Experiences of research assistants in the administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments in the Kgolo Mmogo project

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Experiences of research assistants in the administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments in the Kgolo Mmogo project

by

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Declarations

I, Andria Grobler (student number 95037293) hereby declare that all the resources that were consulted are included in the reference list and that this study entitled: *Experiences of research assistants in the administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments in the Kgolo Mmogo project*, is my original work.

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A. Grobler

August 2009

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Summary

Experiences of research assistants in the administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments in the Kgolo Mmogo project

by

Andria Grobler

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The adaptation of existing psychometric data-collection instruments is often utilised in cross-cultural research as an alternative to the development of a new data-collection instrument for a particular population, as the latter may not always be a viable option. However, given the relative novelty of this practice, several authors call for further research in this field. The research assistants' subjective experience in the administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments in a South African context was identified as a silence in the body of literature under review.

The purpose of the study was to explore and describe the experience of research assistants during the administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments in order to broadly inform the practice of psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation and cross-cultural assessment. This study adhered to the metatheoretical paradigm of *Constructivism,* while the methodological paradigm of qualitative research was adopted. Furthermore, a qualitative content analysis research design was employed, with document analysis of two focus-group discussions as a data-collection strategy. The data was analysed by means of a theme analysis of the data.

The study found that the research assistants of the Kgolo Mmogo project experienced difficulty with regard to the language and comprehension of certain

items of the culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments. Their experiences also indicated the presence of culturally inappropriate questions, the presence of contradicting responses during the administration of the instruments, as well as the phenomenon of participants providing what they perceived to be the 'correct' response.

Furthermore, the findings from this study suggested that the research assistants experienced the culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instrument to have an informative and educational value. It seemed that mothers felt informed about their children's development, while it also served as a tool for HIV/AIDS education. Finally, the findings of this study suggested that the research assistants sometimes experienced that the assessment placed an emotional strain on them. Their experience of emotional strain was related to difficulty with regard to role definition, as well as dealing with the often unrealistic expectations of the participants. The research assistants furthermore seemed to experience difficulty in relating to the interview-participant relationship. However, it seemed as if the research assistants' experience of the participants' spirituality provided some relief from the emotional strain they experienced during the assessments.

Key words:

Cultural tailoring of psychometric data-collection instruments
Cross-cultural assessment
Psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation
Subjective experience
Administration of psychometric data-collection instruments
Kgolo Mmogo project

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Experiences of research assistants in the administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments in the Kgolo Mmogo project

A personal prelude

My initial introduction to the concept of 'multiple realities' as advocated by the ontological assumption of the post-modern paradigm brought about a personally tense journey of re-assessing the way in which I view reality. As such, I was drawn to the idea of valuing an individual's personal experience as being 'true' and 'valid' with the aid of my newly adopted ontological stance. However, as a consequence of this paradigm shift I experienced increasing unease with the idea of objective psychometric data-collection instruments, to the extent that I started to question the value and need of such assessment.

In 2005 I became involved in the field of neuropsychology, performing assessments as a psychometrist for medico-legal purposes. The overlap between the respective fields of psychology and law, and more specifically the medico-legal sphere, brought the need for valid and reliable assessment to the fore and again I was forced to re-evaluate my position with regard to assessments. I encountered yet another dimension of assessment, as this new career avenue exposed me to the practical difficulties brought about by a lack of cultural specific psychometric data-collection instruments in the field of neuropsychology in South Africa.

In practice, the lack of sufficient neuropsychological tests results in the subsequent adaptation of existing psychometric data-collection instruments in an attempt to overcome this particular shortcoming. My experience as a test administrator working with adapted psychometric data-collection instruments made me aware of the fact that, even though psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation may not be ideal in certain instances, it can still be a valuable tool in our attempt to make sense of the world.

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Chapter 1

Introduction, Orientation, Rationale of the Study, Conceptualisation, Research Design and Methodology

1.1   BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This study forms part of a larger research project, namely the Kgolo Mmogo[1] project, which is a five-year randomised controlled trial study funded by the National Institute of Health (NIH) in the USA. The study focuses on psychological resilience in South African mothers and children who are affected by HIV and AIDS, and it rests on two parallel tracks of data collection. Firstly, longitudinal data on resilience factors in mothers and children is collected by means of a combination of psychometric data-collection instruments (Eloff, 2008:112). However, parallel to this is a theory-based support intervention conducted with the mother-and-child participants to assess the efficacy of a group-based intervention while mothers are dealing with the effects of HIV and AIDS on themselves and their families (Eloff, 2008:112).

This study aligns with the first track of data collection, during which data was collected from participating mothers and children by research assistants using culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments. One of the aspects of the process of cultural tailoring involved the translation of existing psychometric data-collection instruments into four African languages. The research assistants, in turn, participated in this M Ed study to share their experience on the administration of the psychometric data-collection instruments. The Kgolo Mmgolo project is based at the Kalafong Hospital in Atteridgeville, as well as in Mamelodi in the City of Tshwane. Two on-site focus group discussions were conducted at the premises in Atteridgeville.

1.2   INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

The lack of appropriate psychometric data-collection instruments to assess a particular construct in a specific population often results in existing psychometric data-collection instruments being adapted across different cultural and linguistic contexts. This practice is often favoured over the development of a new psychometric data-collection instrument, as such an endeavour might be hampered by time and financial constraints (Brandt, 2005:205). According to Hambleton (in Meiring, Van de Vijver & Rothmann, 2006:341),

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[1]   The term means 'growing together'.

cross-cultural research using proven psychometric data-collection instruments is on the increase. With this growth the need has arisen to adapt psychometric data-collection instruments to be used in different cultures[2] and languages.

According to Gierl (2007:74), test adaptation refers to the "methods, procedures and processes required to accommodate a psychometric data collection instrument that, initially, measures a specific construct in one language and/or culture, so that it will also measure the construct in a different language and/or culture". However, relatively little research has been devoted to this topic (Gierl, 2007:75).

For the purpose of this study, the process of psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation in the context of cross-cultural assessment is rooted in the indigenisation discourse. Adair (1999:406) explains indigenisation as the process modifying an imported discipline to fit a particular culture so well that it is made to appear as if it were indigenous. This description resonates with what has been described by Gierl (2007:74) as 'test adaptation'.

In the literature under review with regard to cross-cultural assessment and psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation, attention was, among other things, given to the process of adaptation and the challenges surrounding this process (Meiring, *et al.*, 2006; Carter, Lees, Murira, Gona, Neville & Newton, 2005; Casillas & Robbins, 2004; Butcher, 2004; Collinge, Rüdell & Bhui, 2002); Moletsane & Eloff, 2006; Brandt, 2005; Widenfelt, Treffers, Beurs, Siebelink & Koudijs, 2005, Skevington, 2002). However, a silence in this body of work is that of the instrument administrator(s)'s subjective experience of administrating tests that have been transformed through a process of cultural tailoring within a South African context. This study aims to give a voice to research assistants and their experiences in the administration of a battery of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments in an attempt to generate supplementary information with regard to the general practice of cross-cultural assessment.

Given the relatively novel nature of the practice of psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation in terms of cross-cultural assessment, as well as the limited research focussing on this topic, this study could contribute to a deeper understanding of the process of instrument adaptation in the field of psychology by focussing on the research assistants' experience within the specific South African context.

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[2]   For the purpose of this study, the definition of culture from a social constructivist perspective as noted by Stead (2004 in Stead & Watson, 2006:182) will be followed where culture is described to be "*a social system of shared symbols, meanings, perspectives, and social actions that are mutually negotiated by people in their relationship to others*".

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.3.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Several authors have commented on the lack of and need for research with regard to the field of cross-cultural assessment as well as psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation (Gierl, 2007; Meiring, *et al.*, 2006; Widenfelt, *et al.*, 2005), although Casillas and Robbins (2005:5), writing from a business perspective, noted that cross-cultural assessments have gained more prominence in psychological literature over the past few decades.

1.3.1.1 Cross-cultural assessment

A prominent question within the body of literature (Gierl, 2007; Carter, *et al.*, 2005; Casillas & Robbins, 2005; Brandt, 2005; Widenfelt, *et al.*, 2005; Skevington, 2002) regarding cross-cultural assessment concerns the justification of research in this field. Widenfelt, *et al.* (2005:135) hold the opinion that, with the increased globalisation of psychology and related fields, having reliable and valid measures that can be used in a number of languages and cultures has become critical.

On home soil, the issue of cross-cultural assessment is being shaded by the particular political-historic context of separate development that existed in a pre-democratic South Africa. In this regard Moletsane and Eloff (2006:882) noted that the Professional Board of Psychology had indicated that the post-apartheid state inherited a system of separate psychometric data-collection instruments designed for racially defined groups which resulted in minimal tests being standardised for all South Africans. With the promulgation of the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998, psychological testing and similar assessments are prohibited, unless the instrument being used has been scientifically proven to be valid and reliable, it can be applied fairly to all employees, and it is not biased against any employee or group. The onus therefore lies with the user of the psychometric data-collection instrument to indicate that the instrument being used adheres to the regulations of the Employment Equity Act and can be applied to a multicultural setting (Meiring, *et al.*, 2006:340-341).

1.3.1.2 Psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation and translation

Bhui, Craig, Mohamud, Warfa, Stansfeld, Thornicroft, Curtis & McCrone, (2006:401) noted that cultural adaptation of needs assessments and diagnostic measures is a complex

process and pointed out that very few studies publish the procedures and provide little guidance for further work, whilst preventing appraisal of the validity of the measures. However, in the absence of a suitable psychometric data-collection instrument, Brandt (2005:205) points out two possibilities in response to the situation, namely the development of a new psychometric data-collection instrument, or, alternatively, the adaptation of a psychometric data-collection instrument that was developed in another country. The latter is usually less demanding, with the additional advantage that it allows results from different countries to be compared.

1.3.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

1.3.2.1 Primary research question

In response to the experience research assistants could have during the administration of a culturally adapted battery of psychometric instruments, the following primary research question was explored in this study:

How do research assistants experience the administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments?

1.3.2.2 Sub-questions

In an attempt to examine the implication of the abovementioned, the following sub-questions were explored:
- What challenges did the research assistants encounter in administering the psychometric data-collection instruments?
- What strategies did the research assistants apply in order to manage the challenges that may have arisen in the administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments?
- How did the research assistants perceive the participants' reaction to the battery of psychometric data-collection instruments?

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to explore and describe the experience of research assistants during the administration of culturally adapted psychometric data-collection instruments in order to inform the specific practice of psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation and cross-cultural assessment broadly.

1.5   CONCEPTUALISATION

1.5.1   CULTURAL TAILORING

Sensitivity for the complexity and multi-layered nature of the translation of a psychometric data-collection instrument from one language to another has been advocated by Van de Vijver (in Meiring, *et al.*, 2006:342). This author notes that in the past the translation of a psychometric data-collection instrument was primarily seen as a linguistic issue. However, a growing awareness has been noted to consider translation of instruments in a wider context, which would require expertise in the language and culture of the specific target group, as well as in item-writing.

The literature under review for this study refers to the process of "test adaptation". Meiring, *et al.* (2006:342) refers to adapted psychometric data-collection instruments as "those in which some component has deliberately been altered independent of unavoidable translation change." However, in aiming for a culturally sensitive process and the multiple aspects that come into play, an open-ended approach to psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation is being advocated.

In reaction to the complexity, in this study the term cultural tailoring is proposed as an alternative to test adaptations. The primary reason for this choice is the emotional value of the idea of tailoring, as this in essence encompasses the idea of uniqueness. A tailored psychometric data-collection instrument is sensitive to all inimitable aspects of the process of psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation, namely considering contextually unique aspects of psychometric data-collection instrument development, translation and implementation. In the larger Kgolo Mmogo study the selection of previously developed psychometric data-collection instruments was culturally tailored in order to be employed in the unique South African context.

1.5.2   EXPERIENCE

This study was conducted from a constructivist paradigm. According to Nichols and Schwartz (1998:91), the constructivist perspective is based on the assumption that in the process of perceiving and describing an experience, whether to ourselves or to others, we construct not only our personal knowledge base about reality, but reality itself. This has the implication that it is not possible to have a 'true' representation of reality, as an individual can know only his or her constructions of the world. The individual's subjective experiential world therefore considers the individual's construction of reality (Nichols & Schwartz,

1998:91-92). Human beings invent concepts, models and schemes to make sense of experiences and continually test and modify these constructions in the light of new experiences (Schwandt, 2000:197). Nichols and Schwartz (1998:92) also draw attention to the fact that, in the realm of social constructionism, the 'reality' experienced by an individual is inseparable from the pre-packaged thoughts of society.

These opinions imply that the subjective experiences expressed by the participants in this study are considered their constructions of reality. These subjective experiences are expected to include cognitive, affective and normative aspects and are influenced. However, in the descriptions of these experiences as offered in this study the co-constructed reality was presented, as the qualitative inquirer can no longer directly capture the lived experience, because such experiences are created in the social text written by the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:17).

1.5.3   PSYCHOMETRIC DATA-COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

In Reber (1995:617) the term 'psychometric' pertains to the measurement of that which is psychological, thus relating to mental testing in any of its facets, which would include assessing personality, evaluating intelligence or determining attitudes. In similar vein, Kaplan and Saccuzzo (2001:8) describe a psychological test to be a set of items designed to measure the characteristics of human beings that pertain to behaviour. Focussing on the field of educational psychology, Shonkoff and Meisels (in Lubbe, 2004:319) regard the process of assessment as the acquisition of information and understanding that will facilitate the child's development and functioning abilities with the family and community. Lubbe (2004:318) draws attention to the fact that the past decade saw significant and frequent changes and shifts in the manner in which assessment has been approached as theoretical advances and practical experience have influenced each other.

In the light of this opinion, it can be concluded that different theoretical approaches would influence the views and definitions of psychometric data-collection instruments. The concept of measurement and psychological tests as quoted in the above definitions (Reber, 1995; Kaplan & Saccuzzo, 2001) leads to the modernist view of objective constructs that can be 'measured' with relative accuracy by a measuring instrument. As this study was influenced by a post-modern perspective, the psychometric instruments were not regarded as objective measures of constructs of reality, but rather as tools for a collection of a variety of data over a range of human features in order to facilitate the collection of information and understanding as proposed by Shonkoff and Meisels' opinion

(in Lubbe, 2004:319). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, preference was given to the term psychological data-collection instruments over 'measurement' or 'psychological test'. During the Kgolo Mmogo project, data was collected from both mothers and children by research assistants administering a combined psychological assessment scale. This assessment scale consisted of the adapted psychometric data-collection instruments tabled below (Eloff, 2008:112):

Table 1.1   Description of data-collection instruments used in the Kgolo Mmogo Project

With the mothers	With the children
Centre of Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D)	Bar-On Emotional Quotient-Inventory: Youth Version (Bar-On EQ:YV)
Brief COPE (28 items self–report assessment of Adaptive and maladaptive coping skills)	Revised Multidimensional Anxiety Scale (RCMAS)
Brief Religious Coping Scale (Brief RCOPE)	Children's Depression Inventory (CDI)
Vineland Behavioural Scale	Kidcope (A brief self-report of coping strategies)
Coping with Children's Negative Emotional Scale (CCNES)	Child Spiritual Coping Survey (CSCS)
Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL)	Self-Description Questionnaire (SDQ)
Parenting Stress Index (PSI)	

1.5.4   RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

When research assistants collect data in the home languages of a study's participants, it is fair to assume that the trustworthiness of the data collected increases. This is one of the reasons for research assistants to be deployed: to assist investigators in overcoming potential language barriers. Writing from a medical perspective, Gift, Creasia and Parker (1991) state that the appropriate use and supervision of research assistants is essential to the success of a research study and the avoidance of academic misconduct.

Carter, *et al.* (2005:393) accentuate the importance of having someone familiar with the language of the area involved in every stage of assessment, construction and administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments. In drawing on their experience in conducting research in Kenya, Carter, *et al.* (2005:396) recommend the employment of local fieldworkers and assessment specialists in conducting cross-cultural research. Hence, the introduction of research assistants when conducting cross-cultural research could assist the investigator bound by linguistic and cultural obstacles (Cartel, *et*

al., 2005), while it could contribute to meaningful communication between the research participants and the investigator in heterogenic cultural groups (Collignem, Rüdell & Bhui, 2002).

Nine research assistants took part in the greater Kgolo Mmogo study. These individuals were responsible for collecting data from the mother-and-child participants by means of interviews, during which the culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments were employed. The research assistants were also responsible, and therefore trained, to provide the participants with emotional support during the interview. Although the research assistants were sporadically involved in the capturing of data, this was not considered a primary responsibility. With regard to the selection criteria for the research assistants, the individuals were required to be proficient in English as well as isiZulu, Sepedi, Setswana and Sesotho. A tertiary qualification was a further requirement, while individuals with health-profession backgrounds were favoured.

1.5.5   KGOLO MMOGO PROJECT

As was stated earlier, this study formed part of the larger five-year Kgolo Mmogo project, which focuses on resilience in South African mothers and children who are affected by HIV and AIDS. In the project, four hundred and thirty-six HIV-infected women and children were enrolled in a randomised controlled trial (Eloff, 2008:113). According to Eloff (2008:112-113), the study has multiple aims:

- The study seeks to demonstrate the extent of the psychological effects of parental HIV disease on young children living in urban communities affected by poverty in South Africa by comparing them with other children whose parents are not HIV-infected, but live in the same communities.
- Furthermore, the study seeks to assess the effectiveness of the theory-based support intervention for HIV-infected mothers and their children that is designed to improve maternal functioning and help mothers promote resilience in children at two different stages of development: very young children (aged three years) and school-age children (aged six to ten years).
- Finally, the Kgolo Mmogo study seeks to identify maternal psychological and medical factors (including initiation of antiretroviral (ARV) treatment), as well as child-related mediating variables, that contribute to changes in the adaptive functioning of children of HIV-infected parents over a 24-month interval.

1.5.6   ADMINISTRATION OF PSYCHOMETRIC DATA-COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

For the purpose of the Kgolo Mmogo project, the collection of data commenced in January 2007. The collection of information for the baseline data was concluded in April 2009. However, as was stated earlier, the five-year longitudinal study is expected to continue for a further three years. The psychometric data-collection instruments were administered during a personal interview with the mother or child participants. These interviews were scheduled according to the availability of the participants during the week, with the exception of Sundays. Interviews were conducted either in Atteridgeville at Kalafong Hospital, or on the Kgolo Mmogo premises in Mamelodi.

1.6   PARADIGM: CONSTRUCTIVIST AND INTERPRETIVIST

1.6.1   METATHEORETICAL PARADIGM: CONSTRUCTIVISM

The importance of the question of paradigm is emphasised by Guba and Lincoln (1998:195) as they define it to be the basic belief that guides the investigator in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways as well as the consequent methodological choices. This study was conducted by subscribing to the constructivist paradigm. As stated by Schwandt (1998:221), this paradigm adheres to the goal of understanding the complex world of lived experience from the perspective of those who lived it. This resonates with the aim of this study, given the fact that this project focused on the examination of the subjective experiences of the different participants in order to inform future practice.

Following the paradigm, a certain ontology and epistemology were proposed by the inquirer. The former is regarded as the way in which reality is viewed, while the latter could be considered to be the way in which knowledge is created. Constructivism holds to a relativist ontological assumption, that is, realities are regarded as multiple, intangible constructions and these constructions depend on the individual or group for their form and content. Furthermore, these 'constructions' as well as the associated 'realities' are alterable, while constructions are not more or less 'true', but simply more or less informed and/or sophisticated (Guba & Lincoln, 1998:206-207).

In a different publication, the same authors explain that social realities are therefore regarded as "social constructions, selected, built and embellished by social actors (individuals) from among the situations, stimuli, and events of their experiences" (Lincoln & Guba, 2003:227). Given this advocacy for multiple realities and therefore discarding the

idea of a singular and objective truth, the constructivist paradigm promotes the epistemological view of an interactive creation or construction of findings between the investigator and the participants in the investigation (Guba & Lincoln, 1998:206-207). This paradigm therefore allows for the exploration of different individuals' subjective experience in collaboration with the inquirer, as all experiences are regarded as valuable within the construction and elaboration of existing knowledge. During the course of this study the participants, as well as the inquirer, were therefore involved in the construction of a joint reality through the description and interpretation of the different participants' experiences.

1.6.2 METHODOLOGICAL PARADIGM: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

This study was conducted from a qualitative tradition. According to Flick, Kardorff and Steinke, "qualitative research aims to describe life-worlds 'from the inside out', from the point of view of the people or participants" (2004:3). In accordance with this, Brinkmann and Kvale (2008:263) state that: "Qualitative research entails the power to explore human existence in great detail. It gives access to human experience and allows the researcher to describe intimate aspects of people's lived worlds". This approach thus seeks to contribute to a better understanding of social realities, while it draws attention to the processes, meaning patterns and structural features within a particular population (Flick, *et al.*, 2004). Furthermore, qualitative research uses methodologies that celebrate the richness, depth, multi-dimensionality and complexity of the data in order generate arguments as to "how things work in a particular context" (Mason, 2002:1). Given the aim and focus on the different experiences of the participants within the context of cross-cultural assessment as proposed by this study, it therefore seemed appropriate to use a qualitative approach as a vehicle in the exploration and description of the subject.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.7.1 RESEARCH DESIGN: QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

The qualitative study used a qualitative content analysis design in order to portray the research assistants' experiences with regard to the implementation of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments. Schwandt (1997:21) refers to content analysis as the generic name for a variety of means of textual analysis that involve comparing, contrasting, and categorising a corpus of data. According to Wilkinson (2008:198), content analysis is a commonly used approach to analyse qualitative data such as focus groups, while Kapborg and Berterö (2003:185) consider content analysis to be one of the classic procedures for the analysis of textual material.

Mouton (2001:166) describes a qualitative content analysis as one of the specialised design types under content analysis. According to Mouton (2001:166), the source of data in a qualitative content-analysis design can include public documents, advertisements, letters and political speeches. For the purpose of this study, the data sources were the audio recordings of two focus-group discussions that were conducted with the research assistants in the Kgolo Mmogo project. These audiotape recordings had been transcribed and, along with the field notes generated by the facilitators of the focus-group discussions, formed the primary sources of data.

A possible strength of a qualitative content-analysis research design is that indicated by Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004:102). These authors state that "it works on one level of meaning – the content of the text". Because I was not present during the focus group discussion and therefore had to rely on the content of the text, the analysis and interpretation of the data was not hued by my interaction with group members during the focus-group discussion. Mouton (2001:166) regards one of the strengths of a qualitative content-analysis design to be the avoidance of errors associated with the interaction between the researcher and the participants.

However, a possible limitation of a qualitative content-analysis research design is related to the authenticity of the data (Mouton, 2001:166). For the purpose of this study, verbatim transcripts of the focus-group discussion could have been impeded by the poor quality of the audio recording. As I mainly relied on the verbatim transcriptions of the text, my absence during the focus-group discussion could have had an adverse impact on my ability to attain accurate transcripts of the focus-group discussions. However, in an attempt to increase the accuracy of the transcripts and increase the trustworthiness of the data, the field notes generated by the facilitators were used to ensure the accuracy of the transcripts.

1.7.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.7.2.1 Empirical study

a) Selection of participants

The sampling method utilised in this study correlates with what LeCompte and Preissle (in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000:142) describe to be typical case sampling that is used in naturalistic research. According to these authors, this would be the process during which a sample is selected from typical persons, or cases where a profile of attributes or

characteristics that are possessed by the 'average' is also present in the sample. Because this method rules out statistical sampling (LeCompte & Preissle in Cohan, *et al.*, 2000:142), this form of sampling does not necessarily lead to generalisation. However, in reaction to this criticism, Lincoln and Guba (in Cohan, *et al.*, 2000:144) consider this to be trivially true (that is, unimportant), as the objective of naturalistic research is not to focus on similarities and to be able to make generalisations, as is the case in conventional research, but rather to provide a wealth of detail so that the uniqueness and individuality of each case can be represented.

Nine research assistants took part in two focus-group discussions. They were selected on the basis of their participation in the collection of data for the Kgolo Mmogo project through of the administration of a battery of culturally tailored data-collection instruments. The information regarding the participants is presented in the following table:

Table 1.2: **Description of the participants in the study**

Participant	Group	Age group					Level of education
		20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	
Research Assistant 1	1	♦					Master's degree (Psychology)
Research Assistant 2	2					♦	Master's degree (Nursing)
Research Assistant 3	1					♦	Master's student (Nursing)
Research Assistant 4	1	♦					Master's degree (Gender studies)
Research Assistant 5	2		♦				Master's degree (Psychology)
Research Assistant 6	2		♦				Honours degree (Psychology)
Research Assistant 7	2	♦					Honours degree (Psychology)
Research Assistant 8	1	♦					Master's student (Public Health)
Research Assistant 9	2					♦	B.Cur degree (Psychiatry)

The research assistants were all proficient in the five languages used for the data collection, namely, English, isiZulu, Sepedi, Setswana and Sesotho. The group completed various training programmes with regard to the psychometric data-collection instruments

included in the Kgolo Mmogo project, including peer training, in-service training and specialised environment training.

b)   Data collection

►   Document analysis of the focus groups

According to Schwandt (2007), focus group interviews are a method of data generation that bring together a group of people to discuss a particular topic or range of issues. In this study the research assistants were divided into two groups and engaged in two separate group interviews guided by an interview schedule. The discussions were conducted on 30 January 2008 at the Kgolo Mmogo building on the premises of the Kalafong Hospital in Pretoria and facilitated by Professors Irma Eloff and Liesel Ebersöhn. The sessions were documented by means of audio recordings that were recorded and then transcribed in order to produce a database.

According to Schwandt (1997:162), transcripts are the written account of what was said during an interview or conversation. Silverman (2001:13) draws attention to the fact that the transcripts of audio recordings provide an excellent record of what occurred during the interaction between the participants and the researchers. However, a possible limitation of verbatim transcripts is indicated by Schwandt (1997:162), as this author warns of the fact that transcripts should not be regarded as merely "some kind of innocent recording of the way things really are". It therefore needs to be considered that information relating to non-verbal communication may not be revealed in the text. As was mentioned earlier, in an attempt to increase the accuracy of the transcripts in this study, the field notes of the facilitator's observations and activity during the focus-group discussions were used to inform the verbatim transcripts.

►   Document analysis of the field notes

For the purpose of this study, the facilitators' observations and documentation of the focus groups during the course of the study were included as an additional source of data in the form of field note. As a qualitative approach aims to describe life-worlds from the perspective of the social participants (Flick *et al.*, 2004:3), the experiences and thoughts of the facilitators provided an additional perspective to this study, which assisted in the embellishment of the description of the research theme.

c) **Data analysis and interpretation: Theme analysis**

The analysis of data within the sphere of qualitative research is conceived to be an activity of making sense of, interpreting and theorising data. It begins with the process of organising, reducing, and describing the data and continues through the activities of interpreting the data and drawing conclusions from it (Schwandt, 2007:6). A general process for data analysis as suggested by Cohen, *et al.* (2002) involves: a) the generation of natural units of meaning; b) the classification, categorisation and ordering of the units of meaning; c) the structuring of narratives to describe the content, and d) the interpretation of the data. In referring to general views, Schwandt (2007:6) describes the process of qualitative analysis as the breaking down of the corpus of data into components or constituent parts. Through the process of the reassembly of the parts, the researcher comes to an understanding of the integrity of the whole. As the body of data is broken down, the segments are categorised and coded and, by relating the codes and categories to one another, the researcher tries to establish a pattern for the whole.

The aim of reading through the data gathered during the study was to search for themes within the data. Ryann and Bernard (2003:275) describe themes to be abstract constructs that investigators identify before, during and after data collection. Themes can be identified during the literature review, although themes from the text itself would also be included. As the researcher goes about identifying themes in the data, these are refined until they can be applied to the entire corpus of the texts (Ryann & Bernard, 2003:276). A possible limitation to the process of theme analysis is the fact that the inquirer may unintentionally omit themes that emerged during the interview or, alternatively, give unreasonable prominence to some themes. Because this was a supervised study, the additional and valued supervision and guidance of accomplished researchers served as a buffer to limit unforced errors in analysis.

1.7.3 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

Denzin and Lincoln (1998:24) imply that one of the roles of the researcher is to make the worlds of experience that are studied more understandable by employing interpretative methods, keeping in mind that there is no clear window into the inner life of an individual, as any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity. On the other hand, these authors accentuate the proverbial other side of the coin, namely that individuals are seldom able to give full explanations of their actions or intentions when offering an account of what they did and why they did it. Thus, the complexity and depth of the qualitative inquiry is highlighted. Given the former view and

keeping in mind that, within the stipulated paradigm, a value-free inquiry is not possible, the role of the researcher in this study was to attempt the expounding of the participant's experiences by interpreting the body of data in a narrative format with the aim of producing a thick description of the identified phenomenon.

1.7.4   TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE DATA

Establishing the trustworthiness of the study lies at the heart of what used to be discussed as validity and reliability within a quantitative tradition (Lincoln & Guba in Seale, 2003:172-173). As was argued earlier, the constructivist paradigm in which this study was grounded, aimed to explore the co-constructed reality that was established between all the different participants in the study, as no single contributor's take on reality was considered to be more or less true. The aim of the study was therefore not to discover the 'ultimate truth' with regard to psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation in this specific context, but rather to explore the different role players' individual constructs and experience of the implementation of culturally tailored instruments and report these experiences in a thick description. However, this did not indemnify the researcher from going about this process in a responsible manner.

According to Lincoln and Guba (in Seale, 2003:172), one of the most valuable techniques in establishing trustworthiness is through member checking. In essence, this would entail verifying the researcher's comprehension of members' statements with the participating members in an attempt by the researcher to guard against a biased description of the data. In this study, the initial member check had already been addressed by the facilitators of the focus groups in that they continuously verified and summarised the participants' remarks and, as such, providing the participants with an opportunity to clarify any misconceptions with regard to their statements. An additional measure in an attempt to increase the credibility of the research would have been for the researcher to seek the opinion and guidance of the group facilitators in reporting the main themes of the focus groups. This would have allowed for an additional opportunity to ensure that the content of the focus group was being reported in a responsible manner.

In traditional quantitative research, the notion of external validity refers to whether the results of the research can be generalised to another population (McBurney, 1994:124). Lincoln and Guba (in Seale, 2003:172) propose that transferability replace external validity. In this regard the researcher avowed the context-specific features of this proposed study. In taking measure of the description of the detail of the context and different aspects of the study, the information gathered during this project could prove to be valuable in the

practice of psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation and, as such, aspects of the study could be transferred to other contexts.

Auditing is regarded by Lincoln and Guba (in Seale, 2003:172) as a valuable tool in establishing confirmability and dependability. The latter refers to the concept of consistency with the quantitative tradition, whereas confirmability is a criterion proposed to address the modernist concept of objectivity. Auditing is described as "an exercise in reflexivity, which involves the provision of a methodologically self-critical account of how the research was done" (Seale, 2003:172). In this study care was taken with the description of the research methodology in an attempt to negotiate the trustworthiness of the data.

Despite the vigilant attempts to offer a trustworthy account of the research that had been undertaken, consideration was given to the opinion of Lincoln and Guba (In Seale, 2003:172) when they state that "trustworthiness is always negotiable and open-ended, not being a matter of final proof whereby readers are compelled to accept an account."

1.7.5   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Brinkmann and Kvale (2008:263), the human interaction in qualitative research affects both the researcher and the participants and, consequently, this form of inquiry is saturated with ethical issues. More specifically, ethical issues in qualitative research arise because of the complexities of researching private lives and placing accounts in the public arena and, as such, the researcher embarked on a process with "inescapable ethical aspects" (Brinkman & Kvale, 2008:263).

Keeping this in mind, the intended study not only engaged with the research participants in describing their particular experience, but the participants that took part in the larger study yielded an additional dimension in the ethical considerations at hand. Therefore, the ideal would have been to consider not only the participants, but also the individuals and populations that are implied in the project. Furthermore, even though the different aspects of the ethical considerations are mentioned below, the aim was not to provide a clear-cut and comprehensive discussion of each of the themes, but rather to identify different fields of consideration as areas of continued awareness that were adopted by the researcher.

1.7.5.1 Beneficial consequence of the study

Brinkman and Kvale (2008:265) recommend that before embarking upon a research project, a researcher must contemplate the beneficial consequences of the study. In this regard, the proposed study holds a potential benefit not only for the larger research community but also for the participants that took part in the project. As was argued earlier, the practice of psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation is a fairly novel activity and, as such, the need for continued research had been called for by numerous participants (Gierl, 2007; Meiring, *et al.*, 2006; Widenfelt, *et al.*, 2005). However, the benefit for the participants (research assistants) does not lie so much in the outcome of the study, but rather in the process of the project. Engaging these individuals in a group discussion as to their experiences during the project, rendered another opportunity in which they were acknowledged and valued as a fundamental part of the study, while it provided the participants with an opportunity to reflect on and share their personal experiences during the duration of the project. Therefore, even though this might be small, this study has a potential psychological benefit for its participants.

1.7.5.2 Informed consent

Brinkmann and Kvale (2008:266) indicate informed consent to entail informing the research participants of the overall purpose of the investigation and the main features of the design, as well as pointing out possible risks and benefits from participation in the project. In this particular study, the participants were involved as research assistants in the larger Kgolo Mmogo project and, given the nature of their participation in the project, were well informed as to the nature and extent of the study in order to give informed consent.

1.7.5.3 Confidentiality

Brinkmann and Kvale (2008:266) state that confidentiality in research implies that private data identifying the participants will not be reported. In this study, even though reference is made to the experience of the research assistants, their personal information remains confidential in an attempt to uphold their right to privacy. In elaborating on the aspect of anonymity, Lincoln and Guba (2003:230) quote Skritic, Egon, Guba and Knowlton when they warn of the fact that, even though a researcher may provide as much protection of the participant's identity as possible, such protection could be difficult to extend and impossible to guarantee. As a consequence of this, Lincoln and Guba (2003:230) propose that the trust relationship built between the researcher and the participant should be negotiated with full disclosure of the risks that participants are taking. For the purpose of

this study, the identities of the participants were not disclosed. However, even though the effort was made to protect the participants' anonymity, an attempt should also be made not to deny them their voice, which might be the fundamental aim of the research (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2008:267).

1.7.5.4   Consequences

The consequences of a study need to be addressed with regard to the possible harm as well as the expected benefits of participating in the study. This refers to the ethical principle of beneficence (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2008:267). Researchers should not harm their participants and the risk of harm should be minimised (Marczyk, 2005:241; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2008:267). In considering the proposed study, no part of the study intends to cause any purposeful physical or psychological harm. However, the possibility exists that during the course of the group discussion a participant may have disclosed more information, causing some regret with the participant. The fact that the anonymity of the participants is being protected, should limit the impact of such regrets to some extent at least. In addition to this, the facilitators of the group discussions provided the participants with their contact numbers. As such, the participants had continuous access to the facilitators providing them with the opportunity to contact the facilitators in the event of them experiencing discomfort after their participation in the research.

1.8.   OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS TO FOLLOW

Chapter 2 offers a review of the literature regarding cross-cultural assessment and psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation. In addition, the concept of subjective experience is also explored. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the psychometric data-collection instruments utilised in the Kgolo Mmogo project and comments on the cultural tailoring process.

Chapter 3 provides a more detailed account of the paradigm of the study, the research design as well as the research methodology. The chapter concludes with comments on the trustworthiness of the study as well as the particular ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 presents the findings from the theme analysis.

Chapter 5 offers discussion of the research findings as well as the literature control, where the finding from this study is linked to existing literature. The primary and secondary research questions will be addressed, while the strengths and limitations of this study will be highlighted. This chapter concludes with recommendations for practice, training and future research.

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Chapter 2

**A brief exploration of the literature on cross-cultural
assessment and cultural tailoring of data-collection instruments**

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the subjective experience of research assistants in the
administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments[3] in a South
African environment. The process of cultural tailoring is explored with cross-cultural
assessment as a contextual backdrop to the field of study. In an attempt to guide and
inform this study, a brief review of available literature on the subject of cross-cultural
assessment and related topics was undertaken. However, for the purpose of this study,
the practice of cultural tailoring would be rooted in the indigenous psychology discourse.
Hence, the indigenisation discourse would serve as a point of departure in the exploration
of relevant concepts.

2.2   INDIGENOUS PSYCHOLOGY

2.2.1   TOWARDS A DESCRIPTION OF INDIGENOUS PSYCHOLOGY AND INDIGENISATION

Adair (1992:62, as cited in Stead & Watson, 2006:182) describes the term indigenisation
as the process of taking development from elsewhere, such as the science of psychology
as developed in the United States, and introducing modifications to make it fit the new
culture. At the onset, this definition resonates with the practice of instrument adaptation
(Gierl, 2007), providing a context for the investigation of cultural tailoring from a South
African perspective. In referring to the concept of indigenisation, but in another publication,
Adair (1999:406) expressed his concern about the fact that the term is vaguely
conceptualised and often not well understood. In this regard he points out the discrepancy
with the question of 'How can something imported (psychology) be indigenous?'. In
reaction to this question and in accordance with an earlier published definition by the same
author, Adair (1999:406) explains indigenisation to be the process of indigenisation or
modifying the imported discipline to fit a particular culture so well that it is made to appear
as if it were indigenous.

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[3]   The term data-collection instruments will be used in referring to psychometric data-collection instruments.

Adair, Puhan and Vohra (1993:152) define indigenous research as work that emanates from the culture in which it is conducted. It should furthermore reflect the extent to which the culture or culturally unique behaviours are cited.

Moghaddam and Taylor (1986:253) regard indigenous psychology as a discipline that is culturally appropriate, as these authors propose the concept of "appropriated psychology". In analysing a number of definitions that were imposed on the concept of indigenous psychologies, Sinha (1997, as cited in Adair, 1999:406) identified four aspects that seemed to have underlined the descriptions he had considered: firstly, the psychological knowledge should arise from within the culture. Secondly, it should reflect local behaviour. Thirdly, it should be interpreted within a local frame of reference and finally, it should yield results that are locally relevant.

At the turn of the previous century, Sinha (1997:132, as cited in Stead & Watson, 2006:182) defined the indigenous psychological approach as "those elements of knowledge that have been generated in a country or a culture, and that have developed therein, as opposed to those that are imported or brought from elsewhere." The following year, Ho's published definition of indigenous psychology was quoted in Ho, Peng, Lai and Chan (2001:926), as well as in Jackson (2005:51), as the study of human behaviour and mental processes within a cultural context. This context relies on values, concepts, belief systems, methodologies and other resources indigenous to the specific cultural or ethnic group under investigation. As such, these authors state that indigenous psychology is characterised by the conceptions and methodologies rooted in the cultural group employed to generate knowledge.

This leads to the challenge facing indigenous psychologies to demonstrate that they are indeed informed by, rooted in or derived from their respective indigenous cultures and not merely referring to the body of knowledge obtained on the population under investigation (Ho, *et al.*, 2001:926). In a similar tone but with a slightly more lenient stance, Yang (2000:245-246) states that indigenous psychology aims to develop "a scientific knowledge system that effectively reflects, describe, explain, or understand the psychological and behavioural activities of the native context in terms of culturally relevant frames or reference and culturally derived categories and theories".

Adair (1999:415) identifies the primary goal of an indigenous psychology to be the creation of a psychology that is appropriate for the culture. In addition to this, the aim of an indigenous psychology ought to be to make research more culturally sensitive and appropriate, while the psychology should also aim to become independent from its origin

and stand on its own, address local problems and provide its own local training and textbooks.

For the purpose of this study the indigenisation is regarded as the process of developing a psychological discourse that is culturally appropriate, by drawing on cultural knowledge and values and simultaneously comparing them to and communicating with the existing globalised knowledge. The aim of this process is to create a culturally sensitive research and serve the local community by attempting to address local problems and providing appropriate support.

2.2.2 THE RATIONALE OF INDIGENISATION

Ho, *et al.* (2001:930-931) identifies the following three metatheoretical propositions on which the rationale for indigenisation rests:

1. The conceptualisation of psychological phenomena is in itself a psychological phenomenon. As a metalevel phenomenon, it requires further study.
2. The generation of psychological knowledge is culture-dependent: Both the conceptualisation of psychological phenomena and the methodology employed to study them are informed by cultural values and presuppositions. Accordingly, the role of the knowledge generator cannot be separated or eliminated from the process of knowledge generation.
3. Indigenous psychologies go one step further and insist on viewing a target group from the natives' own standpoint. However, there is no necessity to exclude the view of outsiders. Rather, we adopt a comparative framework with the recognition that reality be construed in various ways, by insiders as well as outsiders. In the end, a common ground of understanding between insiders and outsiders has to be achieved for effective intercultural communication. It therefore ranks higher in importance than understanding from the natives' point of view.

The contribution of the indigenisation discourse to this study is illustrated by the interconnectedness between the identified rationale of indigenisation by Ho, *et al.* (2000:930-931) and cultural tailoring, as the latter, in principle, refers to the process of the generation of psychological knowledge by drawing on information of cultural values and presuppositions. Furthermore, during this study, the intercultural communication between the insider and outsider perspectives represents a critical aspect of cross-cultural assessment as indicated later on in this chapter.

2.2.3 INDIGENISATION VS. CULTURAL TAILORING

In considering the various views on indigenous psychology as summarised in the aforementioned, one is obliged to speculate whether cultural tailoring is a synonym for indigenisation, especially in considering Adair's (1992, as cited in Stead and Watson, 2004; 1999) descriptions of the concept. For the purpose of this study and despite the similarities between the concepts, it is not regarded as the same concept. Rather, cultural tailoring is conceptualised and rooted within the indigenisation discourse as it refers to the process during which modification and adaptation were made to data-collecting instruments that were developed for a particular population and, in the process, draws on the indigenous knowledge of the target population. However, the process furthermore entails the process of adaptation and adjustment that occurred during the administration and use of the instrument in order to refine the cultural appropriateness and relevance of the data-collection instrument.

In considering the literature under review, it seems as if the possibility exists that a radical attitude in favour of indigenous psychology and globalisation on the one hand, or against them on the other hand, would be potentially harmful to this study. For the purpose of this study, the tension that exists between the two extremes is rather utilised in order to engage in a continuous conversation in an attempt to remain culturally sensitive, yet globally relevant. Ho, *et al.* (2001:929) comments on the dialectic tension between the tendencies of globalisation and indigenisation by stating that globalisation without diversity results in boring uniformity, while indigenisation without unity may in turn lead to particularism. However, according to the authors, indigenisation represents a call for diversity. This study aligns with the notion of diversity as it seeks to find a balance between the culturally unique and universal aspects in exploring the experience of the research assistants in the administration of the culturally tailored data-collection instruments.

2.3 CROSS-CULTURAL ASSESSMENT

2.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Prior to embarking on a concise review of prominent topics within the field of cross-cultural assessment, the question of terminology should be addressed. In the light of the recent South African history of inequality and marginalisation that prevailed prior to the first democratic election in 1994 and manifested in the decision-making and power structures of the country, I deemed it necessary to consider the use of terms such as 'test' or 'measure', as these are entangled with the emotional suggestions of the unequal

distribution of power between the 'tester' and the 'testee'. In an attempt to be sensitive to the specific historical and political context, for the purpose of this study the term 'psychological data-collection instrument' would be used in favour of the term 'tests' and variations thereof.

This particular stance is understandably not reflected in the body of literature addressing the topic of cross-cultural assessment and instrument adaptation. Therefore, when referring to the statements and opinions of authors in published studies, preference would be given to the terminology used by the author concerned. However, when referring to this study, the terms psychological data-collection instruments and cultural tailoring will be utilised as the preferred terms.

2.3.2   A BACKGROUND TO CROSS-CULTURAL ASSESSMENT

With regard to the practice of cross-cultural assessment Ercikan (2006:105) states that tests have been administered to groups of individuals from different cultures within the same country or across countries from the time that psychometric data-collection instruments were developed. In commenting on the scope of psychological testing enterprises and with specific focus on the adaptation of educational and psychological data-collection instruments, Gierl (2007:74) reports that the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children has 26 official adaptations and has been used in at least 34 countries. However, according to the same author the relatively recent bout of instrument adaptations and translation activity has a precedent. In this regard, Hambleton and Bollwark (in Gierl, 2007:74) reported that the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale, previously known as the Binet-Simon Intelligence Scale (developed in France), had already been translated into seven different languages as early as 1916.

According to Pérez-Arce (in Carter, *et al.*, 2005:286) data-collection instruments designed for cross-cultural assessment date back to the early twentieth century. The underlying hypothesis of many of these assessment tools was that behaviour is independent from the surrounding culture and superimposed by a cultural veneer. The assumption was thus that the behaviour underlying the cultural façade could be penetrated by means of a 'culture-free' assessment.

Within the conceptual framework of empiricism it was believed that the most valid and reliable results could be obtained in a context-free clinical setting using culture-free assessments. Widenfelt, *et al.* (2005:136) reported a similar assumption to be held in health research, suggesting that the culture of a population has a minimal impact on the

construct being measured, and therefore the way in which a construct is defined and operationalised in one culture can be directly applied to another. However, the later shift from 'culture-common' to culture-fair assessments, as described by Pérez-Arce (in Carter *et al.*, 2005:286), reflected the hypothesis that assessments should rather target only those experiences and expressions of behaviour common to different cultures. As such, it was thought that the use of non-verbal performance tasks could diminish the cultural effect. Further research rendered ample evidence suggesting the contrary, as non-verbal assessments are also susceptible to cultural bias (Carter, *et al.*, 2005:386-387).

Shortly prior to the turn of the previous century a further development in philosophy underlying cross-cultural assessment was voiced by Anastasi and Urbine (in Carter, *et al.*, 2005:387), as they indicated that a single assessment cannot be universally applicable to all cultures, but can only aim to reduce cultural differentials in performance. A similar orientation is outlined by Herdman, Fox-Rushby and Badia (1997:244) in commenting on the "universalist orientation", where culture is viewed as having a potentially significant impact on the expression of concepts in different cultures. As such, psychopathology might be viewed as universal, but culture could, for example, play a role in the variations of expression. Given this perspective, it can therefore be assumed that instruments developed in another country will in all likelihood need to go through a process of cultural-specific adaptation before being administered in a different cultural context.

2.3.3   CULTURE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF CROSS-CULTURAL ASSESSMENT

The term cross-cultural assessment does not refer merely to an assessment conducted in a language different from that of the assessor, but the term also encompasses the larger concept of 'culture'. Therefore, the concept of culture receives noticeable attention in literature dealing with cross-cultural assessment. Laher (2007:88) comments on the difficulty in defining the concept formally, as the definitions are noted to vary according to the epistemological assumption of the defining partner.

In commenting from a South African career psychology perspective, Stead and Watson (2006:182) state that there is no widespread agreement on the meaning of terms such as 'culture' and 'ethnicity' within a subject discipline. There is also no clarity on what constitutes a culture or an ethnic group in South Africa, as cultures and ethnic groups are redefining themselves in post-apartheid years. Acknowledging the difficulty surrounding the definition of the concept of culture, Stead and Watson (2006:182) note Marsella and Leong's, (1995, as cited in Stead & Watson, 2006:182) description of culture as:

... the shared learning behaviour that is transmitted from one generation to another for purposes of individual and societal adjustment, growth and development. Culture has both external (i.e. artefacts, roles, activity contexts, institutions) and internal (i.e. values, beliefs, consciousness, personality, epistemology) representations.

Furthermore, Stead and Watson (2006:182) state that culture is not homogenous, especially within a context where national and international connections are pervasive and where many people do not necessarily identify with one culture. Finally, following a social constructionist perspective, culture is described to be "a social system of shared symbols, meanings, perspectives, and social actions that are mutually negotiated by people in their relationship to others" (Stead, 2004, in Stead & Watson, 2006:182). Taking into consideration Stead and Watson's (2006) argument that culture is not a homogenous group, caution needs to be given to the transferability of research findings in this study and the individual characteristics of the research assistants and participants in the Kgolo Mmogo project also need to be considered through the study.

In exploring different issues in the development of cross-cultural assessment of speech and language in children, Carter, *et al.* (2005:288) commented on the influence of an individual's culture on his or her test performance. According to these authors, the experiences available to children in their immediate physical and social environment will have a direct effect on their development, and therefore on the range of appropriate materials with which development can be measured. Furthermore, the impact of culture on differences in normative strategies in communication also receives attention. This is illustrated by the example of eye contact as an aspect of successful face-to-face communication in the UK, while children in a rural Kenyan community would be taught to avoid eye contact with an adult, as this is regarded as a sign of disrespect. For the purpose of this study, these findings from Carter, *et al.* (2005) raise awareness of the possible normative difference that may present itself in the research assistants' experiences.

Carter, *et al.* (2005) quotes Taylor and Payne when describing what is perceived as a culturally valid assessment by the following:

> A data collection process wherein testing, measurement and evaluation are conducted using instruments and procedures that discriminate only in those areas for which they were designed (i.e. normal versus pathological behaviour) and do not discriminate unfairly for or against a client for cultural reasons... (Carter, *et al.*, 2005:386).

These authors therefore believe the task of a cross-cultural assessment to be the ability to identify and distinguish between behaviours that are universal, those that are culturally variable and those unique to the individual.

2.3.4 THE NEED FOR CROSS-CULTURAL ASSESSMENT

Ercikan (2006:105-106) commences an argument on the need for cross-cultural assessment by stating that the challenges in such multicultural assessments are significant and multifaceted. The author continues by focussing on the difficulties surrounding the practice of assessing an individual in a foreign language. Ercikan (2006:106) states that the translation and adaptation of a test to the language of the participants play a very important role in reducing the potential bias and error due to language in testing, given the potential of misinterpreting test scores, with consequent detrimental effects on participants. Hence, the author not only regards the use of multiple language versions of a data-collection instrument as desirable, but as essential for many of the instruments that involve individuals from different cultures (Ercikan, 2006:106).

Widenfelt, *et al.* (2005:135) contribute to arguments for the need for cross-cultural assessment and the development of cross-cultural data-collection instruments when these authors state that numerous psychometric data-collection instruments are translated annually into and/or adapted for specific cultures within the field of clinical child and family psychology. An advantage of the use of established measures is that they allow for cross-cultural comparison of findings as well as use in international trials. As such, Widenfelt, *et al.* (2005:135) are of the opinion that, with the increased globalisation of psychology, having reliable and valid measures that can be used in a number of languages and cultures is critical.

Joining in the debate for the need for cross-cultural assessment from within the field of speech and language therapy, Carter, *et al.* (2005:386) stated that the recognition of cultural variation and the potential of cultural bias are fundamental to the provision of equitable therapeutic services. These authors regard the lack of appropriate data-collection instruments as potentially damaging in the field of research, as biased results and inaccurate conclusions can be produced as a consequence of limited assessment instruments. This argument supports a growing recognition of the necessity of developing and adapting tools and procedures to match the needs of a particular population.

As was stated earlier, the practice of cross-cultural assessment in South Africa is shaded by the political-historical context of separate development advocated by the apartheid

government's manifesto. In reaction to this, the Employment Equity Act 55 promulgated in 1998 stipulates that psychological testing and similar assessments are prohibited unless the instrument being used has been scientifically shown to be valid and reliable, it can be applied fairly to all employees and it is not biased against any employee or group. The onus therefore rests with the test user to indicate that the instrument being used adheres to the regulations of the Employment Equity Act and can be applied in a multicultural setting (Meiring, *et al.*, 2006:340-341).

Kanjee (2007:47) also refers to the Employment Equity Act in pointing out that no group or individual responding to an assessment instrument should be disadvantaged in any way as a critical step in the development or adaptation of psychological tests. Therefore, the detection, removal or revision of potential bias items forms an important part of the development of tests that do not discriminate against any participant. The author argues that the detection of biased items through a process of differential items functioning (DIF) is applicable only to a two-group comparison and proposes the logistic regression procedure as the preferred technique when multiple groups are compared to one another.

2.3.5 PSYCHOMETRIC DATA-COLLECTION INSTRUMENT ADAPTATION

Despite the fact that the adaptation of psychometric data-collection instruments is a complex matter (Bhui, *et al.*, 2006:410), the adaptation of an existing instrument is often the less demanding option when one is faced with the dilemma of the absence of a suitable data-collection instrument (Brandt, 2005:205). An additional advantage of adapting an existing data-collection instrument instead of developing a new instrument is pointed out by Brandt (2005:205) when stating that the former allows for the comparison between results of different countries and populations. In accordance with this view, Carter, *et al.* (2005:395) state that, even though ethnographically based research is necessary for the development of novel assessments in cross-cultural situations, the approach is both resource- and time-consuming.

As an alternative approach, one of the following possible solutions could be considered: re-norming an existing assessment for the target population, using dynamic assessment techniques, or modifying existing standardised assessments. Widenfelt, *et al.* (2005:135) regard the latter, namely the translation and adaptation of an established English language measure, as an efficient solution for the lack of available instruments. A further advantage pointed out by the authors that is in accordance to the opinion of Brandt (2005:205), is the fact that the use of an established measure further allows for a cross-cultural comparison of findings.

In referring to Van de Vijver's view, Casillas and Robbins (2005:6) point out that cross-cultural assessment and psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation are not synonymous. Cross-cultural assessment encompasses a broader set of issues than psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation, although both terms are often used to describe the construction and use of data-collection instruments that require cultural or language sensitivity due to their adaptation to another language or use in another country or culture.

Butcher (2005) focussed on the cross-cultural adaptation of the MMPI-2. Some of the challenges with regard to psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation are indicated to be the openness of the mental heath community towards new ideas in the environment and the community's acceptance of the questionnaire personality-assessment method. Another factor that may influence the acceptability of self-report personality tests is the appropriateness of the response format for the general population of the new culture. It is also important that a significant part of the project of psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation be conducted by indigenous psychologists, although Butcher (2005) notes that cross-cultural collaborative research is not without challenges. Finally, financial constraints were also identified as possible challenges in the test-adaptation process (2005:92-93).

A key aspect of psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation is often the translation of the instrument from one language to another. As can be expected, this process poses a potentially significant source of difficulty. In this regard Widenfelt, *et al.* (2005:137) draw attention to a striving for equivalence, in terms of keeping a new version of a data-collection instrument as similar as possible to the source version as a primary goal in the translating process, while simultaneously striving for conceptual equivalence. According to these authors, a possible source of errors in translation would be to translate items too literally. Another source of translation error could be mistranslations that are made as a result of foreign authors not understanding an original item well enough. The example of the English phrase "Your mind going blank" from the SCL-90 being translated to the Dutch phrase "Een gevoel van leegte" (which means an empty feeling) is offered as an explanation of the error. In addition to these general errors, Widenfelt, *et al.* (2005:142) recommend that care be taken with regard to the manner in which instructions of a questionnaire are translated, as this my also have an influence on how the questionnaire is completed.

However, the translation of one data-collection instrument into another language is not necessarily regarded as an ideal practice by Skevington and O'Connel (2003:348), as

these authors appeal for the use of multilingual data-collection instruments that have been developed in a culturally sensitive way to be used for cross-cultural research, as opposed to scales developed initially in a single culture and then translated without any concessions or adjustments to the concept. These authors furthermore state that instruments created exclusively for one culture are unlikely to demonstrate good semantic and conceptual equivalence to other languages despite care taken with translation and back-translation procedures and high levels of psychometric rigor applied.

2.3.6 PROCEDURES OF AND CONSIDERATIONS IN CROSS-CULTURAL DATA-COLLECTION INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT

Brandt (2005:206) indicated that various approaches could be applied for the translation and cross-cultural adaptation of psychometric data-collection instruments. The author highlights that the adaptation should attempt to ensure that the translation is fully comprehensible, and that there is cross-cultural equivalence of source and final versions. This should include semantic, idiomatic, experimental, and conceptual equivalence. Widenfelt, *et al.* (2005:135) draw on the work of Sprangers, *et al.* (in Widenfelt, *et al.*, 2005) in stating that the more desirable scenario for the cross-cultural use of psychometric data-collection instruments would be the development of an instrument in several countries at the same time. A common set of items is generated that is relevant to a number of cultures (parallel approach), while culture-specific items are developed at the same time in different countries (simultaneous approach). However, this seems to be the least common scenario in the development of psychometric data-collection instruments.

Skevington (2002:137) identified broad types of translation procedures that have been used in Quality of Life (QoL) research, as summarised by the following:
• Firstly, the ethnocentric approach is explained to be based on the assumption that it is possible to translate an instrument developed in one culture into a second language without attending to how appropriate the instrument will be for the target culture. However, the author indicates that "this approach suffers from the questionable assumptions that these concepts are transferable, that the two languages are so closely related that translation is meaningful and that the method of questioning is as acceptable to the target as is it to the source" (Skevington, 2002:137).
• A second and more pragmatic approach is identified as one during which the common conceptual grounds between two cultures are identified and measured.
• In another case described by Skevington (2002:138), items from the source instrument are interpreted for use by the target culture without presenting the

instrument to members of the target culture for assessment. According to the author, numerous examples exist of specific and generic scales that have applied to this method in cross-cultural work.

Working in Kenya, Carter, *et al.* (2005:386) suggest the following process outline in studies attempting to create culturally valid psychometric data-collection instruments and procedures:

- Tools should be developed in conjunction with mother-tongue speakers or an assessment language that is familiar with the local area of research.
- Adapted assessments should be piloted on a representative sample of the target population.
- All pictures should be piloted with children from the target population for level of recognition before inclusion in assessments.
- All aspects of the assessment should be piloted, including the instructions, response formats, practice items, prompts and setting.
- Mother-tongue speakers of the assessment language should be trained to administer or assist in assessment procedures.
- Materials familiar to children in the local area should be used in the assessment.
- In an attempt to minimise the unfamiliar aspects of the assessments, children should be assessed in rooms away from the hospital or clinical setting or in their own homes.
- When working with children who are unfamiliar with the testing situations, consider using appropriate practice items and prompts, although the impact of the length of the assessment should be considered.
- When incorporating timed tasks, consider the cultural view of speed and performance.
- Having followed the abovementioned measures, the normative data should show the expected distribution.

In the article devoted to the adaptation of the MMPI-S personality inventory across different cultures, Butcher (2004:91) identified the following guidelines for test translations:

- Prior to the onset of the process, ensure that issues of copyright and future publication arrangements have been resolved.
- Although item content equivalence is usually regarded as the primary goal of test translation, gaining psychological equivalence for some items might require modification or substitution of certain items in an attempt to be culturally more appropriate.

- A back-translation should be done after the initial translation process has been completed.
- A bilingual test-retest study is desirable following the back-translation.
- A normative study might be necessary in the process of accumulating data in order to complete the adaptation process.
- Finally, external validity data and appropriate research samples should be collected to enable psychometric analysis.

In addition to the above-mentioned, Butcher (2004:94) suggests that, for the successful adaptation of a psychometric data-collection instrument for cross-cultural personality assessments, the instrument should have a substantial established database to allow for comparison. It is also valuable for a test to have successful existing translations in other languages and cultures in order to guide new projects. The instrument should have available interpretive textbooks, while the provision of workshops on the use of the instrument is also regarded to be valuable.

Widenfelt, *et al.* (2005) comment on practical aspects when translating psychometric data-collection instruments by promoting the following:
- Making contact with the original author of a psychometric data-collection instrument prior to embarking on a translation task.
- Creating a translation team consisting of at least three to four people. Ideally, it is recommended that a first-language user who is both bilingual and bicultural should be included in the team.
- The procedure would involve each team member first completing an independent translation, after which the team members, through dialogue, decide on the best version of each item. Furthermore, the authors refer to the recommendation by Guillemin, *et al.* (in Widenfelt, *et al.*, 2005) that a multidisciplinary committee should be organised to evaluate the translation along with the back-translation and the original. In addition to this, the suggestion by Geisinger (in Widenfelt, *et al.*, 2005) is also reported in that a reviewing team responds verbally and in writing to the translation done by the translating team,.

Brandt (2005) describes the process of the translation of the Quebec User Evaluation of Satisfaction with assistive Technology 1.0 (QUEST 1.0) from English to Danish. However, in contrast to a recommendation of a back-translation to follow the initial translation of an instrument, the author found the method to be less efficient compared to the other methods (forward translation, multidisciplinary committee discussions, pre-testing and further content and equivalent studies). In accordance with this, Widenfelt, *et al.*

(2005:136) reported growing international literature indicating that a simple forward and backward translation procedure is an insufficient method of evaluating the quality of a translation and, as sole method, may result in a poor effort. However, Brandt (2005:212) points out a lack of agreement in the literature with regard to the value and relevance of the back-translation of instruments. Despite the procedural suggestion and guidelines offered in the body of literature, the lack of research in this regard is reiterated by Widenfelt, *et al.* (2005:145).

2.3.7 THE MATTER OF EQUIVALENCE WITHIN THE PROCESS OF THE ADAPTATION OF PSYCHOMETRIC DATA-COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

In referring to issues and recommendations in cross-cultural assessment from a business perspective, Casillas and Robbins (2005:7) describe equivalence in cross-cultural assessment to be whether a particular version of a data-collection instruments in another language can be claimed to be equivalent to the original instrument. These authors identified five types of equivalence as the primary focus in the literature, namely: construct and conceptual equivalence (i.e. the similarity in meaning that individuals attach to a concept); functional equivalence (i.e. whether similar activities of behaviour measured by a test have the same meaning in different cultures); metric equivalence (i.e. whether scores from the same test administered in different languages have comparable psychometric properties); scalar equivalence (i.e. the similarity in score magnitudes of two language versions of the same test), and linguistic equivalence (i.e. the accuracy associated with the translation of an instrument). In addition to test equivalence, Casillas and Robbins (2005:7) furthermore mention the comments of Van de Vijver and Hambleton (in Casillas & Robbins, 2005:7), as these authors provide a guide regarding three types of bias encountered in data-collection instruments translation, namely: construct bias (i.e. the lack of equivalence across constructs from one cultural group to another), method bias (i.e. problems related to instrument administration) and item bias (i.e. differential item functioning, often related to the translation process).

Brandt (2005:206) proposes that translation and cross-cultural adaptation of psychometric data-collection instruments should be followed by an assessment of validity in order to establish whether the instrument measures that which it intends to measure. This author points out that the examination of the content validity of a psychometric data-collection instrument should be the first step in the process of validation in order to determine whether the content of the instrument covers all relevant aspects. Usually such an investigation entails asking experts or representatives of the target group, in a structured manner, about the relevance of the content of an instrument. Subsequently, formal

statistical methods are used to assess other kinds of validity of an instrument. Later on in the same article, Brandt (2005:206) also refers to 'face validity' in the process of psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation. This implies that, after a multidisciplinary committee has compared various translations and back-translations in a structured way, the translated instrument should be pre-tested on a sample of the target population in order to establish the face validity in terms of acceptance of the questions.

2.4   SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE

According to Richardson, as cited in Mckelvie (2007:8), subjective experience can be defined as an event or process that a person attends to and isolates from the stream of consciousness – an awareness of something inside the self. Experiences can refer to external events such as perceptions, or to internal events that may occur in the absence of environmental stimulation such as thoughts or imagery. In an earlier publication, Richardson (1999:469) in turn cited Gray's view on the subjective experience of an individual to cover every type of conscious content, including that which comes from our immediate perception of events in the external world, as well as that which comes from the inner non-perceived world. Richardson furthermore belongs to a group of psychologists who agree that, even though nothing may be known about an individual's subjective experience as such, reports produced about these experiences can be studied. For the purpose of this study, the subjective experiences of the research assistants were explored through their contributions during the focus-group discussions.

Phipps and Voster (2009:33) trace the attempts of psychotherapists to understand the subjective experience of the individual back to the intrapsychic perspective of Freud and other psychoanalysts. However, at that stage in history a limitation of this perspective was considered to be the fact that, because no person can see the mind 'at work,' any conclusions about the individual's subjective experience were only speculative without any way to verify the conclusion. This brought about the movement from the intrapsychic to the interpsychic perspective, which marked the transition from speculation about the individual's subjective experience to the observation of behaviour, hence inferences about an individual's subjective experience were based upon the observations of the individual's behaviour.

The idea of the objective observer being able to draw conclusions about an individual's subjective experience was again challenged by the opinion of Maturana, a biologist, cybernetician and scientist in the 1960s, as he came to the conclusion that all perception is ultimately subjective. Therefore, because all perceptions are subjective, an objective

observation becomes impossible (Phipps & Voster, 2009:35). According to Phipps and Voster (2009:33), the effect of Maturana's thesis in the context of the observer/observed relationship was a shift in the emphasis from the role of the observed (i.e. independent reality) to that of the subjective experience of the observer. This stance resonates with the philosophical assumption of constructivism as described by Phipps and Voster (2009:37), that the act of knowing is subjective and the knower can never have objective knowledge. This view links up with the aim of a constructivist inquiry, and therefore with this study, to understand and reconstruct the constructions of people, including that of the inquirer, aiming towards consensus, but still open to new interpretations as information and sophistication improve (Guba & Lincoln, 1998:211).

As was stated earlier, this study was conducted from a constructivist paradigm that is based on the assumption that we construct reality during the process of perceiving and describing our experiences. Therefore, the individual's subjective experiential world is considered the individual's construction of reality (Nicholas & Schwartz, 1998:91-92). However, in view of the arguments presented in the abovementioned, the collective subjective experiences of the research assistants as reported in this study are regarded to be the co-constructed realities as negotiated between the participants of the study and the inquirer. This view is in accordance with that of Denzin and Lincoln (2000:7), when these authors state that the qualitative inquirer can no longer directly capture the lived experiences, as these experiences are created in the social text written by the researcher.

2.5   CULTURAL TAILORING OF THE PSYCHOMETRIC DATA-COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS IN THE KGOLO MMOGO PROJECT

2.5.1   PSYCHOMETRIC DATA-COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The need for assessment instruments is stressed by Embretson (1999:1), as this author regards the valid construction and interpretation of measurement instruments as critically important activities for psychologists and educators. However, different authors propose different descriptions of psychological tests, measurements and assessments (Crocker & Algina, 1986; Reber, 1995; Kaplan & Saccuzzo, 2001). As was emphasised in the previous chapter, different theoretical approaches would influence the views and definitions of psychometric data-collection instruments. As this study was conducted from a constructivist perspective, the investigator and the object of investigation were assumed to be interactively linked. Therefore, the findings of the inquiry are regarded as "literally created" as the investigation proceeds (Guba & Lincoln, 1998:207). This notion therefore rejects the idea of an objective psychological measuring instrument or test, which will be

able to offer an objective measure of the truth. Therefore, favour is given to the term psychometric data-collection instruments as tools for the collection of a variety of data over a range of human features in order to facilitate the collection of information and understanding.

During the Kgolo Mmogo project, thirteen psychological data-collection instruments were administered by the research assistants as tabled below (Table 2.1). The table is followed by a brief description of each of these instruments.

Table 2.1:   The psychometric data-collection instruments used in the Kgolo Mmogo project

With the mothers:	With the children:
Centre of Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D)	Bar-On Emotional Quotient-Inventory: Youth Version (Bar-On EQ:YV)
Brief COPE (28 items self –report assessment of adaptive and maladaptive coping skills)	Revised Multidimensional Anxiety Scale (RCMAS)
Brief Religious Coping Scale (Brief RCOPE)	Children's depression inventory (CDI)
Vineland Behavioural Scale	Kidcope (A brief self-report of Coping strategies)
Coping with Children's Negative Emotional Scale (CCNES)	Child Spiritual Coping Survey (CSCS)
Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL)	Self-Description Questionnaire (SDQ)
Parenting Stress Index (PSI)	

2.5.1.1   Centre of Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D)

The CES-D is a widely used measure of depression and was developed for use with the general population (Shafer, 2006:124-125). This 20-item scale was developed by The National Centre of Mental Health from epistemological research (Gupta, Punetha & Diwan, 2006:65), and the items primarily measure affective and somatic aspects of depression (Shafer, 2006:125). The respondents are required to choose from four possible responses in a Likert format where 1 = rarely or none of the time and 4 = almost all of the time (Gupta, Punetha & Diwan, 2006:66).

2.5.1.2   Brief COPE

Piazza-Waggoner, Adams, Muchant, Wilson and Hogan (2006) describe the Brief COPE to be a 28-item short version of the longer 52-item COPE Inventory. In essence, the Brief

COPE assesses how frequently the respondent uses specific coping behaviour. Items are rated on a 4-point Likert scale and the inventory comprises 14 scales that represent different coping behaviours as indicated by the following: active coping, planning, positive reframing, acceptance, humour, religion, using emotional support, using instrumental support, venting, self-distraction, denial, substance use, behavioural disengagement, and self-blame.

2.5.1.3 Brief Religious Coping Scale (RCOPE)

The Brief RCOPE was designed to measure a wide range of positive and negative religious coping methods (Pargament, Smith, Koenig & Perez, 1998:713). Participants respond to the items of the Brief COPE on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 3 (a great deal) (Pargament, Tarakeshwar, Ellison & Wulff, 2001:503).

2.5.1.4 Vineland Behavioural Scale

According to De Bildt, Kraijer, Sytema & Minderaa (2005:53), the Vineland Behavioural Scale is a well-known and widely used international instrument to measure the level of adaptive functioning in children and adolescents. Voelker, Johnston, Agar, Gragg & Menna (2007:178) considers the Vineland as a psychometrically sound measure for obtaining information form the child's care-taker in a semi-structured interview while a teacher's rating scale format also exists. The former was included in the Kgolo Mmogo project. The instrument yields four domain scores, namely Communication (Receptive, Expressive, Written), Daily Living Skills (Personal, Domestic and Community), Socialisation (Interpersonal relationships, Play, Leisure Time and Coping Skills) and Motor Skills (Gross and Fine, only applicable to children under 6), along with the Adaptive Behaviour Composite, a summary score, derived from the four domains (Voelker, *et al.*, 2007:178; De Bildt, *et al.,* 2005:53).

2.5.1.5 Coping with Children's Negative Emotional Scale (CCNES)

The Coping with Children's Negative Emotional Scale (CCNES) was developed by Fabes and colleagues as an instrument to assist in assessing how parents typically respond to young children's negative emotions. In this self-report scale, parents are presented with 12 hypothetical scenarios in which their child is upset or angry, which represents common emotionally evocative events that young children are exposed to. The respondents are requested to rate the likelihood of responding to the scenario in each of the six possible ways – with each of the six responses representing theoretically different ways of

responding to children's negative emotions (Fabes, Poulin, Eisenberg & Madden-Derdich, 2002:288).

The CCNES offers six subscales describing different responses that parents might engage in when exposed to their young children's negative emotions. The problem-focussed responses reflect the degree to which parents help their child solve the problem ecausing the distress while the emotion-focussed responses reflect the degree to which the parents respond with strategies that help the child feel better. The Expressive Encouragement subscale reflects the active encouraging of children's expression of negative emotions, while the Minimisation Reactions subscale reflects the degree to which parents discount the seriousness of their children's emotional reactions or devalue their problem or distress response. The Punitive Reactions subscale represents the degree to which parents use verbal or physical punishment to control children's negative emotional display. Finally, the Distress Response represents the parental response where the parents could themselves become distressed in reaction to the children's expression of negative emotions (Fabes, *et al.*, 2002:288-289).

2.5.1.6   Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL)

The Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL) forms part of the Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment (ASEBA) and facilitates systematic comparisons of multiple perspectives of children's functioning. In completing the CBCL, respondents provide descriptive information specific to the child along with the ratings that are scored on the competence scales. These scales include an Activity Scale that consists of scores for the number of sports, other recreational activities, jobs and chores, as well as a rating of the amount and quality of the child's participation in the various activities. The Social Scale includes scores for participation in organisations, the number of close friends, the number of weekly contact with friends, how well the child gets along with others and how well the child plays and works alone. Finally, the School Scale includes the ratings of performance in academic subjects, receipt of special remedial services, grade repetitions and other school problems (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001:1-20). However, during the Kgolo Mmogo project, the School Scale was excluded.

2.5.1.7   Parenting Stress Index (PSI)

The Parenting Stress Index (PSI) short form consists of 36 items as derived from the full-length index. The items are rated on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire consists of three subscales of 12 items each. The first subscale,

Parental Distress scale, was designed to assess the amount of stress an individual is feeling as a parent due to personal factors such as impaired parenting competence, conflict with the other parent, presence of depression, and lack of social support. The second Parent-Child Dysfunctional Interaction scale aims to determine whether the child is seen by the parent as reinforcing a negative element in the parent's life. On this scale, parents note whether they feel rejected or alienated by the child. The final scale in this index, the Difficult Child subscale, assesses behavioural characteristics of the child that reflect whether the child is difficult to manage, due either to temperamental factors or learned patterns of non-compliance and defiance (Pipp-Siegel, Sedey & Yoshinaga-Itano, 2002:6-7).

2.5.1.8   Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory: Youth Version (Bar-On EQ-i:YV)

According to the Bar-On model, emotional intelligence pertains to the emotional, personal, and social dimensions of intelligence. Emotional intelligence comprises abilities relating to understanding oneself and others, relating to people, adapting to changing environmental demands and managing emotions. The Bar-On-i: YV, which is based on the Bar-On model of emotional and social intelligence, is a self-report instrument, designed to measure emotional intelligence in young people aged 7 to 18. The short form of this instrument consists of 30 items and the questionnaire makes use of a 4-point Likert-style format in which the options are "Very seldom true of me", "Seldom True of Me", "Often True of Me" and "Very Often True of Me". A high score indicates increased levels of emotional intelligence. The items are distributed across 5 scales, namely the Intrapersonal Scale, Interpersonal Scale, Stress Management Scale, Adaptability Scale and Positive Impression Scale (Bar-On & Parker, 2000:1-2). A total EQ score is then derived from the first four scales (Bar-On & Parker, 2000:8).

2.5.1.9   Revised Multidimensional Anxiety Scale (RCMAS)

The Revised Multidimensional Anxiety Scale (RCMAS) was developed in 1978 after several criticisms of the original Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale (CMAS). The RCMAS, which is also subtitled "What I Think and Feel", is a 37-item self-report instrument designed to access the level and nature of anxiety in children and adolescents between the ages of 6 and 19. The child is required to respond to each question by circling a "Yes" or "No", although the items may also be read out and recorded by an examiner if the child experiences difficulty in reading. The total number of "Yes" responses is then counted to determine a Total Anxiety score. In addition to the total score, the RCMAS offers four

subscale scores, namely Physiological Anxiety, Worry/Oversensitivity. Social Concern/Concentration as well as a Lie scale (Reynolds, Richmond, 1985:3-5).

2.5.1.10 Children's Depression Inventory (CDI)

The CDI aims to measure the extent and severity of depressive symptoms in children aged 7 to 17. According to the author (Kovacs, 1992), self-rated or informant-rated scales typically quantify a depressive syndrome which, from a clinical point of view, is a characteristic combination of psychopathological symptoms and signs. The 27-item self-rated symptom-orientated scale is suitable for school-age children and adolescents. The inventory was developed in 1977 and published in 1992 in response to the growing need for a self-rated symptom scale for children. Usually the scale discriminates between children with the psychiatric diagnosis of major depressive disorder or dysthymic disorder and those with other psychiatric conditions, or non-selected "normal" school children. It is also considered to be sensitive to changes in depression over time and is an acceptable index of the severity of the depressive disorder (Kovacs, 1992:1-2).

2.5.1.11 Kidcope

The Kidcope is a self-report measure of child and adolescent coping strategies (Piazza-Waggoner, *et al.*, 2006:196) According to Cooke, Ford, Levine, Bourke, Newell and Lapidus (2007:99), the 12-item questionnaire assesses subscales for positive and negative coping with daily stressors. Positive coping consist of four items indicating problem-focussed or self-management stressors, while the eight items of negative coping elements indicates blame, avoidance and wishful thinking.

2.5.1.12 Child Spiritual Coping Survey (CSCS)

The Child Spiritual Coping Survey (CSCS) is a 22-item measure of religious and existential coping strategies. During the administration of the CSCS the interview will prompt the child to "think when you are feeling down or afraid of being sick", upon which the child is then requested to rate each coping item on the basis of frequency of use and the effectiveness of the technique in reducing distress. The response opinions range from 0 "I never do this" to 4 "I always do this" (Boeving, 2003:32).

2.5.1.13 Self-Description Questionnaire (SDQ)

The Self-Description Questionnaire (SDQ) is a multidimensional instrument designed to measure seven facets of self-concept hypothesised in Shavelson's hierarchical model (Marsh, Relich & Smith, 1981:1). In discussing Shavelson's definition, Marsh, *et al.* (1981) describe self-concept to be an individual's perception of the self that is formed through experience with the environment, interactions with significant others, and attributions of his/her behaviour. Self-concept is both descriptive and evaluative. Furthermore, self-concept is multidimensional and hierarchically organised, with perceptions moving from inferences about the self in subareas (e.g. reading and mathematics), to boarded areas (academic and non-academic), and finally to general self-concept.

Finally self-concept becomes increasingly multifaceted as an individual moves from infancy to adulthood, and will depend upon the particular category system developed by an individual and shared by a reference group (Marsh, *et al.*, 1981:4-5). The SDQ measures seven components of self-concept that are based on Shavelson's hierarchical model. The SDQ consists of four non-academic scales (Physical Abilities, Physical Appearance, Relationship with Peers, and Relationship with Parents) as well as three academic scales (Reading, Mathematics and All School Subjects). Children answer to each item with one of the following possible response options, namely "e", "Mostly False", "Sometimes False", "Sometimes True", "Mostly True" and "True" (Marsh, *et al.*, 1981:8-9).

2.5.2 THE PROCESS OF CULTURAL TAILORING OF THE PSYCHOMETRIC DATA-COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS INCLUDED IN THE KGOLO MMOGO PROJECT

During the Kgolo Mmogo project, each of the psychometric data-collection instruments, as briefly described above, underwent a process of cultural tailoring prior to the administration of the instrument during the project. The detail regarding the individual alterations and adaptations of each item in these instruments falls on the fringe of the study and was therefore not referred to in particular.

However, in general the process of cultural tailoring commenced with the research team's initial selection of instruments that could potentially be included in the research project. This selection of proposed psychometric data-collection instruments was administered in English in two pilot groups. It was followed by discussions with the research assistants responsible for the administration of the psychometric data-collection instruments, after which the research team then decided on the 13 instruments to be used for the Kgolo Mmogo project. An independent company was commissioned to translate the selected

instruments from English into isiZulu, Sepedi, Setswana and Sesotho. Each questionnaire subsequently underwent several trials of translation that was followed up and informed by the research assistants as well as the care workers of the Kgolo Mmogo project in order to ensure the authenticity of the translations. Upon the completion of the translation process, each of the instruments underwent a back-translation from the African languages into English in an additional attempt to ensure the accuracy of the translations.

The aim of the cultural tailoring process was to achieve a culturally sensitive version of the original data-collection instrument. In the process the research team was confronted by several unique challenges that required unique considerations, hence the term cultural tailoring. One of the prominent challenges was the limited range of emotional vocabulary that exists in the African languages used in this project. Whereas the English version of a test could have several nuanced questions relating to a group of emotions, the research team was faced with the dilemma of not having a similar variety of words to translate the original phrase into. In addition to this, some of the items required additional tailoring in order to be culturally appropriate. For example, the original item might refer to the ability to use cutlery or lack thereof as a developmental milestone, whereas in a traditional African context, eating with one's hands may be regarded as culturally appropriate. Therefore, the cultural tailoring of each instrument encompassed more than merely the translation of the instrument, as each item in each instrument needed to be considered and, if need be, tailored, in order to achieve a culturally sensitive and appropriate psychometric data-collection instrument.

2.6   CONCLUSION

In summary, this chapter offers a brief exploration of literature regarding cross-cultural assessment, as this forms the backdrop of the study of cultural tailoring. However, as this study focussed on the experience of the research assistants during the administration of psychometric data-collection instruments within a South African context, the indigenisation discourse is employed as a point of departure in this brief literature review. The concept of indigenisation and indigenous psychology was, however, been explored beforehand to place the practice of cultural tailoring within the context of the indigenous psychology discourse.

After orientating the study with regard to the indigenous psychology discourse, an exploration of a body of literature addressing the practice of cross-cultural assessment was undertaken. Initially, a background to cross-cultural assessment was established before the concept of culture within the context of cross-cultural assessment was explored.

Furthermore, the need for cross-cultural assessment was also addressed and followed by an investigation of the arguments and opinions on the practice of psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation. Finally, specific reference was made to procedures of and considerations in the process of psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation, while brief mention was made of different authors' opinions with regard to the concept of equivalence within the process of instrument adaptation.

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Chapter 3

Research design and methodology

3.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter commences with a description of the paradigm adopted during this study. It is followed by a discussion of the research design that was employed. The particular strengths and weaknesses of the research design, as well as the ethical considerations relating to the study, are mentioned, while arguments with regard to the trustworthiness of the data are also considered. Finally, this chapter provides information on the research methodology.

3.2   BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This study formed part of the larger Kgolo Mmogo[4] project, which focuses on resilience in South African mothers and children who are affected by HIV and AIDS. The study aimed to demonstrate the extent of the psychological effects of maternal HIV on young children living in urban communities affected by poverty in South Africa by comparing this group with children whose parents are not HIV infected, but live in the same communities. Furthermore, the Kgolo Mmogo project seeks to assess the effectiveness of a theory-based support intervention for HIV-infected mothers and their children that is designed to improve maternal functioning and help mothers promote resilience in children at two different stages of development. As a final aim, the Kgolo Mmogo project seeks to identify maternal psychological and medical factors (including the introduction of antiretroviral (ARV) treatment), as well as child-related mediating variables that contribute to changes in the adaptive functioning of the children of HIV-infected parents over a 24-month interval.

As part of the Kgolo Mmogo project, research assistants administered a combination of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments to four hundred and thirty-six mothers living with HIV and AIDS and their children. The following summary and brief description of the project are offered by Eloff (2008:111-116):

This Kgolo Mmogo project is a five-year randomised controlled trial study that focuses on psychological resilience in South African mothers and children who are affected by HIV and AIDS. The study relies on two parallel tracks of data collection, the first being the

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4   Kgolo Mmogo means 'growing together'.

collection of longitudinal data on resilience factors in mothers and children. The data was collected by means of a combined psychological assessment scale consisting out of the following data-collection instruments (Eloff, 2008:112):

With the mothers:
- Centre of Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D), which is a short self-report scale to measure depressive symptomatology in the general population
- A brief multi-dimensional inventory used to examine general ways in which people usually respond to stress (Brief COPE)
- Positive Religious Coping
- Vineland (questionnaire on the developmental milestones of children)
- Coping with Children's Negative Emotion Scale (CCNES)
- Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL)
- Parenting Stress Index (PSI)

With the children:
- A measure of emotional intelligence in the youth (Bar-On EQ-I: YV)
- Revised Children's Multidimensional Anxiety Scale (RCMAS)
- Children's depression inventory (CDI)
- A brief self report of coping strategies (KIDCOPE)
- Child Spiritual Coping Survey (CSCS)
- Self-Description Questionnaire (SDQ)

Parallel to the psychological data collection is a theory-based support intervention conducted with mothers and children to assess the efficacy of a group-based intervention while mothers are dealing with the effects of the disease on themselves and their families (Eloff, 2008:112).

The author indicates the project to have multiple aims as it seeks to (Eloff, 2008:112-113):
- demonstrate the extent of the psychological effects of parental HIV disease on young children living in poverty-affected urban communities in South Africa by comparing them with other children whose parents are not HIV infected but living in the same communities;
- assess the effectiveness of the theory-based support intervention for HIV-infected mothers and their children that is designed to improve maternal functioning and help mothers promote resilience in children at two different ages

and stages of development: very young children (aged three years) and school-aged children (aged six to ten years);

• identify maternal psychological and medical factors (including initiation of antiretroviral treatment), as well as child-related mediating variables, that contribute to changes in the adaptive functioning of children of HIV-infected parents over a 24-month interval.

The Kgolo Mmogo project enrolled four hundred and thirty-six mothers and four hundred and thirty-six children. The current study was embedded in the first track, namely the data collection by means of composite psychological assessment scales. However, these scales were not specifically developed for the South African population. Therefore, the psychometric data-collection instruments had to be adapted or culturally tailored in order to be utilised in this project. This dissertation reports on the experiences of the research assistants who have been responsible for the administration of the culturally tailored psychological assessment scales.

3.2.1 ROLE OF THE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS IN THE KGOLO MMOGO PROJECT

Nine research assistants partook in the greater Kgolo Mmogo project. The selection criteria for the appointment of research assistants required them to be proficient in English, isiZulu, Sepedi, Setswana and Sesotho. A tertiary qualification was indicated as an additional requirement for the selection of research assistants, while individuals from a health professions background were favoured. The research assistants' responsibilities included the collection of data from the mother and child participants in an interview during which the collection of data via culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments were employed. They were also required to provide the participants with the necessary emotional support during the interview, for which the research assistants underwent additional training. The research assistants were sporadically involved in the capturing of data, although this was not considered a primary responsibility. These individuals underwent various training programmes with regard to the psychometric data-collection instruments included in the Kgolo Mmogo project. The training included peer training, in-service training and specialised environment training.

3.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the current study was to explore and describe the experiences of the research assistants involved in the Kgolo Mmogo project during the administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments in order to broadly inform the

specific practice of psychometric data-collection instrument adaptation and cross-cultural assessment.

3.4 PARADIGM

Guba and Lincoln (1998:195) define paradigm as the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator in his choice of method as well as in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways. Denzin and Lincoln (1998:185) state that a paradigm includes three elements, namely epistemology, ontology and methodology. Ontology is driven by the question of 'What is there to know?' (Willig, 2001:13). It raises basic questions about the nature of reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998:185; Ponterotto, 2005:126). Epistemology, in turn, is concerned with the question 'How do we know the word?' (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998:185), that is, the relationship between the participant and the would-be-knower (Ponterotto, 2004:126). The methodological assumption, according to Denzin and Lincoln (1998:201), grapples with the question on how the inquirer could go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known.

3.4.1 METATHEORETICAL PARADIGM: CONSTRUCTIVISM

This study was conducted from a constructivist paradigm. In essence, constructivists hold the opinion that reality is constructed in the mind of the individual, rather than being an external single entity (Hansen, in Ponterotto, 2004:129). The constructivist psychologies theorise on and investigate how human beings create systems for understanding their worlds and experience (Raskin, 2002:1) in a meaningful way. It seems as if, fundamentally, constructivist approaches centre around human meaning making as psychology's primary focus of inquiry (Raskin, 2002:2).

Constructivism is grounded within relativist ontology. Realities are in other words considered to be multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature and dependent on the individual or group that holds the construction for their form and content (Guba & Lincoln, 1998:206). Relativist ontology rejects the view that the world is made up of structures and objects that have a linear cause-effect relationship with one another. Rather, this ontological position maintains that the world is not an orderly, law-bound place, as the "out-there-ness" of the world is being questioned and emphasis is given to the diversity of interpretations that can be applied to it (Willig, 2001:13).

With regard to the epistemology, constructivism advocates a transactional and subjective stance that maintains that reality is socially constructed, and therefore the dynamic interaction between the inquirer and the participants takes a central position in capturing and describing the lived experience of the participants (Ponterotto, 2005:131). Therefore, the investigator and the object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked and the findings are created as the investigation proceeds (Guba & Lincoln, 1998:207). Given the particular ontological and epistemological stance, constructivism subscribes to a hermeneutical and dialectical methodology in that individual construction can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among an investigator and respondents. The varying constructions are interpreted using hermeneutical techniques, and are compared and contrasted through a dialectical interchange, with the aim being to distil a more informed and sophisticated consensus construction (Guba & Lincoln, 1998:207).

However, as Schwandt (2007:37) rightfully states, constructivism appears to be a particularly elusive term, with variable meanings, depending on the discourse in which it is used. In a similar vein, Raskin (2002:1) agrees that many "varieties of constructivism" exist. Although constructivist psychologies have grown in quantity and influence over the past fifty years, they have not evolved into a single, coherent, theoretically consistent orientation (Raskin, 2002:1).

In reaction to this, Raskin (2002) draws on the opinion of Chiari and Nuzzo, (1996, as cited in Raskin, 2002) by identifying two broad categories of constructivism, namely epistemological constructivism and hermeneutical constructivism. The former is described as having adopted the stance that an external reality that is independent of the observer might very well exist, although it is not possible for the observer to know the independent reality except through their construction thereof. Human knowledge is therefore regarded as a compilation of human-made construction of reality. Epistemologically, a constructivist regards knowledge schemes as being classified as more or less viable, rather than accurate, given the fact that humans can never know for certain whether a construction corresponds to an independent reality. They can only know if their construction works well for them.

Radical constructivism as advocated by Von Glasersfeld (in Raskin, 2002:3) seems to be the most clearly exemplified epistemological constructivism, according to Raskin (2002:3). Hermeneutical constructivism, on the other hand, does not subscribe to the existence of an observer-independent reality. Knowledge is regarded as a product of the linguistic activity of a community of observers, suggesting that there can be as many knowledge systems as there are groups negotiating them. Knowledge (and therefore truth) is viewed

as an interpretation. The interpretation is historically founded rather than timeless, contextually verifiable rather than universally valid, and linguistically generated and socially negotiated rather than cognitively and individually produced (Chiari & Nuzzo, 1996, in Raskin, 2002:4). The social constructivist theory of Gergen is noted to be an example of hermeneutical constructivism (Raskin, 2002:4).

Although naming them slightly differently, Schwandt (2007) also distinguishes between two broad categories within constructivism in social sciences. One category is identified as radical constructivism as advocated by Ernst von Glasersfeld. Like in Raskin's description of epistemological constructivism, Schwandt (2007) considers the central idea of radical constructivism to be that human knowledge cannot consist of an accurate representation or faithful copying of an external reality. Knowledge is thus redefined as a series of processes of inner constructions.

In the second category of constructivism, according to Schwandt (2007:39), the focus is more on the social process and interaction. The emphasis is on the manner in which social actors recognise, produce and reproduce social actions and how they come to share an inter-subjective understanding of specific life circumstances. Social constructivists seek to explain how human beings interpret or construct a concept in specific linguistic, social, and historical contexts.

As this study proposed to explore the unique human experience within a unique context, the primary focus of the inquiry was therefore not to find the 'absolute objective truth' about the administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments, but rather to give a description within the cultural and linguistic boundaries of an experience as co-constructed between the inquirer and the participants. However, for the purpose of this study, the position of hermeneutical constructivism and more specifically, the argument within social constructivism, was selected. As was stated above, the aim of the study was not to come as close as possible to the representation of the objective truth on cultural tailoring of psychometric data-collection instruments. The knowledge that was brought forward was considered as the product of the linguistic activity of a community of observers. Referring back to Chiari and Nuzzo (In Raskin, 2002:4), the process of inquiry and the consequent findings of this study are considered to be a historically and culturally founded interpretation that is contextually variable, linguistically generated and socially negotiated.

3.4.2   METHODOLOGICAL PARADIGM: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

In the light of the metatheoretical paradigm of constructivism, I conducted this study from a qualitative tradition. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) state that qualitative methods refer to a broad class of empirical procedures designed to describe and interpret the experiences of research participants in a specific setting. In an earlier publication the same authors indicate that qualitative research means different things at different moments in the complex historical field, but nevertheless they offer the following generic definition:

> Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. That means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998:3).

In accordance with this, Flick, *et al.* (2004:3) regard qualitative research as the description of life-worlds from the view of the people who participate in an attempt to contribute to a better understanding of social realities and to draw attention to processes, meaning patterns and structural features. The naturalistic approach of qualitative research that aims to describe the life-worlds of the participants as described above, links up with the aim of this study. It aims to describe the subjective experiences of the participants within the natural setting, that is, their capacity as research assistants in the larger Kgolo Mmogo project.

Hamilton (1998:116) traces the history of qualitative research back to an eighteenth-century disruption that occurred in the fortunes of quantitative research. According to this author, the philosopher Immanuel Kant opposed the Cartesian position emphasising the importance of mathematics and objectivity in the search for truth by presenting a range of fundamental ideas in his work, Critique of Pure Reason (1781), which provided a source of qualitative thinking. Kant proposed that perception derives not only from the evidence of the senses, but also from the mental apparatus that serves to organise the incoming sense impressions. With this view, Kant broke sharply with Cartesian objectivism. Human knowledge is ultimately based on understanding; an intellectual state that is more than just a consequence of experience (Hamilton, 1998:117). These arguments by Kant are weighty with the later arguments of constructivism stated in the aforementioned.

Willig (2001:9) points to the tendency in qualitative research to be concerned with meaning. This tradition explores how people make sense of the world and how they

experience events. The researcher was specifically concerned with the quality and texture of experience and did not attempt to identify causal relationships between variables.

The objective of qualitative research is to describe and possibly explain events and experiences and never to predict. In the light of this and previous descriptions of qualitative research, it seemed evident that a qualitative methodology should be adopted in this study. It supported the aim of this study, namely to explore and describe the experience of research assistants in the administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments as utilised in the Kgolo Mmogo project. This study follows the directions of Willig (2001) and Denzin and Lincoln (2000, as cited in Ponterotto, 2005:128) in being concerned with the quality and texture of the participants' experiences within the natural setting, and therefore it fitted the qualitative tradition. The intension of the inquirer in this study was to provide a description of the insider's perspective from the point of view of the participants as stipulated by Flick, Kardorff, and Steinke (2004:3).

3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN: QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

3.5.1 DESCRIPTION OF A QUALITATIVE CONTENT-ANALYSIS DESIGN

Mouton (2001:165) describes content-analysis research design as a study that analyses the content of texts or documents. In this regard, content refers to words, meanings, pictures, symbols, themes or any message that can be communicated. This research design made use of secondary data, that is data that already exists. Elo and Kyngäs (2007:107-108) describe content analysis as a method of analysing written or verbal messages, while content analysis is also known as a method of analysing documents. In a similar vein, Kapborg and Berterö (2003:185) refer to content analysis as one of the classic procedures for analysing textual material. Furthermore, content analysis is described as a method for making inferences from the data to their context with the aim of attaining a broad description of a phenomenon (Elo and Kyngäs, 2007:108). More specifically, Wilkinson (2008:198) indicates content analysis to be a commonly used approach to analyse qualitative data such as focus-group data. This method involves coding participants' open-ended talk into closed categories, which summarise and systematise the data. This description by Wilkinson (2008:198) is in keeping with the specific features of the current study, as it involved the analysis of verbatim transcripts of two focus-group discussions.

A qualitative content analysis is indicated to be a specialised design-type of content analysis (Mouton, 2001:166). Kapborg and Berterö (2003:185) state that the qualitative

procedure in content analysis is one "where the word usage is explored, where the researcher wishes to discover a range of meaning that a word can express in normal use". The aim of the current study was to explore the subjective experiences of the research assistants in the administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments. The main sources of data were the verbatim transcripts of two focus-group discussions, as well as the supporting field notes of the facilitators. In the light of Kapborg and Berterö's (2003:185) description, a qualitative content-analysis research design seemed to be an appropriate fit. Furthermore, the exploratory nature of this research question made it suitable for this particular research design, as Mouton (2001:166) points to the fact that content analysis is usually employed for descriptive or exploratory questions.

3.5.2   STRENGTHS OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Mouton (2001:166), the most prominent strength of this type of research design is that the analysis of text and documents is a non-reactive method. Given the fact that the inquirer was involved with secondary data sources, errors usually associated with the interaction between the researcher and the participants were avoided (Mouton, 2001:166). For the purpose of this study, the analysis of the data documents rendered an additional perspective to the study, as the information was not filtered through the involvement in the focus-group discussions, and consequently the co-constructed reality of the group. With this, the researcher did not claim a more superior position, but rather an alternative perspective with the aim of providing a further description of the data.

3.5.3   SHORTCOMINGS IN THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Mouton (2001:166) identifies the most significant limitation of this type of research design to be the authenticity of the data. As the current research design employed secondary data sources, the challenge lay in establishing the integrity of the data. For the purpose of this study, the most prominent data source for the qualitative content analysis research design was the verbatim transcripts of two focus-group discussions. The absence of the inquirer at the focus-group discussions suggests lack of access to the non-verbal information and cues that accompany spoken language. In addition to this, the inquirer mainly relied on the audio recordings of the discussions and the poor quality of the auditory data hampered the transcriptions of the text. In an attempt to increase the trustworthiness of the text and limit the impact of the suspected shortcomings of the data source, I used the field notes of the facilitators to verify and enrich the verbatim transcripts.

Another possible shortcoming of a qualitative content analysis relates to the authenticity of the data. Mouton (2001:166) suggests that questions regarding the representativeness of the analysed text are bound to have an adverse impact on the external validity of the findings. However, for the purpose of this study, the constructivist paradigm did not aspire to the notion of an objective truth that can be discovered and generalised to different populations. Rather, the aim was to have a thick and in-depth inquiry and description of a particular issue; in this case the subjective experiences of the research assistants in the Kgolo Mmogo project.

3.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.6.1 INTRODUCTION

The methodology refers to the process and procedures of the research (Ponterotte, 2005:132). In a slightly more nuanced description, Strauss and Corbin (1998:3) refer to methodology as a way of thinking about the study of social reality, while the term method is used to refer to a set of procedures and techniques for gathering and analysing data. The difference between the two concepts is indicated by the following: The importance of the methodology is that it provides a sense of vision. It provides guidance as to where the analyst wants the search directed. The method, on the other hand, entails the techniques and procedures that furnish the means for bringing the 'vision' into reality (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:3). In the following sections, the process, procedures and techniques in the data collection and analysis will be discussed briefly.

3.6.2 PLACE OF STUDY

Two on-site focus groups were conducted at a clinical training hospital (Kalafong Hospital) in Atteridgeville in Pretoria. The Kgolo Mmogo project is based in a separate double storey building on the hospital grounds. The focus-group discussions were conducted in a spacious meeting room with two large writing tables and chairs. The geographical setting of the building on the hospital grounds limits traffic and noise in and around the building.

3.6.3 PARTICIPANTS

Nine research assistants took part in two focus-group discussions. The first focus group as facilitated by Professor I. Eloff consisted of four participants, while five research assistants took part in the second group discussion facilitated by Professor L. Ebersöhn. The information regarding the participants is presented in the following table:

Table 3.1: Description of the participants in the study

Participant	Group	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	Level of education
		Age group					
Research Assistant 1	1	♦					Master's degree (Psychology)
Research Assistant 2	2					♦	Master's degree (Nursing)
Research Assistant 3	1					♦	Master's student (Nursing)
Research Assistant 4	1	♦					Master's degree (Gender studies)
Research Assistant 5	2		♦				Master's degree (Psychology)
Research Assistant 6	2		♦				Honours degree (Psychology)
Research Assistant 7	2	♦					Honours degree (Psychology)
Research Assistant 8	1	♦					Master's student (Public Health)
Research Assistant 9	2					♦	B.Cur degree (Psychiatry)

The participants were selected on the basis of their participation as research assistants in the Kgolo Mmogo project. The sampling method employed in this study was typical case sampling that is used in naturalistic research. Typical case sampling is the process during which a sample is selected from typical persons or cases where a profile of attributes or characteristics that are possessed by the 'average' are also present in the sample (LeCompte & Preissle in Cohan, *et al.*, 2000:142). For the purpose of this study the participants were selected primarily on the basis of the fact that they were involved in the administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments.

3.6.4   PROCESS OF THE STUDY

Initially, a literature study (Meiring, *et al.*, 2006; Carter, *et al.*, 2005; Casillas & Robbins, 2004; Butcher, 2004; Collinge, *et al.*, 2002; Moletsane & Eloff, 2006; Brandt, 2005; Widenfelt, *et al.*, 2005, Skevington, 2002) was conducted in order to provide a backdrop against which the current study could be undertaken. The literature study proved to be informative with regard to the discourse on indigenisation in psychology as a context against which the practice of cultural tailoring was examined. In addition to this, the

literature study informed the inquirer of the existing practices, experiences and potential challenges with regard to the process of the adaptation of psychometric data-collection instruments.

The literature review was followed by the transcription of the discussions in the two focus groups that had been conducted on 30 January 2008 with the group of participants, as was previously stated. Two of the investigators of the Kgolo Mmogo project, namely Professor Irma Eloff and Professor Liesel Ebersöhn, facilitated the focus groups. Prior to embarking on the analysis of the data, I visited the project site at Kalafong Hospital in Pretoria and met with the project coordinator as well as the available research assistants and team members in order to familiarise myself with the Kgolo Mmogo project in general and to orientate myself with regard to the generated data of this study.

3.6.5   DATA COLLECTION

3.6.5.1   Document analysis of the focus-group transcriptions

As was stated, the primary data source used in the document analysis was the verbatim transcripts of two focus-group discussions. A focus-group interview is a method of data generation that brings together a group of people to discuss a particular topic (Schwandt, 2007). The focus groups were guided by an interview schedule[5]. Both focus-group discussions were audio taped, from which the verbatim transcriptions[6] were then made.

The value of a focus-group discussion is highlighted by Bohnsack (2004), where this author states that the group opinion, as derived from a focus group, is not merely the sum of the individual's opinion, but rather the product of the collective interaction. This argument links up with the idea of knowledge as the product of a collectively constructed reality, as advocated by the constructivist paradigm. Therefore, the focus group allows for the participants to convey their different opinions and experiences in a process during which the collective opinion (or co-constructed reality) is being negotiated and constructed by all the different participants in the conversation.

Another advantage of the use of focus groups is that this type of interview is particularly suited for obtaining several perspectives on the same topic. If multiple understandings and meanings are revealed by participants, multiple explanations for their behaviour and attitudes will be more readily articulated. Furthermore, it allows for gaining insight into

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[5]   A copy of the interview schedule is included in appendix A.
[6]   An example of the verbatim transcriptions is included in appendix B.

people's shared understanding of the topic and the ways in which individuals are influenced by others in the group situation (Gibbs, 1997).

A possible limitation of focus groups as a means of data collection is pointed out by Morgan (in Gibbs, 1997), in that the inquirer has less control over the data produced compared to in a one-on-one interview. However, because this study is of an exploratory nature, the researcher does not necessarily require excessive control over the collected data. Another possible limitation of focus groups is the fact that it becomes difficult to distinguish the individual's opinion from that of the group (Gibbs, 1997). However, for the purpose of this study, the focus is not as much on the individual's opinion, but rather on that of the collaborative construction of their experiences in order to inform the practice of cultural tailoring.

Greef (2002:304) is of the opinion that tape recordings allow a much more comprehensive record compared to notes taken during the interview, as tapes can later be transcribed for close analysis. The researcher is therefore encouraged to make audio or visual recordings of interviews, as was the case during the current study. Schwandt (1997:162) describes transcripts as the written account of what was said by respondents or informants in conversation. The aim of the transcripts is to prepare a record of the respondents' own words. Silverman (2001:13) considers audio recordings to be an increasingly important part of qualitative research, and regards the transcripts of these recordings as an excellent record of what this author refers to as "naturally occurring interaction".

One of the strengths of verbatim transcripts as identified by Silverman (2001:13) is the fact that they offer a highly reliable record to which a researcher can return. In addition to this, one of the primary advantages of audio tapes and transcripts is that tapes can be replayed and transcriptions can be improved (Silverman, 2001:162). Repeated listening to audio tapes is therefore recommended by the author in order to improve and build on the researcher's version of the transcripts (Silverman, 2001:163). For the purpose of this study, the audio recordings were repeatedly played during the transcription process and, after the initial transcripts had been completed, the transcripts were again read along with the audio recordings in order to ensure the accuracy of the text as far as possible.

Schwandt (1997:162) warns that transcripts should not be regarded as merely "some kind of innocent recording of the way things really are". This view is supported by Van Maanen (in Schwandt, 1997:162), when he states that transcriptions are mediated by factors such as the fieldworker's own standards of relevance of what is of interest, by the self-reflection

demanded of both the fieldworker and the informant, as well as by the fieldworker's mere presence on the scene of the research as an observer or participant.

Even though care was taken to ensure that the transcripts of the focus-group discussions were as accurate as possible, I remained cautious as to the limitations of the text as pointed out by Schwandt (1997) and Van Maanen (in Schwandt, 1997:162). The transcripts were therefore regarded as an account of the verbal responses during the focus-group discussions, as the data did not allow for access to the non-verbal cues, for example. The transcripts were therefore not regarded as a complete reproduction of the focus-group discussions. However, Silverman (2000:830) holds the opinion that "completeness" of data is only an illusion, as data can never be fully "complete", nor can there be a "perfect transcript".

Another shortcoming of transcripts of audio material is pointed out by Silverman (2001:33) when this author states that the reliability of interpretation of the transcripts may be weakened by a failure to note apparently trivial but often crucial pauses, overlaps or body movements. Because I was not present during the focus group discussion, the integrity of the transcripts may pose a barrier to the trustworthiness of the study. In an attempt to ensure the reliability of the transcripts, the field notes (as discussed below) produced by the group facilitators were used to inform the transcripts and to increase the trustworthiness of the data.

3.6.5.2 Document analysis of the field notes

In addition to the data collected by means of the focus groups, the two facilitators also generated field notes[7] during the course of the study, which were included as an additional source of data. Given the aim of a qualitative approach to describe life-worlds from the perspective of the participants (Flick, *et al.*, 2004:3), the experiences and thoughts of the facilitators yielded an additional perspective to the study. For the purpose of this study the field notes were used to inform the transcription process of the focus-group discussions. The field notes were continuously compared with the transcripts in order to increase the accuracy of the transcripts.

The descriptions of field notes are nuanced differently by various authors (Schwandt, 1997; Silverman, 2001; Strydom, 2002; Greef, 2002, Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). Notwithstanding the particular accent of the definition, in essence, field notes are

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7   An example of the field notes is included as Appendix D

considered to be data (Schwandt, 1997:52). Greef (2002:304) describes field notes as the written account of the things the researcher hears, sees, experiences and thinks about in the course of the interviewing, whereas Strydom (2002:285) points out that field notes should contain a chronological description of what happens to the setting and the participants. The same author warns that the more the time that passes between the sessions and the making of field notes, the less accurate the data is expected to be (Strydom, 2002:285). The field notes utilised for this study were generated during the focus-group discussion, and in doing that, the loss of information or the alteration of information that may have occurred over time as indicated by Strydom (2002), was limited.

Schwandt (1997:52-53) describes several categories of field notes that would include daily entries made in a field journal, while field notes may also encompass all those things collected in the course of fieldwork, such as the fieldwork journal, transcripts of conversations and interviews, photographs, audio- and videotapes, copies of documents and artefacts. However, for the purpose of this study, field notes were considered to be related to the first description of field notes described by Schwandt (1997:52) when he defines field notes to be raw data consisting of notes made in the field based on observations and conversations, lists of terms and rough diagrams and charts, for example. Silverman (2001:65), however, continues this description by stating that field notes are not merely the recording of data, but form part of the analysis of data.

Arguing from an ethnographical research perspective, Bryman (in Silverman, 2001:227) states that the availability of field notes has the advantage that they can allow the reader to formulate his or her own instinct about the perspective of the people who have been studied. Fortunately, the field notes were made available during this study in order to enrich the data sources of the audio transcripts of the focus-group discussions. For the purpose of this study the field notes were used to inform the transcription process of the focus-group discussions. The field notes were continuously compared with the transcripts in order to increase the accuracy of the transcripts. This practice of supporting verbatim transcripts with the field notes of the researcher's experience in the interview is also recommended by Henning, *et al.* (2004:76).

A possible limitation in this study is the absence of the inquirer during the focus-group discussions, which made the verbatim transcripts vulnerable to minor inaccuracies resulting from difficulties with regard to the clarity of the audio recordings. In addition to this, absence during the focus-group discussions resulted in the inquirer not having access to any non-verbal cues or information offered during the group discussions, as implied by Silverman (2001:33). This potentially threatens the integrity of the primary source of data.

In response to this potential limitation, the process of reconsolidating the field notes with the verbatim transcripts aimed to limit any inaccuracies and proposed to increase the trustworthiness of the data.

However, not being present in the focus-group discussion compelled the inquirer to focus entirely on the data from the transcriptions, which may be considered a possible advantage in this case. The fact that my reading and interpretation of the text were not hued by potential biased perceptions resulting from my participation in the group discussions could result in the interpretation of the data not favouring pre-existing conclusions drawn during the discussions.

3.6.6   DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION: THEME ANALYSIS

Strauss and Corbin (1998:11) describe the process of qualitative data analysis as a process of interpretation, carried out for the purpose of discovering concepts and relationships in raw data and then organising these into a theoretical explanatory scheme. Analysis is the interplay between the researcher and the data. In a similar vein, Schwandt (2007:6) describes the analysis of qualitative data as an activity of making sense of, interpreting and theorising data. This activity follows a process of organising, reducing, and describing data and continues through the activities of interpreting and drawing of conclusions. Cohen, *et al.* (2002) make a suggestion with regard to the general process of data analysis. This involves a) the generation of natural units of meaning, b) the classification, categorisation and ordering of the units of meaning, c) the structuring of narratives to describe the content, and d) the interpretation of the data. Schwandt (2007:6) describes the process of qualitative analysis as the breaking down of the corpus of data into components of constituent parts.

As the body of data is broken down, the segments are categorised and coded and, by relating the codes and categories to one another, the researcher tries to establish a pattern for the whole. Strauss and Corbin (1998:1) refer to the process of coding as the analytical processes through which data is fractured, conceptualised, and integrated to form and theory. The purpose of the coding procedure is summarised by the following (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:13):

•   Provides the researcher with analytical tools for handling masses of raw data
•   Helps analysts to consider alternative meanings of phenomena
•   Stimulates a systematic and creative process
•   Identifies, develops and relates the concepts that are the building blocks of theory.

For the purpose of this study, the data was analysed by means of a theme analysis. According to Aronson (1994), a thematic analysis focuses on the identifiable themes and patterns of living and/or behaviour. However, prior to commencing with the thematic analysis, I initially organised the data by consolidating the information from the field notes with the verbatim transcripts of the focus-group discussions, as guided by Schwandt's (2007:6) views on qualitative data analysis. The main purpose of this process was to ensure the accuracy of the focus-group transcripts. An additional aim was to reduce the data into one document. This was followed by organising the transcripts into natural units of meaning (Cohen, *et al.*, 2002) as the body of the text was divided into speaker units.

The next step in the process of data analysis during this study was to embark on a literal reading of the text, which I followed by interpretive and reflective reading as recommended by Manson (2002:148). The former refers to the process during which a construction is made of what the text means or represents in the opinion of the reader. During the process of reflective reading, I sought to explore my role in and perspective of the process of data generation, but more specifically interpretation (Manson, 2002:148).

After the repeated reading of the text, I commenced with the thematic analysis[8]. During this process, I identified the themes within the data. Ryan and Bernard (2003:275) describe themes to be abstract constructs that investigators identify before, during and after data collection. Possible themes were identified during the literature review, as recommended by Ryan and Bernard (2003), but themes that form the text itself were also included.

After repeated reading of the text, three main themes were identified and coded. During the following step I identified and coded the subthemes within each of the three main themes, as recommended by Aronson (1994). I also needed to develop criteria on the basis of which certain statements were included within a theme as subthemes, as well as criteria for the exclusion of statements in themes and subthemes. Finally, I reported the findings from the study by formulating the themes and subthemes into what Aronson (1994) calls theme statements.

3.7   TRUSTWORTHINESS

Within the qualitative tradition, the concept of quality has the purpose of generating understanding (Golafshani, 2003). The inquirer is concerned with the question of "How can

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[8]   An example page from the thematic analysis is included as appendix C

an inquirer persuade his or her audience that the research findings of the inquiry are worth paying attention to?" (Lincoln & Guba in Golafshani, 2003:601). In this regard the terminology used would be credibility, transferability and trustworthiness (Golafshani, 2003:600). Lincoln and Guba (1985, as cited in Morse, *et al.*, 2002) propose credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability as the corresponding criteria to ensure the trustworthiness in qualitative research.

Lincoln and Guba (1985, as cited in Seale, 2003:172) suggest that the naturalistic inquirer adopt the term credibility in favour of truth value, as the latter assumes a single, tangible reality, while the naturalistic researcher accepts multiple constructed realities. The technique recommended by the authors to establish credibility is that of 'member checking'. In this study the initial member check was already addressed by the facilitators of the focus groups in that they continuously verified, reflected upon and summarised the participants' remarks and, as such, provided the participants with an opportunity to clarify any misconceptions with regard to their statements. An additional measure, in an attempt to increase the credibility of the research, was the process during which the researcher sought the opinion and guidance of the group facilitators as well as that of the project coordinator of the Kgolo Mmogo project in reporting the main themes of the focus groups. This allowed for an additional opportunity to ensure that the content of the focus group was being reported in a responsible manner.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985, as cited in Seale, 2003:172), transferability of the study is another criterion in establishing its trustworthiness. This term refers to the concept of external validity or applicability within quantitative research, i.e. the notion of whether the results of the research can be generalised to another population (McBurney, 1994:124). In this study, the uniqueness of the context may pose limitations to the generalisation of the findings. However, in taking measure in the description of the detail of the context and different aspects of the study, the information gathered during this project may be valuable in the practice of cultural tailoring and, as such, aspects of the study may be deemed meaningful in other contexts.

The conventionally conceived concept of reliability, or what is also regarded as consistency, is replaced by the notion of dependability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, as cited in Seale, 2003:172). The former refers to the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the study (Joppe, 2000, as cited in Golafshani, 2003). In addition to this, confirmability is proposed as criterion to replace objectivity within the quantitative tradition. A useful technique to establish both confirmability and dependability is that of auditing, which is explained to be an exercise in reflexivity. This

involves the provision of a methodologically self-critical account of how the research was done. The adoption of a critical and reflective attitude, as well as taking care with the description of the methodological conduct during this study, represents the auditing of the study. Furthermore, for the purpose of this study, an opportunity for peer auditing was created by the fact that the study was conducted under the guidance of two supervisors to the inquirer.

Morse *et al.* (2002) suggests that the researcher must aim for methodological coherence to ensure coherence between the research question and the components of the methodology in an attempt to increase the quality of the study. As was argued earlier, caution was taken to ensure the congruency between the paradigm, research question, methodology and research design. In addition to this, Morse *et al.* (2002) recommend an appropriate sample as another factor in establishing the trustworthiness of the study. For this particular study, the participants were selected for their first-hand experience and involvement in the administration of the culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments and, as such, the participants in the study were considered to have a thorough knowledge and experience of the research topic.

3.8   ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

The role of the researcher is, in essence, embedded and informed by the epistemological stance of the adopted paradigm. Constructivism emphasises the transactional and subjective nature of the relationship between the investigator and the object of investigation (Guba & Lincoln, 1998:207). The inquirer therefore assumes an active role in the co-construction of the data with the aim of acknowledging the subjective nature of the data in the reporting of the findings. For the purpose of this study, my role as investigator was specifically focused on the analysis and interpretation of the documented data in order to give a meaningful and deep description of the experiences of the research assistants in the larger Kgolo Mmogo project. The epistemological stance subscribed to by the constructivist paradigm suggest this to have a transactional nature (Ponterotto, 2005:131), as the inquirer and the data were interlinked (Guba & Lincoln, 1998:207). The findings as derived from this study were therefore considered the co-constructed reality that was created through the interaction of the inquirer with the data.

In addition to this, Denzin and Lincoln (1998:24) imply that one of the roles of the researcher would be to make the worlds of experience that have been studied more understandable by employing interpretive methods, while keeping in mind that this view is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity. For

the purpose of this study, I engaged in a reflective attempt to describe the participants' experiences by interpreting the body of data, aiming to provide a thick description of the topic.

3.9   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Human interaction lies at the heart of this study and this affects both the researcher and participants of the study. Consequently, this form of inquiry is submerged in ethical issues (Brinkman and Kvale, 2008:263). Ethical issues in qualitative research arise because of the complexities of researching private lives and placing accounts in the public arena and, as such, the researcher embarks on a process with "inescapable ethical aspects" (Brinkman & Kvale, 2008:263). In this light, an additional dimension to the ethical considerations in this study was proposed by the fact that despite the direct involvement of the research assistants as the primary participants in this study, their experiences and the consequent content of the conversation may also have included the mothers and children who took part in the larger Kgolo Mmogo project.

Several aspects ought to receive attention when ethical aspects of qualitative research are considered, including informed consent, confidentiality, the consequence of the study, the role of the researcher, respect for the person, beneficence, trust and negation (Brinkman & Kvale, 2008; Marczyk, De Matteo & Festigner, 2005; Lincoln & Guda, 2003). However, Brinkman and Kvale (2008:265) suggest that the researcher adopt a critical attitude in which these problem areas are continuously addressed and reflected upon, rather than considering these issues as questions that can be settled once and for all, all in advance of the research project. The researcher should remain open to conflicts, dilemmas and ambivalences that may arise throughout the research project. Therefore, even though the different aspects of the ethical considerations are mentioned, the aim was not to provide a clear-cut and comprehensive discussion of each of the themes, but rather an identification of different fields of considerations as areas of continued awareness as adopted by the researcher.

3.9.1   INFORMED CONSENT

According to Marczyk *et al.* (2005), one of the fundamental ethical principles when conducting research is respect for the individual. It is this fundamental underlying ethical safeguard that commands the requirement that informed consent be obtained from individuals who freely volunteer to participate in research projects. Informed consent implies that the participants in the research project were informed of the potential facts that

might influence their decision to take part in the research project and, consequently, had the right to choose to take part or reject participation in the study (Cohen, *et al.*, 2003).

For the purpose of this study, the participants were involved as research assistants in the larger Kgolo Mmogo project. They were therefore not only informed of the purpose and potential consequence of this study, but the nature of their involvement in the larger research project resulted in an additional perspective with regard to the nature and aim of this study. In addition to this, all the research assistants had attained, or were in the process of, completing their own postgraduate studies, rendering an additional perspective with regard to the nature of research and the possible consequence of participating in research in general and in this study in particular. The research assistants were therefore in a favourable position to give consent, which they did prior to participating in the focus-group discussions.

3.9.2   BENEFICIAL CONSEQUENCE OF THE STUDY

Brinkman and Kvale (2008:265) recommend that, before commencing with an inquiry, the researcher consider the beneficial consequences of a study. In this regard, the information elicited from the Kgolo Mmogo project potentially holds significant benefit of, among other things, the development of psychological support for families living with HIV in South Africa. The potential benefit of this particular substudy centred more on the possible information that may arise from the study, which, in turn, may potentially inform the practice of the cultural tailoring of psychometric data-collection instruments. The benefit for the participants (research assistants) was not so much in the outcome of the study, but rather in the process of the project. Engaging these individuals in a group discussion on their experiences during the project provided the participant with an opportunity to reflect on and share their personal experiences during the project. Therefore, even though this could be small, this study had a potential psychological benefit for its participants.

3.9.3   CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality generally involves the individual's right to have control over the use or access of his or her personal relationship, as well as the right to have the information that he or she shares with the research team to be kept private (Marczyk, 2005:244). Brinkmann and Kvale (2008:266) state that confidentiality in research implies that private data identifying the participants will not be reported. In this study, even though reference was made to the experience of the research assistants, their personal information remained confidential in an attempt to uphold their right to privacy.

In elaborating on the aspect of anonymity, Lincoln and Guda (2003:230) quote Skrtic, Egon, Guda and Knowlton when they warn of the fact that, even though a researcher may provide as much protection of the participant's identity as possible, such protection could be difficult to extend and impossible to guarantee. As a consequence of this, Lincoln and Guda (2003:230) propose that the trust relationship being built between the researcher and the participant should be negotiated with full disclosure of the risks that participants undertake. However, even though the effort is being made to protect the participants' anonymity, an attempt should also be made not to deny them their voice, which might be the fundamental aim of the research (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2008:267).

3.9.4 CONSEQUENCES

The consequence of the study relates to the beneficial consequence discussed earlier, as this entails the possible benefits that a proposed study holds for its participants. However, in addition to this, the possible harm that may result from participating in a research project also needs to be addressed. This argument relates to the ethical principal of beneficence (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2008:267). According to Marczyk, *et al.* (2005:241), this principle has its origins in the Hippocratic Oath, namely, "First, do no harm". Above all, researchers should not harm their participants and the risk of harm should be minimised (Marczyk, 2005:241; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2008:267). This study had no intent to cause any deliberate physical or psychological harm. However, the possibility exists that a participant may have disclosed more information during the course of the group discussion, which could have caused some regret with the participant. The fact that the anonymity of the participants was protected should limit the impact of such regrets, to some extent at least. In addition to this, the facilitators of the group discussions provided the participants with their contact numbers. As such, the participants had continuous access to the facilitators, providing them with the opportunity to contact the facilitators in the event of them experiencing discomfort after their participation in the research.

3.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter offers a slightly more detailed description of the research design, paradigm stance, research design and methodology. Furthermore, this chapter includes considerations with regard to the quality of the study, as well as the ethical consideration. This study was oriented with regard to the background of the larger research project. The process of the research is mentioned briefly, as is the data-collection process. Finally, this chapter concludes with a summary of the process of data analysis. In the next chapter, the findings from the proposed thematic analysis will be presented.

Chapter 4

The experiences of research assistants in the administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments: Discussion of themes

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, attention was given to the guiding ontological and epistemological stances adopted during this study, while the research design and process were also discussed. Following the information regarding the course of the research in the previous chapter, chapter 4 aims to present the analysed data in the form of the main themes followed by identified subthemes. An initial summary of the identified main themes is followed by a detailed discussion of the thematic content of the data.

4.2 RESULTS OF THE THEME ANALYSIS

In total, three main themes were identified by means of a theme analysis of the research assistants' experiences in the administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments. Subsequently, subthemes related to each of the main themes were identified in three of the main themes. A summary of the theme analysis is presented in the following table:

Table 4.1   Summary of the themes and subthemes

Theme	Related themes
Challenges of language and comprehension	• Difficulty in translating the instruments
	• Challenges in comprehension
	• Culturally inappropriate questions
	• Contradicting responses from the participants
	• Participants offering what they perceive to be the "correct" responses
The instruments had an informative value and educational function	• Informing participants about their children's developmental phases
	• Identifying mothers' lack of knowledge regarding their children's development
	• Serving as a tool for HIV education

Theme	Related themes
The assessment placed an emotional strain on the research assistants	• Difficulty in defining their role as researchers
	• Dealing with the expectations of the participants

	• Challenges with regard to the interaction and research relationship with the participants
	   o The assessment is time consuming
	   o Breaks
	   o Participants deliberately trying to extend the assessment session
	   o Finding ways to elicit responses

	• Spirituality

4.3 THEME ANALYSIS: RESEARCH ASSISTANTS' EXPERIENCES IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF CULTURALLY TAILORED PSYCHOMETRIC DATA-COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

4.3.1 ORIENTATION TO THE PRESENTING DATA

The focus of this study was to examine the subjective experience of the research assistants who were involved in the administration of a battery of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments in the Kgolo Mmogo project. The data was collected by means of two focus-group discussions facilitated by Professors Irma Eloff and Liesel Ebersöhn. I transcribed[9] the audio recording of these focus-group discussions and did a thematic analysis of the verbatim transcriptions. For the purpose of this study the focus group conducted by Professor Eloff will be referred to as 'Focus group 1', whereas the focus group facilitated by Professor Ebersöhn will be referred to as 'Focus group 2'. I used the field notes recorded during both these focus-group discussions by the interviewers to inform the transcription and analysis of the focus-group discussions[10]. Each theme and subtheme identified during the thematic analysis was supported by the related verbatim quotations from the transcribed raw data and field notes. These excerpts were quoted in the same order that they were presented in during the focus groups.

As could be expected, the participants verbalised a range of experiences that included their emotional experiences during the administration of the different instruments, difficulties with and comments on the cultural tailoring of the instruments, as well as the perceived reaction of participants to the research project. Several themes were presented

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[9] An example of the data transcriptions is included in appendix B.
[10] See appendix for an example of the field notes D.

during the focus-group discussions. I regarded the main themes as those aspects of the research assistants' experiences that resulted in recurring comments. However, in order to enrich the findings, the main themes were nuanced in subthemes and reported in this chapter. In the following section, the main themes and the related subthemes will be discussed with supporting quotations from the data transcripts.

4.3.2   CHALLENGES OF LANGUAGE AND COMPREHENSION

Table 4.2:   **Inclusive and exclusive criteria of the theme: Challenges of language and comprehension**

Indicators	All the instances in the raw data where participants referred to challenges in language and comprehension of questions. Instances where participants referred to the cultural appropriateness of the items were also included. Finally, instances from the raw data where reference was made to contradictions in the mothers' and children's responses, as well as where participants offered responses they perceived to be correct.
Exclusions	Instances from the raw data where participants referred to difficulty in eliciting responses from mothers or children.

Several comments by the participants referred to issues relating to the language of the assessment process. Closely related to this theme were comments referring to challenges and issues referring to the comprehension of the questions by the participants in the Kgolo Mmogo project. This theme is illuminated and discussed in terms of the following subthemes:

►   **Difficulty in the translation of the psychometric data-collection instruments**

Table 4.3   **Inclusive and exclusive criteria of the subtheme: Difficulty in the translation of the psychometric data-collection instruments**

Indicators	All the instances in the raw data where participants referred to difficulties relating to the translations of items.
Exclusions	Instances from the raw data where participants referred to difficulty in comprehension or difficulty in eliciting responses.

The research assistants indicated that they experienced difficulty with certain aspects of the translations. These difficulties seemed to be related to the fact that different dialects of a language are spoken in different parts of the country, bringing about difficulties in the translation of the instruments. Even though the instruments had been translated into

isiZulu, for example, the urban dialect might differ from the dialect employed for the translation of the instruments. The research assistants therefore indicated that they reverted back to the English version in order to compensate for the difficulties in the translation process. The following quotations are presented in support of this subtheme:

- Here and there, especially with the translations, I, for one find it difficulty when using the language that the mom speaks… I find that I always have to jump to the English version and reach out here and there. You find that the English version is much easier understandable than the indigenous language. Sometimes the indigenous language is too heavy that the mom actually finds it difficulty to understand. When the research assistant immediately page into the English version you find that you go easier to the mom than in that language. I think the translation here and there is a problem (Focus group 1, unit 8).

- I think when they were translated they use like Sepedi, they use Sepedi from the north and if you come into the urban townships and then it is different. And the mom has been here for some time, so she'll find that some of the words she also does not know… sometimes when you go back to the English version… it flows easier (Focus group 1, unit 9).

- As I said, the translation here, it flows simply well in English…. (Focus group 1, unit 54).

- My difficulty is the language that we use, especially the black language, as we said the translation… the version has been changed into different languages, but it makes, sometimes it is difficult. Half the time you must have the English one at hand (Focus group 1, unit 205).

- And what you said in the beginning is it is almost as the mothers understand the English explanations better than the other explanations (Professor Eloff, Focus group 1, unit 206).

- But it goes faster if you use the English version and I start with the Tswana… trying to take this one in my language… sometimes the woman don't really know" (Focus group 1, unit 218).

- Quite disappointed with the translation (Focus group 1, unit 221).

- The Zulu is Zulu, straight Zulu from KZN and you don't get here… people don't speak that kind of language (Focus group 1, unit 226).

- It's the regional dialect (Focus group 1, unit 227).

- You have to take it from English and then we say it in a Pretoria way, you know, not KZN (Focus group 1, unit 228).

- All the black languages. Tswana as well you will repeat that question. I am telling you, you can't reach the client. You go to the English version (Focus group 1, unit 229).

- A little word like 'computer' – the Sepedi said 'computera' – I mean there is no such thing... Just take computer away in English and put it (Focus group 1, unit 232).

- Like in the PSI this one section of the PSI in black languages it totally different from the English version… coming nicely with the two questions and then the black language is one big consolidation of a question (Focus group 1, unit 239 & 241).

- They speak about sexual problems when you go to the other languages they, when you read it, it says does the child think of sex… and the English version says sexual problems (Focus group 1, unit 243 & 245).

- So the translation seems to be a huge issue. And what you are telling me is, and the way you are coping with the tension you tend to revert to the English, because you just find it more clear and more understandable (Professor Eloff, Focus group 1, unit 247).

- The thing with the question is, sometime you have to translate the question. You can't read it the way it is because in most case they won't understand it. It doesn't make sense with the language (Focus group 2, unit 135).

- It is difficulty, more difficult than the English one in fact. You always have to get the English questions to make sure that what you are asking is right (Focus group 2, unit 137).

- And the Tswana ones are more difficult that other questionnaires. Even Maje is a Botswana woman, but she can't even understand the Tswana questions.

- So most of you actually don't use this translation just as they are. You look at the English ones then you translate as go on… So it is a free translation, not that translation (Professor Ebersöhn, Focus group 2, unit 144 & 146).

However, even though research assistants gave preference to the English version of the instruments, an exception to this theme was indicated. In this regard research assistants indicated that the instruments could not be administered only in English as the participants' ability to understand English depended on their level of literacy. Therefore, according to the research assistants' experience, the questionnaires cannot be administrated in English only, as is indicated by the following:

- But I think it also depends on their literacy in terms of the understanding of the English version (Focus group 1, unit 208).

- But the questionnaires is fine because literacy plays a role (Focus group 1, unit 217).

► **Challenges in comprehension**

Table 4.4 **Inclusive and exclusive criteria of the subtheme: Challenges in comprehension**

Indicators	All the instances in the raw data specifically referring to difficulty in comprehension, as well as references relating to attempts to overcome comprehension difficulties.
Exclusions	Instances from the raw data where participants referred to difficulty in the translations of items.

Apart from difficulties with regard to the translation of the psychometric data and collection instruments from English into African languages, the research assistants also reported that, at times, they experienced difficulty in conveying the meaning of the question. In this regard research assistants mentioned that some of the participants encountered difficulty with regard to the comprehension of the question. The research assistants consequently needed to employ strategies such as rephrasing, providing additional examples or telling stories in order to overcome the difficulty in comprehension that presented. The following quotes provide supporting evidence in this regard:

• You make up a whole lot of stories so that they can understand the question… because sometimes they (the children) really don't understand you so clear (Focus group 1, unit 11).

• I found the CSCN to be a bit abstract, especially for kids 7 to 8 years old (Focus group 1, unit 19).

• There's one question that talks about the connectedness. You are aware that you are not alone in this world, you are connected….your spirituality... and they look at you like 'Are you mad?' (Focus group 1, unit 19 & 20).

• The CSCS I think is sometimes too high for some kids (Focus group 1, unit 25).

• Half the time they look at you… the child is not able to answer… you do not just bounce off the question. You must start telling stories… (Focus group 1, unit 26).

• I had a problem with the wording about 'God' and 'being connected'… How do you ask a child that is so young about the spirituality of things? (Focus group 1, unit 34).

• You need to help the child to find a way of getting the child to understand what you are asking (Focus group 1, unit 35).

• You sort of drill and trend, guide the child what you actually mean... (Focus group 1, unit 54).

• You ask them 'Do you feel strong?' you don't actually explain what you mean when you say strong, you actually (show a gesture) (Focus group 1, unit 60).

- … there are questions that they don't understand… Not that the questions are difficult, but you know there are people that cannot understand it easily even if we ask them in the language they understand and that they are fluent in (Focus group 2, unit 2).

- … the language is also not the problem because we do the interviews in the language that they understand, but it is still a bit difficult…it is our responsibility as researchers to make it easier for them to understand the question (Focus group 2, unit 13).

- Most of the women that we work with…are depressed… they sometimes misunderstand this thing of being happy and depressed (Focus group 2, unit 24).

- And sometimes when you ask them a question, they don't answer what you are asking them. And you must confirm it with them…you want to explain and make sure they understand (Focus group 2, unit 26 & 28).

- It become problematic especially when you are using kids when they have to point… they become so confused that they end up pointing for you and you start realising that they are just pointing (Focus group 2, unit 82).

- You know, I find that for them to understand every time I ask them whether it is about A, B, C, D or E, you have to repeat the question to make sure they understand (Focus group 2, unit 88).

- I think the main thing for them is to understand the question… asking the question over and over until they understand the question (Focus group 2, unit 100).

- I also find it much better and easier to use example along the way. Sometimes they answer the questions, but they don't understand, but when you make an example it is easier for them to understand (Focus group 2, unit 101).

- I try to phrase it in a simpler way that they can understand it, because otherwise it is something that they don't understand (Focus group 2, unit 129).

- For some kids, especially the smaller ones, 7, 6. They don't understand the questions easily. You have to use a lot of examples (Focus group 2, unit 156).

- When you talk about the Bar-On… it is difficulty for them to answer, so all of us we ask the Bar-On in the form of giving examples (Focus group 2, unit 163).

- For the younger kids, the CSCS it is really difficulty, because with most of the questions they just look at you (Focus group 2, unit 188).

However, according to the research assistants, not all participants experienced comprehension difficulties. An exception to the theme of a lack of understanding is indicated by the following response:

- Some women are like this (fingers snapping). They give you all the information. You can see it is correct in the way they answer. From the beginning of the questionnaire to the end. Not a lot of contradictions (Focus group 2, unit 30).
- This it not all of them. Other they do understand it (Focus group 2, unit 182).

► **Culturally inappropriate questions**

Table 4.5: Inclusive and exclusive criteria of the subtheme: Culturally inappropriate questions

Indicators	All the instances in the raw data relating to the cultural context of the participants, as well as references to inappropriate questions based on the cultural context of the mothers and children.
Exclusions	Instances in the raw data where the cultural context is not specifically referred to.

The research assistants experienced some of the specific questions as culturally inappropriate for the specific African context. In this regard research assistants noted that if a participant had not had an opportunity to master a certain skill, this did not necessarily indicate a developmental delay, but rather a lack of opportunity. Unfortunately, the research assistants felt that the lack of educational opportunity is not always reflected in the recorded response. In addition to these perceived scoring limitations, research assistants stated that the specific cultural and contextual background of the participants also influenced their responses on the questionnaire. The following quotations are presented in support of this subtheme:

- OK, the way I see it, kids, when you ask the question 'Do you ever close your eyes and go to a happy place when you are sad?' and I think that it is totally different with black kids… they don't go and close their eyes and go to the place where they are happy. Literally they go to the place where they are happy… I just think some of the questions are not really relevant in a way to answer. (Focus group 1, unit 34).
- And sometimes I don't think we get a true reflection again with the mother's instruments. The way in which you are going to be asking these questions. If you go about the questions as numbered like this ones where you have asked the mom if she has visited a spiritual healer or a traditional healer and according to the black culture when you go shopping you go medical. So when they see you at this place that is academic, they don't want to talk about their traditional experience (Focus group 1, unit 93).

- I am working with the Vineland…a question like... can a child withdraw money... most of them do not have the opportunity to do that (Focus group 1, unit 163).

- On the Vineland it is not really a 'no opportunity' question. And I have a problem with that, because it does not mean that the child cannot do that… but what then if the child is capable it's just that the child didn't get the opportunity to do that (Focus group 1, unit 165).

- Like the question that says does is the child able to type… I got stuck… I went to Michelle… I have a child here who knows how to operate a cell phone… we looked at it and find that we can score a child (Focus group 1, unit 174).

- In our community in most cases, your children don't understand whether to report or concern about something, they just keep quiet. Even though they know this thing is wrong (Focus group 2, unit 66).

- The child may not have any opportunity to go…they don't have bank accounts. They didn't have a chance…Society would say: Yes you have a bank account, but the way it works out in our lives, there are no opportunities for a bank account (Focus group 2, unit 68 and Professor Ebersöhn, Focus group 2, unit 71).

► **Contradicting responses from participants**

Table 4.6: Inclusive and exclusive criteria of the subtheme: Contradicting responses from participants

Indicators	All the instances in the raw data where reference is made to contradictions within the participants' responses
Exclusions	Instances from the raw data relating to difficulty in translation or comprehension.

The research assistants indicated that they found that participants sometimes provided contradictory responses relating to a similar topic or question. In reaction to this, the research assistants needed to be alert to the fact that contradictions may be present, which would require clarification from them as the interviewers. This practice resulted in several repetitions and rephrasings of a question, as well as going back and pointing the participants to contradicting statements in order to get to the "deep emotions". The following statements are presented in support of this subtheme:

- It is difficult when you find them contradicting themselves… At times they would say yes we do that, but going on with the question that is no, it is not something

they usually do so you have to go back and correct it, their responses now and then (Focus group 2, unit 4).

- You go back and say when I ask you about if people were friendly or unfriendly to you, you answered by saying yes or no, but now I'm asking you if you feel people dislike you, what is your answer now? Then they think about it and come out and say a different answer (Focus group 2, unit 11).

- It is easier to go deep and make them understand the question properly, because it seems, as we go on, they lose their focus on what we ask them about (Focus group 2, unit 11).

- …she was depressed for seven days and happy at the same time for seven days, but then you go back and ask her 'How possible is it, gently… that you were happy for seven days and depressed for seven days … I find that when you probe, they do come up with a different answer and the correct answer for that matter (Focus group 2, unit 15).

- …they were happy for 5 days and depressed for 5 days. When you approach them they say 'I am happy because my partner bought me a cell phone, but this is just happiness for the moment. They think they are happy, but for the rest of the day they were depressed… they want us to guess their deep emotion (Focus group 2, unit 16).

- Maybe most of them (give contradicting responses), but I think that those who contradicted themselves are those that are remotely depressed (Focus group 2, unit 24).

- They (the interviewer) must be very clear to get to the deep emotions, and them probe to find out what happened and clarify (Focus group 2, unit 37).

- The Vineland… sometimes they do contradict themselves, but it doesn't often happen (Focus group 2, unit 50).

► **Participants offering what they perceive as "correct" responses**

Table 4.7 Inclusive and exclusive criteria of the subtheme: Participants offering what they perceive as "correct" responses

Indicators	All the instances in the raw data referring to responses considered to be the required responses from mothers or children
Exclusions	Instances from the raw data relating to mothers' lack of knowledge about their children.

Research assistants indicated that they often had the experience that participants offered what they perceived to be the expected response in order to please the researcher or to

present themselves in an acceptable light. The research assistants therefore needed to be sensitive to the participant's attitude and answers in order to identity whether a participant reverted to what they perceived to be the 'correct' answer. This subtheme was identified from the following utterances:

- … she is telling you what she thinks you want to hear or should she tell you to make her look nice…You actually get moms who will tell you, no she is smart and when the child comes she does not know to write (Focus group 1, unit 143).

- We as researcher must try to explain to them… we want what is true… don't answer what is expected… each and every answer is right, it is true. There is no wrong answer (Focus group 2, unit 19).

- Do they understand that there is no wrong or right, because this is difficult. You see, usually people think it is a test. It is wrong or right (Professor Ebersöhn, Focus group 2, unit 20)

- Except that sometimes you think maybe they are protecting their children… There is this one client who did that... I interviewed the child the other day and this child told me, you know, I hit this little boy that I came with on our way to the office, but the mother when you do the interview it sounds like that boy is an angel (Focus group 2, unit 109).

- Sometimes I find that most of the kids they just answer the same questions when coming to the ratings. They will just say always, always, always… because they think it is the highest score (Focus group 2, unit 194 & Professor Ebersöhn, Focus group 2, unit 195).

- …it is difficult to think of it not as a test where you get a high score and a low score, because they are used to that (Professor Ebersöhn, Focus group 2, unit 201).

4.3.3 THE INSTRUMENTS HAVE AN INFORMATIVE VALUE AND FULFIL AN EDUCATIONAL FUNCTION

Table 4.8   Inclusive and exclusive criteria of the theme: The instruments fulfil an informative value and educational function

Indicators	All the instances in the raw data where reference was made to the informative function or educational value of the instruments, mothers' lack of knowledge regarding their children's developmental phases, as well as instances referring to HIV education or information on HIV.
Exclusions	Instances from the raw data not relating to the educational value of the psychometric data-collection instruments.

The research assistants indicated that they had experienced the culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instrument to have an informative value and fulfil an educational function for mothers. Their experience was that on the one hand, the instruments provided mothers with information regarding the expected developmental milestones of their children while, conversely, mothers' participation in the assessment demonstrated a lack of knowledge about their children's development. In certain instances the mothers' participation in the assessment seemed to result in parents becoming more focussed on their children. In this regard research assistants reported that mothers seemed to be more knowledgeable about their children's development when they returned for the follow-up interview after six months. In addition to providing mothers with information about their children's development, the instruments also proved to be a educational tool on HIV, as the research assistants experienced the administration of the instruments to be an opportunity for HIV education.

► **Informing participants about the their children's development**

Table 4.9:   Inclusive and exclusive criteria of the subtheme: Informing participants about their children's development

Indicators	All the instances in the raw data referring to "informative" or "education". In addition to this, instances in the raw data indicating an increase in mothers' knowledge about their children's development, as well as instances referring to the educational value of the instruments.
Exclusions	Instances from the raw data relating to HIV education or research assistants, or instances focussing on the mothers' lack of knowledge.

In the research assistants' experience, the instruments had an informative function in enhancing mothers' knowledge about their children's development. Mothers' participation in the assessment seemed to focus their attention on their children and their development. As was stated, this informative function of the instruments was illustrated by the fact that that the research assistants sometimes experienced mothers to be more knowledgeable about their children's development when they returned for the follow-up interview after six months. In addition to this, the perceived educational value of the instruments also lay in the fact that some of the research assistants used the information, or lack thereof, that was elicited during the interview as a point of departure in providing mothers with advice regarding their children's development. This subtheme was elicited from the following statements made by the research assistants:

•   Over and about, the instruments is informative (Focus group 1, unit 8).

•   And the informative part of it (Focus group 1, unit 13).

- And she says "Oh, at 7 years this child of mine was suppose to be able to be doing this". And the clever moms actually want to peep and say "Are we still at 7 years? (Focus group 1, unit 15).

- But your sense is that it has an educational function with the mothers (Professor Eloff, Focus group 1, unit 16).

- You see that when you do the six-month follow-up you find that the mom has opened her eyes and know what is going on (Focus group 1, unit 17).

- So with the children's instruments it is an education for the mother about her child (Professor Eloff, Focus group 1, unit 86).

- The Vineland… I think it makes a lot of moms to be into their kids (Focus group 1, unit 120).

- Still it is informative, abundantly (Focus group 1, unit 122).

- I'm going to use it (the Vineland) throughout the years… Not that she is going to take it and teach the child, but she is going to actually Vineland the child…. Now I am Vinelanding my grandchildren… since I started Kgolo Mmogo" (Focus group 1, unit 126).

- I had one mom at Mamelodi… she never used to think about it, playing with the kids or doing anything with the kids. The kids will come home from school, take off their uniforms and go and play. She goes on with her business. But now, she does pay attention. She wants to see the schoolwork, she wants to see the homework (Focus group 1, unit 128).

- Like I said, the instrument is really educational. When you ask certain questions and the moms kept on saying 'I don't know, I am not sure'. Now you get… they actually look at it, they observe it (Focus group 1, unit130 & 131).

- Mom, you need to do A B C… You need to visit the school. Just go ask the school when I am going to town and the school is along the route, stop there (Focus group 1, unit 132).

- I have to go back and say: Now, really, it is important that you visit the school…educate the mom, advice the mom (Focus group 1, unit 132).

► **Identifying mothers' lack of knowledge regarding their children's development**

Table 4.10 Inclusive and exclusive criteria of the subtheme: Identifying mothers' lack of knowledge regarding their children's development

Indicators	All the instances in the raw data referring to mothers' lack of knowledge about the development of the children or their children's education.
Exclusions	Instances from the raw data referring to a lack of knowledge about HIV, as well as instances referring to the educational or informative value of the instruments.

At times, the research assistants experienced the assessment instruments to be valuable in demonstrating mother's lack of knowledge regarding their children's development:

• ... especially when it comes to the Vineland you find that she does not know that of her 7-year-old.. (Focus group 1, unit 15).

• It is ugly to find that some moms don't even know the teacher of the kids… They immediately say 'I don't know' (Focus group 1, unit 132).

• I remember when we did the pilot study there was one mom who said her kid, little girl, goes to crèche which is walking distance from her house, but she didn't know the name of the crèche. And it was for me unbelievable (Focus group 1, unit 135).

• Here you coming to the question 'which school' but she couldn't even say which school (Focus group 1, unit 137).

• They just assume that their kids know how to react in a case of emergency. When you probe deeper, you realise that… they have never been in a medical emergency, but because they are older the mother assumes that she'll be able to do it (Focus group 2, unit 56).

• The mom doesn't think the kids can do it and this is where you see most of the women don't know their children. They just assume (Focus group 2, unit 60).

• I think the problem is that they are not good with their children, they don't care about the better of the children. The children are out, but they don't even look at them (Focus group 2, unit 62).

• Sometimes the count of the Vineland cannot be reliable… they (the mothers) are undermining the children… For example a child is 8 years old and you ask if your child is able to draw a pregnant woman, then they say no. That is the simplest thing that even a smaller chid can do. So we get that response, but it doesn't often happen (Focus group 2, unit 75).

► **Serving as a tool for HIV education**

Table 4.11 Inclusive and exclusive criteria of the subtheme: Serving as a tool for HIV education

Indicators	All the instances in the raw data referring to 'HIV education', the mothers' health or information relating to the mother's health.
Exclusions	Instances from the raw data not referring to HIV information or information relating to 'health'.

According to the research assistants, the culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments provided an opportunity for HIV education, as the instruments proved to be a tool that was sometimes utilised by the research assistants in this regard.

- Now you start to explain and you go into detail. If this is happening to you go to the doctor (Focus group 1, unit 83).
- My experience was you had to do a bit of HIV education. Some of them still don't know what a CD4 means. You know, they don't even know that they have to go get their blood test or taken again (Focus group 1, unit 84).
- …over here, it (the education) is more directive over the mother's own health (Professor Eloff, Focus group 1, unit 86).
- … one continuous with the education because you can see that, for example, if the mom says 'I'm not even sure…' then you need to start now.. start to educate the reality of this now, it's HIV (Focus group 1, unit 87).

4.3.4 THE ASSESSMENT PLACES AN EMOTIONAL STRAIN UPON THE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Table 4.12 Inclusive and exclusive criteria of the theme: The assessment places an emotional strain upon the research assistants

Indicators	All the instances in the raw data relating to the difficulties in role definition, as well as reference to the expectations of mothers and children. Instances in the raw data referring to challenges relating to the interaction and relationships between the research assistants and the participants. Finally, instances in the raw data referring to the participants' spirituality or sense of connectedness.
Exclusions	Instances from the raw data relating to challenges experienced by the research assistants in terms of language and comprehension..

The fact that the mothers are all HIV positive, the sometimes poor socio-economic circumstances as well as the nature of the psychological interview often elicited emotional responses from the participants. These emotional responses seemed to exacerbate the

emotional load experienced by the research assistants. The experience of emotional strain as a result of the administration of the research instrument was indicated by the following quotes:

• I mean, you'll get an 8-year-old who tells you the grandmother passes away and you never think an 8-year-old will tell you that (Focus group 1, unit 29).

• I also think the client being afraid (Focus group 1, unit 92).

• …if the person is teary and sad, listen to what she has to say, although sometimes there are times when you are also down (Focus group 1, unit 195).

• It also means that you have to be very alert and be very focussed on the process because you actually have to guide this person through it and see that they are paying attention and really talking about what their feelings are (Focus group 2, unit 17).

In addition to the overall emotional strain experienced by the research assistants as indicated above, it seemed as if they experienced specific difficulty with regard to their role differentiation. Therefore this aspect is foregrounded as one of the subthemes. Furthermore, the research assistants reported that the emotional load of the assessment process was intensified by the sometimes unrealistic expectations of the participants regarding the role of the research assistants, as well as the limitations of their own functions and capabilities. A final subtheme is the challenges experienced by the research assistants with regard to the interview relationship and interaction with the participants.

► **The research assistants experienced difficulty with regard to defining their roles**

Table 4.13 Inclusive and exclusive criteria relating to the subtheme: The research assistants experienced difficulty with regard to defining their roles

Indicators	All the instances in the raw data relating to the experience of difficulty in role defining as well as reference to "boundaries".
Exclusions	Instances from the raw data relating to challenges not related to the tension relating to boundaries or the research assistant's role.

The research assistants seemingly experienced difficulty in distinguishing between their role as researchers in the Kgolo Mmogo project and that of health professional or helper. This role confusion seemed to bring about psychological discomfort at times. The research assistants were faced with a continuous process of critical self-evaluation as they needed to negotiate the boundaries of their role and the conflicting roles they experienced at times.

Difficulty in defining their roles as research assistants in contrast to being 'the helper' was indicated by the following utterances:

- I don't know how to put it… reach out to this mom that tell me everything, let me help you out… Where you are not reaching out… It is a role clash, sometimes. When are you the researcher and when are you the helper or the health professional (Focus group 1, unit 144 & Professor Eloff, unit 146).

- Sometimes when you give advice to ask yourself 'how far should I go'…learned helplessness comes in, you know, and you sit and advise her and support… you think should she go to the police and report… and sometimes it become at the end of the interview and you think 'Man, these women!' (Focus group 1, unit 199).

- So I think sometimes you have to set your own boundaries… But also give the advice to think about it (Focus group 1, unit 201).

► **Dealing with the expectations of the participants**

Table 4.14   Inclusive and exclusive criteria relating to the subtheme: Dealing with the expectation of the participants

Indicators	All the instances in the raw data referring to the expectations of the participants, including expectations with regard to medical advice, emotional support and/or physical support.
Exclusions	Instances from the raw data relating to difficulty in role definition.

The research assistants were often confronted with unrealistic expectations of participants, which seemingly added to the emotional load experienced by the research assistants. It furthermore seemed as if the research assistants had experienced that the participants expected medical advice and help. Some mothers expected physical and material support. Desperate health and socio-economic circumstances were sometimes verbalised by participants and that seemed to affect the research assistants negatively. The research assistants' experiences of such emotional appeals by mothers are illustrated by the following quotes:

- When you come to the asking of being in hospital, the CD4 counts… she sees you as somebody who is coming to help her in a way. You want to know if she is sick and you give her assistance. If you ask her 'How do you feel? Are you getting tired? Losing weight?' then she goes all out. To me it was if this was with the intention of saying 'I tell you all this and when we are finished you are either

going to give me some medication or you are going to refer me (Focus group 1, unit 83).

- With the social demographics you get down in there and they immediately want to know if their CD4 count is low, she is looking at you as if you are going to help her… The moms' expectations are like that completely. You are asking me this because you are going to help me (Focus group 1, unit 83).

- Are you going to give me money?... So I think some of them would expect that in the project you come in there and you get a job, get something.. something you really can touch, something tangible which they recognise (Focus group 1, unit 150).

- … she looks at me with those eyes like 'eat something' (Focus group 1, unit 157).

- You are my only hope. I think for most of them you are their only hope. This is terrible… (Focus group 1, unit 158).

- … those demographic questions...if I am in an informal settlement, are you going to help me to get the house what you are asking (Focus group 1, unit 159).

- You come to the question you'll think are you working or looking for work… she says it in a sense ..oh.. this is the one I want (Focus group 1, unit 160).

As part of the Kgolo Mmogo project, the participants received money for transport as well as food parcels upon the completion of the interview. The research assistants seemingly experienced the concrete compensation as helpful in addressing participants' emotional demands and expectations. However, according to the research assistants, the provision of food parcels and transport money also highlighted the participants' need for basic living requirements. In turn, participants' material needs seemed to exacerbate the negative emotional experiences of the research assistants. The following quotes from the focus groups highlight this aspect:

- I think that is a help, because we give them food parcels after the interview. I think giving the food parcel had made our role easier, because you can see the mom came here with expectations… being here for four hours (Focus group 1, unit 151).

- At least they have something… to eat (Focus group 1, unit 152 & 153).

- … the transport money we give them. They don't necessarily use it for transport to come back… one lady said she was going to buy washing powder. They were actually happy (Focus group 1, unit 154).

- Moms will come out of their appointments. Their appointment is only thee months down the line. Is it not my chance? (Focus group 1, unit 155).

► **Challenges with regard to the interaction and research relationship with the participants**

Table 4.15 Inclusive and exclusive criteria of the subtheme: Challenges with regard to the interaction and research relationship with the participants

Indicators	All the instances in the raw data referring to challenges relating to the interaction between the research assistants and the participants. Instances referring to the duration of the assessment, issues relating to breaks, the deliberate attempts of the participants to extend the assessment as well as difficulty eliciting responses were included.
Exclusions	Instances from the raw data relating to difficulty with language, translations or comprehension as well as difficulty relating to role definition.

The research assistants reported the experience of several challenges with regard to the interaction and research relationship as illustrated by the following subthemes. At times, the research assistants experienced the administration of the instruments as time-consuming. As one of the challenges faced by the research assistants, time seemed to add to the emotional strain of the research assistants. The following supporting phrases are presented in this regard:

• It usually takes about 2½ hours, but if the mom is crying and she has problems it can take up to 3 and 4 hours (Focus group 1, unit 4).

• So the fact that there is an emotional load on the instruments affects the time it takes to finish, but it also affects you the interviewer (Professor Eloff, Focus group 1, unit 5).

• … because once the mom gets established and gains confidence with you, she tends not to drag you and her trying to give you all the problems, social development, in a graphic personal and all that.. (Focus group 1, unit 8).

• It's just the time it takes with the children… (Focus group 1, unit 11).

• … if we look at it generally that the time is an issue…and the emotional responses the instrument elicits (Professor Eloff, Focus group 1, unit 12).

• But it gives you as interviewer more work because with this child it will flow easier by with the next child you'll feel it's an hour and I haven't moved further and then you run into 2½ hours (Focus group 1, unit 60).

• It is time-consuming (Focus group 1, unit 134).

• And sometimes when you ask them a question… you must confirm with them… And that is why it sometimes takes longer to do the interview (Focus group 2, unit 26 and Professor Ebersöhn, unit 27).

A subtheme related to the issue of the time needed to complete the assessment, was that of the use of breaks during the assessment. As the interview administration was sometimes lengthy, the research assistants noted that participants became tired. However, the participants often refused to take breaks in order to finish the interview. In these instances, the research assistants often grappled with the issue of maintaining rapport on the one hand, and gathering reliable and valid information on the other hand. The following utterances illustrate the difficulty experienced by the research assistants regarding time management during the assessment:

• You can literally see they are tired as well and they need to take a break (Focus group 1, unit 63).

• And some of the children have been sitting down for a long time… they will tell you… when are we getting done with this… OK, let's take a break (Focus group 1, unit 65).

• And with some women… during the interview you can actually see that – 'get done and get finished'. She get in she's closed she out she is closed… Half the time you need to break and when you come back, you must be so different that she sort of opens up (Focus group 1, unit 109).

• The problem is time. Sometimes I find that you can see that the woman is tired… especially at the end she just answers because she is tired…(they don't take breaks)… but they will tell you 'I am in a hurry, I want to finish… then you don't know if she is answering correctly (Focus group 2, unit 229 & 231).

• You don't know these women. You try to talk to them with a smile. You are friendly, but she says 'No, let's finish'. What can you do? Tell her to go to the loo? (Focus group 2, unit 236).

• Some of them, well I find, most of them do not want to take breaks… When to try to do it they say 'No, go on, go on' (Focus group 2, unit 238).

• Usually you think about taking a break if you see that she is tired, but if she sits down and enjoying it, you don't. But if you see she is tired, she is moaning….and if you think they want to take a break 'No, no, just want to finish (Focus group 2, unit 242).

In contrast, another challenge that proved to be emotionally taxing to research assistants was that of participants deliberately trying to extend the assessment session:

• I see you working with me and you are looking at the time because there is another child waiting and you try to push and then they tell you a story" (Focus group 1, unit 69).

• And they do like that (previous comment). Even some of them will start writing (Focus group 1, unit 70).

- You find that sometimes we as research assistants are pressed for time… she came back after an hour, one and a half hours. I would be cross because I had to sit there and wait (Focus group 1, unit 190).
- … they are talking and talking. They just feel they can stay with you through the whole day (Focus group 2, unit 238).

The research assistants mentioned challenges in the <u>creation of rapport</u> in order to elicit reliable and representative responses from the participants. It seemed as if the novelty of the assessment, the HIV status of the mothers, as well as the inquisitive nature of the interview made some of the mothers nervous. The research assistants experienced that mothers may have experienced judgement. The interviewers therefore wanted to provide an environment in which the participants could feel safe to open up during the assessment. The following remarks provide an illustration of this subtheme:

- I think some of the moms think we are here to judge them. And the first few minutes they come very tense in a way, you know, they look at you and also trying to figure out: Are you positive? (Focus group 1, unit 95).
- Your client said that, it would be better if we are being questioned by people who are living with HIV/AIDS (Focus group 1, unit 97).
- And there is a lot of stigma out there to that she is also trying to see if there is stigmatising (Focus group 1, unit 107).
- Already you know when she doesn't know this what I might say to this mom, she opens up (Focus group 1, unit 134).

At times the emotional demand on the interviewers was exacerbated by the fact that they were required to find ways to <u>elicit responses</u> as the participants often offered limited responses. The following utterances illustrated this aspect:

- So what you are saying is the question tends to put quite a high demand on you as an interviewer, because you have to find all sorts of creative ways to elicit a response (Professor Eloff, Focus group 1, unit 55).
- … this one you have to probe and probe…others they would say nothing happened in my life…a lot of examples to give them an idea of what you really want from them (Focus group 2, unit 174).

An <u>exception</u> related to the emotional strain of the administration of the psychometric data-collection instruments was indicated by some research assistants reporting that they sometimes experienced assessments with children as "fun".

- But it is fun I mean sometimes there are kids who you'll ask her question and you'll start telling a story and she'll say 'Are you talking about a friend here?'

(laughing) and then she wants to tell you and then she will be standing up (laughing) (Focus group 1, unit 27).

- I think the kids really love this place… she (a mother) said to me, you know what, our children are always asking us when are we going, when are we going to that place? Children love coming here. I think it is where they get the attention (Focus group 2, unit 213).

Another aspect that proved to be an exception to the emotional strain experienced by the research assistants is the support provided by the psychological and social services on the Kgolo Mmogo project as indicated by the following:

- Another thing that really works with this instrument is that….with the Kgolo Mmogo project we've got psychologists and social services on site... and then what makes it even lovelier, they come back to come and give a report (Focus group 1, unit 203)

- What I like most about this … is that we have got the psychologist and the social workers at hand most of the time (Focus group 2, unit 245).

► **Spirituality**

Table 4.16   Inclusive and exclusive criteria or the subtheme: Spirituality

Indicators	All the instances in the raw data relating to the experience of the spirituality or connectedness of the participants.
Exclusions	Instances from the raw data not referring specifically to spirituality, "God", "religion" or connectedness.

Research assistants expressed the importance of spirituality for both the participants and themselves. According to research assistants, the participants' sense of spiritual connectedness seemed to be helpful in dealing with adversity in their circumstances. This, in turn, seemed to have contributed to alleviating the emotional strain of the research assistants to some extent. A noticeable sense of connectedness to a higher power, as well as to the religious communities of the mother and children, emerged throughout the two focus-group discussions, as is suggested by the following supporting quotes:

- And the question to the child might reflect that the child is not spiritual, but they are actually spiritual in their own way (Focus group 1, unit 39).

- Maybe we haven't (experienced any other forms of spirituality in the children) because the questions are just so direct. It doesn't say 'other spiritualities (Focus group 1, unit 41).

- I still think that it is a good question to ask the kids on 'Who do you think God is?' or you know 'What do you think about God?' I think that one is still a good question (Focus group 1, unit 46).
- And those who are in a family that actually follows religion you get lovely stories from (Focus group 1, unit 47).
- I haven't found a child that doesn't know who God is (Focus group 1, unit 48).
- A lot of black people are very spiritual, whatever religion that is. It is Christianity, but we do have aspects of other traditional stuff, but yes, I think so (Focus group 1, unit 50).
- Even if they do have a traditional sense it's all connected (Focus group 1, unit 51).
- Dare to say, yes, God is up… Sometimes when you go into the question you want to find out which denomination do you attend, you find out maybe she is a Zion Christian and she is able to open up she goes to church, she prays and all that (Focus group 1, unit 114).
- Questioning God's power. Some say… why me? You still get that (Focus group 1, unit 115 & 117).
- Some of them pray every day (Focus group 2, unit 46).
- They trust in God (Focus group 2, unit 48).

The responses of the research assistants suggested their awareness of the spirituality of the participants, even though this was not necessarily expressed in religious terms. It furthermore seemed as if the research assistants valued these expressions of spirituality.

4.4   CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter focussed on the presentation of the findings of the theme analysis that was presented in three main themes and supporting subthemes with regard to the research assistants' experiences during the administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments in the Kgolo Mmogo project. In summary, the prominent aspects of the theme analysis relate to the difficulties experienced by the research assistants with regard to the translations of the instruments, as well as the comprehension thereof by the participants. In addition to this, it was the experience of the research assistants that the instruments performed an educational and informative function. The administration of the psychometric data-collection instruments also brought about an emotional load for the interviewers. Finally, the theme analysis was completed by the references made to the spirituality of the participants of the Kgolo Mmogo project. In the next chapter the application of these themes in the improvement of the project is discussed.

Chapter 5

Synopsis of findings, literature control, conclusions and recommendations

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to explore the subjective experiences of the research assistants in the administration of a culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instrument in the larger Kgolo Mmogo project. While chapter 1 mainly provided a brief orientation and background to the study, the rationale for the study was also addressed. This was followed by a review of the available literature in chapter 2, which primarily focussed on instrument adaptation in the context of cross-cultural assessment. Chapter 3 focussed on the ontological and epistemological stance that guided this study, while the research methodology, the design and the particular ethical considerations for this study were also discussed. The findings of this study were discussed in chapter 4 with reference to the relevant themes and subthemes as they emerged through the process of theme analysis.

This final chapter commences with a summary of the findings of the study and also provides the literature control for the study. This involves the process whereby the identified themes from this study are related to themes identified in the existing literature. The literature control is followed by a brief discussion of the conclusions that can be drawn from this study, and the specific research question, as stated in chapter 1, is then addressed. Chapter 5 concludes by focussing on the particular limitations and contributions of this study, while also proposing several recommendations for practice, training and future research.

5.2 SYNOPSIS OF FINDINGS AND LITERATURE CONTROL

The research assistants indicated that they had experienced challenges with regard to language and comprehension during the administration of the culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments. As part of the Kgolo Mmogo project, several existing psychometric data-collection instruments were translated from English into the African languages as part of the cultural tailoring process so that they can be used in the South African context. Despite the care that was taken with the translation process, a recurring theme in the collected data was the difficulties that the research assistants experienced with the translations of the psychometric data-collection instruments. It

seemed as if the difficulties encountered by the research assistants were related to the variability in the regional dialects of the different languages. During both focus-group discussions it became clear that the research assistants reverted to the English translation during the administration of the instruments when they came across translation difficulties.

Difficulty with regard to test translation is all but a novel topic in the existing literature. Ercikan (2006:105) regards the use of different languages in multicultural assessment as one of the most easily understood. Although the particular detail with regard to dialectic variability was not specifically addressed by Bhui, *et al.* (2006:402), these authors explained that, because of the regional dialect variations, they had selected two translators from the North and the South of Somalia to translate the MINI Neuropsychiatric Interview from English into Somali. Therefore, the existence of variability within regional dialects of different geographical areas in Somalia is suggested.

Brandt (2005:213) reported on difficulties encountered with regard to idiomatic and semantic equivalence during the process of translating the QUEST 1.0 from English into Danish, despite major attempts that had been made in order to find equivalent wording. This author is of the opinion that the primary reason for these challenges is the fact that the English language contains substantially more words than the Danish language. Furthermore, Brandt (2005:214) comes to the conclusion that "multidisciplinary discussions and pre-testing focussing on cross-cultural equivalence and content validity were useful methods for revealing equivalence and validity problems, but they are not sufficient and there is a need for statistical methods as well". In addition to this, Brandt (2005:214) found that back-translations did not seem efficient, stressing this practice not to be as important in all cases.

Widenfelt, *et al.* (2005:136-137) draw attention to the fact that a simple, single forward and backward translation procedure does not provide a sufficient method for completing and checking the quality of translations. Several examples of idiosyncratic nuances within different translations in cross-cultural assessment are revealed. Skevington (2002:136) states that researchers comment on widely shared translation difficulties appearing to have no solution. However, despite the difficulties experienced by the research assistants in the Kgolo Mmogo project, given some of the participants' low levels of education and literacy, according to the research assistants the instruments cannot be administered in English only. The inability to understand the questions will have an obvious adverse impact on the validity of the findings.

In addition to the difficulties relating to test translations, the research assistants also experienced difficulty with regard to the comprehension of certain questions or aspects of the assessment during the administration of the psychometric data-collection instruments. Keeping in mind that children as well as adults (mothers) participated in the Kgolo Mmogo project, the difficulties in comprehension indicated by the experiences of the research assistants did not exclude any of the participant groups. These comprehension difficulties required the research assistants to put additional effort into the explanation of questions. Similarly, these perceived comprehension difficulties imply that the research assistants had to be sensitive to inconsistencies in the participants' responses in order to identify any comprehension difficulties.

A prominent theme in specifically the second focus-group discussion was the presence of contradicting responses by the participants. For the purpose of this study, the issue with regard to translation and that of comprehension were discussed as two separate subthemes, although this can be considered a technical differentiation. In practice, the ability to render an effective translation is clearly related to understanding. Therefore, as can be expected, a similar differentiation with regard to translation and comprehension was not necessarily stipulated in the body of consulted literature.

However, Brandt (2005:206) refers to the opinion of Guillemin, Bombardier and Beaton (1993, as cited in Brandt, 2005), as these authors stress that the adaptation of a psychometric data-collection instrument needs to ensure that the translation is fully comprehensible. Referring specifically to the translation and adaptation of the QUEST 1.0 from English to Danish, Brandt (2005:213) stated that one of the challenges encountered, was the fact that several of the words from the English questionnaire are loanwords in the Danish language and therefore not generally understood. Widenfelt, *et al.* (2005:139) recommend that the level of comprehension needs to receive attention during the adaptation process of psychometric data-collection instruments, as even adult questionnaires should be at the reading level of elementary-school children.

The psychometric data-collection instruments included in the Kgolo Mmogo project were not originally developed for a South African context. In the research assistants' experience, some of the questions were not culturally appropriate, despite the attention that had been given to the cultural tailoring process. For example, in the Vineland Behavioural Scale, one of the questions relates to the child's ability to take responsibility for his or her own personal bank account. This is, however, rarely relevant in the cultural context of the participants in the Kgolo Mmogo project.

Butcher (2004:93) reports that one of the challenges in adapting a self-report personality test is the appropriateness of the response format in the new culture. In a similar vein, Widenfelt, *et al.* (2005:136) recommend that psychometric data-collection instruments must go through a process of culture-specific adaptation in order to ensure the appropriateness of the testing instruments. Carter, *et al.* (2005:392) also draw attention to the fact that cultural variability may also be present in test-taking behaviour and orientation towards assessment. The same authors point out that despite similarities in the overall language and socio-economic background, cultural differences may still influence performance.

Unfamiliarity with the testing situation was cited as one of the possible reasons why research assistants experienced participants in the Kgolo Mmogo project producing what they perceived to be the expected answer, despite attempts by the research assistants to ensure the participants that there were no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. Furthermore, this phenomenon seems to be related to participants' attempts to portray themselves or their children (in the case of the mothers) in a more positive light.

Carter, *et al.* (2005:389-390) argue that the familiarity, or lack thereof, may influence participants' responses and conduct during the assessment procedure. Several examples focussing on the different cultural responses are quoted by these authors in support of their argument. One of these examples refers to Brazilian children, who displayed highly sophisticated reasoning and problem-solving abilities while selling sweets on the street. However, these children performed poorly in classroom mathematical tests when confronted with everyday mathematical tasks (Carter, *et al.*, 2005:390). Another example was that of Puerto Rican children in the US, who performed significantly better in tasks requiring descriptions than tasks requiring object labelling, which was an unfamiliar activity not being taught in their home or community settings (Peńa, *et al.*, 1992, as cited in Carter, *et al.*, 2005:390).

The next major theme that was identified by means of the theme analysis with regard to the research assistants' experiences was that the culturally tailored instruments that had been administered in the Kgolo Mmogo project seemed to fulfil an educational and informative function. Research assistants experienced that mothers who were involved in answering questions with regard to their children's development, guided by the questions of the instruments, found this process informative with regard to child development. It also seemed to ignite a change in the attitude and behaviour of the mothers, as the research assistants experienced that some of the mothers became more focussed on their children.

The questionnaires furthermore seemed to provide an opportunity for the research assistants to give the mothers some guidance and information concerning their children, while they often demonstrated the mothers' lack of knowledge with regard to their children's development. Another aspect relating to the educational value of the assessment process was the fact that the research assistants experienced the assessment process as instrumental in providing HIV education. The research assistants experienced that speaking about the participants' status and answering health-related questions created an opportunity to provide the participants with information as they deemed it necessary.

In the body of literature examined in the course of this study, no specific reference was found to the informative and educational value of psychometric data-collection instruments that have been adapted for the purpose of cross-cultural research. This could be a unique finding of the research. However, this particular theme is not that closely related to the cultural tailoring process, but more to the subjective experience of the research assistants in the administration of the culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments. The body of literature, which seemed to be more focussed on the issues relating to the process of instrument adaptation and cross-cultural assessment, together with the subjective experience of the research assistants, was subsequently identified as a gap in the literature. The findings of this study may therefore not necessarily have been a unique experience of the research assistants, but may have fallen on the periphery of the adaptation process and were therefore not specifically documented and reported.

The third theme identified by means of the theme analysis during this study, was that the assessment placed an emotional strain on the research assistants. This emotional strain seemed to be the result of a combination of factors and could not be attributed to one single aspect of the administration of the culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments. One of the selection criteria in the Kgolo Mmogo project with regard to the appointment of research assistants was that these individuals needed to come from a health professional background. It seemed reasonable to assume that the characteristics of an individual who had chosen a career as a health professional, would have to include a person-orientation and empathy towards their clients.

Consequently, in the Kgolo Mmogo project it seemed that the research assistants experienced a conflict of roles at times, as they experienced difficulty in distinguishing between their role as researcher and their role as trained health professionals. Commenting on the experience of ambivalence between his role as assessor and that of psychotherapist, Handler (2005:18) described the process during which he found his

collaboration with patients by helping them to get through arduous testing sessions to be beneficial to the role change from the assessor to therapist.

In addition to this, the research assistants often experienced that the participants in the Kgolo Mmogo project had unrealistic expectations of them. The ability to deal with the expectations of the mothers also contributed to the emotional strain experienced by the research assistants. The unrealistic expectations of the participants may be related to the experience of a lack of support as discussed by Orner (2006). Focussing on the experience of the caregivers of people living with HIV and AIDS, Orner (2006:236, 239) found the lack of support (including food, counselling, and training) to be debilitating. Ward (2008:320) accentuates the importance of "developing a thorough understanding of the meaning that assessment has on the lives of assessees". In this regard the sometimes unrealistic expectations of the participants in the Kgolo Mmogo project may be related to the meaning ascribed to the assessment by various individuals.

Furthermore, the relationship between the research assistant and the participants in the Kgolo Mmogo project added to the emotional load that the research assistants needed to deal with for a variety of reasons. The particular combination of psychometric data-collection instruments included in the Kgolo Mmogo project turned out to be very time-consuming when all the instruments were being administered in one session. Because of this, participants were sometimes reluctant to take the recommended breaks which, in turn, brought about some tension in the research assistants, as the participants were often visibly tired.

Tension in the assessment relationship is reflected by the findings of McLaughlin and Carr (2005:68), who state that poor rapport coincides with problem behaviour in people with developmental difficulties. Contrary to this, but with a similar emotional demand, the research assistants experienced that some of the participants deliberately tried to extend the assessment. Overall, the research assistants' experiences focussed attention on the importance of creating rapport in order to elicit reliable responses, but simultaneously, on the difficulties that might hamper the inquirer-participant relationship.

It seemed as if the research assistants perceived that some of the mothers felt judged, while the sheer novelty of the situation resulted in some of the mothers being very nervous. In addition to this, the mothers' HIV status was also at times experienced to be a challenge in the creation of rapport. In this regard Oner (2006:238) found that stigma towards people living with HIV and Aids, as well as towards their caregivers, was a common experience amongst this population, and that it tended to heighten distress

levels. The research assistants sometimes experienced difficulty in eliciting responses from the participants, which also played a role in the emotional load brought about by these assessments.

A final subtheme elicited through the process of data-analysis is related to the research assistants' experience of the spirituality of the participants. Even though expression of their spirituality was not always traditional, the research assistants experienced that the participants had a well-developed sense of spirituality. This, in turn, seemed to contribute to the alleviation of the experience of emotional strain by the research assistants.

Sorajjakool, Aja, Chilson, Ramirez-Johnson and Earll (2008:11) found that the presence of depression resulted in people feeling disconnected from God, others, and themselves. However, at the same time, people suffering from depression recognised that spirituality played a significant role in helping them to cope with the depression. This positive contribution of spirituality seems to be related to the experiences voiced by the research assistants in this study. Post and Wade (2009:131) also draw attention to the positive relationship between religion and mental health, while Delaney, Miller and Bisonó (2007 as cited in Post and Wade, 2009:133) reported that the majority of psychologist participants believed religions to be beneficial to mental health. Finally, Erickson (2008:287) points out that trauma may have significant spiritual implications for children.

An exception to this theme was indicated by the research assistants calling the assessment with the children "fun". Another exception was related to indications that the referral network offered by the Kgolo Mmogo project sometimes provided the research assistants with emotional support.

5.3   CONCLUSIONS OF THIS STUDY

This study focussed on the subjective experiences of research assistants in the administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments. The study aimed to address a silence in the literature relating to instrument adaptation and cross-cultural assessment by focussing on the specific experience of the research assistants. In the light of the data analysis as discussed in chapter 4, four main themes were identified during this study with regard to the research assistants' experiences.

Firstly, when working with culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments, issues relating to language and comprehension seemed to be a recurring theme throughout the literature, and this study was no exception. Another aspect of the cross-

cultural research was that certain items of the culturally tailored instruments were not regarded as culturally appropriate, while the phenomenon where participants attempted to portray themselves in a more positive light was also indicated.

A second experience of the research assistants that seemed to be a unique finding of this study, was that the combination of the culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments administered in the Kgolo Mmogo project seemed to have an educational and informative function. It provided mothers with information regarding their children's development, while it also proved to be a useful tool for the research assistants in educating the participants with regard to their HIV status. Another distinctive finding of this study refers to the research assistants' experience of the spirituality of the participants.

Finally, this study concludes with the finding that, in the experience of the research assistants, the administration of the culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments caused them emotional strain. This was related to the difficulty with regard to the ability to manage the different roles as health professionals and researchers, while the expectations of the participants were also reported to bring about emotional discomfort. Issues relating to the inquirer-participant relationship were also identified as a contributing factor in the emotional load experienced by the research assistants.

5.4 ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

5.4.1 PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

► **How do research assistants experience the administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments?**

The findings from this study indicated that the following four aspects were central to the experience of the research assistants in the administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments:

- Issues relating to language and comprehension posed a significant challenge in order to establish valid and reliable responses from the participants.
- The combination of tests had an informative value to the participants, as well as an educational function.
- The administration of the psychometric data-collection instruments placed an emotional strain on the research assistants.

5.4.2 SUBQUESTIONS

► **What challenges did the research assistants encounter in the administration of the culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments?**

It seems as if the primary challenge experienced by the research assistants during the administration of the culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments was related to the participants' comprehension of the questionnaires. More specifically, the research assistants experienced difficulty in explaining the translation of certain items. This seems to be related to the different dialects that exist in the particular languages. Despite a functional translation, the research assistants also seemed to experience difficulty in conveying the content of certain items.

Furthermore, at times participants seemed to provide contradicting responses. This posed a challenge to the research assistants, as it required them to be completely focussed for the duration of the assessment in order to be alert to variability in the participants' responses. In addition, participants sometimes offered unreliable responses, as the research assistants perceived some of the participants to provide responses that they perceived to be 'correct', which were not necessarily honest responses.

Several of the challenges reported by the research assistants were related to the inquirer-participant relationship. The research assistants reportedly experienced difficulty in eliciting responses at times. Conversely, research assistants reported that some of the participants deliberately attempted to extend the assessment. The assessment was time-consuming, which brought about a challenge with regard to the research assistants' ability to regulate the interview schedule. Some of the mothers were reluctant to take breaks, even though the assessment obviously fatigued them, which raised questions relating to the reliability of their responses.

The research assistants also experienced the expectations of participants as specifically challenging, given the fact that these expectations were often unrealistic. In addition, it became evident that the research assistants experienced difficulty in distinguishing between their role as researcher and that of health professional, for which they had been trained.

► **What strategies did the research assistants apply in order to manage the challenges that may have arisen in the administration of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments?**

From the research assistants' responses during the focus-group discussions, it can be concluded that they had to "make up a whole lot of stories" in order to manage the difficulties they encountered with regard to language and comprehension. By creating these supporting stories, the research assistants seemed to provide a context for the questions in order to make them more understandable or relevant to the participants. It was also evident that the research assistants relied heavily on the English translation in addition to the official translation into the African languages in order to manage the challenges relating to the translation of the instruments. This was necessary, as the translations into the African languages were apparently not always clear, due to the formal nature of these translations.

The research assistants seemed to adopt a reflective attitude during the interviews in order to manage the difficulties regarding inconsistencies in the participants' responses. If they discovered an inconsistency, they demonstrated this by reflecting the inconsistency back to the participant in order to ensure accurate and reliable test results. This often seemed to result in numerous repetitions of questions, constantly going back to previous questions in order to verify the participant's responses.

In order to deal with the difficulties that arose within the assessment relationship, the research assistants needed to establish a trusting and safe environment for the participants in order for good rapport to be established. The fact that the research assistants were able to provide the participants with food parcels and transport money, seemed to provide some relief in dealing with the challenges relating to the expectations of the participants.

► **How did the research assistants perceive the participants' reaction to the battery of psychometric data-collection instruments?**

The data that was analysed for this study did not produce any specific indication that the battery of psychometric data-collection instruments was unfavourably perceived by the participants in the Kgolo Mmogo project, although the reports from the research assistants provided both positive and less favourable remarks in this regard. An encouraging factor regarding the data-collection instruments identified during this study was the fact that the research assistants experienced that the mother-participants found the psychometric data-

collection instruments informative in nature, providing them with information regarding their children's development.

However, it seemed that certain items in the instrument sometimes were perceived as difficult to understand. As a result of this, the research assistants needed to ensure that the content of the item was understood. It also seemed as if the specific collection of tests was time-consuming to administer and resulted in participants perceiving the assessment as tiring. This resulted in some of the participants displaying impatient behaviour, which contributed to tension within the relationship with the research assistant.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

The limited scope of the study needs to be considered as one of the limitations of the study, as it only focused on the experiences of nine research assistants who administered the battery of culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments in a particular project, namely the Kgolo Mmogo project. This limits the transferability of the study. However, this does not necessarily render the information derived from this study invaluable for related studies, as it may very well inform future practice (as is discussed in the recommendations following later in this chapter). Furthermore, the constructivist perspective from which this study was conducted, prevents the study from claiming universal applicability, as the aim of the study was not to discover an objective truth.

Another possible limitation of this method is the fact that typical case sampling rules out statistical sampling (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, as cited in Cohan, *et al.* 2000:142), and therefore does not necessarily lead to generalisation. However, in the light of the fact that the aim of naturalistic research is not focussed on similarities in order to be able to make generalisations, the criticism is regarded as unimportant (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Cohan, *et al.*, 2000:142).

One of the selection criteria for the appointment of research assistants in the Kgolo Mmogo project was for them to have a health professions background. Individuals who have undergone training as health professionals tend to be more focussed on people's experiences and needs and arguably this potentially influenced their experiences. The fact that the research assistants consisted of a homogenous group could therefore be considered a limitation to this study.

For the purpose of this study, the main data sources were the verbatim transcripts of two focus-group discussions. However, the inquirer was not present during these discussions.

Despite the care that was taken in order to ensure the integrity of the data, the possibility that some of the non-verbal information conveyed during the focus-group discussions could not be accessed by means of the verbatim transcripts needs to be entertained. Furthermore, the possibility of minor inaccuracies within the transcripts of the focus-group discussions is also possible. In an attempt to increase the accuracy of the data, the verbatim transcripts were compared with, and informed by, the field notes of the facilitators, which proved to be valuable in this regard.

Finally, the data analysis was conducted by means of a theme analysis. This brings about the possibility that, under the influence of the subjective stance of the inquirer, prominence might unintentionally have been given to certain aspects of the data. On the other hand, themes may not have received the necessary prominence as a result of the unintended subjectivity of the inquirer.

5.6 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

As this study addressed a particular silence in the body of literature relating to cross-cultural assessment and test adaptation, its insights may contribute to a deeper understanding of the practice of psychometric data-collection adaptation by giving voice to the test administrators and their experiences. The fact that test administrators are directly involved in the practical functionality of a culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instrument implies that their experiences and insights may enrich the process and practice of cultural tailoring within the context of cross-cultural assessment. This study focussed in particular on the research assistants' experience in the Kgolo Mmogo project.

The findings of the study render a possible contribution with regard to the challenges in translating a psychometric data-collection instrument in the South African context while it also raised awareness with regard to challenges that may arise during the assessment, not only with regard to the specific questionnaires, but also with regard to the interview environment.

One of the test findings that can be considered to be one of the contributions of this study is the experience that the psychometric data-collection instruments have an educational value. This informs the possible result of the research, while it contributes to an awareness in this regard for future research. In addition, this points towards a need for information within the particular context of the mothers involved in the project.

A further contribution of the findings of this study is the information relating to the emotional load that the research assistants experienced during the course of the assessments. These findings may be context specific, especially given the fact that half the participants in the Kgolo Mmogo project were from a vulnerable population given their HIV positive status, although this was not the only contributing factor relating to the emotional strain brought about by the assessment. In this regard, the findings from this study may contribute to inform future assessment practices by focussing attention on the support, training and well-being of the research assistants.

5.7   RECOMMENDATIONS

5.7.1   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND TRAINING

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations for practice are proposed:

- The translations of psychometric data-collection instruments prove to be an aspect of cultural tailoring that require continuous attention. In the light of the specific findings of this study, it is recommended that the existence of regional dialects should be considered in the translation process. However, the translation process is also faced with the challenge of a limited emotional vocabulary in some of the African languages. Furthermore, despite the care that is taken with a translation, the findings from this study propose a constant awareness with regard to the difficulties that could arise from translation. In this regard special attention needs to be given to translating the meaning of the instruments into a language and dialect understandable to the participants, without compromising the validity and reliability of the instruments.

- The novelty of the assessment situation may present an additional dimension when one considers a participant's responses and behaviour within the assessment, and it is recommended that test administrators be informed of this phenomenon in order to be sensitive to this.

- Given the indications of the informative nature and educational value of the assessment instruments, it is recommended that this be considered in preparing and training the research assistants in order to be sensitive to the needs of the participants, but also to provide the participants with accurate information. In this regard, it would be of specific interest to ensure that the research assistants are informed of the referral possibilities for HIV treatment and as much knowledge as possible pertaining to the course and consequences of the illness.

- From the information elicited during the focus-group discussions it was clear that the research assistants participating in this study experienced significant emotional strain during the administration of the culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instruments. It is therefore recommended that the research assistants receive sufficient training in order to prepare them for the psychological demands expected to be made during the assessment process. In addition to this, it is recommended that the research assistants be provided with the necessary psychological support during and after the administration of the instruments, including debriefing sessions.

5.7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In the light of the findings from this study, the following recommendations with regard to future research are proposed:

- It seems that continued research focussing on the process of successfully translating existing psychometric data-collection instruments from English into different African languages might be valuable.
- It is furthermore recommended that future research be focussed on the specific need for information that exists with mothers living with HIV, and on ways in which the information can be communicated effectively to this population.
- The need for psychological support, as well as ways in which this service could be rendered to research assistants, is recommended as a topic for future research.
- The experience and expression of spirituality in mothers living with HIV, as well as that of their children, may be recommended as another topic for future research.

5.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The process of the cultural tailoring of psychometric data-collection instruments is expected to bring about unique challenges, depending on the population concerned. However, despite the challenges and complexity of the practice, it is a valuable asset within the ever-growing context of cross-cultural assessment. The role of the research assistants in the process of cross-cultural assessment, as well as the value of their experiences for this practice, seems to be underestimated and this field of research is not yet saturated.

By attempting to give a voice to the experience of the research assistants during the administration of a culturally tailored psychometric data-collection instrument, this study pursued a greater understanding of these experiences in order to inform the process of test adaptation specifically, and also within cross-cultural assessments in general.

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Appendix A: Focus group interview schedule

Appendix B: Example of a page from the focus group transcripts

jump to the English version and reach out and here and there you find that the English version is much easier understandable than the indigenous language. Sometimes the indigenous language is too heavy that the mom actually now find it difficult to understand. When the research assistant immediately page into the English version you find that you go easier to the mom than in that language. I think the translation here and there is a problem.

9RA: Yes, I agree with Rachelle. I think when they were translated they use like Sepedi, they used Sepedi from the North and if you come into the urban townships and then it is different. And the mom has been here for some time, so she'll find that some of the words she also does not know and you also does not know (laughing). But it is true that sometimes when you go back to the English version, you can.. it flows closely easier.

10I.E. Ok. All right,

11RA   I don't have much experience with the mothers. So far I interviewed the children and with the children I think it has been ok so far. It's just the time it takes with the children. You need to be… you make up a whole lot of stories so that they can understand the question and I get the answer from them and make sure that it is the correct answer. Because sometimes they really don't understand you so clear.

12I.E. All right, if we look at it generally that the time is an issue and the translation is an issue and the emotional responses that the instruments elicit, if I ask you the fist question that is what is popping out.

13RA? And the informative part it?

14IE   Ja

15RA   Becaues you realize that the mom suddenly realize as well that "Oh" in initially be expected to be knowing this and that and that, especially when it come to the Vinelands you would find that she did not know that of her 7-year old. And she says "Oh, at 7-years this child of mine was suppose to be able to be doing this". And clever moms actually wants to peep as say 'Are we still at 7 years?' and when you are running down and saying 'We are at 8 years' 'We are at 9 years' they become so shy and half the time you are not sure if you are getting the real mother and the real child in there responses.

16IE   But your sense is that is has an educational function with the mother

Appendix C: Example of the theme analysis

18IE   All right. Lets talk specifically about the instruments for the children if you have particular comments about that.

19RA   I found the CSCS to be a bit abstract, especially for kids 8/7 years old. The 9 and 10 year olds – they do understand. There's one question that talks about the connectedness. You are aware that you are not alone in this world, you are connected.

20RA   You are connected and you are alive in this world…. (laughing)… you're spirituality. And then they look at you like 'Are you mad'

21IE   Yes, you are not only assessing them, they are also assessing you (laughing),

22RA My name this morning is

23RA   I have to make up stories like this. Sometimes you had to draw in a grandmother, grandfather, mom, aunt, uncle, (laughing).. so afterwards you realize… but all around I think it is a good questionnaire.

24IE   Are you now talking about the CSCS?

25RA   The whole battery. The CSCS I think sometimes it is high for some kids.

26RA   You round about the question the child expects. Half the time they look at you..Are you saying 'Don't you know' of 'You are not sure' or the child is not able to answer. But as Princess has already said, you have already orientated yourself that you do not just bounce of the question. You must start telling stories, asking her when she is waking up, going to school and what happens when she reaches school and then take it from there. 'We are at assembly'. 'What do you do at assembly?' 'We sing, we pray'. They you come in and say 'Pray? Tell me, say a prayer. And then you hear they start saying 'God' and then you come in and you actually hook the child. 'Praying God? Singing God?' actually explain now and the child gets it to….   It's work…

27RA   But it is fun. I mean sometimes there are kids who you'll ask her a question and you'll start telling a story and she'll say 'Are you talking about a friend here?' (laughing) and then she wants to tell you and then she will be standing up (laughing)

28RA   And then "other times we jump we jump you see?' and she stands up and say ' Yes I know this song I know this song". And the under 6, when

Appendix D: **Example of a page from the field notes**