, cultural differences and the opportunity to learn test content) contribute to the differences between English-speaking learners and non-English-speaking learners, and the achievement gap is of particular concern when looking at long-term student outcomes (Cawthon, 2010). The informants in this study stated that English was a challenge in comprehending their postgraduate work:

> **Luyanda:** It [language] is a real barrier because we are instructed and examined in English and it is not our native language. If you are an African, you have to read the question and translate it. Sometimes you fail because you just didn't understand the question; not that you don't know. It was a real disadvantage in our education experiences because the teachers did not translate or explain what the question wanted, and you would be left with guessing what the question is looking for. In this way, we couldn't achieve what we were capable of achieving.

> **Aphelele:** Before I even talk about its impact, it's so fortunate that the English language is the language that we have to use. It is an international language and a communication language. However, it has a very negative impact. Although all the subject books accept the language subjects are in English, we still find it difficult. If you don't know English, it means that it's not easy to understand the content of the subject, hence a high rate of failure comes in.

> **Lulama:** One cannot think in a foreign language and so it takes time to think and then decide on how you will phrase your answer. In the process, you lose time and you find that you don't complete the paper. You have to read and understand the question, translate it into your language then back, while others are already writing because it is their home language.

> **Aphiwe:** It's academic language used at universities. I was so frustrated because I couldn't understand it; as a result, I have to spend most of my time at the university than at home. Although they say that English is a medium of instruction, some of the teachers still used IsiZulu even when they were supposed to use English, and that affected us in developing language communication in English. We were also not exposed to the use of computers unlike other schools in townships and towns, who have computers. Comparing my primary education to that of my children, they know computers because they have it in their curriculum and they have computer periods at school, but we did not get that opportunity.

From the above sentiments it became apparent that studying in English was a major problem for the informants, as the English language became a learning barrier for most of them. This

suggests that teachers who lack content knowledge could not teach learners effectively. There is strong evidence that the synthesis of teacher quality suggests that teacher certification, pedagogical knowledge, and subject specialist knowledge are significantly associated with higher student achievement (Wayne & Young, 2003). In spite of this, all the informants spoke English as their second language, and they therefore found some difficulties in coping with the learning content in a higher education setting. They indicated that this particular challenge emanated from not being taught proper English when they were younger. The reason for this was that their teachers were not English first language speakers, and were thus not proficient in English.

Aphelele highlighted that even the matric failure rate is so high because some black learners did not have a good command of English. This confirms an earlier finding by Tshotsho (2006), who revealed that:

> … black students from rural areas as being more disadvantaged than urban students since they do not have exposure to spoken English or the opportunity to use the language outside the classroom. This drawback, particularly for the rural students results from a lack of contact with the English language with people, television, radio or books. They also do not always have good English teachers of functional school buildings.

They therefore experienced challenges in trying to comprehend the questions and translating them into their mother tongue, while other students who spoke English as their first language did not encounter this problem. Aphelele substantiated this, saying:

> In my experience, the teachers who taught us at those times did not know how to teach. They were just conveying the message without understanding it. There was an Afrikaans poem that we did, for example. We crammed because we didn't understand it. I would say that we were not taught to learn with understanding and there was a problem with the language because we were not encouraged to speak English.

It became clear that most informants were concerned about the use of the English language, which they experienced as a learning barrier. Black South African people struggled alongside an education system intended to cramp their future professional opportunities (Walker, 1998). Indeed, there was a relationship of structural exclusion which played out on the educational stage of apartheid life chances. For those who survived the school years, there were the further hurdles of study at historically black universities designated for different 'ethnic' groups and marked by disparities of funding, resources, research capacity and scholarship (Walker, 1998).

It was evident that the informants acknowledged that being a product of teachers who did not know how to teach affected them while pursuing their higher degrees. They found it difficult to cope even if they tried hard – the damage was substantial. They indicated that they had not been encouraged to speak and practise English; as a result, they failed to develop a command of English at a young age, and this contributed to their learning challenges in higher education. The informants' sentiments are supported by the DoE (2002) which highlighted that in South Africa the English language has been and continues to be a barrier to access and success in higher education, insofar as the majority of students entering higher education are not fully proficient in it. However, in working hard to overcome English as a language barrier as well as other postgraduate challenges, the informants became resilient and pushed themselves in an attempt to climb the mountain of achieving higher qualifications.

10.3.3 Knowledge deficiency

Knowledge deficiency was also among the educational adversities encountered by most of the informants in this study. The concept of 'deficit thinking' describes the phenomenon of blaming the families or backgrounds of students for their non-seamless assimilation into educational environments and poor performance (Mophosho, 2013). This is a form of oppression; it is based on the cruel and unjust use of authority and power to keep a group of people in their place (Ryan, 1976). The history of deficient thinking in education is filled with examples of how poor students of colour were kept 'in their place' by macro- and micro-level educational policies/practices fuelled by class and racial prejudice (Ryan, 1976).

In this study, the informants indicated they encountered challenges at every stage of their studies. Indeed, this finding aligns with Spaull (2013), who reported that poor-quality schooling at the primary and secondary level in South Africa severely limited the youth's capacity to exploit further training opportunities (Spaull, 2013). As such, existing skills deficiencies among those who are the product of an underperforming school system (predominantly black youth) are likely to persist. Some of the problems that perpetuated this were due to being taught by unqualified teachers and the segregation policy during their earlier education. Also, Kodero, Misigo, Owino, and Simuyi (2011, p. 1) confirmed that this matters a lot because ineffective teachers inhibit the learning of many learners over time. As a consequence, some may be demotivated and drop out of school. Informants commented as follows:

Aphelele: I was blank when I came here. I found that I knew nothing and when we had to go through the articles that we had to go through, read them, critique, agree or disagree with them, I found it very difficult. I thought that they had given me work they couldn't even do themselves. I asked myself what I was doing when I had to do my proposal. I was asked to mention which people would participate in my study and put together the critical questions. This was a very difficult part.

> **Lulama:** It was not about English as a medium of instruction only, I am also struggling with academic writing, so for me, academic writing is not an easy thing to understand within a short period.

From the above perspectives, it became apparent that most of the informants lacked certain skills when they continued their studies. Concerning this, Spaull (2013) revealed that all of the available evidence suggests that many South African children are acquiring debilitating learning deficits early on in their schooling careers, and that this is the root cause of underperformance in later years. The learning deficits emanate from the previous schooling, where the student role was to listen to and memorise what the teachers said (Christie, 2006). As a result, the students were not active – they simply 'received' the knowledge which the teacher 'deposited' in their minds. The 'banking' approach will never propose to students that they critically consider reality; students may discover through existential experience that their present way of life is irreconcilable with their vocation to become fully human (Freire, 1970).

Like the other informants, Aphelele encountered deficient knowledge and admitted that she was blank when she started her postgraduate degree. She thought even her supervisor could not do what he had asked her to do. That feeling was caused by her lack of knowledge, and she was overwhelmed by the high standard of work she was expected to provide. This is evidence that most students were not allowed to think for themselves or to discover things for themselves (Freire, 1970); this also tells us that there is no magic in education, but skills are meant to be attained to be used in the future. It was for this reason that closing the gap within a short period was a challenge on its own, and might take some time. Aphelele also had to meet deadlines and finish her degree within the stipulated time, like all the other students. Most students found a lack of knowledge to be an obstacle, and this created a lot of stress and frustration. The informants thus spent lengthy periods at the university in an attempt to close the gap and meet the required standards. Bongeka had a similar experience regarding the deficiency of knowledge as a learning barrier as a postgraduate student, and stated:

> I would say yes, other students also experience the same problem because, in my class at Curriculum Studies, we do contact each other and sometimes we meet as a group to discuss things that we don't understand. We are always concerned about being behind, and [that] this is beyond our potential.

The above sentiment demonstrated the impact of the lack of knowledge on the life experiences of postgraduate students in this study. This finding relates to what Spaull (2013) has identified in terms of difficulties encountered by black students:

> … the existing body of evidence suggests that a large proportion of South African teachers have below-basic content-knowledge in the subject they teach – largely as a result of inadequate apartheid-era teacher training and ineffectiveness of in-service teacher training initiatives. For this reason, teachers cannot teach what they do not know.

It becomes clear that while these women encountered knowledge deficiency, it was however noted that they had inherited this from their previous teachers, who lacked skills in how to teach content. In spite of this discrepancy, these women were self-motivated and fought to overcome their challenges. As Elihle pointed out:

> I think the type of education that we received has an impact on our education. Because the education that we received was not good enough for these days. We just received the education that will get us nowhere. Even if we did science classes, there were no resources to do the experiments and I can say the resources were too limited, we had no libraries, we had no laboratories.

It was apparent from the above narratives that some of the obstacles that informants faced had been caused by several contributing factors, that were strong enough to expose students to such educational experiences and challenges. Knowledge deficiency and the language barrier were among the driving forces for such experiences. In spite of these factors, the informants further highlighted that postgraduate students struggled in using technology at the university.

10.3.4 Use of technology

Realising the potential of technology in people's lives, scholars are agreed that technology is empowering (Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1990). It was apparent that the utilisation of technology was aimed at empowering the students. The university offered these women computers and the Internet as a way of supporting them. Using technological processes is not only mandatory in learning, it also provides many of the mechanisms for it to occur; it has had an enormous impact on society and adult education (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). Concerning the use of technology, the informants articulated as follows:

> **Elihle:** Being a rural person, it becomes very hard when you get to universities because in the university they use computers; you find out that you can't use that so you cannot get information. You have to ask for help, only to find out that people are busy with their work, so it becomes very difficult.

> **Lulama:** We didn't have the technology yet the university expected us to use technology. You are expected to use things like EndNote without any training being provided to you and as someone from a rural area, I had to go the extra mile to try to learn those things.
>
> **Luyanda:** Yes, rural schooling affected my tertiary education because we received a Bantu Education. We came from rural areas where there were no libraries or technology. We had to learn how to use a computer at the university and it wasn't easy. At one stage, I had to sleep in the computer lab when I was doing a Sociology assignment during my junior degree because it had to be typed and I was not as fast as the others.

From the above, it became apparent that coping with the struggles they encountered was a non-stop process. All of the informants came from rural areas but chose to live, in particular to further their studies, in an urban area. It appeared that studying at an HEI as adult learners posed several challenges. Crenshaw (2017) notes that while it is difficult to isolate these factors (adult challenges), it is acknowledged that they can have an impact on a student's path to completion. It was evident that one of their challenges was that they had never been exposed to technology, yet the university assumed that because they were doing postgraduate degrees, they should know how to use a computer. Technology can be intimidating to many non-traditional students, especially if it is not something used in their daily lives (Bell, 2012). It was also evident that the informants found it difficult to get help from others, because they were all running short of time and needed to meet deadlines. This finding was supported by Erisman and Steele (2012), who noted that once classes have started, many adult learners experience various anxieties, such as about attending classes with younger students, guilt over missing events in their family's lives, selfishness, and low self-esteem.

It was apparent that these postgraduate students were not well-trained in how to use ICT. This caused frustration, as they did not have enough time to spend at the university as they were also full-time workers. However, the university was waiting for their cooperation in terms of submitting assigned work. As a result, the informants took some time to become familiar with the technology, as they had not previously been exposed to it. Some informants mentioned that they came to the university to do their postgraduate degrees not knowing how to use a computer, as they were born before they came into use and were not exposed to them before, even at their workplace. The university provided students with a variety of technologies, since the ICT allows students to be more organised and efficient. They can take obtain the notes from their computer, submit their works by email from home (as long as they meet the

deadline), and look for information from various sources online to fulfil the tasks given to them (Hermans, Tondeur, van Braak, & Valcke, 2008). The main goal of utilising ICT is to enable students to gain a wider range of knowledge and be able to access the Internet for developing a global outlook, to nurture students through the capability of processing information more effectively and efficiently, and to develop students with attitudes and capabilities for lifelong learning (Ghavifekr & Rosdy, 2015).

It was apparent that informants had to learn how to use EndNote and how to search for information on top of their university work. Even for oral presentation assessments, they had to use computers including the Internet to retrieve relevant information. EndNote is a well-known proprietary reference management software widely used by researchers across the world (Mishra, 2015). It affords researchers unlimited reference storage, capabilities for multiple bibliographies, journal abbreviations recognition and standardisation (Mishra, 2015). master's and doctoral students are required to use EndNote to compile their dissertations, theses, or academic articles to be accepted for publication. The university library has assigned different individuals to assist postgraduate students in this regard. In spite of this, one informant stated that she had to stay the whole night to learn to use the computer to type her assignment. Because these students care about how they will use course material practically and learn best, being involved with the material, role-playing, discussions, observations, and the chance of hands-on applications benefit them best (Vandenberg, 2012).

The informants corroborated experiencing these challenges:

> **Bongeka:** Yes, rural schooling affected my studies. It did have some disadvantages, like not learning how to use a computer before I reached the university level. It also has an impact on self-confidence to do presentations, because there are a lot of presentations at university and it's never easy, because it's like doing a presentation for the first time in front of a class. Some of the presentations require that you use PowerPoint and I was using it for the first time, for marks.
>
> **Aphiwe:** The problems that I encountered were technological processes, the style of writing and the academic language, but I've adjusted and I'm getting used to the way things are done at [university] where most things are done electronically like computers, emails, and typing: things I wasn't used to while studying at another university, because we were not exposed to such things.
>
> **Aphelele:** As an African woman, you need to be strong and know what you want in life, strive to be better and be confident in what you want. People always say that when you say something, it becomes you and you live it. I feel great and like I've

> got the world and I am proud of my writing and my dissertation. It is an unbelievable achievement.

The above sentiments demonstrate that these women found postgraduate studies challenging. Bongeka commented that she found difficulty in doing presentations, something she had not done before, and was also using a computer program that had not used before. Bénabou and Tirole (2002) acknowledged that higher self-confidence enhances an individual's motivation and gives anyone with a vested interest in his/her performance an incentive to build up and maintain his self-esteem (Bénabou & Tirole, 2002). As such, confidence can help the individual to be more ambitious and persist in the face of adversity. Self-confidence kept the informants going, regardless of their educational hurdles. Their progress was supported by the environment they found themselves in, as it required them to be autonomous students.

Undeniably, an enormous ''self-help industry flourishes, a sizeable part of which purports to help people improve their self-esteem, shed 'learned helplessness' and reap the benefits of 'learned optimism'" (Seligman, 1990). Besides this, adult learners are self-directed and must have some control over what they are learning, as they are motivated to learn (Vandenberg, 2012). Self-confidence helped these women to persevere and learn new skills. It was evident that they found challenges when it came to academic writing. A study by Schulze and Lemmer (2017) revealed that meeting the demands of quality academic writing is a challenge to the increasing number of English second language students worldwide, from undergraduate to postgraduate level, who choose to study and publish in English. The global academic world increasingly privileges English for publication (Wood, 2001). Thus, English is likely to be increasingly used for writing most academic texts, even in non-English-speaking countries (Wachter, 2008). However, pre-university and undergraduate preparation seldom includes extensive academic writing practice (Caffarella & Barnett, 2000). In this study, the findings demonstrate that these postgraduate students did not receive any training during their undergraduate degrees that would prepare them for master's and doctoral studies. These findings have been confirmed by Bitchener and Basturkman (2006), who maintained that at postgraduate level competence in academic writing has become a matter of particular concern, since English second language students frequently struggle to meet the requirements of thesis or dissertation writing. Postgraduate students in South African universities also struggle with the rigours of dissertation writing (Schulze & Lemmer, 2017). In spite of the challenges, the informants were proud of the progress they had made and the support they had been given, that resulted in them submitting dissertations of good quality.

10.3.5 Support structures

The informants in this study revealed that they had encountered several educational challenges at an HEI. For example, it was apparent that language barriers, knowledge deficiency, and academic writing were among the factors that contributed to their stressful lives. As they were adult learners and had multiple roles, they also indicated the kind of support they received while doing their postgraduate studies. It was crucial for these women that they were recognised and receive assistance to move ahead (Daloz, 1999). In this regard, Rowntree (1992) argues that a lack of support delays completion and leads to students dropping out of programmes. Besides this, Denhere (2013) insists that a lack of family support, poor achievement, discouragement from family and peers, lack of information, reluctance to live in a small village, unaffordability, and a desperate need to find employment all hinder adult participation in higher education. On the kind of support that the women received while studying, Sibusisiwe articulated that:

> There were different types of support, I received financial support because I didn't get any from my family. I wouldn't make it because I was financially dry. The university arranged that I am supported with NSFAS in my first degree. My lecturers were also able to avail themselves for me when I made appointments when I needed help. Before I received a bursary, and it had just stopped. I couldn't depend on my family, with my mother who was a pensioner and my sisters were living on grants, which is why I turned to the university and I got help. It helped with the learning materials. For example, books from the library and, most importantly, the laboratories and experiments because I was a science student. Before I went for the teaching practice, I would take material from the university if there was a need that I do practicals with the learners where I would be teaching.

Sibusisiwe shared her experience of the support she received at the university. She said that at first she was given bursary, but this bursary stopped. She was then stressed because she needed financial support. Fortunately, the university offered her National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) funding, because even though she was working, she could not afford the university fees due to other expenses. She also mentioned that she received support from the lecturers and that the university supported her with science resources for her teaching practice, so that she could do practical experiments for learners while being evaluated. Other informants also shared the kind of support they received as postgraduate students:

> **Aphelele:** You just have to talk with your family and tell them what you are doing. Just tell them like if you are doing chapter one, just tell them right now I'm doing chapter one, and you submit it and it comes back, then you just take the family out and say let us celebrate. So in that way they are going to like what you are doing because they'll know that at the end of it there will be a triumph, then there is a

> reward after that. Therefore, they'll strive and make sure that they support you because they are for that award. They are waiting for it, because they know that at the end of this race there will be something. So that's one of the things that I did.
>
> **Elihle:** At home, the support that I received is that they understood that I'm studying and we help one another, we share house duties and they support me morally. My husband even waits for me if I'm doing my studies until late. He'll say while I'm studying, he'll go to watch TV until he becomes exhausted and goes to sleep. In the university, I've got support from my supervisor, from the librarian, also information that I have through the studies done by others gives me support. My fellow students provide me with information, they search for information, and assist with proofreading.

From the above it was evident that in spite of their challenges, they were able to receive different kinds of assistance. In this regard, Aphelele used a different strategy to enhance support from her family, by communicating and informing her family about her situation and also indicating how the family is going to benefit. After any progress she would celebrate with them by taking them out, and she stated that this strategy worked well for her and her family. Similarly, Elihle commented that she received support from different structures. She mentioned that the university provided her with the library, Research Commons, librarian, and supervisor. She also indicated that she received support from her fellow students in terms of locating information and proofreading purposes. Other informants stated as follows:

> **Aphiwe:** As a postgraduate student I needed support, as I struggled to write my first assignment. As a result, I failed it. At first, I thought I knew how to write, but I found out I was wrong. My lecturer brought it back saying that it was not the standard of university level, although one student wrote something closer to what he wanted. It was then that he helped us, as we didn't know how to write; we even lacked academic language. He encouraged us to form support groups. Then I joined other students. It was then that I realised that if I had joined a support group, I think I would not have been asked to redo it.
>
> **Lulama:** I can say here at the university I got support, but I don't think it is sufficient, as I am saying we need support on academic writing because we are not researchers. You come from the world where you don't know how to write academically, so now to be expected to just jump in and write academically. The university provides us with a cohort session for master's and PhD where our work is critiqued. We learn how to write academically because you find that you do your work and send it to your supervisor, and then it comes back. Your writing is not good because first of all, not all of us are having supervisors who teach you how to phrase your … so I think that university has to think about that for people who are doing master's and PhD to write academically.

The above information revealed the different types of support that these women received from different structures. For example, Aphiwe confirmed that she needed support to enable

her to reach her potential. However, like all other informants, she indicated that she was struggling with academic writing, as her previous learning failed to prepare her for postgraduate studies. She commented that she submitted her assignment but it was returned due to not reaching the master's level or postgraduate university standards. Concerning, postgraduate students, a lack of academic writing skills has been identified as a major obstacle to successful completion of their dissertation, among a range of problems encountered by supervisors and students during supervision (Albertyn, Kapp, & Bitzer, 2008; Lessing, 2011).

When Aphiwe spoke, the feeling of being a failure was written on her face. She stated that while she and other students wrestled with their assignments, the lecturer informed them that there was one student who did better than the rest. From this experience the lecturer learned that they needed support, and he advised them to create support groups on top of the cohort-based support programmes they attend. Aphiwe acknowledged that it was in the support group that she really got assistance: they learned to support each other, critique each other's work and help with proofreading.

Lulama also spoke about the support she received as she was doing her PhD. She reported that she needed academic writing support as she had not been mentored in it. However, she explained that the university provided them with cohort sessions where she would present her work and receive critiques from other supervisors and postgraduate students. These findings are in line with those of Nimer (2009), which revealed that the cohort-based doctoral programme is an integral part of the personal and professional support required for academic interaction and degree completion (Nimer, 2009). Lei, Gorelick, Short, Smallwood, and Wright-Porter (2011) describe cohort-based support as follows:

> … a group of about 10-25 students who begin a programme of study together, proceed together through a series of developmental experiences in the context of that programme of study, and end the programme at approximately the same time.

Graduate school is a space and a place where "real changes can begin to enact different policies, build a different community, draw on functioning and effective support systems, and make inclusiveness and diversity a reality" (William, 2007). From her learning experience, Lulama wished that the university would do the same for master's level students as well. Equally, Mophosho (2013) found that through educational attainment an individual attains

the sense of ownership of capital, and thus claims a subject position of power in society. For this reason, the attainment of educational credentials by individuals from a group with a lowered status in a society's hierarchy is particularly significant. Education can grant capital, in spite of the individual's group lacking social, economic, or symbolic capital (Mophosho, 2013). Indeed, attaining education grants access to better employment opportunities, lifestyle choices, and other opportunities for improving one's life (Jetten, Iyer, Tsivrkos, & Young, 2008). The findings of this study on the role played by a varied range of support structures correlate with the existing literature highlighted above. The support received by the informants in this study proved to be their stepping stones to achieving their educational goals. They all mentioned that their success was based on the support they were granted while studying.

10.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed the women's educational experiences and the challenges that had occurred while they were studying. I explained their experiences of being adult learners in higher education. It was evident that their impediments included a language barrier and knowledge deficiency. They also indicated the kind of support that the university offered them as postgraduate students. I have presented the challenges they encountered in using technology at the university. Next, I discuss the last theme which emerged from this study – in terms of how these black educated women, as postgraduate students welcomed their challenges and dealt with them, including the enabling factors that encouraged resilience.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

RESILIENT WOMEN AND ENABLING FACTORS

11.1 Introduction

Resilience is the ability to cope with or recover from difficult or challenging life experiences (Louw & Louw, 2014). It involves reflection on the experiences and the ability to understand them or reinterpret them in psychologically beneficial ways (Greer, 2016). While many factors affect the development of resilience, the most important is the attitude one adopts to deal with adversity (Greer, 2016). Resilience presupposes the presence of significant adversity, together with adaptation by using available protective resources to attain positive outcomes (Ebersöhn, 2017). Resilient women and enabling factors is the last theme which emerged from the data. The women in this study demonstrated that they were exceptionally resilient, regardless of the multiple challenges they encountered as mothers, workers and postgraduate students at the same time. They demonstrated this through their educational ambitions and their experiences. Their desire enabled agency and the ability to study and pursue their dreams despite their challenges. It is believed that without economic power, women have no power and are much more dependent on the family for their basic well-being (Bwakali, 2007). Naidoo and Patel (2009) express what is reality for many women in South Africa:

> … we know what it means to be born into a society that is oppressed and confined to the dark, black spaces of the land, to be of different (the wrong) skin colour, to be women who are even today classified according to language, race, gender, and ethnicity. And yet, as women who have experienced the effects of colonisation, Apartheid and Afrikaner nationalisation, we continue to be chained to our past, to be conditioned into accepting the unreasonable demands of institutional and other authority while making feeble attempts to counter the oppression, only to find solace in our cultural, religious, and historical roots. We remain 'educated' slaves who succumb to western ideals and agendas.

The above sentiments portray the realities and life experiences which the informants in this study had endured due to their unique multiple identities, and the pain they suffered owing to the racial group they belong to as black people. All of this cultivated resilience, and these women rejected the idea of depending on anyone. Below I present the factors that strengthened these women's resilience.

11.2 Factors that strengthen resilience

The informants in this study suffered a great deal due to various contributing factors that led them to experience hardships while studying as postgraduate students. It became apparent

that these women were still able to achieve, despite the influence of historical background, and despite encountering role strain and the challenges they faced while studying for higher degrees at a South African university. It was clear that they were also very resilient in coping with their adversities. These women used education as the protective resource which they had available in order to attain positive outcomes (Ebersöhn, 2017) in dealing with their social and educational difficulties. The potential of resilience is that it helps one to confront and handle stressful life events, ongoing adversities and difficulties, and traumatic experiences (Meichenbaum, 2007), with the outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences and the ability to rise above one's circumstances. It was apparent that the educational ambitions of the informants in this study led them to be clear about the fact that education is evolving, and that they had to become lifelong learners. I now present the factors that strengthened their resilience.

11.2.1 Women resistance strategies

Challenges such as growing up in deprived contexts, limiting cultural practices, experiencing educational struggles and most importantly failing to balance their social and work experiences led the women in this study to become resilient. It is through internal changes that the individual goes through or the strengthening of environmental support that allows the person to withstand negative forces and manage to 'beat the odds' of negative outcomes (Garmezy, 1974). As such, the support they received from their teachers and their parents while they were young strengthened their aspirations to prosper. Their aspirations led them to be willing to empower themselves, and to embark on becoming change agents.

While some individuals find it impossible to rise above their challenges, the informants who participated in this study were courageous and were able to conquer their challenges. As some of them explained:

> **Aphelele:** I could see that there was nobody who was going to uplift me from my situation and I had to do it myself. People say that if you want to achieve something, you have to work very hard so that you can earn your dream and that is what pushed me. I knew that people were living better lives and I had to be disciplined.
>
> **Elihle:** Working with other people makes you rise above the challenges that you face because they motivate you, they assist you, and because of taking further studies you learn that to succeed, you have to work hard.

It became evident that rising above their challenges would not have been possible without changing their mindset for the better and their agency. Educational resilience is a particular area of interest, given the strong relationship between academic attainment and later psychological functioning, physical health and employment opportunities (Graber, Pichon, & Carabine, 2015). Also, academic resilience brings sustained engagement, school bonding, and holistic support across assets at the level of the individual, family, peers, classroom, and school (Morrison, Brown, D'Incau, O'Farrell, & Furlong, 2006). Success was also achieved by listening to others who had walked the same path on the road to success. It became important to learn from those persons' experiences as a source of encouragement. As Elihle commented, working with other people helped her to understand that success comes with sweat; as a result, she worked hard in order to get to where she is today. Supporting these viewpoints, Luyanda commented as follows:

> On my side, self-determination and another thing is whenever you encounter a problem is to enquire from other people. At some stage, I was thinking of quitting but when I communicated with other people, they would encourage me and tell me to go back and look at what I had achieved. When I looked at my results I was satisfied and I told myself that I had to finish this course.

As a young mother, Luyanda had the potential to climb the ladder of success, hoping to reach the highest level at some stage. She indicated that self-determination was a stepping stone to success, but rising above her challenges was not easy at all. Her hindrances tempted her to quit her studies. However, communicating with some fellow students encouraged her to accept her challenges and to be positive and complete the course. Indeed, courageous women overcome their hurdles and problems by devising strategies for survival with freedom and dignity (Bernardin, 2019). It was apparent that resistance helped Luyanda to complete her PhD on time; this would not have been possible if she had not shared her problems with others and been offered a variety of support. De Casanova and Brown (2013) emphasise that "students should cultivate a support network that is career-focused so that they can benefit from working with people with similar goals." In line with these sentiments, Lulama stated that:

> Studying opened up some doors for me. I was able to apply and get this job because I had my master's. It has helped me to learn more about research. I used to think other writers are geniuses and never thought I could write like them. I have had a change of mind-set having been exposed to research and writing. So those are the things I have achieved, even though I am not there yet in terms of writing

> articles, but I am getting there. I know how to analyse research and how to be critical when looking at things.

Lulama noted that she regarded perseverance as the mother of success. Coming from a poor family, she struggled to obtain the required clothes and equipment for her course while doing her undergraduate studies. However, despite the embarrassment of not having the same resources as the other students who were studying with her, she resisted quitting. Instead, she was persistent and was willing and prepared to learn how to use the computer after noticing that some students were already familiar with it. She was patient and self-motivated and learned the hard way, eventually rising above her challenges. Some evidence suggests that education provides accumulated financial and social resources, facilitating long-term resilience during disasters (Frankenberg, Sisoki, Sumantri, Suriastini, & Thomas, 2013). Lulama's resilience enabled her to secure a post at the university, using the qualifications she had obtained in order to pursue financial freedom. This would not have been possible if she had not been prepared to endure the pain of her struggles.

11.2.2 Empowerment

Regarding the role played by empowering women, the United States Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's issues, Melanne Verveer (2009) said:

> … we know that no country can prosper if half of its people are left behind. The truth of the matter is that countries that repress women also tend to be backward economically, and are more likely to be failed states.

The late former first black President of South Africa proclaimed the following words during his inauguration on 24 May 1994, after spending 27 years in jail fighting for the freedom of all people – in particular, black people who were the worst hit by the apartheid system: "Freedom cannot be achieved unless the women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression."

In Mandela's experiences emancipation of black women was his priority after escaping the chains of jail. He was recorded during the presentation of his speech from the dock during his trial on 20 April 1964 (Allo, 2016) as saying:

> I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all people will live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal for which I hope to live for and to see realised. But, My Lord, if it needs to be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.

The difficulties encountered by the black women in this study did not cause them to succumb – instead, they used education for their emancipation. Being resilient helped them to thrive, mature, and increase in competence in the face of adverse circumstances or obstacles (Rouse, 2001). As resilient women, they were aware that learning in adulthood is a transformative rather than an additive process (Mezirow, 2000). However, becoming resilient requires the ability to reflect critically on one's thoughts and assumptions. In this study, the informants reflected on how a higher education institution as the provider of adult learning programmes had empowered them to resist their oppression as black women. Resilience led them to escape poverty and instilled the drive to succeed.

Below is a poem which I wrote based on the informants' verbatim responses regarding empowerment as a resilient enabling factor.

Empowerment

The reality is,
Forcing education in women results in role strain.
While a patriarchal society has no room for higher education
Education is so powerful
It enlightens women
Things have changed
bit by bit
Indeed, feminist have a political agenda of
empowering women

As a result,
Culture is no longer a tool to control
Women fight for their rights
Winning the battle is possible
But it requires special weapons
Through education as a site of struggle,
Through education as a site of resistance,
Through education as a site of emancipation
Rural women rise above all odds!

This poem depicts empowerment as the strengthening factor that enabled these women to resist ill-treatment due to their gender. Concerning resilience, informants stated as follows:
uttered that:

> **Aphelele:** Higher education opens up minds and encourages us to excel in whatever we are doing. There is nothing as important as knowing. For example, if you are reading a book or watch[ing] the news, you start to view things differently and this is what happened to me when I came to this higher institution. Now when

> someone talks, I can analyse and group that person with certain kinds of people like sexists, those trapped in the past, those dedicated to something, politicians, analysts or newsreaders. I can look at things differently. When you are studying, there is a theory that informs you and you apply theories to different scenarios and this opened my mind.
>
> **Bongeka:** I gain a lot of information through studying, attending classes, listening to lecturers and supervisors [who] show me that life goes a long way. We often think that doing a master's is enough, but when you meet people like doctors and supervisors they encourage you to study further, which is why I'm thinking of pursuing a PhD after completing my master's. I've also learned how to critique. Before I came to the university, at honours level, I wasn't familiar with that but now I can critique statements before agreeing.

It became apparent that most of the informants were grateful for the knowledge they had acquired through pursuing postgraduate degrees. They had been exposed to incredible experiences, which they were all very proud of. It became clear that studying opened their minds to think 'outside the box' and look at things from different angles before reaching conclusions. They were grateful that the university had helped them to identify theories that influenced their thinking.

Investing in women and empowering women lifts entire families, communities, and countries out of poverty (Jackson, 2009), and also opens up opportunities which are impossible without education. It was apparent that the university had empowered the informants and helped them to developed critical thinking skills, to the extent that they were able to understand, analyse and even critique scholarly articles. They also mentioned that they had gained information that would not have been accessible to them otherwise. Their university experience had become a constant motivational force that increased their constant willingness to learn. In this regard, explained:

> **Sibusisiwe:** It has made me view the reality of the world differently. It has opened me up physically, emotionally and spiritually. I never understood why people behave the way they do before, but having pursued the degree that I am pursuing, I now understand that there is more to the behaviour of a person.
>
> **Elihle:** The role played by the higher education institution is very huge to me because it empowered me; in future, I will be able to change my teaching career and become an education specialist and contribute in making positive changes in my country.

It became evident that the university offered these women an amazing experience, that not only involved their personal growth but also facilitated their physical, spiritual, and emotional

well-being. The availability of adequate resources served as a strategy to empower these resilient women. Persisting in achieving their aspirations regardless of hurdles that came their way was not easy. An individual is considered "resilient" when, despite adversity, they do better than others facing that same adversity (Rutter, 2012). It is undeniable that students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds are able to persist and manage to achieve exceptional academic results (Agasisti, Avvisati, Borgonovi, & Longobardi, 2018). These students from disadvantaged environments can be classified as resilient, since they managed to overcome adversity to achieve academic success (Wills & Hofmeyr, 2019).

The positive adjustment that enables individuals to overcome adversity and academic resilience can be used to characterise students who succeed in school, despite coming from a socio-economically disadvantaged background (Wills & Hofmeyr, 2019). Black women in this study resisted failing because they believe that education will open up new avenues and empower them. Most of the informants noted that they hoped to secure better positions in the workplace through higher degrees.

11.2.3 Women as lifelong learners

The South African Norms and Standards (DoE, 2000) document prescribes seven roles of an educator. The fourth role is that of the educator as a scholar, researcher, and lifelong learner. This role requires educators to take a stand in furthering their studies for their personal, academic, professional, and occupational growth (Booyse & Du Plessis, 2008). This study revealed that the informants valued the act of being lifelong learners and being well informed: For example, indicated:

> **Lulama:** For me, especially as a teacher, sitting with the degree that you got 10 years ago doesn't make you grow. You should be a lifelong learner. You need to constantly upgrade yourself so that you are on par with what is happening. You need to read around your profession and develop yourself so that you can review your work. Also, it will open opportunities like with me, I now work at a university. It should be more about you and your professional development instead of financial gain, and this way you start to see things differently.

> **Luyanda:** I believe that knowledge is part of lifetime wealth, because if you know you can plan and a lot of other things. For instance, I did Sales and Marketing and because of that, I manage to keep my informal business working because of the skills that I gained from it. Whenever I enrol for something, I apply the knowledge I gain from that particular course to the relevant situation. So in essence, by learning, you gain knowledge.

> **Aphiwe:** Learning is the process that changes people now and again; you change in the way you think, you change in the way you work, even the way you eat because anytime you know that what I'm doing is because of 1, 2 and 3. And if you are that lifelong learner, definitely you are going to have more knowledge than before.

These findings revealed the positive impact of lifelong learning in the lives of rural working mothers. They viewed lifelong learning as an incentive towards their personal, professional, and occupational growth. This finding is in line with that of a study by Desjardins and Schuller (2011), which revealed that:

> Adult education brings different changes, and these changes are not limited to the individual. Adult learners can in turn initiate changes in the wider sense, by affecting the home/family, work, and community contexts that they engage in. There is a deep rooted belief that adult learning has the potential to create personal, economic, and social value. This value can accrue to a variety of actors, to the learner, to other private interests such as a current or future employer, and/or to society at large. Indeed, individuals invest in education with an expectation that there are benefits of different kinds to be realised.

In this study it became apparent that for the informants, investing in their education was the right decision. Luyanda indicated that she believed that learning was part of lifetime wealth, which means that through lifelong learning one is enriched with knowledge that will be useful throughout one's life. This is in line with Vandenberg's (2012) notion that adult learners must be able to see the personal benefit of what they are learning and how it satisfies a need they have. Also, Taylor (2000) maintains that one of the goals of adult learners is to transfer knowledge in real-life situations. The transfer of learning is an effective application by students of what they learned as a result of attending an education programme. This is true in the sense that adult learners want to be able to apply what they learn in their life-worlds (Gravett, 2005). This demonstrates that the risk they take for lifelong learning is not a mistake, but is about the variety of benefits of adult education. In this regard, Bongeka concluded by saying:

> I thought that studying was just for younger people only, but now I realise that even as an adult and a teacher, you can be a lifelong learner; so that is why I decided to re-enter higher education.

While some informants viewed education as a lifelong journey from the outset, it took the majority of the informants some time to realise the importance of being a lifelong learner. However, Bongeka ended up noticing that there was so much she was missing out on, so she

changed her mind and enrolled as a postgraduate student. This was in line with Lauglo and Øia's (2008) statement that educational experiences can also serve to support enlightenment.

11.2.4 Education as a source of motivation

Women in this study used education as a driving force to resist gender inequality, oppression and poverty, and the educational challenges they encountered in higher education. To them, education represents both a right and a need and occupies a central role in the determination of individual standards of living – including their health, happiness, economic security, opportunities and social status – each of which is affected by education (Carnoy, 2008). Below I present a poem illustrating the reasons for women's resistance of the situations they find themselves in.

Education is powerful

It helps us to divert from what we've been doing,
Through education, we learn new teaching trends
Education has transformed us
What happened twenty years ago is different from now,
Mother, don't blame yourself for studying
Just suffer the consequence, but
The reward is greater than you think!

This poem spells out the kind of confidence that these women demonstrated and the benefit they perceived as their rewards, that propelled them to resist whatever challenges they came across. Goals are signposts for action; without goals there will be little motivation to do anything (Van Schoor, Mill, & Potgieter, 2010). In this study motivation was related to the unmet needs or unwanted conditions in life and the pursuit of positive growth toward desired goals (MacKeracher, 1996).

> **Sibusisiwe:** The fact that I wanted to widen my understanding and wanted to go beyond my first degree and see what else I could get motivated me.
>
> **Lulama:** I want to be a professor and have a secure academic job. I've realised that being an academic is not as easy as I thought. My goal is to understand the academic field better. At the moment I don't feel like I know enough to call myself academia. I would like to study until I feel secure that I'm academia. I would also like to enrich my content knowledge in Mathematics, which is my specialisation – to be comfortable as a Mathematics teacher.

From the above it became apparent that these two informants were not happy to obtain only one degree and stop there. While Sibusisiwe wanted to be more knowledgeable, Lulama's driving force for continuous participation was that of understanding academic life as she was working in higher education. This is supported by the study conducted by Lauglo and Øia (2008), which revealed that learning experiences can lead to wider benefits by directly shaping what people know, and developing competencies. This helps people use their knowledge to yield benefits for themselves and society, and cultivate values, attitudes, beliefs, and motivations that foster the potential for generating wider benefits. Indeed, these educational benefits taught Lulama to resist her challenges to accomplish her educational goals. She was confident that furthering her studies would help her to enrich the content knowledge of her subject of choice in her field of study, and to become an expert and qualify to be called an academic. Other informants added as follows:

> **Aphelele:** Motivation to participate is when I look at other women who are at the forefront. When you go for interviews, you find that there are people who think that you don't know and you ask yourself where they are coming from. This is when I realised that people are studying and they are getting a lot of information because the books hold all the information you may need, and this motivated me.

> **Luyanda:** Professor Jonathan was one of my lecturers and he always stressed lifelong learning. You have to be ahead of your learners. At times, there are those learners who know more and they can challenge you as an educator, so those things motivate you to be knowledgeable. To research as an Economics teacher, I had to know what was happening in the economy and the business sector. This included reading newspapers for more information and finding out what was happening at tertiary institutions where they teach Business Economics. I wanted to be a teacher that qualifies.

Aphelele made it clear that her inspiration was other women who excelled because they were studying and were able to access more knowledge than those who were not. Looking at the way they did things motivated her to become involved in furthering her studies regardless of her challenges. This is in line with Houle's (1988) work, highlighting that some adult learners participate for the sake of the activity itself and social interaction.

Bongeka explained what led her to study:

> Having a heavy load at work motivated me to partake in adult learning programmes. I see myself in one of the education offices in some years to come because I feel like it's a burden to mark 250 exercise books every day. I have large classes, and the subject I'm teaching requires a lot of marking including learners' homework. I then decided to study.

The above comment highlights that a heavy workload led Bongeka to resist and find ways of improving her situation. She learned from her brother, who had once been a teacher and had the same problem. By improving his qualifications, he was able to get promotions and secure a position as a subject advisor, which alleviated his load. Houle (1988) notes that some students participate because they are goal-oriented learners. This study thus concurs, as it was found that adult learners participated in adult learning programmes to use education as a means of achieving some of their goals.

11.2.5 Education is evolving as a source of motivation

Any HEI should provide a quality education that helps people satisfy their educational needs. In this study, resilience was intentionally cherished by all of the informants, regardless of the obstacles they dealt with on a daily basis. Pursuing higher degrees was opted for by these women because they felt driven by the fact that education is evolving. These women sensed that by choosing education, they were on the right track:

> **Luyanda:** We need people who are going to bring changes in our education and societies, so if there are no people who are empowered in our communities some necessary changes will not take place; it means there will be no transformation.
>
> **Aphelele:** When you are working and studying, you need to refresh then you learn new things that add value to what you do at work. Also, you can't stop working, because you have to study because you will still need money and promotion.

It became apparent that the informants in this study resisted all their educational challenges because they wanted to enact changes in their communities, as they also believed that knowledge changed rapidly. They also resisted for the sake of empowering themselves as black women who were marginalised and oppressed by the previous regime.

They felt the need to refresh their knowledge to become effective workers. Besides this, as academics, they wanted to contribute new knowledge as a prerequisite for postgraduate qualifications. As Lulama was employed at a university, she believed that educated people contributed to society by bringing changes through knowledge that might improve people's lives. Furthermore, Aphelele believed that studying helped her to learn how to do things differently, effectively, and proficiently in the workplace and for promotion purposes. These findings confirm an earlier study by the OECD (1992) which found that adults with a record of adult education and training are less likely to be unemployed and more likely to experience wage growth, compared to uneducated individuals. Equally, adult learning improves

employability and income, which is the key pathway to realising a range of other benefits (Lauglo & Øia, 2008). Other informants had related but different opinions:

> **Aphiwe:** Teachers who are not studying are stagnant and they lack knowledge because sometimes they just inherited all those things, but they have to change with the time because the education system is changing now and again.
>
> **Elihle:** If you are not educated, you remain unexposed to new things and even if you are told that things have changed, you resist because you are outdated and you don't progress.

It thus became evident that studying helped the informants, who were teachers, to seek more relevant information and learn current teaching trends in education. It appeared that informants had a strong belief that education was changing in South Africa, as it had evolved from Outcomes-Based Education to Curriculum 2005. As teachers, they had experienced the challenges brought by the new curriculum, which was introduced in 1995 with implementation in all grades by the year 2000 (De Waal, 2004). This date was later revised and rescheduled for the year 2005, and because of this revision the new curriculum became known as Curriculum 2005.

In the process of implementation there were many difficulties in the system in terms of social demands and a lack of finance, as well as physical and human capacity, which affected the schedule (De Waal, 2004). Msibi and Mchunu (2013) noted that the introduction of so many innovations at once, particularly with little teacher involvement, led to much criticism of the implementation of this curriculum, particularly among scholars and academics. After some time, the Curriculum Assessments Policy Statement (CAPS) was also introduced, and these changes led the women in this study to wish to embark on lifelong learning, since changes in the education system are unavoidable. As such, Tate and Tate (1983) proclaimed that "we've got to live in the real world, if we don't like the world we're living in, change it and if can't change it, we change ourselves, we can do something". In other words, these teachers could see that they had to take action towards gaining new ideas in and on teaching.

11.2.6 Women's attitude toward learning

It is undeniable that a student's attitude towards learning may influence his or her performance at university. In this regard, performance may be affected by the way a student conducts him-/herself towards learning. In this study, regardless of the many hindrances they faced, the attitude of these rural women postgraduate students towards learning conquered all:

> **Aphelele:** I had to calm myself down, keep focus. I looked at other people and I realised I'd never heard of someone who failed their master's, so why would I? That thought kept me going.
>
> **Aphiwe:** It is difficult, but you have to be a person who is not fearful of challenges because challenges are part of a process to make us develop in some way. There are challenges at work, at home, and the university, but you must be open to learn every time and be positive so that you can overcome those challenges. Just be dedicated and trust yourself. Do not look back when you've started what you are doing; look forward and never backward. Because there is no other thing that you can do without being self-disciplined; you need to be self-disciplined. Know how to do your things. Have a time-table. Just plan your work according to your pace. Then you can make it.

From the above perspectives, it became apparent that obtaining postgraduate degrees required focus and courage. Knowing that other students had faced similar drawbacks but had made it to the end was also an encouragement. It appeared that students' attitudes towards learning had a positive impact on the women's academic performance. The postgraduate students demonstrated that they had developed a 'can do' attitude which helped them to survive (Price & Maier, 2007). Their attitude towards learning enabled them to manage their lives and to have a sense of control over their academic work.

Aphelele's attitude towards learning was positive as she had observed that other students passed their master's degree, so she opted to resist her worries and worked hard to succeed. Aphiwe's sentiment painted a clear picture of her positive attitude. She admitted that there were troubles along the way, but in spite of her dilemmas she regarded herself as someone who was not fearful of challenges but devised a plan to address them. Her strategy was that of being well-disciplined and being prepared to go the extra mile in planning her work and drawing up a time-table that allowed her work to be divided into smaller sections. This also guided her on what to do and when. Other informants stated as follows:

> **Lulama:** In the university, I had to go the extra mile trying to learn things that I did not know like critiquing and evaluating. I have learned these because I've been at the institution for some time, but it doesn't come as easy as it does for people who were already familiar with this.
>
> **Sibusisiwe:** I had to give up my time of relaxation and enjoyment because I realised that if I got stuck only with the first degree, I wouldn't be able to explore what life has in store for me. I chose to pursue my studies instead of having too much time to enjoy myself, even though I still get time for those things.

From the above it was evident that some of the informants accepted that learning in adulthood was challenging, but required perseverance and the willingness to go the extra mile

and to be prepared to learn new things. For example, Lulama indicated that she had to learn to critique and evaluate her work and that of other fellow students during the cohort session. Indeed, critiquing is an important part of academic work (it is the striving for perfection and always seeking more that drives equality research); the fact that students so strongly appreciated supportive critique suggests that perhaps a different balance is needed between constructive criticism and non-judgement, particularly in the early stages of idea development (Cravens, Ulibarri, Cornelius, Royalty, & Nabergoj, 2014). If students are anxious that any little flaw might invoke a degree of critique that they are not yet prepared to encounter, rather than viewing flaws as a learning opportunity they are more likely to be focused only on getting it 'right' and protecting themselves from feeling vulnerable, rather than on exploring the new options and approaches necessary for innovative work (Cravens et al., 2014). In spite of this, they learned also to give up other things which they viewed as less important, and noticed that having a 'nice time' would not enable them to achieve their educational goals. Like the other informants, Lulama mentioned that doing her undergraduate and postgraduate degrees at the same university helped her as she learned how to acquire the necessary skills needed at the university, but mentioned that it was never smooth sailing. She said that it was not as easy as one might think, and required patience and the willingness to learn.

11.2.7 Resilient women as change agents

Resilience propelled these women to become change agents. In spite of the hitches they had experienced, altruism led them to resist and move forward and enact change. They then embarked on an extra journey to become counsellors, mentors, sponsors, and caregivers beyond the call of duty. Their actions are supported by Collins (1994), who maintained that "other mothers" are those mothers who routinely take care of children in black communities, even though their maternal ties are social rather than biological. There were some concrete reasons for this particular practice among rural working mothers, such as: 1) having experienced what it means to have learning barriers while others do not feel the pinch; 2) the impact of having an underprivileged background and its consequences; and 3) feeling the need to make a mark and feeling good about doing justice by those marginalised learners that needed extra support. In this regard, Amahle commented that:

> I am a class teacher for Grade 7 and I teach different subjects. I also have to play a motherly role because most of my learners don't have parents, so I need to assist them with grants. I work with social workers in the area. Sometimes you find that they [the children] don't even have Birth Certificates and as I have said, it is not my job but I have to play that motherly role. I try to assist them in getting Birth

> Certificates so that they can get grants. Sometimes you have to use your own money to buy them food and girls' necessities.

In the same vein, Luyanda stated:

> What had helped me working in a semi-urban area is my passion for children. My motto was: To do the best for the children. Even if there is one child that I've helped, in spite of the place where I live, someone has to make a difference, and I wanted to be part of the people who would make a difference to the community. Sometimes one has to involve others to create awareness and try to make them feel part of the school. This would work sometimes, at times not.

From the above perspectives, it became evident that these women went the extra mile in an attempt to help black learners succeed. They spread their wings over those they were not supposed to 'mother', and this was not part of their job description. Eradicating women's oppression, they opened their hands to offer any assistance that the girls under their supervision might need. These women's challenges taught them to seek ways to enact changes in the lives of young students, particularly girls, so that they wouldn't have to experience similar challenges in the future, since racial issues are no longer a challenge in South Africa.

Creating greater gender equality helps create a fair society, and raises economic productivity (Global Monitoring Report, 2008). The informants hoped to do whatever it takes to help students succeed. They were more concerned about social justice in the workplace. Pursuing further studies opened these postgraduate students' eyes to the need to make a difference in the communities they served. However, they were quite aware that enacting social justice was not one person's job; therefore, they involved other stakeholders in ensuring that they actually 'made things happen.' Lulama was also prepared to offer mentorship to needy or struggling black students. She explained:

> Teaching in a higher education institution is a bit different from teaching in a school because you deal with adult people who have goals. Sometimes you do find those that still think they are at high school, but you try to motivate them. In my experience, I have learned to have a mentoring relationship with students, especially when they come for a consultation, where you can tell someone what they are doing wrong.

Echoing Lulama's viewpoint, Aphelele stated:

> I thought I would be lecturing but I am teaching because the kinds of students that we get are not independent. They still want to be pushed to do their work. If you just lecture and expect the students to follow you, none of them will pass, so I have

> to go out of my way to explain what they are doing, the expectations and the dedication that we are expecting from them. And at the same time, you need to be up to date, serve the students as they come, and help them because we are working in a multiracial institution, you have to be ready to address race issues, live with it and make sure that you excel in that. Against all odds, you need to ensure that you do what is expected of you.

Supporting young black learners did not happen at primary and high school level only, as those working in HEIs experienced the same need to be 'other mothers' to the students they worked with. Teaching and learning methods in tertiary education differ from those at primary and high school levels. However, these informants working in tertiary settings found themselves deviating from what they were expected to do, for the sake of helping students to understand the learning content. As Collins (1994) asserted about mothers who routinely take care of children in the black community, even though their maternal ties are social rather biological, these women were also willing to offer any support, based on their assessments pertaining to struggling or needy learners. Even though they were supposed to use lecturers' instructional strategies, they found themselves acting as teachers and counsellors in an attempt to help their students find a calm space and familiarise themselves with their new environment. Some students found it difficult to cope in the new setting and other experienced racial issues; these female lecturers played an important role in evoking peace among students. These women also agreed that some students who paid attention benefited from mentoring and counselling assistance. These sentiments connect with Graham's (2013) findings on the role played by black women lecturers (called "othermother") in tertiary institutions. She noted that one of the successful roads of educational attainment included the practice of "othermothering" and further highlights that this practice set a foundation for black women's roles as simultaneously being academic providers and caretakers.

11.3 Conclusion

In spite of all of the challenges that rural working mothers encountered as postgraduate students, they became resilient because they had the desire to succeed. They were being driven by their strong educational ambitions and had important sources of motivation. They ensured that they used higher education as a platform to negotiate their experiences and use it as a space for resistance. They were not afraid to point out some of the challenges they faced as postgraduate students, such as the language barrier and knowledge deficiency. However, they fought back by employing strategies that strengthened their resilience.

CHAPTER TWELVE

CONCLUSION

12.1 Introduction

This study intended to explore the experiences of rural working mothers pursuing higher degrees at a South African university. I wanted to investigate how they negotiated their concurrent multiple identities as black women, students, wives/partners, and working mothers. Also, I wanted to ascertain the support they received during their postgraduate studies. I interviewed eight voluntary informants who met the criteria for inclusion in this study. I hoped that several life stories taken from the same set of socio-structural relations would support each other and together make up a strong body of evidence (Bertaux, 1981). Although I was aware that life history research allows even a single individual to be interviewed, in this study I opted for obtaining different individuals' perspectives, as life stories serve as a means for understanding how people see their own experiences, own lives, and interactions with others (Atkinson, 2002). The research aimed to reveal shared patterns of experience or interpretations within a group of people who have some characteristics, attributes or experiences in common (Goodson & Sikes, 2001).

This chapter presents a summary of the study and a discussion of the findings, recommendations, limitations of the study, and the conclusion. The discussion presents a summary of the critical research questions, connecting them to the findings of the study. Using the life history approach helped me to answer the four research questions, complete this doctoral thesis, and disseminate the findings. I hope that the documented informants' life stories will have a positive impact on others. Each question is presented together with the key findings. I subsequently highlight some recommendations as well as suggestions for future research.

12.2 Discussion of the findings

There were four critical research questions that this project sought to answer. My curiosity in conducting this project emanated from my professional interest, personal experiences, and challenges I encountered as a female African student coming from an isolated rural area and studying at a university in an urban area. The four critical questions helped me to generate and analyse raw data, which led me to identify five themes which emerged from the data. I was able to present the participants' stories, illustrated by quotations from the transcripts (Austin & Sutton, 2014), and the themes are presented from Chapter Six up to and including

Chapter Ten. The first theme was the influence of culture in women's life stories. In this theme it surfaced that culture dealt rural women a cruel blow. Escaping the impact of cultural beliefs was impossible due to accompanying factors such as power relations, patriarchal influences, and rural communities' style of living, all of which affected these women. However, having parents – especially mothers – who were visionary leaders enabled these women to open a new chapter in rural communities. The second theme was the influence of apartheid education on women's experiences. It appeared that apartheid ruined the lives of these women while they were young and ready to learn without any interruption in their rural areas. The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers (Barber & Mourshed, 2007), but the shortage of teachers, overcrowding, lack of resources, lack of opportunities, poverty, and the parents' socio-economic status affected these women. It was evident that they still felt the injuries and injustices of apartheid, so many years later. The third theme was women's social challenges. It transpired that motherhood as an institution of isolation became a burden for these women.

The fourth theme was women's educational experiences at an HEI, which caused a lot of stress through the pressure it placed on them and the expectations required of them. As postgraduate students they were expected to have acquired computer literacy skills, academic writing skills, and a good command of English before registration. It was apparent that their challenges with higher education emanated from the historical education experiences which they were exposed while they were still young. Rural schools are often plagued with educational problems, such as isolation from specialised services, limited accessibility to quality staff, development and university services, and teacher shortages (Wallin & Reimer, 2008). Their background led the informants to feel that the university expectations were beyond their control, as well as feeling that fitting in was a struggle. The last theme was resilient women. It transpired that regardless and in spite of the challenges I mentioned above, these women resisted leaving university without an accomplishment. They chose to have it all. They devised many coping strategies that enabled them to succeed.

Courageous women overcome their hurdles and problems by devising strategies for survival with freedom and dignity (Bernardin, 2019). It was also apparent that the role played by support structures for these women was incredible. Also, these women hoped that other rural women who are workers and have an interest in pursuing higher degrees might be motivated by learning from their experiences, that master's and doctoral degrees are attainable.

12.3 What are the profiles of rural working mothers in pursuit of higher degrees at a South African university?

As indicated in Chapter Four, eight informants who were knowledgeable about the phenomenon under study were selected to participate in the study by employing snowball sampling. The women are referred to by pseudonyms as part of the ethical considerations, to protect their identities and their privacy. In order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, the areas where the informants grew up as well as the tertiary institution(s) where they studied are also not referred to by name. The informants are referred to as Lulama, Elihle, Aphelele, Luyanda, Sibusisiwe, Bongeka, Amahle and Aphiwe. To partake in the project, the informants had to meet the following key criteria:

- a black (African) female;
- resided in and received her schooling in a rural area;
- resided in an urban area at the time of the study;
- employed;
- a single mother, or a mother living with a partner/spouse; and
- a student in pursuit of a postgraduate qualification at a university in South Africa.

The participants shared the experiences that follow as part of their background profiles. All of them grew up in deep rural areas in KZN and spoke IsiZulu as their home language. Lulama grew up in a rural area on a smallholding owned by a white man. They all learned about their cultural beliefs, values, norms, and customs when they were young. Rurality had an impact on shaping their life stories, in particular as women. Respect was an important rule of etiquette that they needed to learn, especially because they were Zulu girls. Many African societies ascribe great significance to respectful behaviour, because many social practices and cultural customs in these societies are based on strict patriarchal principles (Rudwick, 2008), and this respect is deemed necessary to keep women in their place. To reach school involved a long journey on foot (mostly barefoot) and fraught with unpleasant experiences for young children, especially girls. Mahlaba (2014) revealed that poor rural learners who walk long distances experience delays and miss the first lesson of the school day. While walking to school there were also life-threatening risks such as snakes that the learners came across.

Some of the informants' experiences, such as late-coming and absenteeism, lead to barriers that undermined access to quality education (Mahlaba, 2014). Because of the long distance from school, Lulama had a pleasant memory of her walks to school as the owner of the land grew sugarcane, and the children could enjoy its sweet taste on their way. It was interesting to learn that while they all grew up in rural areas, some of the informants came from stable households as their parents were educated and employed, whereas others' parents were uneducated and did not have jobs that provided a living wage. It is argued that functionally illiterate and innumerate parents are mainly found in rural areas (Du Plessis, 2014). Due to apartheid, these parents lacked the opportunities, development, and resources that one would normally find in a more affluent community (Du Plessis, 2014). This study found that even the uneducated parents understood the value of education and insisted on sending their daughters to school, despite the hardships and the pressure of community members who did not support the need to educate girls.

One memory that stood out clearly for these women was that girls had a much harder life than boys when growing up in a rural area. Boys were treated differently by their parents and the community, as the chores they had to do and the freedom they experienced were unlike those of the girls. Boys had to look after the cattle, and when they grew up they had to find wives. However, girls' duties were far more complex. Traditional African culture stipulates the different roles of men and women in society, and there were clear consequences if these rules were breached (Bwakali, 2007). Besides home chores, their mothers were harsh on them in terms of the way they should behave, which included restrictions on visiting their friends. This is a way of controlling African women, and is patriarchy in disguise which instils discrimination among girls and women in differing ways. Examples include the continuous burden of household work on women and young girls, lack of educational opportunities for girls, lack of freedom and mobility for girls, male control over women and girls, and male control over women's bodies (Sultana, 2011).

Socialisation is considered to take place primarily during childhood, when boys and girls learn the appropriate behaviour for their gender roles (Sultana, 2011). Girls, like their mothers, experienced hardship when they had to fetch water and firewood from rivers and plantations far from their homesteads. Cooking, cleaning, washing and attending to every need of the family were never boys' jobs. While the community expected them to attend traditional ceremonies and to drop out of school after reaching Grade 4 when they could read IsiZulu and write a letter, their parents played an important role in pushing them to be

educated. The misinformation that education was not compulsory for either boys or girls did not hinder the ambitions of the informants' parents to ensure that their daughters were educated. However, many rural women are often prevented from progressing by their family.

A study by Frenkel (2008) revealed that in South Africa people use culture to enforce compliance, particularly in terms of gendered roles. As a consequence, young girls in rural areas have to endure many harmful practices in the name of their culture (Maluleke, 2012). Hence, these women opened a new chapter when they achieved their dreams. They all completed their master's degree and graduated. One of these women received a promotion as Head of Department at the school where she taught. Another informant is expecting a second child and is about to get married. Four informants registered for a PhD and are at different stages of research. One is still writing her PhD proposal, to be ready in 2020. The last informant received her PhD within three years and has published three academic articles, and is supervising master's and doctoral students. She is currently overseas for six months after being awarded a sponsorship. She is also involved in community engagement projects, and in charge of a master's students' cohort, where they assist and critique students' work.

All of this tells us that these women had won their battle at last, while others who had not demonstrated resilience had quit because of the pressure they experienced. In other words, history proved to repeat itself: women of all races united and marched to the Union Building in Pretoria in 1956 against the imposition of passes to be carried by black women (Sisulu, 2006); they won the battle, and the same could be said of the women who participated in this project. These women hope that the new generation will carry the baton with both hands in addressing their future challenges.

12.4 What are the experiences of rural working mothers in pursuit of higher degrees at a South African university?

The findings revealed that for these women the educational journey to obtain higher degrees was not an easy one. It might be noted that observing the challenges and hardships faced by their mothers and other women in their rural communities served as a wake-up call for the informants. They made informed decisions and relocated to urban areas, which do not lack infrastructure. In the South African context, education is viewed by many as the most viable vehicle to upward mobility, the achievement of which enhances the propensity to challenge racial and class-based oppression (Cole & Omari, 2003), which might include gender-based oppression. Unlike the many women in rural areas who 'suffer in silence' because of cultural

customs and traditions that expect women to be submissive and not to question issues that they are uncomfortable with, the informants plucked up the courage to seek a different destiny in a new environment. These courageous women were thus able to 'think outside the box' and disregard the judgemental attitudes of the many traditionalists in their communities. Instead of being bound by cultural ties and practices, they sought an environment where they would be free to talk about things that affected them as women.

In other words, they used education for two reasons. First, they used education to overcome what they had experienced as oppression. They resisted being moulded by custom and tradition and they did what they were not supposed to do – that is, they fought back. Second, in line with the feminism theory, they used education to free and empower themselves. They were emancipated and found ways that would let their voices be heard, so that they would be treated with respect as human beings. Indeed, the concern of black feminism is that of resisting oppression through empowerment (Collins, 1994). Although they were adult learners and full-time workers, they were prepared to deal with their challenges. There was no turning back for them, as what they desired was to educate themselves.

Merriam et al. (2007) state that most professionals agree that what they knew by the time they finished formal training became outdated in less than five years. It was for this reason that these women force themselves to move forward. They also indicated that education is evolving; and therefore educators are required to refresh their minds for the benefit of their learners, who otherwise suffer the consequences and become the products of teachers who lack knowledge because they do not stay academically enriched. There is evidence from surveys that South African learners read at below their age levels (Howie, Van Staden, Tshele, Dowse, & Zimmerman, 2011) because their teachers lack knowledge on how to teach reading properly. Also, most teachers do not pursue higher qualifications because they see no value in it. The women in this study felt that this dichotomy should be eradicated as a matter of urgency. They mentioned that the pressure is mostly regarding the need to attain master's and doctoral degrees. While some students found fewer challenges, hindrances for these women included the language barrier as English second-language speakers, and knowledge deficiency. Another challenge they were faced with was that they struggled to use computers as an important tool at university. In spite of all odds these women while studying as postgraduate students they developed power-within which transforms their consciousness that led to new self-confidence (Rowlands, 1977). The developed 'power-within' empowered

these women to gain their self-esteem, self-confidence, self-awareness, and assertiveness (Williams, Seed & Mwau, 1994).

12.5 How do women negotiate their multiple identities within the spaces that might be challenging?

While culture has a profound impact on instilling the importance of women's role at home as caregivers, globalisation has encouraged women to take participate in economic sectors. The negative side of globalisation is that global capitalisation has the power to bring the rural and urban together in strange and unequal ways (Williams, 1973). The positive side is that globalisation of economic activity during the last third of the 20th century incorporated millions of women into the labour force. It was apparent that globalisation inspired women in this study, since it brought with it new technologies that make life easier and more enjoyable, compared to the pressures of manual labour.

However, becoming part of the global market did not result in them no longer being caregivers or absconding their role. The responses illuminating the educational and social experiences of the informants painted a clear picture of the reasons for their behaviours and attitudes later in life. One informant voiced that stopping house chores would mean that she would be abandoning her responsibility as a mother. She said that this would mean that she would not be checking on them or whether they had food, but would just be looking after herself. She stated that she thought many things would collapse. Another informant stated that "I told him during Christmas that I am not going home because of my studies. He complained because he put the in-laws first, what are they going to say *'indoda edonswa umfazi ngekhanda'* [meaning he was misled by his wife]. unaware that I was struggling with my studies." These findings revealed the pervasive mood perpetuated by a patriarchal society and the unwillingness of men to understand women's multiple identities, as it was impossible to reverse them. Indeed, patriarchy is the prime obstacle to women's advancement (Sultana, 2011). Patriarchy gives priority to men and to some extent also limits women's human rights. While all the power and authority within the family, society and the state remain entirely in the hands of men (Sultana, 2011), educated women resist and challenge this male domination and control. The women in this study admitted to having it all, regardless of their difficulties.

Similarly, Edwards (1993) commented that she had fulfilled various roles without experiencing any problems when she was well remunerated for the work she did. However, she encountered difficulties when she re-entered tertiary education and her family expected

her to be whole-heartedly involved in all of her roles as a working mother as well. The informants had similar experiences, but they were adamant that quitting was not an option. As Aphelele stated: "family, work, and study needs do not balance but you have to make sacrifices." Even though they worked, they also decided to further their studies to acquire new knowledge and skills. Due to this additional role, they found it impossible to balance their roles as required. They started to feel the impact of this new role, or what Goodie (1960) referred to as a feeling of having difficulty in fulfilling a role or obligations. In this regard, one informant argued as follows:

> I didn't want to stay at home when I started working. I wanted to have my life but I couldn't because I had to come back to these kids now. So even other women were looking at you and say how are you going to go away? My friends, you know when you start working, you have lots of things that you want to experience but I never experienced those things. After all, my parameters were so limited because you go wherever you are going, but make sure that at night you are here so that you are taking care of your children.

This suggests that the multiple identities of the informants had a huge impact on shaping their life experiences as postgraduates' students. Work, study, and family obligations are different institutions that compete against each other at the expense of a woman. As one informant hinted: "as a student, you find that you don't have a social life and you are always tired because you sleep lesser hours just to manage your life". In a study by Greenhaus and Powell (2006) it was evident that regardless of having multiple roles, experiences in one role can produce positive experiences and outcomes in the other role. Also, participation in some roles creates energy that can be used to enhance experiences in other roles (Marks, 1977).

In this study, this was true in the sense that while having difficulties in balancing their roles, the informants dared not relinquish any role. Also, they expressed that the expectation that you have to complete your studies in a certain period put pressure on them. As indicated in Chapter Four, this was due to the Ministry of Education requesting the universities to admit students who will be capable of completing the education programmes in which they enrol (Fraser & Killen, 2005). Of course, while it would be unreasonable to expect to study for one degree for 10 years, it does add pressure, and when you see other people moving forward and you are not, you feel less intelligent and that pressure sometimes makes people end up dropping out. However, woman's identity is shaped by the surrounding social, political, and historical forces, while at the same time individuals try to influence their identities (Walker, 1998). These were some of the reasons that led these women to resist being defeated and to

reach their aspirations, after observing that the three institutional spaces were indeed challenging.

The findings of this study revealed that some of the educational and social challenges which these women encountered were due to the intersection of gender, class, and race categories of oppression. Axes of female oppression have historically been influenced by events and patterns that have contributed to the current cultural relationships between race, class, and gender (Allen, 2018). These categories are socially constructed and are reflections of power; as even the naming of categories is a power move (Crenshaw, 1989). It can be argued that people utilise 'culture' to enforce compliance, particularly in terms of gendered roles (Maluleke, 2012). The gendered division of labour across cultures is strongly resilient and resistant to change (Baxter, 2002). While there is acknowledgement that men are generally more active in their children's lives than previously assumed (Swartz & Bhana, 2009), a study by Morrell and Jewkes (2014) found that some men in South Africa are not responsible fathers.

In this study, it was apparent that the intersection of informants' social, political and cultural contexts produces the potential for the oppression that is rooted in gender relationships (Lay & Daley, 2007). Having primary responsibility for the intimate care and nurturing of children seems likely to shape women's moral perspectives in especially deep and pervasive ways (Whisnant, 2002). It is through this that experiences in one role can produce positive experiences and outcomes in other roles (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Also, in South Africa black women's role in the family could not be undertaken by anyone else, and previous studies have shown that stressful experiences are more common among women than men due to discrimination and responsibilities (Muller & Volkov, 2009). Consequently, the conditions of work, both in the home and at work, may contribute to a greater risk of depression (Sameshta & Agarwal, 2017). Feminism strives to unite people to confront sexism together as the patriarchal ideology that rationalises and justifies discriminatory social relations (Manne, 2018). In its challenge of patriarchal systems, the feminist struggle promises far-reaching changes, given the embedded nature of gender relations (Ahikire, 2008).

Another challenge that had a negative impact on women's experiences was the class they found themselves in as black people. South Africa has a painful history of discrimination against black people limiting them in all spheres of life. Apartheid education discriminated

against black people and failed to provide them with proper schools; the teachers were unqualified and lacked teaching skills, and were in the habit of administering corporal punishment to all children who had misunderstood the lesson and those who arrived late due to the long distance they walked. The findings confirm those of an earlier study by Du Plessis (2014) that rural schools find it difficult to attract good, suitable teachers because there are less financial resources available, as well as finding it extremely difficult to find teachers who fit into the rural community. Mahlaba (2014) also found that rural learners were exposed to harsh punishment by the teachers as a result of arriving late for school. This led some learners to drop out of school without acquiring the knowledge needed to survive in the future.

An informant in this study, Sibusisiwe, confirmed that, apartheid education discouraged many people. She said she had met several of her former classmates who had become 'aunties', while others were housewives; some reached matric and others did not and were working but did not continue to study. Apartheid did not encourage black people to realise the rewards of education. Another informant, Lulama, mentioned that "apartheid education impacted negatively and it failed to enlightened the minds of the people as most uneducated women are found in rural areas and are few from towns." Indeed, Bantu education was designed to meet the labour demands of industrialisation and modernisation without threatening the privileged position of White workers in the South African labour aristocracy; that is, it "helped in practice to prepare black children for a place as subordinate workers" (Molteno, 1984).

While South African apartheid policies were abolished 26 years ago, these women pointed out that its ghost still haunted them – even if they were in higher education – due to their racial group. Apartheid's strategy was to train black females to become childminders and scrubbers of floors for white families; to train the black youth to be "hewers of wood and weeders of fields" (Truscott, 1994). This was in contradiction to what the women were hoping to achieve. As such, they found themselves unsettled and not fit for the space they were trained to be in while they were young. These women also revealed that even if they regarded themselves as working class, their parents' social or lower class hindered them from escaping the noose of inferior education, due to unaffordability. From the above findings, it can be concluded that the intersection of race, gender, and social class disadvantaged these women in many ways. However, these experiences inspired these women to resist being uneducated and persist in empowering themselves.

12.5.1 Lacking voice

It became evident that the site where the informants experienced oppression was not only in the family but also in the public sphere. This was driven by cultural influences and patriarchal traditions. This is in line with Zuma's (2009) findings, that culture oppresses women while giving their male counterparts opportunities to dominate and exercise authority over women. As Lulama argued:

> As a black woman, you don't have a voice. Society doesn't expect you to have a voice. Or in your family, if there are family negotiations, they won't expect any suggestions from a woman. When you make a suggestion that seems to be very good, they would say you are a talkative woman. It is acceptable for men when they make even wrong decisions in the family just because they are men. They are expected to have a voice.

The informants felt that women rural areas have no voice. Their comments revealed that in some instances, when they wanted to express their views, they were influenced by their husbands/partners who would speak on their behalf. These educated women challenged the patriarchal norms. As one informant voiced:

> I didn't wear the scarf and no one said a thing so I just carried on. I only wear it for important functions. However, I have to wear '*doek*' because I know that my father-in-law would say something.

The influence of cultural practices had a profound impact on the informants, and one of these forms was in silencing them. Challenging any cultural and patriarchal tradition may not be welcomed by family members, and may also lead to the woman being divorced since she proves not to be submissive as is required. One informant further acknowledged that the main problem was that they are living in this time but their families are still living in the old ways. As a result, they don't understand what the women are doing, and since they are seen as trying to do something different, they are regarded as rude. The findings revealed that backwardness was another obstruction which they experienced as educated women. However, it was evident that some informants did not want to suffer anymore, and started to challenge the traditional beliefs. This concurs with feminist perspectives; voice has been identified as a key site of power distribution (Thompson et al., 2018), which enables women to articulate their discrimination and oppression.

12.5.2 Accepting university challenges

It was evident that at university the informants encountered several impediments that taught them some lessons. As survivors of apartheid education that did not prepare them for tertiary challenges, they suffered many indignities. However, as powerful women they did not succumb to adversity, but instead welcomed their challenges and faced them head-on to find a way out. Alternatively, it can be argued that individual transformation involves acknowledging the historical structure of institutions of domination (Lay & Delay, 2007). Even if the women admitted that it was not easy, sharing ideas and information and creating a platform for listening to the challenges of others made them grow. They also found comfort in the fact that they were not suffering alone. They used communication and networking as their 'weapons' to face their challenges, and this worked well for them. Indeed, a significant step for the feminist movement is to recognise what has not ended, and this is a very hard, slow and painstaking step (Ahmed 2017).

> We might think we have to make that step only to realise that we have to make it again. It might be you are up against a fantasy of equality: that woman can now do it, even have it, or that they would have it if they tried hard enough; that individual women can bring sexism and other barriers (we might describe these barriers as the glass ceiling or the brick wall) to an end through sheer effort or persistence or will.

12.6 What are the sources of motivation for rural working mothers to access higher education?

It transpired that there were driving forces that propelled these women to pursue higher degrees. For instance, through their tribulations as a result of different factors, such as poverty, rurality, cultural practices, women's oppression, and lack of opportunities in rural areas, they opted to liberate themselves since no one else would stand up for them. Indeed, the South African Higher Education White Paper (DoE, 1997) acknowledges that, while progression to university is the focus (as it is socially just to fight inequalities on the basis of race, gender and disabilities, for example), improving the quality of education is also a major concern. Since women have been and are still a marginalised group, the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill is in place to improve the lives of all women, and particularly black women, as they have experienced more discrimination than their white counterparts. In this study, it appeared that their liberation was not only about themselves – they also wanted to improve their learners' conditions by obtaining new knowledge that would be more relevant. They had sensed that education is evolving, and they were the ones

who will be affected because of their sensitive role as teachers; therefore, they wanted to find ways to improve the situation. As Luyanda commented:

> Professor Jonathan was one of my lecturers and he always stressed about lifelong learning. You have to be ahead of your learners. At times, there are those learners who know more and they can challenge you as an educator, so those things motivate you to be knowledgeable, do research.

In South Africa there is that tendency of a high level of matric failures, particularly in black schools. Teachers are blamed for lacking content knowledge that exacerbates the failure of students, even if the majority are qualified to become teachers. However, the learners' performance standard showed that there is still an elephant in the room, with most black children continuing to receive an education which condemns them to be the underclass of South African society where poverty and unemployment are the norms, not the exception (Spaull, 2013). The women in this study were educators and some were working in the higher education sector; they opted for lifelong learning so that they could perform their role effectively. The driving force was to make a difference, which was accomplished by these teachers in differing ways. For example, Luyanda articulated that:

> It was not easy to get 100% in Grade 12. What made it easy for me to understand them is that I would start teaching them in Grade 10, so I would know their capabilities from then. I would then move with to Grade 11 then 12, and in the 3 years teaching them, I would know their strengths and weaknesses. Also, teaching is about teaching the subject matter but also about being open to learners and being approachable. I would also make sure that they are rewarded and motivated for their achievements and improvements, no matter how little, because that creates a space where they can love the subject I was teaching.

It became apparent that one of their reasons for opting for lifelong learning was in order to do justice to both mind and matter, the individual and the world (Dewey, 1923). As academics, part of their job specification is that of being a scholar, and a researcher – which does not happen without embarking on research. They were also required to produce new knowledge, and there was no shortcut to this – and acquiring higher degrees would eventually lead to this position. Also, these women aspired to change their title, and that would be impossible without obtaining a doctoral degree.

12.7 What kind of support do women receive during their university studies?

All of the informants I interviewed admitted that the support offered by various individuals was incredible, and that it gave them the strength to achieve their academic goals. Caffarella (2002) acknowledges that "support takes the form of both commitment and action." This

scholar argues that while commitment is viewed as a recurrent promise which usually comes in the form of written and/or verbal statements, action involves having people at all levels respond to that commitment. This perspective was also found to be true in this study. All of the informants agreed that surviving in higher education would not have been possible without the many forms of support they received from the university and other stakeholders, as presented in Figure 9 below.

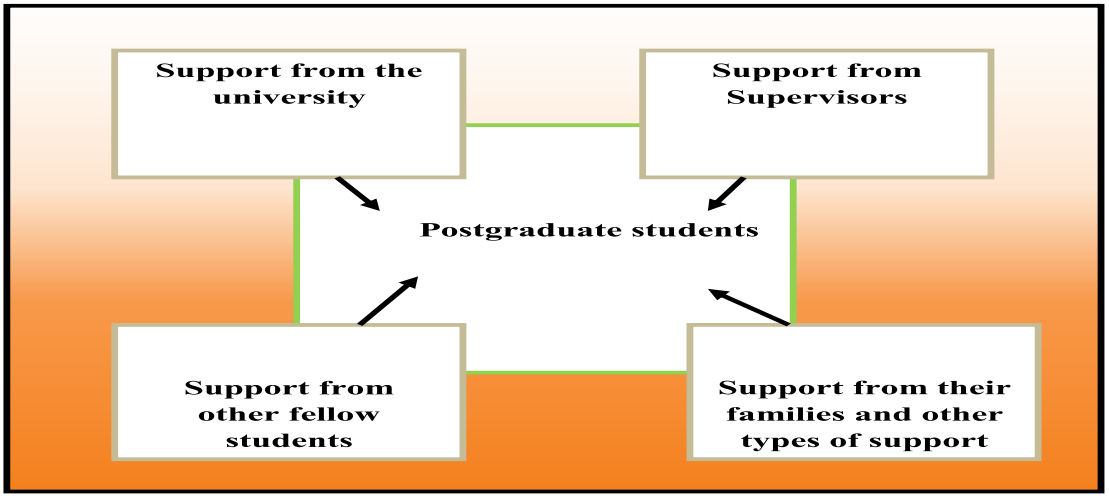


Figure 9: Various avenues of support.

The support that was offered to the informants occurred through a combination of verbal contributions and the commitment demonstrated by many stakeholders. Having analysed the nature of the support they received, a particular support structure emerged, which consists of varied segments: the support offered by the university and that offered by families, friends and fellow students. This structure would not be complete without each of these components. To illustrate the importance of support, Lulama referred to the three-legged pot model that she brought in as an artefact, as follows:

> My artefact … is a three-legged pot. In life, you need support because if you look at the pot, it can't stand on one leg. You need support, but if you don't get support, try and look for some people from somewhere else; maybe your fellow students. Studying is not a one-man journey. So try and get as much support and create a network so that you'll be supported right through. Otherwise, it becomes a lonely journey and one might end up dropping off.

It was apparent that the success of these women studying for higher degrees would not be possible without the employment of various support structures and individuals who offered them the support they needed. It was this that led Lulama to pronounce that studying is not a

one-man journey. The next section presents a brief discussion on the support which the informants received from the university.

12.7.1 Support offered by the university

According to a study conducted by the Council on Higher Education (2016), out of 19 513 students registered for a doctorate in 2000, only 2530 graduated. This suggests that the small number of graduates means minimal throughput at the doctoral level. For this reason, Samuel and Vithal (2011) argue that alternative models of doctoral research teaching and learning pedagogy could address the challenge of the under-productivity of doctoral graduates in the South African higher education system. Their cohort model of doctoral supervision yielded positive results.

The main aims of higher education are to support learners' aspirations for self-development, to supply high-level skills for the labour market and economic benefit, to develop critical citizens, and to equip individuals to make the best of their talents and the opportunities offered by society for self-fulfilment (DoE, 1997). Feedback plays an important role in enabling the student to benefit and grow. It is undeniable that the feedback process enables supervisors and students to engage in 'critical conversations' that assist students to learn among, and to critique the literature and their work (Knowles 1999). All of the informants agreed that the support they received from the university was remarkable. They felt that the university contributed significantly to their success. They mentioned different types of support services, one of which was the library, which sometimes closed very late in the evening to accommodate students.

12.7.2 Support from the university library

The university library was the main source of information for postgraduate students. They listed several facilities that aimed to help them. For example, as students, they could borrow and renew books as and when the need arose. Expert librarians were available during working hours to help them if they encountered any difficulties in their search for information. The library also offered workshops in the use of technology, for example how to use EndNote, an Online Public Access Catalogue link, and off-campus access. The library also offered an interlibrary facility whereby students could borrow books from different institutions. Informants referred to support from the library as follows:

> **Aphiwe:** The kind of support I receive at the university, I can say we were taught how to use the library, how to borrow books, and how to use the laboratory, because I moved from a rural area to an urban area where there are so many facilities. And now at university, we have support, like we do have classes in the afternoon that start from 5–7 and the cohort sessions that we have with our lecturers during weekends and the winter holidays. I think that they are giving us support there.
>
> **Elihle:** I'll say the access to the Internet because this adult learning requires you to have access to the Internet to ensure that you search for things that [you] are going to write about. The fact that the university provides us with free Internet if you are a student here has assisted me a lot.

The above comments revealed that the support rendered by the university had a positive impact on the informants' and other students' attempts to find information on the Internet. Apart from the LAN (computer lab) which was open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the university also provided them with parking areas, surveillance cameras and security guards that patrolled the campus 24 hours a day. In other words, these female students felt safe and did not panic about what was going to happen to their cars while they spent time inside the buildings.

The findings are in line with those of a study by Schulze and Lemmer (2017) on supporting the development of postgraduate academic writing skills in South African universities, which revealed that postgraduate students acknowledge the support they receive in the institution's library regarding information retrieval and citation techniques. As an adult student Sibusisiwe appreciated all the support she was offered by the university, but she could not forget the financial support which made her academic dream come true:

> I would not be able to study because I was financially dry. The source of income that I had before I received that bursary had just stopped. I couldn't depend on my family, with my mother a pensioner and my sister living on grants, which is why I turned to the university and I got help. The university arranged that I will be supported with NSFAS for my first degree. The university also helped me with learning materials. For example, books from the library and most importantly, the laboratories, because I was a science student. Before I went for teaching practice, I would take materials from the university if there was a need so that I could do practicals with the learners where I would be teaching.

It became apparent that the university, as the provider of adult learning programmes, played an important role in ensuring that those students who might be struggling to procure study fees were supported. However, it must be noted that while some students qualify for standalone independent bursaries from industry or other donors, and others qualify for

NSFAS funding, some do not (Naidoo & McKay, 2018). Besides financial support, Sibusisiwe also indicated that the university offered access to a science laboratory and teaching materials such as laboratory equipment that she borrowed for teaching practice. Sibusisiwe acknowledged that her academic achievements would have been impossible without support from the university. Regarding financial support, Lulama commented as follows:

> I got this funding that paid for my studies but they put pressure on me because I'm working, because we could only get funding registered as full time, which means I have to complete my PhD in three years. It's too much when you are working to complete your PhD in three years. So this funding, for me I feel it's not enough, because when I try to apply for another grant I couldn't get, because there was a grant that was available for R24 000 but I couldn't get because I already got this. Conducting research is quite expensive. You know you have to travel, you need equipment. Yes, it assisted in paying for my studies, but I don't think it is enough, taking into consideration for someone like me who is a breadwinner for almost two families. So yes, financially it becomes too much. But I'm grateful for the tuition and everything.

Lulama was grateful for being offered a bursary by the university; however, as a student and a working mother, she had many expenses and felt that her funds were insufficient. She argued that conducting research required a lot of money on the part of the student, as she needed funds to buy appropriate equipment as well as for travelling purposes. Apart from financial support, all of the informants indicated that the university also offered a cohort system. This system involves group lectures, where postgraduate students listen to and critique other students' presentations. They highlighted that being in the cohort system helped them to grow and to learn from their mistakes.

12.7.3 Supervision of students' work

The informants mentioned that they were assigned to different supervisors who were knowledgeable about their fields of study. Effective supervision requires supervisors to be knowledgeable and skilled in the research field (McQueeney, 1996). Moreover, the supervisor should give constant support and reassurance to the student (Haksever & Manisali, 2000) and keep the student's morale high (Phillips & Pugh, 2000). The informants indicated that they met their supervisors during contact sessions or through online procedures:

> **Sibusisiwe:** The kind of support from my supervisor is more like a guide in my research. I find it very interesting and I wish others would avail themselves for

such opportunities, because even if the research is difficult the supervisor breaks it down and makes it much simpler.

Bongeka: As students, we have been allowed to walk into my supervisor's office. The rule is that you have to phone the supervisor or send an email before you come when you need any kind of assistance. But my supervisor just jokes about that. Even if you haven't made an appointment to see him, if you ask for the assistance he is willing to do that. I guess that has assisted me a lot because as a working mother, I sometimes fail to plan my time and manage it properly. So I can just see a chance that I do have an hour or two to spend at the university, then I'll simply walk into his office and he'll assist me.

Amahle: As far as the university is concerned, I am happy about the support I have received because it has enabled me to come this far. I had a very hard time when I first came here. The supervisors introduced cohorts where we would meet on Saturdays as a group of students and present our work and they would critique you. This improved our confidence and helped us in understanding our work more deeply.

Luyanda: The lecturer advised us that you cannot do research alone, and so the colleagues I work with are helpful where we meet up and criticise each other's work. I think it is a variation of support.

It was apparent that supervisors played a notable role in giving support to postgraduate students who are conducting research. Instead of embarking on a lonely journey, the informants were able to rely on their supervisors for assistance whenever they experienced difficulties. Supervisors played an important role in ensuring that the students received the support they needed. Effective supervision of research students is acknowledged as a crucial factor in the student's completion of postgraduate study (Frisch & Larsson, 2000). The relationship between the supervisor and the student can be regarded as a critical one based on mutual trust (Waghid, 2005), and the supervisor role is that of offering social justice to the student. It was also apparent that the postgraduate students not only needed support from the university, but also from various individuals. Other stakeholders such as family members and fellow students contributed significantly to the informants' academic endeavours.

12.7.4 Support offered by fellow students

Given the growing number of students entering South African higher education, the traditional model of supervision is unlikely to meet the complex set of needs of master's students fully. Due to insufficient support, the likelihood of dropout or prolonged time to completion increases (Fynn & Janse van Vuuren, 2017). While it is not deniable is that some of the responsibilities of the supervisor are to guide, advise, ensure scientific quality and

provide the required emotional and psychological support (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This study found that some students received extra support from fellow students. Fellow students played an important role in encouraging and offering support to one another while encountering difficulties during their studies. However, not all of the informants agreed that they found help from their fellow students. For example, Lulama stated:

> It was only comments made within the cohort [that supported her] – nothing outside that, because it's only when they give feedback on my studies in the cohort. I haven't received anything outside the cohort.

However, most informants agreed that without the support of their fellow students, they would not have been successful. Peer support occurs in two interrelated ways. First, peer support can be regarded "as a system of giving and receiving help founded on the key principles of respect, shared responsibility and mutual agreement of what is helpful. Second, peer support is about understanding another's situation empathically through the shared experience of emotional or psychological pain" (Mead, 2003). It was evident that studying while working was not easy for the women in this study as working mothers. They consolidated their efforts by forming study groups to help one another. In some instances, they studied at the university in pairs or groups until 04h00 in the morning. This would not have been possible for a female student working on her own in the computer lab. When they met in the computer lab they not only focused on academic work, but would often share ideas and offer moral support to students with personal problems. They indicated that their challenges varied from one individual to the other, but agreed that they always encouraged one another not to drop out. Dedicated WhatsApp groups also assisted these students:

> **Elihle:** One of our friends created a WhatsApp group because we'll write until like 1 a.m. before I'll remember that the following day I have to go to work. Sometimes you'll get drowsy. You'll see that when you look at this WhatsApp group, you'll see 'Hi everyone'. The group is called 'Busy Bees' [pseudonym]. 'Hi everyone, I'm struggling with this and that'. You'll see that everyone is not asleep. You'll get responses from eight people, and then you get more strength to continue working. I remember I had to sleep at 1 a.m. and 3 a.m. for several days to meet the due dates to submit. So, so far as the fellow students and the supervisor are concerned, I got all the support I needed.

> **Amahle:** One of our fellow students created a WhatsApp group called 'Hungry Ants' [pseudonym] and this is because we would help each other until 2 a.m. When you post something that you are struggling with, you get responses from other people and this gives you more strength to continue working.

It was evident that fellow students contributed a great deal in terms of helping one another to carry on with their studies. Most informants mentioned that studying was not easy, and that many found it too hard and dropped out. However, for these rural working mothers dropping out was not an option. Instead, they tried everything in their power to keep in touch with those who supported them, especially if one was struggling with her work. Instant messages alerted them to the fact that they were all awake and busy with academic work, which boosted their self-esteem and their confidence:

> **Sibusisiwe:** It is that of encouragement because they would constantly communicate with questions like 'How far are you?'. And as we share our ideas, I fill in gaps in understanding things that my supervisor could have missed.
>
> **Elihle:** Firstly, we receive support regarding computers. Because some other students were used to how to use computers so they assisted me in that aspect. How to get the things, how to get the journal from the Internet, how to do this and that, how to Google, I learned that from my fellow students.
>
> **Amahle:** They helped me with the computer because some were proficient and they assisted. I also got help on how to get journals and how to Google.

It was evident that the informants had different experiences regarding the kind of support they received from their fellow students. While Sibusisiwe believed that communicating with other students encouraged her to move forward and get a better understanding of those aspects that her supervisor did not refer to, Elihle and Amahle agreed that their fellow students were computer literate and helped them to retrieve academic journals. Getting support from fellow students, regardless of the nature of this support, lessened their stress and gave them a sense of achievement and the will to move forward.

12.7.5 Support offered by family members

Kantanis (2002) argues that the transition to university "is not a solitary experience for the mature student [but is one] that impacts the whole family unit." As a result, the various reactions of family members, which can range from encouragement to envy and resentment, impact significantly on the transition of individuals into their new role as mature students (Gill, Hayes, & Senior, 2015). In this study, the data revealed that the informants had to negotiate with their families in an attempt to find support from them. The reason for such negotiation was that they did not want to neglect their responsibilities as mothers. Education was important to them, but it did not mean that they would abdicate their role as mothers. To cope, they devised various successful strategies:

> **Aphiwe:** Yah, my family helped me a lot, like my sister. When it was school holiday, she knew that I don't have a maid in my house, she just takes the kids so that I have time to do my school work. And my husband sometimes helped me in doing house chores like the cooking and cleaning. Sometimes my boy [also helped]. I taught him how to do cooking and how to help his sisters with homework. It does help me.
>
> **Amahle:** We had to change the way we do things. I normally have to cook when I come back from work as a mother, but I ended up having to teach my 10-year-old how to cook because of the pressure that I felt and fortunately she was quick. After work, I pick them up from school and tell her what to cook before I leave to do my work. The support that I get is that we share duties now. I also had to discuss with my husband as to how things would work now that I was studying because there are things that had to change.
>
> **Bongeka:** The biggest support they give to me is looking after my child, because sometimes I find myself being at the campus for more than 10 hours and I don't have any stress because I know that my child is safe at home. I know that she's well fed because my mother is there.

From the above comments it became apparent that negotiating with their family members helped the informants to relieve the stress of worrying about what would happen when they left their children unattended. The informants agreed that communicating and negotiating with their family members helped them to cope with stressful situations. Some taught their dependants how to cook, so that when they were not at home other family members could carry on. They also asked older family members to look after their children and this worked well for them. However, they continued to keep up with other house chores and did not leave the burden entirely to their families:

> **Sibusisiwe:** I play nice when I need support from them, regardless of what anybody says. I then explain how far I have gone with my studies and the promise of what will happen once I complete, and that brings a positive view of my studies. It is then that I get support.
>
> **Elihle:** The support that I receive from the family, we had to change the way that we do things. For example, coming from work I always had to cook as a mother but I ended up teaching my 10-year-old how to cook because of the pressure. And fortunately, she was fast. My husband sometimes helps me, he gets annoyed as to why I have to go to campus and not work at home, he doesn't understand the pressures I am under.

Getting support from family members was not always easy. For example, Sibusisiwe had to devise a plan that would help her to enhance the support she received from her family. To do this, she would buy things they liked before disclosing her intention. When the family was

happy, she then communicated with them about the advantages of pursuing her postgraduate study, and this worked well for her. Indeed, change comes through an educational dialogue that affords the opportunity for the discovery of limiting factors that are a problem (Hamilton & Sharma, 1996). Elihle negotiated the sharing of house chores with her family, which alleviated her burden as a mother. She also indicated that her husband would sometimes offer some kind of support, but this did not happen often as he was not happy when she spent time at university to pursue her studies. There is a hope that increased levels of economic activity for married women would lead to some change in the traditional distribution of household labour (Shamir, 1986). Some research shows that sex-role orientations held by and about women are changing and becoming less traditional, in the sense of less rigid sex-specific definitions of expectations (Mason & Bumpass, 1975).

12.7.6 Other kinds of support

My observations revealed that the support which the informants received as postgraduate students from the university, their supervisors, their families, and their fellow students was, however, not enough:

> **Bongeka:** I also think that emotional support is important because at times you have a bad day at school, then you come here you find your assignment needs a lot of corrections, and when you get home you have to be a mother. You have to do this and that. You also need emotional support [from] somebody that can listen to you.

> **Lulama:** … financial support too, because if you are studying it becomes costly and then you also need to be managing the house, because as much as men want to keep to the old tradition, but when it comes to finances they don't keep to the old tradition. They know that you are working, you should be …. While they expect you to be a wife but when it comes to money …. No … no … no. Why are they not helping with the house responsibilities? No one is helping me with my studies. So you also need financial support.

Bongeka further acknowledged the support offered to her while she was young:

> Despite traditional beliefs in my rural area where the community still felt that girls should not be sent to school, for the reason that one day they would get married, my parents sent me to school and encouraged me to study. For this reason, I am very grateful. If I figure out surviving without education, really my life will be miserable.

It was clear that the informants had different needs in terms of support, other than what they received from the university, their families and their fellow students. Bongeka mentioned that

she needed emotional support due to the pressures from her workplace, her academic studies and her family. She needed someone who she would be able to talk to and who would listen to her. She believed that emotional support would alleviate her stress while she was still studying. Emotional intelligence (including the perception of emotions) can be regarded as the use of emotions to facilitate thinking and the understanding of emotions and their management (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). It is argued that teachers equipped with high levels of emotional intelligence cope with confrontative situations in a more constructive way than their colleagues with lower levels of emotional intelligence (Jeloudar, Yunus, Roslan, & Nor, 2011), and this can be also said regarding postgraduate students in terms of learning to control their emotions.

The university proved to be a pillar of strength to the informants in terms of the support they received, and the environment was conducive enough to be a platform fit for their academic endeavours. It became clear that supervisors had significant input in helping working postgraduate students to succeed. Cohort sessions were effective support structures. Family members and other fellow students also played a supporting role. Also, like all of the other informants, Bongeka expressed her gratitude in terms of the support she was offered by her parents, as she visualised how bad her life would be without education. These informants valued the support they received that enabled them to acquire master's and doctoral degrees.

12.8 New knowledge added by this study

Before I succinctly explain the knowledge that this study has contributed to women's scholarship, I present the final words of each of the informants on whether this study will have a positive impact for those who might be experiencing similar challenges but are willing to improve their educational status:

> **Lulama:** My thoughts about this study are: [Obtaining] a PhD is possible and is doable. But our mistake is that sometimes we use our past as an obstacle. We need to leave our past [behind] and say it doesn't matter that I am from a rural area. The bottom line is I can do it.
>
> **Elihle:** I believe that this study will help other rural working mothers to learn the strategies we used to overcome our challenges as mothers, full-time workers, and postgraduate students concurrently. Other women will learn an important lesson: if we could make it, they will also make it, but they will need to be prepared to suffer first before they win.
>
> **Aphelele:** My thought about this study is that it will bring a different view to other rural working women who are mothers. It has the potential of bringing hope

whereby one can see that to grow and study in the rural areas is not a disadvantage, but a challenge that can accelerate one's progress.

Amahle: This study can help other rural women because I believe this study will serve as a wake-up call, especially for those that encounter some difficulties. Women will learn how others rose above their challenges and the choices they used to survive.

Aphiwe: I think this study can make a difference to others, including other rural working mothers, because some [would] love to pursue their studies, but since they are in rural areas, they view studying as if it is far away. Some have this idea that because they are in rural areas, they have to praise their husbands and worship them instead of empowering themselves so that one day they can be better persons than what they are.

Sibusisiwe: My thoughts about this study, I can say: this study will be helpful to other rural working mothers because I think they will gain some advice and some thoughts from other rural working mothers.

Luyanda: This study will conscientise others about gender stereotypes. [It will also make them aware of] the struggle of women who try to balance educational and family life.

Bongeka: My thoughts about this study, I can say: rural women should strive to equip themselves to adapt to every new situation. They need to work hard so that they can fit in higher positions.

Assembling women's perspectives seems necessary for feminist scholars, as this reconstruction of knowledge is essential because of a basic discontinuity: women's perspectives were not absent simply as a result of oversight, but had been suppressed, trivialised, ignored, or reduced by dominant research traditions institutionalised in academic settings and in scientific disciplines (Anderson, Armitage, Jack, & Wittner 1987). This research presents the findings generated from the life stories of eight informants with similar characteristics. As these life stories are taken from those experiencing the same set of sociostructurally relations, they support each other and together make up a strong body of evidence (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). The findings suggest that university students who are full-time working mothers coming from rural areas need to be offered a variety of support structures during their academic studies, particularly when they study in pursuit of postgraduate qualifications. The support should include a commitment from all stakeholders, as women found it impossible to relinquish any of their roles. Despite this, they lived out the saying "backward never, forward ever." No one can afford to shutter their dreams. Their historical experiences shape present-day women's experiences.

12.9 Implications of the findings and recommendations

The implications of the findings of this study are wide-ranging and involve various players, including the education policy developers, university managers, family members, and fellow students. Based on the findings, several recommendations are offered.

12.9.1 Recommendations for university policymakers and curriculum developers

The findings of the study suggest that postgraduate students who are working mothers coming from rural areas need to be offered a variety of support structures during their academic studies, particularly when they study in pursuit of postgraduate qualifications. This finding has wide-ranging implications for higher education curriculum developers as well as for university managers as the providers of adult learning programmes. The following are suggested as matters of urgency: clear strategies should be developed by tertiary institutions for the identification of female postgraduate students with a rural background upon enrolment; such students should be provided with immediate psychological support to allay their fears and possible feelings of inadequacy; also, support groups led by experienced counsellors should be established, particularly for such students, with the specific mandate to address any inadequate basic skills in terms of language and the use of technology. These groups should be established at the start of the identified female students' academic endeavours.

Based on the findings of the study, I further recommend that specific academic support be provided to such students, with special reference to the following: it has become imperative that students with the potential to struggle more than others in postgraduate studies be identified before they commence their study programmes. Special programmes should be developed to assist such students. Postgraduate students who might require extra assistance pertaining to academic writing should be provided with a course on academic writing before they commence their studies. Special short courses on linguistics and academic writing should be specifically designed to cater for those students who are employed and study at the same time. Instead of instructing students to use program such as EndNote only when it becomes compulsory for completing their master's dissertations and doctorates, they need to be introduced to the use of such programs in the first semester of their studies, to give them enough time to learn how to use them. Postgraduate students who study part-time and are employed full-time need to be provided with bursaries during their first semester, to avoid attrition due to the lack of finances.

Similar to the support rendered to full-time students, part-time students should also be provided with counselling facilities after hours. Students studying at a university have personal problems, and part-time adult students who are employed full-time are not exempt from personal challenges. Often, when such problems are not addressed student performance is negatively affected. A counselling office should be open until late in the evenings to accommodate full-time working students. Curriculum developers at tertiary level should specifically consider the needs of adult students coming from rural areas in terms of their readiness for the programme they would embark on, and the support appropriate to their needs.

12.10 Limitations of the study

The current study was designed as a small-scale qualitative study. Research samples for life history research are usually quite small (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). The limitation of this work was that it was only carried out at one university's satellite campus in KZN. Through snowball sampling, only eight informants who had volunteered participated in the study. The criteria for selection required only knowledgeable informants who would render information that would answer the research questions and thus address the research problem. The sample was restricted to eight working mothers with a rural background who were currently postgraduate students studying at a satellite campus of a university in KZN. As the selected informants represented only a small section of the population, the results and conclusions cannot be generalised or be transferred to any other university or any other students coming from rural areas, for the reason that their life stories might be different from those shared by the informants in this study. In retrospect, it may have contributed to the findings if comparisons with working mothers from urban areas had been drawn; however, the scope of this study did not allow for such an extended perspective.

12.11 Avenues for future research

The extent of the findings of this study has made me realise that many avenues have been opened for future research. This study will thus serve as a stepping stone for future studies:

- While this study was based on the experiences of rural working mothers and their challenges and accomplishments as postgraduate students at a South African university situated in an urban area, future studies should pay more attention to the experiences of urban working mothers who are pursuing postgraduate qualifications.

- Comparative research may be conducted to explore the similarities and differences between working mothers from different race groups. This might assist universities to understand the needs and challenges of all female students who are working mothers.

- Another study may explore the challenges and experiences of younger, unmarried students coming from rural areas in pursuit of postgraduate qualifications. The retention of students in higher education contexts requires concrete knowledge and understanding of their challenges in this environment.

- A pivotal problem that was highlighted by this study was the limited and debilitating education that the informants received in rural areas during the apartheid era. Future studies are now required to investigate whether the many challenges experienced by female learners in rural schools have been addressed and eradicated by post-1994 legislation, policies and educational strategies. Moreover, a particular focus is required to determine whether girls are now afforded better opportunities to pursue their social, economic and academic dreams through sound basic education.

12.12 Lessons learned from this life history research

- Mirroring the words of the late former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, this project revealed that “It always seems impossible until it is done”.

- The historical environment, cultural and patriarchal practices and their complexities cannot be the only way to define a woman.

- Challenges in life will always be there, but one needs to welcome them and try to find ways to overcome them.

- Enacting social change in our communities makes us feel good and makes a difference to our lives as well as to those of others.

- Together we stand, divided we fall.

- Perseverance, endurance, and a positive attitude to learning help students who are challenged by adversity to face ‘the giant’ and climb the ladder to success.

- Obtaining a master's degree is 'doable'. Obtaining a PhD is 'doable'. However, these processes require that the student accepts the challenges and devises various creative coping strategies to deal with them.

REFERENCES

AAUP (American Association of University Professors). (2004). *The report on the economic status of the profession*. Retrieved 10 January 2014 from http://www.aaup.org

Abudullah, N. H., Wahab, E., Shamsuddin, A., & Noor, H. (2012). Perceptions on career barrier among working women. *OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development*, 4(7), pp.93-100.

Acker, S. (1987). Feminist theory and the study of gender and education. *International Review of Education, 33*(4), 419-435.

Acker, S. (1993). Contradictions in terms: Women Academics in British universities. In M. Arnot & K. Weiler (Eds.), *Feminism and social justice in education: International perspectives* (pp. 146-166). London: The Falmer Press.

Adel, V. (2013). Four kids and a dissertation: Queering the balance between family and academia. In M. Castaneda & K. Isgro (Eds.), *Mother in Academia* (pp. 81-91). New York: Columbia University Press.

Ademiluka, S. O. (2018). Patriarchy and women abuse: perspectives from ancient Israel and Africa. *Old Testament Essays, 31*(2), 339-362.

Adriansen, H. K. (2012). Timeline interviews: A tool for conducting life history research. *Qualitative Studies, 3*(1), 40-55.

Agasisti, T., Avvisati, F., Borgonovi, F., & Longobardi, S. (2018). Academic resilience: what schools and countries do to help disadvantaged students to succeed in PISA. *OECD Working Paper, 167*(3), 1-40.

Ahikire, J. (2008). Vulnerabilities of feminist engagement and the challenge of Developmentalism in the South: What Alternatives? *IDS Bulletin, 39*(6), 28-32.

Ahmad, A. (1995). Role conflict and coping behaviour of married working women. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Human, 3*(2), 97-104.

Ahmed, S. (2000). Whose counting? *Feminist Theory, 1*(1), 97-103.

Ahmed, S. (2017). *Living a feminist life.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Aina, R. C. F. (2014). Awareness, accessibility, and use of electronic databases among academic staff of Babcock University Business School. *Kuwait Chapter of the Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review, 3*(6), 40.

Aitken, S. C., & Valentine, G. (2014). *Approaches to human geography: Philosophies, theories, people and practices.* Thousand Oaks*:* Sage.

Akoojee, S., & Nkomo, M. (2007). Access, equity and quality in higher education: Academic versus institutional development. In R. Dhunpath & R. Vithal (Eds.), *Alternative Access to Higher Education: Underprepared Students or Underprepared Institutions?* (pp. 89-106). Cape Town, South Africa: Pearson.

Akoojee, S., & Nkomo, M. (2014). Access and quality in South African higher education: The twin challenges of transformation. *South African Journal of Higher Education (SAJHE), 21*(3), 385-399.

Albert, I., & Trommsdoff, G. (2014). The role of culture in social development over the life span: An interpersonal relations approach. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture, 6*(2).

Albertyn, R., Kapp, C., & Bitzer, E. (2008). Profiling exiting postgraduate students' performance and experiences. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 22*(4), 749-772.

Alcázar, L., Rogers, F. H., Chaundhury, N., Hammer, J., Kremer, M., & Muralidharan, M. (2006). Why teachers are absent? Probing service delivery in Peruvian Primary Schools. *International Journal of Educational Research, 45*(3), 117-136.

Alexander, M.C. (2019). Mapping poverty in South Africa. *South Africa Info.*

Ali, A. (1975). *Development of higher education in Trinidad Tebogo.* (Doctoral Degree). University of the West Indies, St. Augustine.

Ali, S., Haider, Z., Munir, F., Khan, H., & Ahmed, A. (2013). Factors contributing to the students' academic performance: A case study of Islamia University Sub-Campus. *American Journal of Educational Research, 1*(8), 283-289.

Aliber, M., Kirsten, M., Maharajh, R., Nhlapo-Hlope, J., & Nkoane, O. (2006). Overcoming underdevelopment in South Africa's second economy. *Development Southern Africa, 23*(01), 45-61. Development Bank of South Africa

Allen, A. (2005). Feminist perspectives on power. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.*

Allen, S. (2018). The importance of an Intersectional Approach to Gender-Based Violence in South Africa. *University Honors Theses.* Paper 526.

Alston, M., & Kent, J. (2003). Educational access for Australian's rural young people: A case of social exclusion. *Australian Journal of Education, 47*(1), 5-17.

Amstuz, D. D. (1994). Staff development: Addressing issues of race and gender. In E. Hayes & S. A. J. C. III (Eds.), *Confronting racism and sexism* (pp. 39-51). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Andermahr, S., Lovell, T., & Wolkowitz, C. (2000). *A Glossary of Feminist Theory*. Oxford: Great Britain: Oxford University Press.

Andersen, M. L., Logio, K. A., & Taylor, H. F. (2001). *Understanding society: an introductory reader.* Belmont, CA*:* Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Anderson, K., Armitage, S., Jack, D., & Wittner, J. (1987). Beginning where we are: Feminist methodology in oral history. *The Oral History Review, 15*(1), 103-127.

Andrew, A., & Shahrokni, N. (2018). Patriarchal accommodations. In J. Misra, M. Steward, & M. Brown (Eds.), *Gendered lives sexual beings: A feminist anthology* (pp. 618-628). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Angelou, M. (1992). *I know why the caged bird sings*: Random Century.

Archer, J., Cantwell, R., & Bourke, S. (1999). Coping at University: an examination of achievement, motivation, self-regulation, confidence, and method of entry. *Higher Education Research & Development, 18*(1), 31-54.

Arendell, T. (2000). Conceiving and investigating motherhood: The decade's scholarship. *Journal of Marriage Family, 62*(4), 1192-1207.

Arneil, B. (1999). *Politics and& feminism*. Wiley-Blackwell: USA.

Arnot, M., & Weiler, K. (Eds.). (1993). *Feminism and social justice in education: International perspective*. London: The Falmer Press.

Aronson, J. (1995). A pragmatic view of thematic analysis. *The qualitative report, 2*(1), 1-3.

Ashari, H. (2006). Voices in the wilderness: Challenges of adult students. Hazadiah Mohamad Dahan and Faizah Abd. Majid (Eds.), *Scaffolding Adult Education: Narratives of Malaysian Practitioners* (pp. 87-100)., Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia: University Publication Centre (UPENA) UiTM, Shah Alam, Selangor Malaysia, 87-100.

Asuelime, L. E., & Chikafa, R. (2018). African feminist academia: towards a militant enterprise for feminist scholarship in Africa. *Gender and Behaviour, 16*(1), 10863-10873.

Asuquo, E. F., Etowa, J. B., & Akpan, M. I. (2017). Assessing women caregiving role to people living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria, West Africa. *SAGE Open, 7*(1), 2158244017692013.

Atkinson, D. (1999). TESOL and culture. *TESOL Quarterly, 33*(4), 625-654.

Atkinson, P., & Silverman, D. (1997). Kundera's Immortality: The interview society and the invention of the self. *Qualitative Inquiry, 3*(3), 304-325.

Atkinson, R. (1998). *The life story interview*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Atkinson, R. (2002). The life story interview. In J. Gubrium & J. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 121-140). Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage.

Austin, Z., & Sutton, J. (2014). Qualitative research: Getting started. *The Canadian jJournal of Hospital Pharmacy, 67*(6), 436.

Babbie, E. (2007). *The practice of social research* (11th ed.). Belmont: Thomson Wadsworth.

Babbie, E., & Mouton, J. (2001). *How to succeed in your Master's and Doctoral studies: aA South African guide and resource book*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Babbie, E., & Mouton, J. (2001). *The practice of social research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Badat, S. (1999/2016). *Black Student Politics: Higher Education and Apartheid from SASO to SANSCO, 1968-1990.* Pretoria: HSRC Publishers.

Badat, S. (2011). University access and admissions. *Insight: Higher Education South Africa,* (3), pp. 5-9.

Baehr, A. R. (2007). Liberal feminism. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.*

Baharudin, S. N. A., Murad, M., & Mat, N. H. H. (2013). Challenges of adult learners: A case study of full time postgraduate students. *Procedia-Social and Behavioural Sciences, 90*, 772-781.

Baker, R. L. (2003). *The Social Work Dictionary* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Balfour, R., Mitchell, C., & Moletsane, R. (2008). Troubling Contexts Toward a Generative Theory of Rurality as Education Research. *Journal of Rural and Community Development, 3*(3), 100-111.

Ball, S. J. (1990). *Politics and Policy Making in Education*. London: Routledge.

Barber, M., & Mourshed, M. (2007). *How the world's best-performing schools' systems come out on top*. McKinsey & Company.

Barker, R. L. (2003). *The social work dictionary* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Barlow, A., Duncan, S., & James, G. (2002). New Labour, the rationality mistake and family policy in Britain. *Analysing Families: Morality and rationality in policy and practice*, 110-128.

Barnett, R. (2004). Women and multiple roles: myths and reality. *Harvard Review of Psychiatry, 12*(3), 158-164.

Barrett, M. J. (2005). Making [some] sense of feminist poststructuralism in environmental education research and practice. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education (CJEE), 10*(1), 79-93.

Bates, L. (2014). *Everyday sexism*. London: Simon & Schuster.

Bauman, Z. (1988). *Freedom.*: Milton Keyne's: Open University Press.

Baxter, J. (2002). Patterns of change and stability in the gender division of household labour in Australia, 1986–1997. *Journal of Sociology, 38*(4), 399-424.

Baxter, J. (2016). Positioning language and identity: poststructuralist perspectives. In S. Preece (Ed.). *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Identity* (pp. 34-4960-75). London: Routledge.

Becker, H. (1970). *Sociological Wok*. Chicago, IL: Aldine.

Bedard, K., & Dhuey, E. (2006). The persistence of early childhood maturity: International evidence of long-run age effects. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 121*(4), 1437-1472.

Bee, H. L., & Bjorklund, B. R. (2004). *The Journey of Adulthood* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/ Prentice Hall.

Behr, A. L. (1984.). *New perspectives in South African education. A review of education in South Africa, 1652-1984.* Durban: Butterworth.

Behr, A. L., & MacMillan, R. G. (1971). *Education in South Africa.* Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Bell, E., Meriläinen, S., Taylor, S., & Tienari, J. (2019). Time's up! Feminist theory and activism meets organization studies. *Human Relations, 72*(1), 4-22.

Bell, S. (2012). Non-traditional students are the new majority. *Library Journal.,* 8.

Belyakov, A. L., Cremonini, L., Mfusi, M., & Rippner, J. (2009). *The effects of transition on access to higher education*. Washington, DC: IHEP.

Bénabou, R., & Tirole, J. (2002). Self-confidence and personal motivation. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 117*(3), 871-915.

Benirschike, K. (2004). Multiple gestations. In R. K. Creasy & R. Resnik (Eds.), *Martenal-fetal medicine: Principles and practice* (pp. 55-62). Philadelphia: Saunders.

Bentley, T. (1998). *Learning beyond the classroom: Education for a changing world.* London: Routledge.

Berg, B. L., & Lune, H. (2012). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. London: England: Pearson.

Bergmann, J., & Mohammad, N. (1998). Primary and secondary education structural issues. In P. Hoodbhoy (Ed.). *Education and the state: fifty years of Pakistan.* Karachi: Oxford University Press.

Bernard, J. (1976). The future of motherhood. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 38*(2), 397-400.

Bernardin, J. (2019). Oppression and resilience of women during Taliban Era. In K. Hossein (Ed.), *Thousand Splendid Suns*, (7 (5), pp. 1464-1470). International English Journal, Literature in Humanities.

Bertaux, D. (1981). *Biography and society: The life history approach in the social sciences*. London: Sage.

Bertram, C., & Christiansen, I. (2014). Understanding research. *An introduction to reading research.* Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Bhana, D., & Pillay, V. (2012). How women in education negotiate work and home: A study of selected women at a university in South Africa. *Journal of Higher Education in Africa. HEA/RESA, 10*(2), 81-94.

Bhasin, K. (2006). *What is Patriarchy?* New Delhi: Women Unlimited.

Bidwell, A. (2014, June 24). Older college students face challenges. US News. Retrieved from https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2014/06/24/higher-education-needs-to-give-older-working-students-more-opportunities

Biraimah, K. C. (1982). *Different knowledge for different folks*. New York: MacMillan.

Bisong, P. B., & Ekanem, S. A. (2014). A critique of feminism. *Am. Journal of Social, Management & Sciences, 5*(2), 33-38.

Bitchener, J., & Basturkman, H. (2006). Perceptions of the difficulties of postgraduate L2 thesis students writing the discussion section. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 5*(1), 4-18.

Black-Chen, M. (2013). Caribbean women finding a balance between returning to higher education and being successful: Voices from Jamaica. *International Research and Review, 3*(1), 40-54.

Blaikie, N. (2000). *Designing social research*. Cambridge: Polity.

Bless, C., & Higgson-Smith, C. (1995). *Fundamentals of social research methods: An African perspective* (2nd ed.). Cape Town: Juta.

Blignaut, S. (1981). *Statistics on Education in South Africa, 1968-79, SAIRR*. Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations.

Blum, L. (2004). Stereotypes and stereotyping: A moral analysis. *Philosophical Papers, 33*(3), 251-289.

Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). Research for education: An introduction to theories and methods.

Bogdan, R. G., & Biklein, S. K. (1992). *Qualitative Research for Education* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Bonner, P. L., Delius, P., & Posel, D. (1993). *Apartheid's Genesis, 1935-1962*. Johannesburg, South Africa: Ravan Press.

Booyse, C., & Du Plessis, E. (2008). *The Educator As Learning Programme Developer*. Pretoria, South Africa: Van Schaik.

Booyse, J. (2013). Education provisioning during the period of National Party rule. In JJ. Booyse, C. L. Roux, J. Seroto, & CC. Wolhuter (Eds.), *A history of schooling in South Africa: Method and context* (pp. 215-268). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Borden, V., Vithal, R., & Dhunpath, R. (2013)4. Assessing the efficacy of access programmes at UKZN. In R. Dhunpath & R. Vithal (Eds.). *Access to higher education: Under-prepared students or under-prepared institutions*, 108-132. Cape Town: Pearson.

Bose, C. E. (2012). Intersectionality and global gender inequality. *Gender & sSociety, 26*(1), 67-72.

Boughey, C. (2018). Access to higher education in South Africa. In J. Hoffman, P. Blessinger, & M. Makhanya (Eds.), *Contexts for diversity and gender identities in Higher Education: International Perspectives on Equity and Inclusion* (pp. 65-71). Bradford United Kingdom: Emerald Publishing Limited.

Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J.-C. (1990). *Reproduction in education, society and culture* (Vol. 4) London, UK: Sage.

Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. J. (1992). *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago press.

Bourgeois, E., Duke, C., Guyot, J.-L., & Merrill, B. (1999). *The Adult University*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal, 9*(2), 27-40.

Bowl, M. (2001). Experiencing the barriers: Non-traditional students entering higher education. *Research Papers in Education, 16*(2), 141-160.

Bradley, K. (2000). The incorporation of women into higher education: Paradoxical outcomes. *Sociology of Education, 7*(1), 1-18.

Brah, A., & Phoenix, A. (2004). Ain't I a woman? Revisiting Intersectionality. *Journal of International Women Studies, 5*(3), 75-86.

Braun, A., Vincent, C., & Ball, S. (2008). I'm so much more myself now, coming back to work- working class mothers, paid work and child care. *Journal of Education Policy, 3*, 533-548.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology,* 3(2), pp. 77-101.

Bray, M. (2000). *Double-shift schooling: Design and operation for cost-effectiveness*. International Institute for Educational Planning. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.

Britannica online Encyclopaedia. (1994). Adulthood. Retrieved from http:www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/6623/adulthood

Brooks, A. (2007). Feminist standpoint epistemology. In S. N. Hesser-Biber & P. L. Leavy (Eds.), *Feminist Research Practice* (pp. 53-82). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Brooks, A., & Hesser-Biber, S. N. (2007). An invitation to feminist research. In S. N. Hesser-Biber & P. L. Leavy (Eds.), *Feminist Research Practice* (pp. 1-24). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Brown, H. M. (2004). *'A Woman's Right to Choose': Second Wave Feminist Advocacy of Abortion Law Reform in New Zealand and New South Wales from the 1970s*. Master's Degree Dissertation, University of Canterbury.

Brown, T. M., & De Casanova, E. M. (2009). Mothers in the field: How motherhood shapes fieldwork and researcher-subject relations. *Women's Studies Quarterly, 37*(3/4), 42-57.

Brown, W. (2005). *Edgework: Critical essay on knowledge and politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Bryant, J. A. (2010). Dismantling rural stereotypes. *Education Leadership, 68*, 54-58.

Bryman, A. (1988). *Quality and Quantity Iin Social Research*. London: Unwin Hyman.

Bryman, A. (2016). *Social Research Methods*. Oxford University Press.

Budgeon, S. (2016). The 'problem 'with single women: Choice, accountability and social change. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 33*(3), 401-418.

Bullough, R. V., Knowles, J. G., & Crow, N. A. (1991). *Emerging as a teacher*. London & New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis.

Burdick, M. (2011). Researcher and Teacher-Participant Found Poetry: Collaboration in Poetic Transcription. *International Journal of Education & the Arts,* 12(1), pp. 1-18.

Burke, B., Cropper, A., & Harrison, P. (2000). Real or imagined: Black women's experiences in the academy. *Community Work and Family, 3*(3), 297-310.

Burman, E. (1994a). *Deconstructing Development Psychology*. London: Routledge.

Burn, V. (2000). *An Introduction to Social Constructionism of Reality*. London: Routledge.

Burns, N., & Grove, S. K. (2007). *The Practice of Nursing Research: Conduct, critique and utilisation*. Philadelphia: WB Saunders.

Burr, V. (1995). *An Introduction to Constructionism*. New York: Routledge.

Bush, H. K. (1995). *Poststructuralism as theory and practice in the English classroom*.: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication. Retrieved from https://www.ericdigests.org/1996-2/english.html

Butler, J. (1988). Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory. *Theatre Journal.* (Vol. 40(4), pp. 519-531).

Butler, J. (1990 [2007]). *Gender trouble: feminism and subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.

Bwakali, D. J. (2001). Gender inequality in Africa. *Contemporary Review, 279*(1630), 270-272.

Bwakali, D. J. (2007). Gender inequality in Africa. *Contemporary Review, 279*, 270-272.

Byrd, R. P., Cole, J. B., & Guy-Sheffal, B. (2009). *I am your sister: Collected and unpublished writings of Audre Lorde.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Byrne, D. S. (1999). *Social exclusion*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press.

Caffarella, R. (2002). *Planning programs for adult learners: A practical Guide for Educators, Trainers, and Staff Developers*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Caffarella, R. S., & Barnett, B. G. (2000). Teaching doctoral students to become scholarly writers: The importance of giving and receiving critiques. *Studies in Higher Education, 25*(1), 39-52.

Campbell, J. (1815). *Travels in South Africa: Undertaken at the request of the Missionary Society.* Cape Town: Struik: Flagg and Gould.

Cannella, G. S., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). Deploying qualitative methods for critical social purposes. In S. R. Steinburg & G. S. Cannella (Eds.), *Critical Qualitative Research Reader* (pp. 104-114). New York: Peter Lang.

Carastathis, A. (2014). The concept of intersectionality in feminist theory. *Philosophy Compass, 9*(5), 304-314.

Carlson, E. R. (2016). Lifelong Learning and Professional Development. *Journal of Oral Aand Maxillofacial Surgery: official journal of the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons, 74*(5), 875.

Carmichael, D. (1982). The challenge of rural education. *Rural Educator, 4*(1), 5-10.

Carney-Crompton, S., & Tan, J. (2002). Support systems, psychological functioning, and academic performance of non-traditional female students. *Adult Education Quarterly, 52*(2), 140-154.

Carnoy, M. (2008). Lessons from the past two decades: Investment choices for education and growth. In G. Bloch, L. Chisholm, B. Fleisch, & M. Mabizela (Eds.), *Investment choices: for South Africa education* (pp. 15-38). Johannesburg, South Africa: Wits University Press.

Carranza, C., & Ender, S. E. (2003). Responding to students' needs. In G. I. Kramer & Associates (Eds.), *Student Academic Services: An integrated approach* (pp. 311-332). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Cassell, J. (1982). Does risk-benefit analysis apply to moral evaluation of social research. In T.L. Beauchamp, R.R. Faden, R.J. Wallace, & L. Walters (Eds.). *Ethical Issues in Social Science Research*. pp., 144-162. London: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Cast, A. D. (2003). Power and the ability to define the situation. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 66(3), 185-201.

Castaneda, M., & Isgro, K. (2013). *Mothers in Academia*. New York: Colombia University Press.

Cawthon, S. W. (2010). Assessment accommodations for English language learners: The case of former-LEPs. *Assessment, 15*(13).

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory, a practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London: Sage.

Charter of African Feminists. (2006). Preamble to the Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists. Retrieved from, http://www.ipu.org/womn-e/classif.htm.

Chinn, P. L., & Wheeler, C. E. (1985). Feminism and nursing. *Nursing Outlook, 33*(2), 74-77.

Christians, C. G. (2011). Ethics and politics in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (4th ed., pp. 61-80). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Christie, P. (2006.). *Right to learn: The struggle for education in South Africa.* (2ndSecond ed.). Johannesburg.: Ravan Press.

Churchill, J. D., Galvez, R., Colcombe, S., Swain, R. A., Kramer, A. F., & Greenough, W. T. (2002). Exercise, experience and the aging brain. *Neurobiology of aging, 23*(5), 941-955.

Clair, M., & Denis, J. S. (2015). Racism, sociology of. *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioural Sciences*, 19, 857-863.

Clark, J. (1970). Motherhood. In T. Bambara (Ed.), *The black woman: An anthology*. New York: New American Library.

Clegg, S. R. (1989). *Frameworks of power*. London: Sage.

Clifford, D. (1998). *Social Assessment Theory and Practice: A multidisciplinary framework.* Aldershot: Ashgate Arena.

Cloke, P. J., & Johnstone, R. J. (2005). *Spaces of geographical thought: Deconstructing human geography's binaries*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Cock, J. (1980). *Maids & madams: A study in the politics of exploitation.* Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Coetzee, B. (1967, November 87). Opening of the new Bantu administration offices Humansdorp. *Speech*.

Coffey, A. (1999). *The ethnographic self: Fieldwork and the representation of identity*. London: Sage.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods Iin Education* (6th ed.). London: Routledge.

Cole, A. L., & Knowles, J. G. (2000). *Researching teaching: Exploring teacher development through reflective inquiry*. Boston, MA: Allyn Bacon.

Cole, A. L., & Knowles, J. G. (2001). *Lives in context: The art of life history research*. Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press.

Cole, B. A. (2009). Gender, narratives and intersectionality: can personal experience approaches to research contribute to "'undoing gender'"? *International Review of Education, 55*(5-6), 561.

Cole, E. R., & Omari, S. R. (2003). Race, class and the dilemmas of upward mobility for African Americans. *Journal of Social Issues, 59*(4), 785-802.

Colin III, S. A., & Preciphs, T. K. (1991). Perceptual patterns and the learning environment: Confronting White racism. In R. Hiemstra (Ed.), *Creating environment for effective adult learning* (Vol. 1991, pp. 61-70). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Collins, P. H. (1994). "Shifting the centre: race, class and feminist theorizing about motherhood.". In D. Basin & M. Honey (Eds.), *Representations of Motherhood* (pp. 56-74). New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher, 19*(5), 2-14.

Connelly, P., Li, T., MacDonald, M., Parpart, J., & Barriteau, E. (2000). *Theoretical perspectives on gender and development.* Ottawa, Canada: International Development Research Centre., *Otawa, Canada*.

Connelly, R., & Ghodsee, K. (2011). *Professor mommy: Finding work-family balance in academia*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Cooley, N., & Stone, P. (2009). New directions for adult and continuing education. *Women's Studies Quarterly 37*(3-4), 9-12.

Corbett, M. (2006). Educating the country out of the child and educating the child out of the country: Exclusion in Spectrology. *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 52*(4), 289-301.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (200814). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory.* USA: Sage Publications.

Council of Higher Education (CHE). (2000). *Towards a New Higher Education Landscape: Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of South Africa in the Twenty-First Century*. Pretoria: CHE.

Council on Higher Education. (2016). *Vital Stats Public Higher Education*. Pretoria: CHE.

Courtney, S. (1992). Why adults learn. Towards a theory of research on adult education participation. *Adult Education Quarterly, 36*, 130-142.

Covington-Ward, Y. (2013). Fighting phantoms: mammy, matriarch and other ghosts haunting black mothers in the academy. In S. Nzinga-Johnson (Ed.), *Labouring Positions: Black Women, Mothering and the Academy* (pp. 236-256). Bradford, Ontario: Demeter Press.

Coward, R. (1983). *Patriarchal precedents Sexuality and social relations*. London: Routledge.

Cravens, A., Ulibarri, N., Cornelius, M., Royalty, A., & Nabergoj, A. (2014). Reflecting, iterating, and tolerating ambiguity: Highlighting the creative process of scientific and scholarly research for doctoral education. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies, 9*, 229-247.

Creighton, S., & Hudson, L. (2002). *Participation trends and patterns in adult education: 1991-1999*. Washington, DC: U.S Department of Education.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: aA black feminist theory of anti-discrimination doctrines. *Legal Forum, 4*, 538-554.

Cresswell, J. (1994). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cresswell, J. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cresswell, J. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approach* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. (2015). 30 essential skills for qualitative research. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative and mixed methods approaches*. London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications.

Cronshaw, S. (2017). Mothers undertaking part-time Doctoral study: Experiences, Perceptions and Implications. Doctoral Thesis, University of Chester: United Kingdom.

Crouch, L., & Hoadley, U. (2018). The Transformation of South Africa's System. In B. Levy, R. Cameron, U. Hoadley, & V. Naidoo (Eds.). *The Politics and Governance of Basic Education: A Tale of Two South African Provinces*. pp. 27-60. Oxford: Oxford University Press,

Cudd, A. E. (2006). *Analysing oppression.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Culler, J. (1989). *Paul de Man's Contribution to Literary Criticism and Theory. The Future of Literary Theory.* New. York: Routledge.

D'Silva, M. U., Smith, S. E., Della, L. J., Potter, D. A., Rajack-Talley, T. A., & Best, L. (2016). Reflexivity and positionality in researching African-American Communities: Lessons from the field. *Intercultural Communication Studies, 25*(1), 94-109.

Daloz, L. A. (1999). *Mentor: Guiding the journey of adult learners* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

D'Amant, A. (2012). Within and between the old and the new: Teachers becoming inclusive practitioners. *Perspectives in Education, 30*(1), 53-60.

David, M. E. (1993). Theories of family change, motherhood and education. In M. Arnot & K. Weiler (Eds.), *Feminism and social justice in education: International perspectives* (pp. 11-13). London: The Falmer Press.

Davies, A. (1981). *Women, race, and class*. New York: Random.

Davies, B. (1989). *Frogs and Snails and Feminist Tales*. North Sydney: Allen &and Unwin.

Davies, B., & Harré, R. (1990). Positioning: The discursive production of selves. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 20*(1), 43-63.

Davies, J., Singh, C., Tebboth, M., Spear, D., Mensah, A., & Ansah, P. (2018). *Conducting life history interviews: a how-to guide.* University of Cape Town: ASSAR.

Davies, W. (1990). *We cry for or land: Farm workers in South Africa*. Oxford: Oxfam.

Davis, K. (2009). Feminist body/ politics as world traveller: Translating our bodies, ourselves. *European Journal of Women's Studies, 9*(3), 223-247.

De Casanova, E., & Brown, T. (2013). Making It Work: Success Strategies for Graduate Student Mothers. In C. M & I. K (Eds.), *Mothers in Academia* (pp. 191-212). New York: Columbia University Press.

De Clercq, F. (1984). *Education and training in the homelands: A separate development?* Paper presented at the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in South Africa, Cape Town.

De Gennaro, B., & Fantini, A. (2002). The concept of rurality and the rural urban relationship as perceived by young people (pp/ 25-263). ARSIA, Florence: ARSIA, 253-263.

De la Rey, C., & Kottler, A. (1999). Societal transformation: gender, feminism and psychology in South Africa. *Feminism & Psychology, 9*(2), 119-126.

De Laine, M. (2000). *Fieldwork, participation and practice*. London: Sage.

De Lauretis, T. (1984). *Alice doesn't: Feminism, Semiotic*. Cinema: Bloomington, Ind.: Cinema.

De Villiers, P. (1996). *The poor and access to higher education in South Africa: The NSFAS contribution*. (Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis)., Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Schulze, S., & Patel, L. (2011). The science and the professions. In A. S. de. Vos. A.S, H. Strydom, C. B. Fouche, & &C. L. S. Delport. (Eds.), *Research in grassroots: For the social sciences and human service professions* (4th ed., pp. 3-27). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

De Vos, A., Strydom, H., Fouché, C., & Delport, C. (2002). *Research at grass roots: F–for the social sciences and human service professions*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

De Waal, T. G. (2004). *Curriculum 2005: Challenges facing teachers in historically disadvantaged schools in the Western Cape.* Cape Town: University of the Western Cape,

Delors, J. (1998). *Learning: The treasure within* (2nd ed.). Paris, France: UNESCO Publishing.

DeMeis, D. K., & Perkins, H. W. (1996). '"Supermoms'" of the nineties: Homemaker and employed mothers' performance and perceptions of the motherhood role. *Journal of Family Issues, 17*(6), 776-792.

Denhere, C. (2013). South African rural matriculants 'perceptions of barriers to Higher Education. *Case Studies, 2*(4), 42-47.

Denscombe, M. (2007). *The good research guide for small-scale social research projects*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Denzin, N. K. (1989). *Interpretive biography*. London: Sage.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Department of Education. (1997). *Education White Paper 3: A programme for the Transformation of Higher Education*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Department of Education. (2000a). *Norms and standards for educators*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Department of Education. (2002). *Language Policy for Higher Education*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Department of Education. (2003). *Policy Document on Adult Basic Education and Training*. Pretoria: DoE.

Department of Education. (2006a). *Monitoring and evaluation report on the impact and outcomes of the education system on the South African population*. Pretoria: Government Printer

Derrida, J. (1976). *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore, MD and London: The Johns Hopkins UP.

Derrida, J. (1982). *'Differance' Margins of Philosophy Trans. Alan Bass*. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Desjardins, R., & Schuller, T. (2011). Wider benefits of adult education. In K. Rubenson (Ed.). *International Encyclopedia of Adult Learning and Education*, 294-298. Oxford: Elsevier.

Deutsch, N. L., & Schmertz, B. (2011). '" Starting from Ground Zero':": Constraints and experiences of adult women returning to college. *The Review of Higher Education, 34*(3), 477-504.

Aliber, M., Kirsten, M., Maharajh, R., Nhlapo-Hlope, J., & Nkoane, O. (2006). Overcoming underdevelopment in South Africa's second economy. *Development Southern Africa, 23*(01), 45-61. Development Bank of South Africa

Dewey, J. (1923). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York: Columbia University., August 1915.

Dhunpath, R. (2000). Life history methodology: ‘" Narradigm’" regained. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 13*(5), 543-551.

Dhunpath, R., & Vithal, R. (2014). Alternative access to university: Past, present and future. In R. Dhunpath & R. Vithal (Eds.), *Alternative access to higher education: Underprepared students or underprepared institutions?* (pp. 26-50). Cape Town: Pearson.

Diamond, I., & Quinby, L. (1988). *Foucault and feminism: Reflections on resistance*. Boston: North-eastern University Press.

Dickson, G. L. (1990). A feminist poststructuralist analysis of the knowledge of menopause. *Advances in Nursing Science, 12*, 15-31.

Dictionary, S. A. C. (2005). *The Dictionary Unit for South African English*. Southern Africa: Oxford University Press.

Diker, C. Y., & Demirel, M. D. (2010). Lifelong learning tendency scale: The study of validity and reliability *Procedia Social & Behavioural Sciences, 5*, 2343-2350.

Dill, P., & Henley, T. (1998). Stressors of College a comparison of traditional and non-traditional students. *The Journal of Psychology, 132*(1), 25-32.

Dixon, D. P., & Jones III, J. P. (1997). On the 'con's in deconstruction. *The California Geographer, 33*, 32-35.

Dladla, T. E. (2012). *Poor Urban Learners' Long Walks to School and the Influence on Their School Activities.* (Master’s thesis). University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood.,

Dolby, N. E. (2001). *Constructing race: Youth, identity, and popular culture in South Africa*. Albany: University of New York Press.

Domansky, E. (1994). Militarization and reproduction in World War 1I Germany.*:* In G. Eley. (Ed.) *Society, culture and state in Germany, 1870-1930*. Ann Arbour: University of Michigan Press.

Donald, D., Lazarus, S., & Lolwana, D. (2006). *Educational psychology in social context*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Dréze, J., & Sen, A. (Eds.). (1990). *The Political Economy of Hunger: Feminine Prevention* Clarendon: Oxford University Press.

Du Plessis, P. (2014). Problems and complexities in rural schools: Challenges of education and social development. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 5*(20), 1109.

Dubula, V. (2018). My feminism is resistance. In I. J. Thorpe (Ed.), *Feminism: South African speak their truth* (pp. 216-222). Cape Town: Kwela Books.

Ebersöhn, L. (2017). A resilience, health and well-being lens for education and poverty. *South African Journal of Education, 37*(1), pp. 1-9.

Ebersöhn, L., & Ferreira, R. (2012). Rurality and resilience in education: Place-based partnerships and agency to moderate time and space constraints. *Perspectives in Education, 30*, 30-42.

Edwards, R. (1993). *Mature women students: Separating or connecting family and education.* Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.

EFA Global Monitoring Report. (2008). *Education for All by 2015: Will we make it?* London: Oxford University Press.

Eisenstein, H. (1984). *Contemporary Feminist Thought*. London: Routledge.

Elbow, P. (1993). The uses of binary thinking. *Journal of Advanced Composition*, 13(1), pp.51-78.

Elliot, M., & Mandell, N. (1995). *Feminist issues: Race, class and sexuality*. Scarborough, ON: Prentice Hall.

Elliott, V. (2018). Thinking about the coding process in qualitative data analysis. *The Qualitative Report, 23*(11), 2850-2861.

Elvin-Nowak, Y., & Thomsson, H. (2001). Motherhood as idea and practice: A discursive understanding of employed mothers in Sweden. *Gender & Society, 15*(3), 407-428.

Ennis, L. (2012). Contract- faculty mothers: On the track to nowhere. In D. L. O. Hallstein & A. O'Reilly (Eds.), *Academic motherhood in a post-second wave context: Challenges, strategies and possibilities* (pp. 177-194). Bradford, ON: Demeter Press.

Enyew, B. E., & Mihrete, A. G. (2018). Liberal feminism: assessing its compatibility and applicability in Ethiopia context. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology, 10*(6), 59-64.

Epston, D., Winslade, J., Crocket, K., & Monk, G. (1996). *Narrative therapy in practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Erasmus-Kritzinger, L. (Ed.) (2003). *Inspirational Women at Work: 52 Personal and Life Experiences Shared to Empower, Encourage and Inspire*. Pretoria: Laga Publishers.

Erdwins, C. J., Buffardi, L. C., Casper, W. J., & O'Brien, A. S. (2001). The relationship of women's role strain to social support, role satisfaction, and self-efficacy. *Family Relations, 50*(3), 230-238.

Erisman, W., & Steele, P. (2012). From contact to completion: Supporting returning adult students in obtaining a college credential. Higher Ed Insight. Retrieved from http://www.adultcollegecompletion.org/sites/files/documents/higherEdInsightBrief.pdf

European Union. (2001). *The Prague Communique: Lifelong learning 2007-2009*. Toward the European Higher Education Area Communiqué of the meeting of European Ministers in charge of Higher Education in Prague: Bologna.

Eze, T., JI, Ezenwafor., J., & Obi, M. (2015). Effects of age and gender on academic achievement of Vocational and Technical Education (VTE): Students of a Nigerian University *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research & Policy Studies, 6*(6), 96-101.

Ezzy, D. (2002). *Qualitative analysis: Practice and innovation*. London: Routledge.

Fairchild, E. E. (2003). Multiple roles of adult learners. *New Direction for Student Services, 102*, 11-16.

Fearon, J. D. (1999). *What is identity (as we now use the word).* Unpublished manuscript, Stanford University, Stanford, California., 1-43.

Ferguson, M. L. (2010). Choice feminism and the fear of politics. *Perspectives on Politics, 8*(1), 247-253.

Field, P. A., & Morse, J. M. (1994). *Nursing research: The application of qualitative approaches*. London: Chapman of Hall.

Filmer, R. (1680). *Patriacha: Or, The Natural Power of Kings* London: Printed for Chiswell.

Fine, M., Weis, L., Wessen, S., & Wong, L. (2000). For whom? Qualitative research, representations, and social responsibilities. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 107-131). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Finlay, L. (2002). Negotiating the swamp: the opportunity and challenge of reflexivity in research practice. *Qualitative R research, 2*(2), 209-230.

Fischer, G. (1999). Lifelong learning: Changing students. In G. Gumming, T. Okamoto, & L. Gomez (Eds.), *7th International Conference on computers in education on new human abilities for the networked society* (pp. 21-30). Omaba, NE: IOS Press.

Fiske, E. B., & Ladd, H. F. (2004). *Elusive equity: Education reform in post-apartheid South Africa*. Washington, DC: Breakings Institute Press.

Flax, J. (1999). Women do theory. In M. Pearsal (Ed.), *Women and values: Readings in recent feminist philosophy* (pp. , 9-13). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Fleisch, B. (2008). Introduction. In L. Chisholm, B. Fleisch, & M. Mabizela (Eds.), *Investment choices: For South African education* (pp. 1-13). Johannesburg: Wits University Press Acumen Publishing Solutions.

Flick, U. (2009). *An introduction to qualitative research* (4th ed.). London: Sage.

Folbre, N. (2001). *The invisible heart: Economics and family values*. In. New York: New Press.

Foubert-Samier, A., Catheline, G., Amieva, H., Dilharreguy, B., Helmer, C., Allard, M., & Dartigues, J.-F. (2012). Education, occupation, leisure activities, and brain reserve: a population-based study. *Neurobiology of Aging, 33*(2), 423. e415-423. e425.

Foucault, M. (1977). What is an author? In D. F. Bouchard (Ed.), *Language, counter-memory, practice: Selected essays and interviews* (pp. 113-138). New York: Cornell University Press.

Foucault, M. (1979). *Michel 1972–1977 Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings.* Edited by Colin Gordon (G. C Ed.). New York: Random House.

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/ knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972-77*. Brighton: Harvester Press.

Foucault, M. (1984). What is enlightenment? In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (pp. 32-50). London: Penguin.

Foucault, M. (1988). *Politics, philosophy, culture: Interviews and other writings 1977-1984*. In L. Kritzman (Ed.). London: Routledge.

Fouche, C. B., & Delport, C. L. S. (2011). Introduction to the research process. In A. S. Dde Vos,. A.S, H. Strydom, C. B. Fouche, & D. C. L. S. Delport (Eds.), *Research in grassroots: For the social sciences and human service professions* (4th ed., pp. 61-76). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Francis, B. (1999). Modernist reductionism or post-structuralist relativism: Can we move on? An evaluation of the arguments in relation to feminist educational research. *Gender and Education, 11*(4), 381-393.

Frank, G. (1995). Anthropology and individual lives: The story of the life history and the history of the life story. *American Antropological Association.,* 97(1), pp. 145-148.

Frankenberg, E., Sisoki, B., Sumantri, C., Suriastini, W., & Thomas, D. (2013). Education, vulnerability, and resilience after a natural disaster. *Ecology and society: a journal of integrative science for resilience and sustainability, 18*(2), 16.

Fraser, W., & Killen, R. (2005). The perceptions of students and lectures of some factors influencing academic performance at two South African universities. *Perspectives in Education, 23*(1), 25-40.

Fratiglioni, L., & Wang, H.-X. (2007). Brain reserve hypothesis in dementia. *Journal of Alzheimer's dDisease, 12*(1), 11-22.

Frazer, L. (1990). 'Feminist talk and talking about feminism: teenage girls' discourses of gender'. *Oxford Review of Education, 15*(2)3), pp. 281-290.

Freeman, M. (1993). *Rewriting the self: History, memory, narrative*. London: Routledge.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York Continuum.

Frenkel, R. (2008). Feminism and contemporary culture in South Africa. *African Studies, 67*(1), 1-10.

Freundlieb, D. (1989). From structuralism to post-structuralism: Was the structuralist project beyond redemption? *Poetics, 18*(3), 271-298.

Frewin, K. (2002). *Theorising 'self': Poststructuralist interpretations of self-construction and psychology.* (A tThesis presented in partial fulfilment for PhDof the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology). Massey Uuniversity, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Frischer, J., & Larsson, K. (2000). Laissez-faire in research education—an inquiry into a Swedish doctoral program. *Higher Education Policy*, *13*(2), 131-155.

Frizelle, K., & Hayes, G. (1999). Experience of motherhood: Challenging ideas. *Psychology in Society, 25*, 17-36.

Frost, N., & Elichaoff, F. (2014). Feminist postmodernism, poststructuralism, and critical theory. In S. Hesser-Biber (Ed.), *Feminist research practice: A primer* (2nd ed., pp. 42-72). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Frye, M. (1983). *The politics of reality: Essays in feminist theory*. Freedom, CA Calif: Crossing Press.

Fynn, A., & van Vuuren, H. J. (2017). Investigating the role of non-academic support systems of students completing a Master's Degree in Open, Distance and e-Learning. *Perspectives in Education, 35*(1), 186-199.

Gaine, C., & George, R. (1999). *Gender, Race and Class in Schooling: A New Introduction.* London: Falmer Press.

Galinsky, A., Magee, J., Inesi, M., & Gruenfeld, D. (2006). Power and perspectives not taken. *Psychological Science, 17*(2), 1068-1073.

Ganai, M., & Mir, M. A. (2013). A comparative study of adjustment and academic achievement of college students. *Journal of Educational Research and Essays, 1*(1), 5-8.

Gardiner, M. (2008). *Education in rural areas*. South Africa: CEPD.

Gardner, K. (2002). *Age, narrative and migration: The life course and histories of Bengali elders in London*. London: Berg.

Gardner, P. (1996). Transition: Understanding economic and workplace changes at the end of century. *Journal of Cooperative Education, 31*(2), 41-57.

Garipagaoglu, B. C. (2013). The effect of self-efficacy on the lifelong learning tendencies of Computer Education and Instructional Technologies pre-service teachers: A case study. *International Journal of Human Sciences, 10*(1), 224-236.

Garmezy, N. (1974). The study of competence in children at risk for severe psychopathology. In E. J. Anthony & C. Koupernik (Eds.). *The child in his family: Children at psychiatric risk*. pp. 77-97. New York: Wiley.

Garry, A. (2011). Intersectionality, metaphors, and the multiplicity of gender. *Hypatia, 26*(4), 826-850.

Gastrow, S. (1987). *Who's who in South African Politics*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Gatz, M., Svedberg, P., Pedersen, N. L., Mortimer, J. A., Berg, S., & Johansson, B. (2001). Education and the risk of Alzheimer's disease: findings from the study of dementia in Swedish twins. *The Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences, 56*(5), P292-P300.

Gaughan, S. (Ed.) (2003). *Women's Rights*. United States of America: Green Haven Press.

Gavey, N. (1989). Feminist poststructuralism and discourse analysis: Contributions to feminist psychology. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 13*(4), 459-475.

Gavey, N. (1997). Feminist poststructuralism and discourse analysis. *Toward a New Psychology of Gender*, 49-64.

Gazso, A. (2007). Balancing expectation for employability and family responsibilities while on social assistance: Low income mothers' experiences in three Canadian Provinces. *Family Relations, 56*, 454-464.

Gelpi, B. C., Keohane, N. O., & Rosaldo, M. Z. (1982). *Feminist theory: a critique of ideology*: University of Chicago Press.

Germeten, S. (2013). Personal narratives in life history research. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 57*(6), 612-624.

Gerrard, N., & Javed, N. (1995). The Psychology of Women. In N. Mandell (Ed.), *Feminist Issues: Race, Class and Sexuality* (pp. 123-151). Scarborough, ON: Prentice Hall.

Ghavifekr, S., & Rosdy, W. A. W. (2015). Teaching and learning with technology: Effectiveness of ICT integration in schools. *International Journal of Research in Education and Science, 1*(2), 175-191.

Ghosh, J. (2011). Financial crisis and impact on women a historical note. In N. Visvanathan, L. Duggan, N. Wiegersma, & L. Nisonoff (Eds.), *The women, gender and development* (pp. 22-27). London: Zed Books.

Gibson, J. L. (2004). *Overcoming apartheid: Can truth reconcile a divided nation?* Cape TownSouth Africa: HSRC Press.

Gill, B., Hayes, S., & Senior, C. (2015). The effects of family support and gender on mature student engagement in higher education. *Frontiers in Psychology, 6*, 156.

Giroux, H. (1991). *Border crossings*. London: Routledge.

Gluck, S. B. (2011). Has feminist oral history lost its radical/subversive edge. *Oral History, 39*(2), 63-72.

Goodie, W. J. (1960). A theory of role strain. *America Sociological Review, 25*(4), 483-496.

Goodson, I. (Ed.) (1992). *Studying teacher's lives*. London: Routledge.

Goodson, I. F., & Gill, S. R. (2011). Understanding the life history research process. *Counterpoints, 386*, 35-54.

Goodson, I., & Fliesser, C. (1994). Exchanging gifts: Collaborative research and theories of context. *Analytic Teaching, 15*(2), 41-46.

Goodson, I., & Sikes, P. (2001). *Doing life history in educational settings: Learning from lives*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Gordon, L. (2015). Race and justice in higher education: Some global challenges with attention to the South African context. In P. Tabensky & S. Mathews (Eds.), *Being at Home: Race, Institutional Culture and Transformation at South African Higher Education Institutions* (pp. 157-183). DurbanSouth Africa: UKZN Press.

Gqola, P. (2001). *Ufanele uqavile*: Black women, feminisms and post coloniality in Africa. *Agenda 16*(:50), 11-12.

Gqola, P. (2018). A mothering feminist's life. In J. Thorpe (Ed.), *Feminism: South Africans speak their truth* (pp. 13-33). Cape Town: Kwela Books.

Gqola, P. D. (2015). *Rape: A South African Nightmare*. Johannesburg: MF Books.

Graber, R., Pichon, F., & Carabine, E. (2015). Psychological resilience: state of knowledge and future research agendas. *Overseas Development Institute Working Paper 425.*

London: Overseas Development Institute: Overseas Development Institute Working Paper 425 ODI.

Graham, T.C. (2013). “I’m Not Your Mama; Do Your Work”: The Black Female Academic as Surrogate Mother. In S. Nzinga-Johnson (Ed.). *Laboring Positions: Black Women, Mothering and the Academy*. (pp. 111-126). Bradford, Ontario: Demeter Press.

Gravett, S. (2005). *Adult learning, designing and implementing learning events: A dialogic approach* (2nd ed.). PretoriaSouth Africa: Van Schaik.

Greef, M. (2011). Information collection: Interviewing. In A. S. De Vos, H. Strydom, C. B. Fouche, & C. L. S. Delport (Eds.), *Research in grassroots: For social sciences and human service professions* (4th ed., pp. 341-375). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Green, A., Preston, J., & Sabates, R. (2003). Education, equality and social cohesion: a distributional approach. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 33(4), 453-470.

Greenhaus, J. H., & Bentell, N. J. (1985). Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *Academy of Management Review, 10*, 76-88.

Greenhaus, J. H., & Powell, G. N. (2006). When work and family are allies: A theory of work-family enrichment. *Academy of Management Review, 31*(1), 72-92.

Greer, J. (2016). *Resilience and Personal Effectiveness for Social Workers*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Griffiths, M. (1998). A play for oneself. In s. Mackey & S. Cooper. *Drama & Theatre Studies*. United Kingdom: Stanley Thornes Publishers.

Griffiths, M., Malcolm, H., & Williamson, Z. (2009). Faces, spaces and research. In D. L. Tidwell, M. L. Heston, & L. M. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Research methods for self-study of practice* (pp. 101-118). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.

Grix, E. G. (2002). Introducing students to the generic terminology of social research. *Political Studies Association, 22*(3), 175-186.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105-1177). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Guendouzi, J. (2006). The guilt thing: Balancing domestic and professional roles. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 65*, 901-909.

Guppy, N., Balson, D., & Vellutini, S. (1987). Women in higher education in Canadian society. In J. Gaskell & A. McLaren (Eds.), *Women and education: A Canadian perspective* (pp. 171-192). Galgary: Detselig.

Guskin, A. E. (1996). Facing the future: The change process in restructuring universities. *Change: The magazine of higher learning*, *28*(4), 27-37.

Haider, S. K.-i.-F., & Hussain, S. (2009). Study of personality difference among identical twins and fraternal twins in Pakistan. *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan, 46*(2), 101-114.

Haing, B. P. (1997). Feminist research methodology. In P. Keeves (Ed.), *Educational research, methodology and measurement: An International Handbook* (pp. 180-185). Oxford: Elsevier Science.

Haksever, A. M., & Manisali, E. (2000). Assessing supervision requirements of PhD students: The case of construction management and engineering in the UK. *European Journal of Engineering Education, 25*(1), 19-32.

Hallstein, L., & O'Reilly, A. (2012). Academic motherhood in a post-second wave context: Framing the conversation. In D. L. O'Brien Hallstein & A. O'Brien (Eds.). *Academic Motherhood in a Post–Second Wave Context: Challenges, Strategies, and Possibilities* (pp., 1-46). Bradford, ON: Demeter Press.

Hamilton, T., & Sharma, S. (1996). Power, power relations, and oppression: A perspective for balancing the power relations. *The Canadian Journal of Peace & Conflict Studies,* 28 (1), pp.*Peace Research*, 21-41.

Hammersley, M. (2013). Defining qualitative research. What is qQualitative rResearch?, *What is research methods?*London: Continuum/ Bloomsbury*1*, 1-20.

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (1995). *Ethnograph*y (2nd ed). London: Routledge.

Hancock, A.-M. (2007). When multiplication doesn't equal quick addition: Examining intersectionality as a research paradigm. *Perspectives on Politics*, *5*(1), 63-79.

Hanemann, U. (2015). Lifelong literary: some trends and issues in conceptualising and operationalising literary from a lifelong learning perspective. *International Review of Education, 61*(3), 295-326.

Hansen, T. L. (1993). *What Is Critical Theory*? An Essay for the Uninitiated Organizational Communication Scholar. *Paper presented at the Annual meeting of the Speech Communication Association, 79th Miami Beach*, FL, November 18-21.

Harding, S. (1991). *Whose science? Whose knowledge? Thinking from women's lives*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Harding, S. (Ed.) (1987). *Feminism and methodology: Social science issues*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Harris, A. (1987). The rationalisation of infancy. In J. Broughton (Ed.), *Critical theories of psychological development*. New York: Path.

Harris, M. (1975) *Culture, people, nature: An introduction to general anthropology*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.

Harris, M. Y. (2005). Black Women Writing Autobiography. *Narrative and experience in multicultural education*, 36.

Harrison, P. (2006). Poststructuralist theories. In S. Aitken & G. Valentine (Eds.). *Approaches to Human Geography*, pp. 122-135. London: Sage Publications.

Hartshorne, K. (1981). 'Private sector involvement in education, 1960-1986.'. In C. Miller, S. Raynham, & A. Schaeffer (Eds.), *Breaking the formal frame: Readings in South African education in the eighties*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Hartshorne, K. B. (1992). *Crisis and challenge: Black education 1910-1980*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Haynes, R. M., & Bentham, C. G. (1982). The effects of accessibility on general practitioner consultations: Out-patient attendances and in-patient admissions in Norfolk England. *Social Science and Medicine, 16*, 251-259.

Hayward, C. (1998). De-facing power. *Polity, 31*(1), 1-22.

Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and time*. London: SCM Press.

Henderson, M. M., & Tindall, N. T. J. (2013). Clashing clocks: Black women professors' 'perceptions of parenting on the tenure clock. In S. Nzinga-Johnson (Ed.), *Laboring Positions: Black Women, Mothering, and the Academy* (pp. 192-208). Bradford, Ontario: Demeter Press.

Henning, E. (2004). *Finding your way in qualitative research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Henry, F. (2004). Concepts of race and racism and implications for OHRC Policy. *Racial Discrimination, Racism, and Human Rights*, 4.

Henwood, K. E., Griffin, C. E., & Phoenix, A. E. (1998). *Standpoints and differences: Essays in the practice of feminist psychology*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Hermans, R., Tondeur, J., vVan Braak, J., & Valcke, M. (2008). The impact of primary school teachers' educational beliefs on the classroom use of computers. *Computers & Eeducation, 51*(4), 1499-1509.

Hesse-Biber, S., Leavy, P., & Yaiser, M. (2004). Feminist approaches to research as a process: Reconceptualising epistemology, methodology, and Mmethod. In S. Hesser-Biber & Y. ML (Eds.), *Feminist perspectives on social research* (pp. 3-26). New York: Oxford University Press.

Hesser-Biber, S. N. (2007). The practice of feminist in-depth interviewing. In S. N. Hesser-Biber & P. L. Leavy (Eds.), *Feminist research practice* (pp. 111-148). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Higgs, P., & Smith, J. (2002). *Rethinking truth*. Lansdowne: Juta & Co.

Hill-Collins, P. (1998). It's all in the family: Intersections of gender, race and nation. *Hypatia, 13*(3), 62-82.

Hill-Collins, P. (2002). Defining black feminist thought. In P. Essed & D. T. Goldberg (Eds.), *Race critical theories*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Hirschman, L. R. (2006). *Get to Work: and Get a Life, Before It's Too Late.* New York, NY: Penguin.

Hlalele, D. (2012). Social justice and rural education in South Africa. *Perspectives in Education, 30*(1), 111-118.

Hochschild, A. R. (2002). Love and Gold. In B. Ehrenreich & C. A. Hochschild (Eds.), *Global Women, Nannies and Sex Workers in the New Economy*. New York: Henry Holt.

Hodza, F. (2007). Managing the student-supervisor relationship for successful postgraduate supervision: A sociological perspective. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 21*(1), 1155-1165.

Holloway, I., & Todres, L. (2003). The status of method: flexibility, consistency and coherence. *Qualitative research, 3*(3), 345-357.

Holmes, S., & Flood, M. G. (2013). *Genders at Work: Exploring the role of workplace equality in preventing men's violence against women*. Sydney: White Ribbon Foundation.

Home, A. (1997). Learning the hard way: Role strain stress, role demands and support in multiple role women students. *Journal of Social Work Education, 33*, 335-347.

Home, A. (1998). Predicting role conflict, overload and contagion in adult women university students with families and jobs. *Adult Education Quarterly, 48*(2), 85-97.

hooks, b. (1989). *Talking back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*. London: Sheba Feminist Publishers.

Horrell, M. (1967). *A survey of race relations in South Africa*. South African Institute of Race Relations.

Hoskins, D. H. (2014). Consequences of parenting on adolescent outcomes. *Societies, 4*(3), 506-531.

Houle, C. (1988). *The inquiring mind* (2nd ed.). Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma.

Houston, G., Davids, Y. D., & Kanyane, M. (20189). Race and racism in post-apartheid South Africa. : A Book Project. HSRC Review, 16(4), pp. 38-39.

Howie, S. J., Van Staden, S., Tshele, M., Dowse, C., & Zimmerman, L. (2012). *PIRLS 2011: South African children's reading literacy achievement report*: Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA).

Howie, S., van Staden, S., Tshele, M., Dowse, C., & Zimmerman, L. (2011). *South African Children's Reading Literacy Achievement*. Pretoria: Centre for Evaluation & Assessment.

Howley, C. B., & Howley, A. (2010). Poverty and school achievement in rural communities: A social-class interpretation. In K. A. Scarfs & A. Y. Jackson (Eds.), *Rural education for twenty-first century*. University Park, Pennsylvanian: Pennsylvanian State University Press.

Hutson, S. (2007). Gender oppression and discrimination in South Africa. *ESSAI, 5*(26), 82-87.

Idang, G. (2015). African culture and values *Phronimon, 16*(2), 97-111.

Igbelina-Igbokwe, N. . (2013). "Contextualising Gender Based Violence within Patriarchy in Nigeria." Pambuka News: Voices for Freedom and Justice. Retrieved from https://www.pambazuka.org/gender-minorities/contextualising-gender-based-violence-within-patriachy-nigeria.

Imam, K., Rahim, S., & Raza, R. (2018). Philosophy of feminism inculcated among working women. *Journal of Arts & Social Sciences, 5*(2), 84-95.

Imlach, A., Ward, D., Stuart, K., Summers, M., & Valenuela, M. (2017). Age is no barrier: predictors of academic success on older learners. *NPJ Science Learning 2*(1), 1-7.

International Labour Organisation (ILO). (2016). *Rural teachers in Africa: A report for ILO/ International Labour Office: Centre for International Teacher Education.* Geneva: Centre for International Teacher Education, 1-63.

Ismail, A., Abiddin, N. Z., & Hassan, A. (2011). Improving the development of postgraduates' research and supervision. *International Education Studies, 4*(1), 78-89.

Jackson, L. W. (2009). *Educate the Women and You Change the World: Investing in the Education of Women Iis the Best Investment in a Country's Growth and Development.* Paper presented at the Forum on Public Policy. ERIC. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ870099.pdf

Jacobs, S. (2012). Terms of Endearment? The desirable female captive and her illicit acquisition. *Exodus and Deuteronomy*, 237-257. Edited by Athalya Brenner & Gale A Yee. Minnepolis: Fortress. Retrieved from, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt22nm70p.22

Jacobson, L. L. (1992). *Gender bias: Roadblock to sustainable development*. Washington, DC: World Watch Institute.

Jaggar, A. M. (2004). The standpoint of women. In S. Harding (Ed.), *The feminist standpoint theory reader: Intellectual and political controversies* (pp. 56-60). New York: Routledge.

Jaggar, A., & Rothenberg Struhl, P. S. (1984). Theories of Women's Oppression. In A. Jaggar & P. Rothenberg Struhl (Eds), *Feminist Frameworks: Alternate Theoretical Accounts of the Relations between Women and Men* (2nd ed., pp. 81-90).

Jarvis, P. (2007). *Lifelong learning and the learning society*. London: Routledge.

Jayachandran, S. (2015). The roots of gender inequality in developing countries. *Economics, 7*(1), 63-88.

Jeloudar, S. Y., Yunus, A. S. M., Roslan, S., & Nor, S. M. (2011). Teachers' emotional intelligence and its relation with classroom discipline strategies based on teachers and students' perceptions. *Journal of Psychology*, *2*(2), 95-102.

Jetten, J., Iyer, A., Tsivrkos, D., & Young, B. (2008). When is individual mobility costly? The role of economic and social; identity factors. *European Journal of Social Psychology 38*, 866-879.

Johnson, M. P., & Ferraro, K. J. (2000). Research on domestic violence in the 1990s: Making distinctions. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 62*(4), 948-963.

Johnstone, J. W. C., & Rivera, R. J. (1965). *Volunteers for learning: A study of the educational pursuits of adults*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Grutyer.

Joseph, L.T & Thomas, J. G. (1996). The early parenting of twins. *Military Medicine*, *161*(4), 233-235.

Jost, J. T., Pelham, B. W., Sheldon, O., & Ni Sullivan, B. (2003). Social inequality and the reduction of ideological dissonance on behalf of the system: Evidence of enhanced system justification among the disadvantaged. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *33*(1), 13-36.

Joubert, C. J., & Britz, J. J. (1986). *History for Std 10: HG/SG*. Johannesburg: Perskor.

Joyce, P. (2009). *Cultures of South Africa: A celebration*. Cape Town: Sunbird Publishers.

Kaarsholm, P. (2006). Culture as cure: Civil society and moral debates in KwaZulu-Natal after apartheid. *Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa, 18*(2), 82-97.

Kamwangamalu, N. M. (1999). Ubuntu in South Africa: A sociolinguistic perspective to a Pan-African concept. *Critical Arts, 13*(2), 24-41.

Kantanis, T. (2002, July). Same or different: Issues that affect mature age undergraduate students' transition to university. In *Pacific Rim Conference on First Year in Higher Education, Christchurch*.

Katongole, E. (2001). Ethics in the workplace and the power of culture: Is Ubuntu a curse or a blessing? In E. Raidt (Ed.), *Ethics in the workplace* (pp. 11-16). Johannesburg: St Augustine Publications.

Katz, D., & Khan, R. (1978). *The psychology of organisations* (2nd ed.). New York: Wiley.

Kaye, J. (2000). Thinking critically about psychology. In T. Sloan (Ed.), *Critical Psychology* (pp. 196-210). New York: St Martin's Press.

Kehily, M. J. (2009). *What is identity? A sociological perspective*. London, UK: London School of Economics.

Keohane, N. D., Rosaldo, M. Z., & Gelpi, B. C. (Eds.). (1982). *Feminist theory: A critique of ideology*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. Great Britain: The Harvester Press LTD.

Kiely, R., & Marfleet, P. (Eds.). (2002). *Globalisation and the 3rd world*. London: Routledge.

Kiliç, A., & Yilmaz, R. (201902). Descriptive analysis of the articles published in the last 10 years within the context of Lifelong Learning. *Bartin University Journal of Education, 8*(1), 322-359.

King, N. (2004). 21——Using Templates in the Thematic Analysis of Text——. In C. Cassell & G. Symon (Eds.). *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research*. (pp., 256-270). London: Sage.

Kitzinger, J. (1994). The methodology of focus groups: the importance of interaction between research participants. *Sociology of Health & Illness, 16*(1), 103-121.

Knapper, C., & Cropley, A. J. (2000). *Lifelong learning in higher education*. London: Kogan Page.

Knowles, M. S., Holton, E. F., & Swanson, R. A. (1998). *The adult learner: The definite classic in adult education and human resource development* (5th ed.). Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing Company.

Knowles, S. (1999). Feedback on writing in postgraduate supervision: Echoes in response–context, continuity and resonance. In A. Holbrook & S. Johnston (Eds.). *Supervision*

of Postgraduate Research in Education, pp. 113-128. Coldstream, Victoria: Australian Association in Education

Kodero, M.N., Misigo, B.C., Owino, E.A & Simuyu, C.K. (2011). The salient characteristics of trained in effective teachers in Secondary School in Kenya. *Sage Open*, 1-12.

Kofi, A. (n.d.). Quote.

Kopelman, R. E., Greenhaus, J. H., & Connolly, T. F. (1983). A model of work, family and inter-role conflict: A construct validation study. *Organizational Behaviour and Human Performance, 32*(2), 198-215.

Kramer, G. L., & Associates. (2003). *Student academic services: An integrated approach*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Kraus, M. W., Park, J. W., & Tan, J. J. (2017). Signs of social class: The experience of economic inequality in everyday life. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *12*(3), 422-435.

Krueger, R. A. (1994). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications.

Kuhn, T. S. (1970). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kumar, R. (2019). *Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners.* London/New Delhi: Sage Publications Limited.

Laber, M. (1999). Women's Resistance to Apartheid. *The Review: A Journal of Undergraduate Student Research, 2*(1), 28-36.

Lacey, A., & Luff, D. (2001). Trent focus for research and development in primary health care: An introduction to qualitative data analysis. *Trent Focus, 15*, 1-39.

Landman, C. (2001). Partnership in language. *Journal for the Study of Religion, 14*(2), 25-31.

Lanehart, S. L. (Ed.) (2009). *African American Women's Language: Discourse, Education, and Identity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Scholars

Lauglo, J., & Øia, T. (20086). Education and civic engagement among Norwegian youths. *Policy Futures in Education,* 6(2), pp. 203-223. : Norwegian Social Research.

Lay, K., & Daley, J. G. (2007). A critique of feminist theory. *Advances in Social Work, 8*(1), 49-61.

Le Roux, L. (2006). *Harmful traditional practices, (male circumcision and virginity testing of girls) and the legal rights of children.* Cape Town: University of the Western Cape,

Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2005). *Practical research: Planning of Design*. Upper Saddle, NJNew York: Merrill Prentice Hall Pearson.

Leedy, P., & Ormrod, J. (2001). *Practical research: Planning and design* (7th ed.). New Jersey: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Lei, S., Gorelick, D., SHORT, K., Smallwood, L., & Wright-Porter, K. (2011). Academic Cohorts: Benefits and drawbacks of being a member of a community of learners. *Education, 131*(3).

Leibbrandt, M., Woolard, I., & Woolard, C. (2009). Poverty and inequality dynamics in South Africa: Post-apartheid developments in the light of the long-run legacy. *South African Economic Policy under Democracy, 10*, 1-51.

Leibowitz, B., & Bozalek, V. (2014). Access to higher education in South Africa. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning, 16*(1), 91-109.

Lenehan, ME., Summers, MJ., Saunders, JJ., Ward, D., & Ritchie, K. (2016). Sending your grandparents to university increases cognitive reserve. *The Tasmanian Healthy Brain Project Neuropsychology, 30*, 525-531.

Lessing, A. (2011). The role of the supervisor in the supervisory process. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 25*(5), 921-936.

Lessing, A., & Schulze, S. (2002). Postgraduate supervision and academic support: students' perceptions. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 16*(2), 139-149.

Lewis, D. (2008). Using life histories in social policy research: Tthe case of third sector/public sector boundary crossing. *Journal of Social Policy, 37*(4), 559-578.

Liehr, P., & Smith, M. (2000). Using story theory to guide nursing practice. *International Journal for Human Caring, 4*, 13-18.

Light, R. J., Singer, J., & Willett, J. (1990). *By design: Conducting research on higher education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Lim, H. (2011). The life history interview: researching the dynamic identities of ethnic minority women in Britain. *Enquire, 4*, 1-21.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1989). Ethics: The failure of positivist science. *The Review of Higher Education, 12*(3), 221-240.

Lind, Y. (2011). Women's community organising in Quito: The paradoxes of survival and struggle. In N. Visvanathan, L. Duggan, N. Wiegersma, & L. Nisoff (Eds.), *The women, gender and development* (2nd ed., pp. 417-424). London: Zed Books.

Lips, H. (2014). *Gender: the basics*. New York: Routledge.

Louw, D., & Louw, A. E. (2009). *Adult development and ageing.* Bloemfontein: Psychology Publications.

Louw, D., & Louw, A. E. (2014). *Child and adolescent development* (2nd ed.). Bloemfontein: Psychology Publications.

Lowe, L. (1993). ‘'Des Chinoises’: Orientalism, psychoanalysis and femine writing. In K. Olivier (Ed.), *Ethics, politics and difference in Julia Kristeva's writing* (pp. 150-163). New York & London: Routledge.

Lubbe, C. (2007). Mothers, fathers, or parents: Same-gendered families in South Africa. *South African Journal of Psychology, 37*(2), 260-283.

Lundy, C. (2013). From structuralism to poststructuralism. In I. B. Dillet, I. Mackenzie, & R. Porter (Eds.), *The Edinburgh Companion to Poststructuralism* (pp. 69-92). Edinburgh Great Britain: Edinburgh University Press.

Lush, J., & Vredevelt P. (2011). *Women and stress: practical way to manage tension*. Spire, United States of America: Revell.

Luvuno, M. D. (2004). *The status of women and language use with particular reference to isiZulu.* (Master’s thesis). University of Zululand, South Africa.

Lykke, N. (2010). *Feminist studies: A guide to intersectional theory, methodology and writing*. London, UK: Routledge.

Mabokela, R. (2001). Hear our voices: Women and the transformation of South African Higher Education. *The Journal of Negro Education, 70*(3), 204-218.

Mabokela, R. O., & Mawila, K. F. N. (2004). The impact of race, gender, and culture in South African higher education. *Comparative Education Review, 48*(4), 396-416.

MacColl, J., & Jubb, M. (2011). *Supporting Research: Environments, Administration and Libraries*: Dublin, Ohi:o; OCLC Research.

MacKeracher, D. (1996). *Making sense of adult learning.* Toronto, Canada: Culture Concepts.

Maclean, H., Glynn, K., & Ansara, D. (2004). Multiple roles and women's mental health in Canada. *BMC Women's Health, 4*(1), 1-9.

MacmMillan. (2005). *Macmillan English Dictionary*. Malaysia: MacMmillan Publishers.

Magano, D. (2010). Narratives of challenges of female black graduate students. *Teaching in Higher Education, 16*(4), 365-376.

Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a thematic analysis: A practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars. *AISHE-J: The All-Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 9*(3).

Magwaza, T. (2009). Experiences of a Black South African womaen. In K. Naidoo & F. Patel (Eds.), *Working women: Stories of strive, struggle and survival*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mahadevappa, T. (2012). Gender bias and social justice. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 4*(2), 42-44.

Mahlaba, B. J. (2014). *Rural school transportation: poor rural learners' experiences of their trips to and from school.* Doctoral Thesis, UKZN.

Maile, S. (2008). Education and poverty reduction strategies: Issues of Policy Coherence. In S. Maile (Ed.), *Education and poverty: Development policy options in a democratic era* (pp. 157-181). Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Maltazan, T. L. (2006). *Rurality and higher education: Implications for identity and persistence.* (Doctoral Degree). The Ohio State University, Columbus, USA.

Maluleke, M. J. (2012). Culture, tradition, custom, law and gender equality. *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal 15*(1), 2/428-422/428.

Manala, M. J. (2013). The impact of Christianity on sub-Saharan Africa. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae, 39*(2), 285-302.

Mandela, N. R. (1994). Statement of the president of the ANC. Retrieved from http://www.polity.org.za/polity/govdocs/speeches/1994/sp0510.htm

Manne, K. (2018). *Down girl: The logic of misogyny*. In. New York: Oxford University Press.

Manstead, A. S. (2018). The psychology of social class: How socioeconomic status impacts thought, feelings, and behaviour. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 57*(2), 267-291.

Maree, K., & Van der Westhuizen, C. (2007). Planning a research proposal. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research.* (pp. 23-45). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Marks, S. R. (1977). Multiple roles and role strain: Some notes on human energy, time and commitment. *American Sociological Review*, 42(6), pp. 921-936.

Martin, E. (1999). The egg and the sperm: How science has constructed a romance based on stereotypical male-female roles. In S. Hesser-Biber, C. Gilmartin, & R., Lydenberg. (Eds.), *Feminist Approaches to Theory and Methodology: An Interdisciplinary Reader* (pp. 15-28). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Mason, K. O., & Bumpass, L. L. (1975). US women's sex-role ideology, 1970. *American Journal of Sociology, 80*(5), 1212-1219.

Matsumoto, D. R. (1996). *Culture and Psychology.* Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Matta, A. (2013). Revolving doors: Mother-woman rhythms in academic spaces. In M. Castaneda & K. Isgro (Eds.), *Mothers in Academia* (pp. 137-147). New York: Columbia University Press.

Mattessich, P., & Hill, R. (1987). Life cycle and family development. In M. B. Sussman & S. K. Steinmetz (Eds.), *Handbook of Marriage and the Family* (pp. 437-469). New York: Plenum Press.

Mauthner, N. S., & Doucet, A. (2003). Reflexive accounts and accounts of reflexivity in qualitative data analysis. *Sociology, 37*(3), 413-431.

Maxwell, J. (2000). Understanding and validity in qualitative research. In A. Huberman & M. Miles (Eds.), *The qualitative researcher's companion* (pp. 37-64). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Washington, DC: Sage publications.

May, C., & Fleming, C. (1997). The professional imagination: narrative and the symbolic boundaries between medicine and nursing. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 25*(5), 1094-1100.

McBride, A. B. (1988). Mental health effects of women's multiple roles. *Image: Journal of Nursing Scholarship, 20*(1), 41-47.

McCaffery, P. (2010). *The higher education manager's handbook: effective leadership and management in universities and colleges*. New York: Routledge.

McCall, L. (2005). The complexity of intersectionality. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 3*, 1771-1800.

McCallum, C. (2005). *Beyond equality and difference: Empowerment of black professional women in post-apartheid South Africa.* Pretoria: University of South Africa,

McCarthy, L. (2013). 'Iit's coming from the heart': Exploring a student's experiences of 'home' using participatory visual methodologies. *Graduate Journal of Social Science, 10*(2), 76-105.

McClintock-Comeaux, M. (2012). Great expectations for moms in academia: Work/life integration and addressing cognitive dissonance. In D. L. O. Hallstein & A. O'Reilly (Eds.), *Academic Motherhood in a Post-Second Wave Context: Challenges, Strategies and Possibilities* (pp. 309-328). Toronto: Demeter Press.

McClusky, H. Y. (1963). The course of the adult life span. In W. C. Hallenbeck (Ed.), *Psychology of adults* (pp. 10-19). Washington, DC: Adult Education Association.

McCorkel, J. A., & Myers, K. (2003). What difference does difference make? Position and privilege in the field. *Qualitative Sociology, 26*(2), 199-231.

McEreath, A. (2009). That Mommy Thing. In E. Evans & C. Grant (Eds.), *Mama PhD: Women Write about Motherhood and Academic Life* (pp. 89-92). New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

McGivney, V. (2004). Understanding persistence in adult learning. *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning, 19*(1), 33-46.

McLeish, S. (2004). Starting a family: The child's role in marital transition. *Free Associations, 11*(2), 272-316.

McMillan, H., & Schumacher, S. (2007). *Research in Education: Evidence-Based* (6thSixth ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

McQueeney, E. (1996). The nature of effective research supervision. *Journal for Further and Higher Education in Scotland, 20,* 23-30.

Mead, S. (2003). *Intentional Peer Support*. Bristol, Vermont.

Measor, L., & Sikes, P. (1992). Visiting lives: Ethics and methodology in life history. In I. Goodson (Ed.), *Studying Teachers' Lives* (pp. 209-233). London: Routledge.

Meichenbaum, D. (2007). Important facts about resilience: A consideration of research findings about resilience and implications for assessment and treatment. Miami, FL: Melissa Institute: Miami, FL, USA.

Melkote, S. R., & Steeves, H. L. (2001). *Communication for development in the Third World: Theory and practice for empowerment*. London: Sage.

Mengisteab, K. (1996). *Globalisation and auto-centricity in Africa's development in the 21st century*. Asmara, Eritrea: Africa World Press.

Merriam, S. B., Caffarella, R. S., & Baumgartner, L. M. (2007). *Learning in adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

Meyiwa, T. (2014). Fragile families' experiences of caring for HIV-positive children: Selected cases from the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. In V. Reddy, S. Meyer, T. Shefer, & T. Meyiwa (Eds.), *Care in context: Transnational gender perspectives* (pp. 342-358). Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Mezirow, J. (2000). Learning to think like an adult. In J. Mezirow & Associates (Eds.), *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress* (pp. 3-33). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Mhlongo, S. P. (2009). *Reasons for undergoing virginity testing: A study of young people in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.* (Master's thesis). University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.,

Michailidis, M. P. (2008). Gender-related work stressors in tertiary education. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment, 17*(1-2), 195-211.

Miles, M. (1993). Towards a methodology for feminist research. In M. Hammersley (Ed.), *Social Research Philosophy, Politics and Practice* (pp. 64-82). London: Sage.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1984). *Qualitative data analysis.* . Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Miles, M., Huberman, A., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Millet, K. (1977). *Sexual Politics*. London: Virago.

Milne, P. (1989). Realism, deconstruction and the feminist standpoint. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior, 28*(4), 349-372.

Minde, K. K., Perrotta, M., & Corter, C. (1982). The effect of neonatal complications in same-sexed premature twins on their mothers' preference. *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry, 21*(5), 446-452.

Ministry of Education. (2001). *National Plan for Higher Education* South Africa:. Pretoria: Government Press.

Mishra, S. (Ed.) (2015). *Research Evaluation Metrics*. ParisFrance: UNESCO.

Mitchell, J. (1974). *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*. London: Allen Lane.

Mohanty, C. T. (1984). Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. *Boundary 2*, 333-358.

Mohney, C., & Anderson, W. (1988). The effect of life events and relationships on adult women's decisions to enrolll in college. *Journal of Counselling & Development, 66*(6), 271-274.

Mojab, S., & Carpenter, S. (2019). Marxism, feminism, and "intersectionality". *Journal of Labour and Society, 22*(2), 275-282.

Molteno, F. (1984). The historical foundations of the schooling of black South Africans. In P. Kallaway (Ed.), *Apartheid and education: The education of black South Africans* (pp. 45-107). Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Mooi, K. (2012). *The impact of our actions*. Wandsbeck, South Africa: Reach Publishers.

Mophosho, B. (2013). *Identity constructions of black South African female students.* (Master's thesis). Wits University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg,

Morgan, B. (2007). Poststructuralism and applied linguistics. In J. Cummins & C. Davison (Eds.). *International Handbook of English Language Teaching* (pp. 949-968). Norwell, MA: Springer.

Morgan, D. (1988). *The focus group guidebook*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Morgan, J. (2017). *When chickenheads come home to roost: A hip-hop feminist breaks it down*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Morojele, P. (2012). The journey to school: Space, geography and experiences of rural children. *Perspectives in Education, 30*(1), 90-100.

Morrell, R. (2001). Corporal punishment in South African schools: A neglected explanation for its existence. *South African Journal of Education, 21*(4), 292-299.

Morrell, R., & Jewkes, R. (2014). I am a male, although I am a little bit soft': Men, gender and care work in South Africa. V. Reddy, S. Meyer, T. Shefer & T. Meyiwa (Eds.). *Care in context: Transnational Gender Perspectives*, pp. 326-341. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Morris, E., & Burkett, K. (2011). Mixed methodologies: A new research paradigm or enhanced quantitative paradigm. *Online Journal of Cultural Competence in Nursing & Healthcare, 1*(1), 27-36.

Morris, M. (2012). *Apartheid: An illustrated history*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers.

Morrison, G. M., Brown, M., D'Incau, B., O'Farrell, S. L., & Furlong, M. J. (2006). Understanding resilience in educational trajectories: Implications for protective possibilities. *Psychology in the Schools, 43*(1), 19-31.

Morrison, K. (1990). *Planning and Accomplishing School-Centred Evaluation*. Norfolk, UK: Peter Francis.

Morse, J. M. (1994). Designing funded qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 220-235). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mouton, J. (2015). *How to succeed in your Master's and Doctoral Studies* (4th impression). Pretoria: Van Schaik

Msibi, T., & Mchunu, S. (2013). The knot of curriculum and teacher professionalism in post-apartheid South Africa. *Education as Change, 17*(1), 19-35.

Msila, V. (2007). From apartheid education to the Revised National Curriculum Statement: pedagogy for identity formation and nation building in South Africa. *Nordic Journal of African Studies, 16*(2), 146-160.

Msimang, S. (2002). African Feminisms II: reflections on politics made personal. *Agenda, 17*(54), 3-15.

Msimang, S. (2001). Affirmative Action in the New South Africa: The politics of representation, law and equity. *Women in Action, 1,* 36. 2.

Muchmore, J. A. (2000). *Methodological and Ethical Considerations in a Life History Study of Teacher Thinking*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research association, New Orleans.

Mufti, I. (1998). Excellence in education: investing in human talent. In J. Delaros (Ed.), *Learning: The treasure within* (pp. 193-198). Paris, France: UNESCO.

Muller, C., & Volkov, O. (2009). Older women: work countries. *Social Work Health Care, 48*, 665-695.

Munday, J. (2014). The practice of feminist focus group. In S. Hesse-Biber (Ed.), *Feminist research practice: A primer* (2nd ed., pp. 233-263). London: Sage.

Munro, P. (1998). *Subject to fiction: Women teachers' life history narratives and the cultural politics of resistance*. Buckingham, Uk: Open University Press.

Murray, N., & Beglar, D. (2009). *Inside track: Writing dissertations and theses*. London, England: Pearson Education.

Musson, G. (1998). *'Life histories' methods and analysis in organisational research: A practical guide*. London: Sage.

Mwambene, L., & Sloth-Nielsen, J. (2011). Benign accommodation? *Ukuthwala*, 'forced marriage' and the South African Children's Act. *African Human Rights Law Journal, 11*(1), 1-22.

Nafukho, F., Amutabi, M. N., & Otunga, R. N. (2005). *Foundations of Adult Education in Africa: African Perspectives in Adult Learning*. Cape Town: Pearson

Naidoo, A., & McKay, T. (2018). Student funding and student success: A case study of a South African university. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 32*(5), 158-172.

Naidoo, K., & Patel, F. (2009). *Working women: stories of strife, struggle and survival*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Naisbitt, J., & Aburdene, P. (1990). *Megatrends 2000: Ten New Directions for the 1990's. New York: William Morrow and Company*. New York: William Morrow & Company.

Nanzhao, Z. (1998). Interaction of education and culture for economic and human development: An Asian perspective. In J. Delores (Ed.), *Learning: the treasure within, Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century*. (Vol. Publishing, pp. 157-181). Paris: UNESCO.

National Planning Commission. (2012). *National Development Plan 2030*. Pretoria: South African Presidency.

National Planning Commission. (2012). *National Development Plan 2030*. Pretoria: South African Presidency.

Ndandani, M. (2005). *Rural village: Rural school and access to quality education and tertiary institutions. A positional paper on learners from a typical rural village in South Africa.* Paper presented at the Spirituality Conference, Justice and Pedagogy, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA.

Nelson Mandela Foundation (NMF). (2005). *Emerging voices: A report on Education in South African Rural Communities*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Neuman, W. L. (1997). *Social research methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.* . Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Neuman, W. L. (2000). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Newby, T. J., Stepich, D. A., Russell, J. D., & Lehman, J. D. (2006). *Educational technology for teaching and learning.* New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Nicholson, L. J. (1990). *Feminism? Postmodernism*. London: Routledge.

Nicolaides, A. (2015). Gender equity, ethics and feminism: Assumptions of an African Ubuntu Oriented Society. *Journal of Social Sciences, 42*(3), 191-210.

Nieuwenhuis, J. (2007). Qualitative research designs and data gathering techniques. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research* (pp. 47-68). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Nimer, M. (2009). The doctoral cohort model: increasing opportunities for success. *Student Journal, 43*(4), 1373-1377.

Nkomo, M. (1984). *Student culture and activism in Black South African Universities The roots of resistance*. Connecticut, West, CT: Greenwood Press.

Nkosi, E., & Nkosi, Z. (2011). *Exploring PhD students' supervision experiences at UKZN.* Paper presented at the 5th Annual Teaching & Learning Conference of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and language learning: Gender, ethnicity and educational change*. London: Longman.

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 16*(1), 1-13.

Ntiri, D. W. (2001). Access to higher education for non-traditional students and minorities in a technology-focused society. *Urban Education, 36*(1), 129-144.

O'Neil, T., & Domingo, P. (2015). *The power to decide: Women, decision-making and gender equality.* ODI Briefing. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Oakely, A. (1981). Interviewing women: aA contradiction in terms. In H. Roberts (Ed.), *Doing Feminist Research* (pp. 30-61). London: Routledge.

O'Brien, M. (1983). Feminism and education: A critical review essay. *Resources for Feminist Research, 12*(3), 3-16.

O'Connor, P. (2010). Is senior management in Irish universities male-dominated? What are the implications? *Irish Journal of Sociology, 18*(1), 1-21.

OECD. (1992). Educational skills beyond school. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/EDIF.socialbenefitsofeducation

Offen, K. (1988). Defining feminism: A comparative historical approach. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 14*(1), 119-157.

Ogundipe-Lesli, M. (2001). Moving the mountains, making the links. In K. Bhavnani (Ed.), *Feminism and race*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Okeke, P. (2000). Epistemology, Black feminist. In L. Cole (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of feminist theories.* (pp. 168-170). London: Routledge.

Okin, S. M. (1989). *Justice, gender, and the family* (Vol. 171). New York: Basic Books

Okome, M.O. 1999. Listening to Africa, Misunderstanding and Misinterpreting Africa: Reformist Western Feminist Evangelism on African Women. Paper presented the 42nd Annual Meeting of African Studies Association, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 11-14.

Olesen, V. (2011). Feminist qualitative research in the millennium's first decade: Developments, challenges, prospects. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 129-141). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Olivier, M. (2007). Postgraduate supervision: For better or for worse? *South African Journal of Higher Education, 21*(8), 1126-1141.

Olsvik, V. (2010). *Intersectionality, power relations and abuse of women with physical disabilities.* Paper presented at the Paper presented at the 13th International Conference on Violence Abuse and Trauma, San Diego, September 15-17, 2008.

Omi, M., & Winant, H. (1994). *Racial Formation in the US: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. New York, NY: Routledge.

O'Reilly, K. (2009). *Ethnography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (1992). Educational skills beyond school. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/EDIF.socialbenefitsofeducation.

Orwell, G. (1946). *Animal Farm: A Fairy Story*. New York: Harcourt Brace.

Osam, E. K., Bergman, M., & Cumberland, D. M. (2017). An integrative literature review on the barriers impacting adult learners' return to college. *Adult Learning, 28*(2), 54-60.

Oyedemi, T. (2018). (De) coloniality and South African academe. *Critical Studies in Education*, 59(1), pp. 1-17.

Palys, T. (2008). Purposive sampling. In L. Given (Ed.), *The Sage Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (pp. 697-698). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Paré, E. R., & Dillaway, H. E. (2005). 'Staying at home 'versus's working: Aa call for broader conceptualizations of parenthood and paid work. *Michigan Family Review, 10*(1), 66-87.

Parker, I. (1995). Everyday behaviour (ism) and therapeutic discourse: Deconstructing the ego as verbal nucleus in Skinner and Lacan. In J. Siegfried (Ed.), . *Therapeutic and Everyday Discourse as Behavior Change.* pp. 447-467, USA: Ablex publishing Corporation.

Parker, I. (1999b). Deconstruction psychotherapy. In I. Parker (Ed.), *Deconstructing psychotherapy* (pp. 1-8). London: Sage.

Pascall, G., & Cox, R. (1993). *Women returning to Higher Education*. Bristol, PA: Open Press.

Pascoe, P. (2009). *What comes naturally: Miscegenation law and the making of race in America.* Oxford:: Oxford University Press.

Patel, L. (2014). Gender and care in the non-profit sector in South Africa: Implications for welfare policy. In V. Reddy, S. Meyer, T. Shefer, & T. Meyiwa (Eds.), *Care in context: Transnational gender perspectives* (pp. 246-264). Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Patemen, C. (1983). Feminist critiques of the public/private dichotomy. In S. Benn, & G. F. Gaus (Eds.). *Public and Private in Social Life.* London: Croom.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). Qualitative research and evaluation methods. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications LTD.

Peet, R., & Hartwick, E. (2009). *Theories of Development: Contentions, Arguments, Alternatives.* New York: The Guildford Press.

Pells, E. G. (1954). *300 years of education in South Africa*. Cape Town: Juta.

Peterson, G. W., Lenz, J. G., & Sampson Jr, J. P. (2003). The assessment of readiness for student learning in college. In G. L. Kramer & Associates (Eds.), *Student academic services: An integrated approach* (pp. 103-125). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Pettman, J. J. (2003). International sex and service. In E. Kofman & G. Young (Eds.), *Globalization: Theory and practice* (pp. 157-173). London: Continuum.

Phatlane, R. S. (2008). *Experiences of diversity in a South African public school.* Pretoria: University of Pretoria.,

Phillips, A. (1999). Bantu Education. *The Review: A Journal of Undergraduate Student Research, 2*(1), 22-27.

Phillips, E., & Pugh, D. (2000). *How to Get a PhD: A Handbook for Students and Their Mentors?* Open University Press, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Phoenix, A., & Pattynama, P. (2006). Editorial: Intersectionality. *European Journal of Women's Studies, 13*(3), 187-192.

Pieterse, H. (2001). *Preaching in a context of poverty*. Pretoria: UNISA Press.

Pillay, V. (2007). *Academic mothers*. Pretoria: Trentham Books Limited.

Pillay, V. (2017). Introduction: Across continents. In V. Pillay, N. Mitra. van. Berg, D. Bhana, C. L. Guimaraes. de. Maltos, & P. Almeida. de. Castro (Eds.), *Academic mothers in the developing world* (pp. 1-18). Trenton: Africa World Press.

Pollitt, K. (1999). Whose culture? In S. M. Okin (Ed.), *Is multiculturalism bad for women?* (pp. 27-30). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Potter, J., & Wetherell, M. (1988). *Social Psychology and Discourse*. London: Routledge.

Power, C., & Maclean, R. (2011). *Lifelong learning for poverty alleviation and sustainable development.* Paper presented at the International Symposium on Lifelong Learning.

Price, G., & Maier, P. (2007). *Effective study skills: unlock your potential*. Harrow: Pearson Education.

Prilleltensky, I., & Gonick, L. (1996). Polities change, oppression remains: On the psychology and politics of oppression. *Political Psychology*, 17(1), pp. 127-148.

Probst, B., & Berenson, L. (2014). The double arrow: How qualitative social work researchers use reflexivity. *Qualitative Social Work, 13*(6), 813-827.

Prodan[a], A., Maxim[a], E., Manolescu[a], I., Austei[a], C. C., & Guta[a], A. L. (2015). Access to higher education: influences and possible implications. *Procedia Economics and Finance, 20*, 535-543.

Puget, J. (2003). How to cope with social disasters. *Free Associations, 10*(4), 454-471.

Punt, J. (1975). Deputy Minister of Bantu Education: House of Assembly Debates. South Africa.

Qui, W. (2014). Aristotle's Definition of Language. *International Journal of English, 2*(8), 194-202.

Rallis, S. F., & Rossman, G. B. (1998). *Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ramana, M. (2012). *Right to education: tThe parameters and the paradoxes*. (PhD Thesis). Gunturi P.G Department of Legal Studies and Research, Acharya Nargarjuna University, India.

Ramazanoglu, C. (1989). *Feminism and the Contradictions of Oppression*. London: Routledge.

Ramphela, M. (1998). "Speech" Unpublished speech delivered at the National Conference on Witchcraft Violence, Thohoyandou, Venda.

Rebughini, P. (2014). Subject, subjectivity, subjectivation. *Sociopedia. Isa*, 1-11.

Reddy, V., Meyer, S., Shefer, T., & Meyiwa, T. (2014). *Towards a critical theory of care*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Rehbein, B. (2018). "Social classes, habitus and sociocultural in South Africa". *Transience, 9*(1), 1-19.

Reilly, T. W., Entwisle, D. R., & Doering, S. G. (1987). Socialization into parenthood: A longitudinal study of the development of self-evaluations. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 49*, 295-308.

Rhedding-Jones, J. (2005). *What is research? methodological practices and new approaches.* Oslo, Norway: Univ.-Universities -Forlager.

Rich, A. (1978). *The Dream of a Common Language: Poems 1974-1977*. New York: WW Norton & Company.

Rich, A. (1995). *On lies, secrets, and silence: Selected prose 1966-1978*: WW Norton & Company.

Richards, T. J., & Richards, L. (1994). Using computers in qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (Vol. 2, pp. 445-462). London: Sage Publications.

Roberts, B. (2009). Talking in class: Subjective class identification in South Africa. *HSRC Review,* 7(4), In *South African Social Attitudes Survey* (pp. 11-13). Cape Town: HSRC.

Roberts, K., Dowell, A., & Nie, J.-B. (2019). Attempting rigour and replicability in thematic analysis of qualitative research data; a case study of codebook development. *BMC Medical Research Methodology, 19*(1), 66, 1-8

Roberts, N., & Price, D. (2019). *Gendered Perceptions of Domestic Violence: How young females are more likely than young males to know controlling domestic violence behaviours*. Sunderland: CASS Sunderland.

Roberts, P. (1983). Feminism in Africa: feminism and Africa. *Review of African Political Economy, 10*(27), 175-184.

Roberts, P., & Green, B. (2013). Researching rural places: On social justice and rural education. *Qualitative Inquiry, 19*(10), 765-774.

Robson, C. (1993). *Real world research: A resource for social scientists and practitioners-researchers*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Rogan, F., & Budgeon, S. (2018). The personal is political: Assessing feminist fundamentals in the digital age. *Social Sciences, 7*(8), 132.

Rönty, H. (1966). Urban Blacks in the Separate Development Propaganda of the South African Government in 1958–1966.

Rooney, E. (2006). Women's equality in Northern Ireland's transition: intersectionality in theory and place. *Feminist Legal Studies, 14*(3), 353-375.

Ropers-Huilman, B. (1998). *Feminist teaching in theory and practice: Situating power and knowledge in poststructural classrooms*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Rose, B., & Tunmer, R. (1975). *Documents in South African Education*. Johannesburg: Ad. Donkert.

Ross, E. (1995). New thoughts on '" the oldest vocation'": Mothers and motherhood in recent feminist scholarship. *Signs, 20*, 397-413.

Ross-Gordon, J. M. (2011). Research on adult learners: Supporting the needs of a student population that is no longer non-traditional. *Peer Review, 13*(1), 26.

Rothbard, N. P. (2001). Enriching or depleting? The dynamics of engagement in work and family roles. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 46*(4), 655-684.

Rothes, A., Lemos, M., & Gonçalves, T. (2017). Motivational Profiles of Adult Learners. *Adult Education Quarterly, 67*(1), 3-29.

Rouse, K. A. G. (2001). Resilient students' goals and motivation. *Journal of Adolescence, 24*(4), 461-472.

Rousseau, N. (1995). What is rurality? *Occasional paper (Royal College of General Practitioners)* (71), pp. 1-4.

Rowntree, D. (1992). *Exploring Open and Distance Learning*. London: Kogan Page.

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2005). *Research methods for social work.* (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/ Cole.

Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ruddick, S. (1989). *Maternal thinking: Towards a politics of peace.* Beacon Press.

Rudwick, S. I. (2008). Shifting norms of linguistic and cultural respect: Hybrid sociolinguistic Zulu identities. *Nordic Journal of African Studies, 17*(2), 152-174.

Rutter, M. (2012). Resilience as a dynamic concept. *Development and Psychopathology, 24*(2), 335-344.

Ryan, A. B. (2001). *Feminist Ways of Knowing: Towards Theorising the Person for Radical Adult Education*. Leicester: NIACE Hobbs.

Ryan, W. (1976). *Blaming the victim*. New York: Random House.

Sackeyfio, R. A. (2013). Mothering black: Aa cross-cultural perspective on mothering in the Nigerian academy. In S. Nzinga-Johnson (Ed.), *Labouring Positions: Black Women, Mothering, and the Academy* (pp. 175-191). Bradford, Ontario: Demeter Press.

Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality, 9*(3), 185-211.

Salter, P., Adams, G., & Perez, M. (2018). Racism in the structure of everyday worlds: A cultural-psychological perspective. *Association for Psychological Science, 27*(3), 150-155.

Sameshta, D., & Agarwal, S. (2017). The effect of age on role expectation, role strain, well-being and health in dual-earner couples. *International Journal of Advanced Scientific Research, 2*(1), 31-36.

Samuel, M. (2009). On becoming a teacher: Life history research and force-field model in teacher development. In R. Dhunpath & M. Samuel (Eds.), *Epistemology, methodology and representation* (pp. 3-18). Rotterdam-Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Samuel, M., & Vithal, R. (2011). Emergent frameworks of research teaching and learning in a cohort-based doctoral programme. *Perspectives in Education, 29*(3), 76-87.

Sapir, E. (2004). *Language: An introduction to the study of speech*: Courier Corporation.

Saul, J. M. (2003). *Feminism: Issues and arguments*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sawicki, J. (1991). *Disciplining Foucault: Feminism, Power, and the Body*. London: Routledge.

Schultz, V. (1998). Reconceptualising sexual harassment. *The Yale Law Journal, 107*(6), 1683-1805.

Schulze, S., & Lemmer, E. (2017). Supporting the development of postgraduate academic writing skills in South African universities. *Per Linguam: A Journal of Language Learning, 33*(1), 54-66.

Schurink, W., Fouche, C. B., & Vos, D. (2011). Qualitative data analysis and interpretation. In D. V. A. S. de Vos, H. Strydom, C. B. Fouche, & C. L. S. Delport (Eds.), *Research in grassroots: For the social sciences and human service professions* (4th ed., pp. 397-423). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Schwandt, T. (2000). Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 189-214). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Seale, C. (1999). *Quality in qualitative research*. London: Sage.

Seale, I., Wilkinson, A., & Erasmus, M. (2005). A step-up action-research model for the revitalisation of service-learning modules. *Acta Academica, 2005*(Supplement 3), 203-229.

Seekings, J. & Nattrass, N. (2005). *Class, Race and Inequality in South Africa*. London: Yale University Press.

Seekings, J. (2003). *Social stratification and inequality in South Africa at the end of apartheid*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.

Seekings, J. (2008). The continuing salience of race: Discrimination and diversity in South Africa. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies, 26*(1), 1-25.

Seidel, J. (1998). *Qualitative data analysis.* Retrieved from https://www.scribd.com/doc/86008326/Seidel-1998-Qualitative-Data-Analysis (originally published as Qualitative Data Analysis. *The Ethnograph v5. 0: A Users Guide, Appendix E. Colorado Springs. The Ethnograph v5 Manual. Retrieved January, 21*, 2011.

Seligman, M. E. (1990). *Learned optimism: How to change your mind and life*. New York: Pocket Books.

Seneviratne, P. (2018). Marxist feminism meets postcolonial feminism in organizational theorizing: issues, implications and responses. *Journal of International Women's Studies, 19*(2), 186-196.

Shamase, M. (2017). *A theoretical exposition of feminism and womanism in African context.* Ife, East Osun, Nigeria: Ife Centre for Psychological Studies., 9210-9222.

Shamir, B. (1986). Unemployment and household division of labour. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 48(1), pp. 195-206.

Shanahan, M. (2006). Being that bit older: mature students' experience of university and health care education. *Occupational Therapy International Journal, 7*, 153-162.

Sheard, M. (2009). Hardiness commitment, gender, and age differentiate university academic performance. *The British Journal of Educational Psychological Society, 79*, 189-204.

Shelly, G., Gunter, G., & Gunter, R. (2010). *Teachers discovering computers: integrating technology and digital media in the classroom, Course Technology*. Boston: Cengage Learning. USA.

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information, 22*(2), 63-75.

Shils, E. (1971). Tradition. *Comparative Studies in Society and History, 13*(2), 122-159.

Shiva, V. (2004). Neo-Liberal context women: The Custodians. In L. Ricciutelli, A. Miles, & M. McFadden (Eds.), *Feminist Politics Activism and Vision: Local and Global Challenge* (Vol. 1). University of Virginia, Canada: Zed Books.

Sibanda-Moyo, N., Konje, E., & Brobbey, M. (2017). *Violence against women in South Africa: A country in crisis*. Cape Town: Oxfam.

Sikes, P. (2006). *Auto/Biographies and life histories. An introduction to educational research methods.* Unpublished manuscript.

Sikes, P., Troyna, B., & Goodson, I. (1996). Talking lives: A conversation about life history. *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education, 1*(Spring), 35-54.

Sikhwari, T., Ravhuhali, F., Lavhelani, N., & Pataka, F. (2019). Students' perceptions of some factors influencing academic achievement at a rural South African university. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 33*(4), 291-306.

Silberstein, M. (1998). Introduction. In M. Silberstein, M. Ben-Peretz, & S. Ziv (Eds.), *Reflection in teaching - A central axis in teacher development* (pp. 5-14). Tel Aviv: Mofet.

Sinha, S. (2017). Multiple roles of working women and psychological well-being. *Industrial Psychiatry Journal, 26*(2), 171-177.

Sisulu, E. (2006). The 50th anniversary of the 1956 Women's March: a personal recollection. *Feminist Africa*. 6, pp. 73-76.

Skelton, C., & Francis, B. (2009). *Feminism and 'the schooling scandal"*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Slan-Jerusalim, R., & Chen, C. P. (2009). Work-family conflict and career development theories: aA search for helping strategies. *Journal of Counselling & Development, 87*(4), 492-499.

Slowey, M., & Schuetze, H. G. (2012). All change–no change? Lifelong learners and higher education revisited. In M. Slowey & H. G. Schuetze (Eds.), *Global perspectives on higher education and lifelong learners* (pp. 1-21). London: Routledge.

Spain, D., & Bianchi, S. (1996). *Balancing act: Motherhood, marriage, and employment among American women.* London: Routledge Sage Foundation.

Spaull, N. (2013). *South Africa's education crisis: The quality of education in South Africa 1994-2011*. Johannesburg: Centre for Development and Enterprise, 1-65.

Spivak, G. (1988). *In other words: Essays in cultural politics*. New York: Routledge.

Squires, G. (1993). Education for adults. In M. Thorpe, R. Edwards, & A. Hanson (Eds.), *Culture and processes of adult learning* (pp. 87-108). London: Routledge.

St Pierre, E. (2000). Poststructural feminism in education: An overview. *Qualitative Studies in Education, 13*(5), 477-515.

Stake, R. E. (2010). *Qualitative research: Studying how things work*. London: Guilford Press.

Stanley, L., & Wise, S. (19983). *Breaking Out Again: Feminist ontology and epistemology*. New York: Routledge

Statistics, South Africa. (2017). *South Africa Demographic and Health Survey 2016: Key Indicator Report.* Pretoria: Stats SA.

Steady, F. (2006). *Women and collective action in Africa*. London: Palgrave McMillan.

Stephens, N. M., Markus, H. R., & Phillips, L. T. (2014). Social class culture cycles: How three gateway contexts shape selves and fuel inequality. *Annual Review of Psychology, 65,* 611-634.

Strydom, C. (2002). *Evaluation of a HIV/AIDS programme for students at a tertiary institution with emphasis on peer group involvement.* (Doctoral Degree). University of Potchefstroom, South Africa.

Strydom, H. (2011). Ethical aspects of research in the social sciences and human service professions. In A. S. De Vos, H. Strydom, C. B. Fouche, & C. L. S. Delport (Eds.), *Research at Grassroots* (pp. 113-130). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Sue, D., Sue, D. W., Sue, S., & Sue, D. M. (2015). *Understanding abnormal Behaviour*. Wadsworth: Cengage Learning.

Sulla, V., & Zikhali, P. (2018). *Overcoming poverty and inequality in South Africa: An assessment of drivers, constraints, and opportunities*. (No. 124 521), pp. 1-18. The World Bank.

Sultana, A. (2011). Patriarchy and women s subordination: aA theoretical analysis. *Arts Faculty Journal, 4*, 1-18.

Suri, H., & Beckett, D. (2012). Intensifying performance and learner-centeredness in Australian higher education. In M. Slowey & H. G. Schuetze (Eds.), *Global perspectives on higher education and lifelong learners* (pp. 195-216). London: Routledge.

Surty, E. (2011). Quality education for rural schools in South Africa–challenges and solutions. *South African Rural Educator, 1*(9), 8-15.

Swartz, S., & Bhana, A. (2009). *Teenage Tata: experiences of young fathers in impoverished communities in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Taefi, N. (2009). The synthesis of age and gender: Intersectionality, international human rights law and the marginalisation of the girl-child. *The International Journal of Children's Rights, 17*(3), 345-376.

Tanner, J. L. (2006). Re-entering during emerging adulthood: a critical turning point in life span human development. In J. J. Arnett & J. L. Tanner (Eds.), *Emerging Adults in America Coming of Age in the 21st Century*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.

Taole, M., & Mncube, V. S. (2012). Multi-grade teaching and quality of education in South African rural schools: Educators' experiences. *Studies of Tribes and Tribals, 10*(2), 151-162.

Tate, C., & Tate, C. (1983). *Black women writers at work*. New York: Continuum

Taylor, D., & Vintges, K. (2004). *Feminism and the final Foucault*. Illiniois: University of Illinois Press.

Taylor, K.-Y. (2017). *How we get free: Black feminism and the Combahee River Collective*. Chicago: : Haymarket Books.

Taylor, M. C. (2000). *Partners in the transfer of learning: A qualitative study of workplace literacy programs.* Paper presented at the TITLE AERC 2000: An International Conference. Proceedings of the Annual Adult Education Research Conference (41st, Vancouver.

Terborg-Penn, R. (2013). Black academic and simple mother: Colliding statues. In S. Nzinga-Johnson (Ed.), *Labouring Position: Black Women, Mothering, and the Academy* (pp. 127-146). Toronto: Demeter Press.

Tesoriero, F. (2010). *Community Development: Community-based alternatives in an age of globalisation*. Frenchs Forets: Pearson Australia.: Pearson

Thiam, A. (1978). *La Parole Aux Negress (Trans) Black sisters speak out: Feminism and oppression in Black Africa* (2nd ed.). Paris: Editions Denoel,: Pluto Press.

Thobejane, T. D. (2013). History of Apartheid Education and the Problems of Reconstruction in South Africa. *Sociology Study, 3*(1), 1-12.

Thoits, P. A. (1986). Multiple identities: Examining gender and marital status differences in distress. *American Sociological Review*, 51(2), pp. 259-272.

Thomas, L. (2002). Poststructuralism and Therapy - What's It All About? *International Journal of Narrative Therapy & Community Work, 2002(2*), 85-89.

Thomas, W., & Znaniecki, F. (1918-1920). *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Thompson, L., Rickett, B., & Day, K. (2018). Feminist relational discourse analysis: Putting the personal in the political in feminist research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 15*(1), 93-115.

Thornton, M. (2010). 'pPost-feminism' in the legal academy? *Feminist Review, 95*(1), 92-98.

Thow, M. E., Summers, M. J., Saunders, N. L., Summers, J. J., Ritchie, K., & Vickers, J. C. (2018). Further education improves cognitive reserve and triggers improvement in selective cognitive functions in older adults: The Tasmanian Healthy Brain Project. *Alzheimer's & Dementia: Diagnosis, Assessment & Disease Monitoring, 10*, 22-30.

Thunborg, C., & Bron, A. (2012). Higher education and lifelong learning in Sweden. In M. Slowey & H. G. Schuetze (Eds.), *Global perspectives on Higher Education and Lifelong Learning in Sweden* (pp. 97-111). London: Routledge.

Thwaites, R. (2017). Making a choice or taking a stand? Choice feminism, political engagement and the contemporary feminist movement. *Feminist Theory, 18*(1), 55-68.

Timmis, S., Mgqwashu, E. M., Naidoo, K., Muhuro, P., Trahar, S., Lucas, L., de Wet, T. (2019). Encounters with coloniality Students' experiences of transitions from rural contexts into higher education in South Africa. *Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning, 7*(1), 76-101.

Tomasevski, K. (2003). *Education Denied: Costs and Remedies.* London: Zed Books.

Tong, R. (2009). *Feminist thought: A more comprehensive introduction*. University of North Carolina, Charlotte: Westview Press.

Tonkiss, F. (2004). Using focus groups. In C. Seale (Ed.), *Researching society and culture* (pp. 193-206). London: Sage.

Toure, A., Mamadou, C., & Pounthioun, D. (2003). the two faces of African feminism. *Codresia Bulletin, 1*, 2-3.

Trebilcot, J. (1984). *Mothering: Essays in feminist theory*. OTottowa: Rowman & Littlefield Pub Inc.

Triegaardt, J. D. (2006). *Reflections on poverty and inequality in South Africa: Policy considerations in an emerging democracy*. Paper presented at the annual Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions Conference, Department of Social Work, University of Venda.

Tronto, J. C. (1993). *Moral boundaries: A political argument for an ethic of care.* New York: Routledge Press.

Truscott, K. (1994). *Gender in Education.* Johannesburg: Education Policy Unit,. University of the Witwatersrand. NECC.

Tshotsho, B. P. (2006). *An investigation into English second language academic writing strategies for black students at the eastern cape technikon*. Doctoral Thesis. University of the Western Cape.

Tummons, J., & Duckworth, V. (2013). *Doing your research project in the lifelong learning sector*. New York: McGraw-Hill

Turok, B. (2011). *Readings in the ANC Tradition: Policy and Praxis*. Auckland Park: Jacana Media.

Turshen, M. (2010). *African women: A political economy*. New York, USA: Palgrave MacMillan.

Tusabe, G. (2002). Ethnicity and the challenge of social cohesion in contemporary Africa. In A. T. Dalforo, J. K. Kigonjo, J. Kissekka, G. Tusabe, E. Wamala, R. Munyonyo, A. B. Rukoko, A. B. T. Byaruhanga-akiiki, & M. Mawa (Eds.), *Ethics, Human Rights and Development in Africa* (pp. 83-100). Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.

Tutu, D. (1999). *Future without fForgiveness*. New York: Random House.

Uggla, B. K. (2008). Who is the lifelong learner? Globalization, lifelong learning and hermeneutics. *Studies in Philosophy and Education, 27*(4), 211-226.

UNESCO. (1967). *Apartheid: its effects on education, science, culture and information*. Paris France: Imprimeries Reunies de Chambery.

UNESCO. (2008). *Institute for Statistics. Global Education Digest 2008: Comparing education around the world*. Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO. (2010). *Trends in tertiary sub-Saharan education*. UIS Fact Sheet. Paris: UNESCO.

United Nations. (2015). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 26*. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf

Usher, P. (1996). Feminist approaches to research. In D. Scott & R. Usher (Eds.), *Understanding Educational Research* (pp. 120-142).. London: Routledge (Vol. Routledge, London.

Van der Berg, S. (2005). *Apartheid's enduring legacy: Inequalities in education', paper to Oxford University/.* Paper presented at the University of Stellenbosch cConference on 'South African Economic Policy under Democracy, Stellenbosch, 27-28 October.'

Van der Westhuizen, M., & Swart, I. (2015). The struggle against poverty, unemployment and social injustice in present-day South Africa: Exploring the involvement of the Dutch Reformed Church at congregational level. *Stellenbosch Theological Journal, 1*(2), 731-759.

Van Manen, M. (1997). *Researching lived experience*. London, Ontario: The Althouse Press.

Van Schoor, A., Mill, E., & Potgieter, D. (2010). *Effective study*. Pretoria: UNISA Press.

Van Witteloostuijn, A. O. (2018). *Applying intersectionality as a method: A critical analysis of how to apply feminist and intersectional methodologies in qualitative research.* (Master's thesis).Degree, Utrecht University.

Vancour, M. L., & Sherman, W. M. (2010). Academic life balance for mothers: Pipeline or pipe dream. In A. O'Reilly (Ed.), *21st century motherhood experience, identity, policy, agency.* (pp. 234-246). New York: Columbia University Press.

Vandenberg, L. (2012). *Facilitating adult learning: How to teach so people learn*. Michigan State University. Retrieved from, http://www.canr.msu.edu/od/uploads/files/PD/Facilitating-Adult-Learning.pdf.

Verveer, M. (2009). Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues speech on Afghanistan and U.S commitment to Afghan women. Retrieved from, www.state.gov/s/gwi/ris/rem/2009/125512.htm

Vincent, C., Braun, A., & Ball, S. (2010). Local links, local knowledge: Choosing care settings and schools. *British Educational Research Journal, 36*(2), 279-298.

Wachter, B. (2008). Teaching in English on the rise in European higher education. *International Higher Education Global Issues, (52*)(3), pp. 3-4..

Waghid, Y. (2005). On the possibility of cultivating justice through teaching and learning: An argument for civic reconciliation in South Africa. *Policy Futures in Education, 3*(2), 132-140.

Walby, S. (1990). *Theorizing patriarchy* (Vol. 20).: Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell. Oxford: Cambridge (USA.

Walker, K. (1990). Class, work and family in women's lives. *Qualitative Sociology, 13*(4), 143-150.

Walker, M. (1998). Academic identities: women on a South African landscape. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 19*(3), 335-354.

Wallace, M. (1990). *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*. New York: Verso.

Wallin, D. C., & Reimer, L. (2008). Educational priorities and capacity: Aa rural perspective. *Canadian Journal of Education.* 31(3)*/Revue Canadienne de 'education,* pp. 591-613.

Walters, S. (2012). Higher education in lifelong learning in a middle-income country: but by the grace of champions. In M. Slowey & H. Schulze (Eds.), *Global perspectives on higher education and lifelong learners* (pp. 215-265). London: Routledge.

Wang, Q., & Brockmeier, J. (2002). Autobiographical remembering as cultural practice: Understanding the interplay between memory, self, and culture. *Culture & Psychology*, *8*(1), 45-64.

Wanka, F. A. (2014). *The impact of educational attainment on household poverty in South Africa: a case study of Limpopo Province.* (Master's Degree thesis). University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

Ward, K., & Wolf-Wendel, L. (2012). *Academic motherhood: How faculty manage work and family*. London: Rutgers University Press.

Ward, M. (2007). Rural education. *3iNetwork (2007), India Infrastructure Report*.

Wasley, S. D. (2005). *The limits of feminism.* Doctoral Thesis, Murdoch University.,

Wayne, A. J., & Young, P. (2003). Teacher characteristics and student achievement gains: A review. *Review of Educational research, 73*(1), 89-122.

Weedon, C. (1987). *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Weiner, G. (1986). Feminist education and equal opportunities: unity or discord? *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 7*(3), 265-274.

Welldon, E. V. (1988). *Mother, Madonna, whore: The idealization and denigration of motherhood*. London: Free Association Books.

Whisnant, R. (2002). Feminist Ethics. *Philosophy Faculty Publications, 168*, 127-152.

Wicks, A., & Whiteford, G. (2006). Conceptual and practical issues in qualitative research: Reflections on a life-history study. *Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy, 13*(2), 94-100.

Wijeysinghe, C. L., Griffin, P., & Love, B. (1997). Racism curriculum design. In M. Adams, L.E. Bell & P. Griffin (Eds.). *Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook* (pp., 82-109). New York, London: Routledge.

Wilde, W.K. (2013). Diverse Academic Support for an Employee, Mother, and Nontraditional Student. In M. Castaneda & K. Isgro (Eds.), *Mother in Academia* (pp. 37-45). New York: Columbia University Press.

William, M., Tilly, L. M., & Grinnell, H. M. (1995). *Research methods in social work: An introduction*. Itasca, IL: Peacock.

William, S. A. (2007). *Graduate students/ mothers negotiating academic life. Discourses, experiences and alternatives.* (Doctoral thesis Degree). University of Florida, USA.

Williams, J. (2000). *Unbending gender: Why family and work conflict and what to do about it*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Williams, R. (1973). *The country and the city*. St. Albains UK: Paladin.

Wills, G., & Hofmeyr, H. (2019). Academic resilience in challenging contexts: Evidence from township and rural primary schools in South Africa. *International Journal of Educational Research*, *98*, 192-205.

Wlodkowski, R. J. (1999). *Enhancing adult motivation to learn: A comprehensive guide for teaching all adults* (Revised ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Wood, A. (2001). International scientific English: The language of research scientists around the world. In J,. Flowerdew & M,. Peacock (Eds.), *Research perspectives on English for academic purposes* (pp. 71-83). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Woodward, K., Dixon, D. P., & Jones III, J. P. (2009). Poststructuralism/poststructuralist geographies. *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography, 8*, 396-407.

Wright, H. R. (2013). *Remembering our lives or learning to tell the truth? The researcher role in recall. Life History and Biographic Research Network*. Paper presented at the ESREA, United Kingdom, Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom.

Wright-Meyers, L. (2002). *A broken silence: Voices of African American in the Academy*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey Print.

Wyatt-Nichol, H., Cardona, M. M., & Drake, K. S. (2012). Balancing work and the family in higher education: best practices and barriers. In D. L. Hallstein & A. O'Reilly (Eds.),

Academic motherhood in a post-second wave context: Challenge, strategies and possibilities (pp. 108-229). Toronto, Holland: Demeter Press.

Wylie, J. W. (2006). Poststructuralist theories, critical methodologies and experimentation. In S. Aitken & G. Valentine (Eds.). Approaches *to Human Geography*, pp. 298-310. London: Sage.

Yamamoto, S. (2012). Lifelong learning and higher education in Japan. In M. Slowey & Schuetze (Eds.). *Global perspectives on higher education and lifelong learners* (pp. 217-229). Abingdon: Routledge.

Yamatji, A., & Shuler, P. (1990). Focus group interview: a research technique for informed nursing practice. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 15*(11), 1281-1288.

Yates, L. (1993). Feminism and Australian state policy: some questions for the 1990s. In M. Arnot & K. Weiler (Eds.). *Feminism and Social Justice in Education: International Perspectives*, pp. 167-185. London: Falmer Press.

Young, I. (1980). "Socialist feminism and the limits of dual systems theory". *Socialist Review Oakland*. 10(2-3), pp. 169-188.

Zeeman, L., Poggenpoel, M., Myburgh, C., & Van der Linde, N. (2002). An introduction to a postmodern appraise to educational research: Discourse analysis. *Journal of Education 123*(1), 1-7.

Zemke, R., & Zemke, S. (1995). Adult Learning: What do we know for sure? *Training, 32*(6), 31-34.

Zuma, R. N. (2009). *Feminist analysis of the representation of female and male characters in selected drama plays in Ishashalazi.* Doctoral Thesis, UKZN.

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

30 October 2014

Mrs Wellie Ntombifuthi Msimango (206523936)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Msimango,

Protocol reference number: HSS/1436/014D
Project title: The experiences of rural working mothers pursuing higher degrees in a South African university

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 22 October 2014, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

[redacted]

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr Thabo Msibi
Cc Co Academic Leader Research: Professor P Morojele
Cc School Administrator: Mr Thoba Mthembu

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: singhsh@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

1910 - 2010
100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
Founding Campuses: Edgewood, Howard College, Medical School, Pietermaritzburg, Westville

APPENDIX B: UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL GATEKEEPER PERMISSION

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

14 October 2014

Mrs Welile Ntombifuthi Msimango
School of Education
College of Humanities
Edgewood Campus
UKZN
Email: 206523936@stu.ukzn.ac.za
Gcini1@gmail.com

Dear Mrs Msimango

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) towards your postgraduate studies, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"The experiences of rural working mothers pursuing higher degrees in a South African University.

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by interviewing UKZN students on all campuses.

Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

MR MG BALOYI
REGISTRAR

APPENDIX C: CONSENT LETTERS

CONSENT FORM

Dear Informant

I hereby invite you to partake in a research study on '**The experiences of rural working mothers studying in a South African university.**' I am a PhD student at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal in South Africa. One of the requirements for doctorate students is to conduct a research. For this reason, I therefore invite you to participate in this study.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of rural working mothers studying in South African universities. The focus will be on their challenges they encounter as rural working mothers and studying at the same time, the strategies they employ in order to be able to cope with their challenges will be of interest. In addition, the kind of support these women receive from their families and the universities will be sought. This study will comprise of six informants including you. You will have a clear picture about what you should expect. The researcher will be anticipated to generate data by means of one-to-one interview conversations, timeline method and the collaborative group work during the weekends, and it may take one and half hours per each session or more. All individual informant and group interview conversations will be audio-taped with your permission.

Confidentiality and anonymity

The researcher will keep all your responses confidential. Collected data will not reveal your identity. The researcher will use pseudonym in order to maintain anonymity. Recorded interviews will be burnt to Compact Disc and be labelled using only pseudonyms. This consent form which you have to sign with your name is just a proof and evidence about all the informants I interviewed; it will be kept strictly confidentially. If you wish to participate and at any time you feel that you wish to withdraw from the study before data collection is complete, you are free to do so without any penalty.

Benefits

The information that will be collected will be of substantial help to the informants, the researcher, and to other rural working mothers who are willing to partake in HEIs however encounter different challenges that might hinder them to further their studies. The universities

on other hand will benefit by getting a clear picture about the experiences and challenges of rural working mothers studying as a part-time or full-time students.

Risk

Although this study is a risk free, the researcher will do her best to prevent or minimize any risk if there be any in the course of this study, since I will be guided by the university ethics.

DECLARATION

In view of the above exposition on the study, I _____

(Full names of the participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. I understand that I was chosen through snowball sampling. I understand that I will be also asked to share my experiences with other informants by means of interviews and group conversations. I understand that interviews may take one and half hours or more. I understand that I will be expected to spend five or more contact sessions with the researcher and I will be reimbursed all the financial expenses occurred during fieldwork. I understand that I might be asked for follow-up sessions if the need arise. I understand that the researcher will take field notes throughout the fieldwork. I understand that tapes will be burnt to Compact Disk and will be used for the purpose of this research and will not be used for any purpose without prior permission from me. I understand that I must keep a copy of this form as I personally agree to participate. I understand that I may contact co-supervisors or Welile if I need some clarity. I understand that I have to validate my responses before the completion of the thesis, and before it is published**.**

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I wish to do so without prejudice or penalty. I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-taped my interview / group conversations	Yes		No	

Use of my photographs, artefacts and drawing for research purposes

Yes		No	

Informant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Contact information

For further questions and clarity, you may contact the researcher, Welile Ntombifuthi Msimango Phone (031) 464 89 68 or 083 492 8523, e-mail-206523936@ukzn.ac.za; gcini1@gmail.com

The contact details for co-supervisors are as follows:

Prof Thabo Msibi

031) 206 3686

msibi@ukzn.ac.za

APPENDIX D:

ONE-TO-ONE GROUNDED INTERVIEW CONVERSATION

Early childhood

1. Kindly tell me your story about the place where you were born.
2. Please explain, how you were brought up?
3. Tell me how was it like to grow up in your rural area?
4. Please explain how would you describe your parents?
5. Kindly describe what did your father and mother do for a living?
6. Tell me what did you like about your parents?
7. Kindly tell me about any memories of the cultural expectations as a young girl? If so, what were they?
8. How did these cultural beliefs shape your life as a woman?
9. Please explain what were the few things that made your family different as compared to others?

Rural education

1. Kindly, tell me about your rural area?
2. Tell me what were the differences between rural and urban areas?
3. Kindly explain what were the challenges of schooling in a rural area?
4. In your opinion, what was the benefit of schooling in a rural area?
5. What were the educational difficulties you had as a child?
6. Tell me what message did you receive in school about the education of girl-child?
7. Please tell me about your best memories of schooling in a rural area?
8. Did you have a role model as a young girl? If so, please explain
9. Tell me about your parents' attitude towards your early education?
10. In your early childhood education, what were your parents' expectations?
11. What memories did you still have about your teachers in rural area?

Motherhood experiences

1. Kindly tell me, what does it mean to be a mother?
2. Tell me, your experiences of having a child?
3. Did you plan to become a mother?
4. What were your experiences, challenges forming a family?
5. Were you aware of what motherhood was all about?
6. How many children do you have, and what are their ages?

7. According to your knowledge as a mother, do you manage to give your children the support they need? If so, how?
8. How did you keep your daily routine going?
9. Tell me, what was your relationship like with your family?
10. Kindly tell me what were your motherhood challenges?
11. Please explain how did you cope with your challenges?
12. What were your best memories of your motherhood?
13. As a mother, what were your specific roles in your family?
14. What challenges did you encounter as a mother?
15. In your view, do you think your family is happy having a working mother? If so, please explain
16. Tell me how do women's social roles affect you as a mother?

Experiences of studying postgraduate degree as an adult learner

1. Tell me as a mother, why did you take part in adult education learning programmes?
2. What choices did you make in preparation to register as an adult learner?
3. What arrangements did you make in preparation to study?
4. What were the reactions of your family when you told them about pursuing a higher degree?
5. How do you cope as a mother and as a student at the same time?
6. What challenges did you encounter studying in a higher education institution?
7. How did your challenges motivate you to become what you are today?
8. How did women's social roles affect you as a postgraduate student?
9. What effect did rural schooling have on your tertiary education? If so, please explain
10. As a rural mother, was it easy to build a friendship with other students in a higher education institution? If so, how?
11. Please explain what motivated you to partake in adult learning programmes/
12. Tell me, to what extent did you feel that your study affects the time you have with your family?
13. What is your view of the role played by a higher education institution?
14. In your opinion, how can you describe an adult learner?
15. In your view, what do you gain by participating in adult learning programmes?
16. What are you missing out by partaking in higher education?
17. Tell me, why other rural women are not participating in higher education?

18. Kindly explain what were your educational objectives?

Work

1. Please tell me what motivated you to study while you are working?
2. Tell me, what are your work demands like?
3. Please elaborate how do you cope with your work demands?
4. Tell me how do you balance work and studying pressures?
5. What would you consider to be a major challenge in your work?
6. Please explain how did you deal with your work challenges as a mother?
7. How has networking with other workers helped you?
8. How did your family benefit from you as a working mother?
9. Tell me, what are the things that you have achieved because of studying and working at the same time?

Kinds of support

1. Tell me, what kind of support did you receive in higher education institution as the provider of adult learning programmes?
2. Kindly describe the support you received from the university?
3. Please explain the kind of support you received from other fellow students?
4. Tell me was the support you received only offered by rural working mothers? Please explain
5. What kind of support did you receive from your family?
6. Please describe the role played by support structures that help you to achieve your studying goals?
7. Tell me what were the things that you would say, you were able to achieve because of the support you had been offered?
8. What are the things you did not achieve because of a lack of support?
9. What were the benefits of being supported while studying?

APPENDIX E:

GROUP GROUNDED INTERVIEW-CONVERSATIONS

Motherhood

1. Tell me in your view what are women's social roles?
2. Tell me, if you were asked to choose among your different roles such as, mothering, a student and a worker, which role would you choose and which role would leave out and why?
3. What are the things you are expected to do as mothers?
4. How do you negotiate your roles as mothers, students, and workers in your families?
5. What are your motherhood experiences?
6. How do you cope with your challenges as mothers?
7. As rural working mothers, how did you cope living two lives (studying and working) at the same time?
8. Please tell me, how do your families help you balance work and studying life?

Rural education

1. If you were asked to choose between rural and urban schools, which school would you choose and why?
2. What is the impact of language and teacher education affected you as postgraduate student?
3. What do we need to know about the impact of rural education?
4. Looking back, what choices did you make as mothers that work well for you, and helped you to be where you are today?
5. What choices did you make as mothers but did not work well for you?
6. What are the positive consequences of pursuing higher degrees?
7. What are the negative consequences of not pursuing higher degrees?
8. What are the benefits of studying as rural working mother?
9. According to your knowledge, why other rural women are not studying?
10. What held you not participating in higher education institution while you were younger?

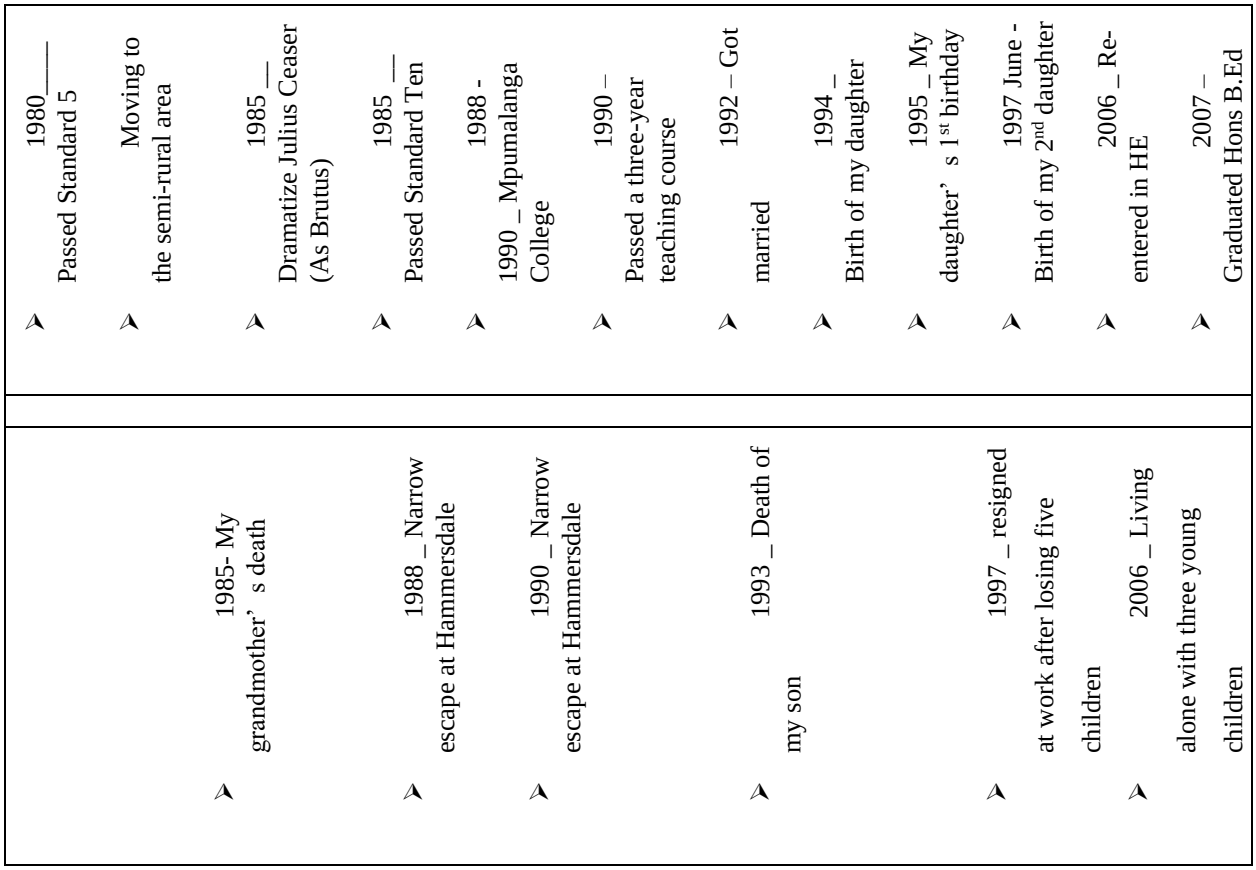
APPENDIX F: GROUP GROUNDED INTERVIEW CONVERSATIONS (ARTEFACTS)

- Kindly tell me which artefact did you bring?
- Why did you choose this artefact?
- What are the special memories your artefact holds?
- What else can we learn from your artefact?
- How can you describe the impact of artefact you brought in your rural community?

As postgraduate students how do each artefact influence your life experiences or how does each artefact shape you as a rural working mother?

APPENDIX G:

TIMELINE METHOD



Author's timeline example

Looking back at your life, can you remember any memorable, unforgettable, remarkable or dreadful experience? Please write down the event that you can remember. First, in a paper in front of you draw a straight vertical timeline. On the right part, you can write your impressive key events specifically as a mother, a worker, a student, and a woman. On the left side please write your memorable events which were or are challenging, specifically as a mother, a worker, a student, and a woman.

APPENDIX H:

EDITOR'S CERTIFICATE

Leverne Gething, M.Phil., t/a WHIZZ@WORDS
PO Box 1155, Milnerton 7435; cell 072 212 5417
e-mail: leverne@eject.co.za

27 June 2020

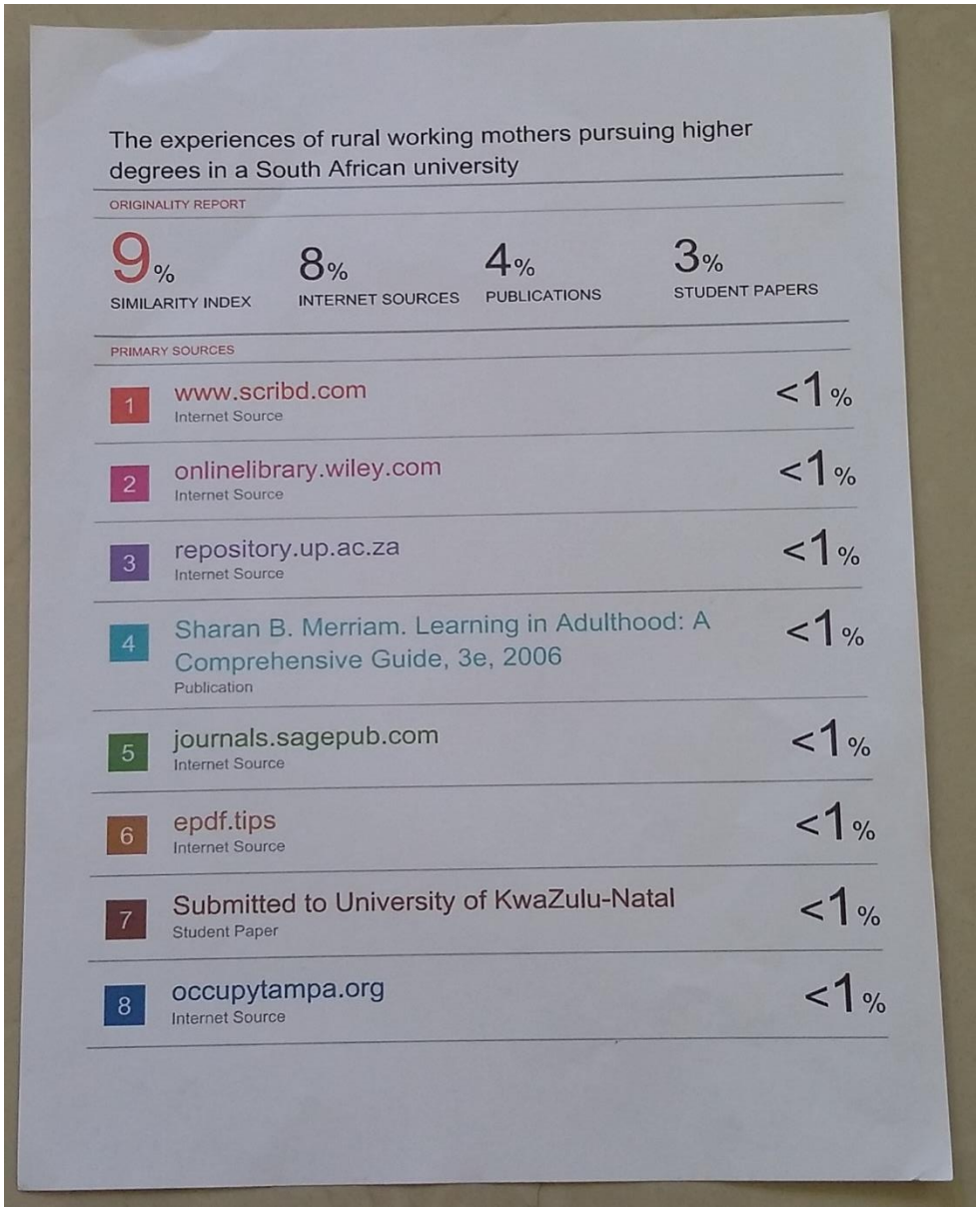
Declaration of Editing of PhD dissertation: THE EXPERIENCES OF RURAL WORKING MOTHERS PURSUING HIGHER DEGREES AT A SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY

I hereby declare that I carried out language editing of the above dissertation on behalf of Welile Ntombifuthi Msimango.

I am a professional writer and editor with many years of experience (e.g. 5 years on *SA Medical Journal*, 10 years heading the corporate communication division at the SA Medical Research Council), who specialises in Science and Technology editing - but am adept at editing in many different subject areas. I have previously edited much work for various faculties at UKZN, including the School of Education. I am a full member of the South African Freelancers' Association as well as of the Professional Editors' Association.

Yours sincerely

LEVERNE GETHING leverne@eject.co.za



The experiences of rural working mothers pursuing higher degrees in a South African university

ORIGINALITY REPORT

9%	8%	4%	3%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	www.scribd.com Internet Source	<1%
2	onlinelibrary.wiley.com Internet Source	<1%
3	repository.up.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
4	Sharan B. Merriam. Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide, 3e, 2006 Publication	<1%
5	journals.sagepub.com Internet Source	<1%
6	epdf.tips Internet Source	<1%
7	Submitted to University of KwaZulu-Natal Student Paper	<1%
8	occupytampa.org Internet Source	<1%