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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERIENCES OF FOSTER MOTHERS IN FOSTERING ADOLESCENTS

by

Keolebogile Betty Mosimege

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Supervisor: Prof. F.J.A. Snyders

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Declaration

I declare that the work on which this thesis is based, is original, except where acknowledgement indicates otherwise, and that neither the whole work nor part of it has been, is being, or will be submitted for another degree at this or any other university or tertiary education institution or examination body.

Signature: ……………

K. B. Mosimege

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Abstract

Unfavourable socio-economic and psychosocial changes, globally and locally, have forced communities to place an increasing number of adolescents in foster care, or take the necessary steps to accommodate them in orphanages. The drastic interventions had many unsettling consequences. South African orphanages were inundated with orphaned and removed children, and foster care was a constructive alternative. Research results have shown that, for children to develop normally, they have to be cared for in cordial and constructive family structures (Republic of South Africa, Department of Social Development, 2009).

The present study was exploratory and aimed to explore the challenges faced by foster mothers who were fostering the adolescents at the time of interviewing, as well as coping strategies employed by foster mothers in their task of fostering. The target areas were Mamelodi and Atteridgeville Townships in the Tshwane/Pretoria Region. Twenty foster mothers were selected from a list of foster mothers received from social workers and semi-structured interviews were conducted with these 20 respondents. Respondents' narratives were translated from Setswana and North Sotho to English. Data was transcribed and analysed by means of Thematic Network Analysis. Four core themes were extracted, namely Crisis, Structure, Relationships, and Resilience and Spirituality. These themes were discussed and linked to the tenets of Positive Psychology and literature sources, and communicated to social workers, foster mothers and legislators.

Key words

Foster care, foster child, foster mother, foster parent, resilience, spirituality, crisis, structure, relationships, Positive Psychology.

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 Background Information

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, now known as United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on Protection for Orphans and Vulnerable Children, (2010), reported that South Africa had 3.7 million orphans, of whom close to half were victims of the effects of HIV/Aids. Many children even had to live with bedridden caregivers. The country further had 150 000 households headed by children. 'UNICEF's position is that children should grow up in safe family environments, whether their own, or those provided by foster or adoptive parents' (http://www.unicef.org/southafrica/protection_6631.html). From a socio-economic perspective, the HIV/Aids pandemic destroyed family structures on an alarming scale. It was estimated that by 2015, approximately one-third of children under the age of eighteen in South Africa would have lost one or both parents if there were no changes in sexual behaviour or significant health interventions embarked upon (Freeman & Nkomo, 2006). This societal disruption has two noteworthy consequences:

(a) An increase in the number of abandoned children, and

(b) increase public awareness of the fact that people who care for children that are not biologically their own, can apply for foster child grants.

Scientific studies have confirmed that the large numbers of foster care applications in many parts of South Africa far exceeded the capacity of social workers to process and monitor cases (www.ci.org.za/depts/ci/plr/pdf/salrc_dis/20-dp103-chap17.pdf, retrieved 18 May 2016).

In South Africa, the breakdown of family structures, scarcity of parental caregivers and increasing number of children, particularly adolescents, who depend on dedicated foster care primarily affects women (http://christianfostercaresa.wordpress.com/, retrieved, 18 May

2016). In many cultures, especially in a traditional Western one, a mother is usually the wife in a married couple. Mothers therefore have a very important role in raising offspring and this title can be given to a non-biological mother that fills this role (Adshade, 2014). This means that in most societies, women not only bear children, but are also primarily responsible for caring for them in the infant stage of development. Women spend more time with children and develop stronger primary emotional ties with infants than men do. Men on the other hand were referred to as heads of the family which meant that they provided financial support and made critical decisions. In instances where biological mothers do not parent a child, other women, rather than men, usually take the woman's place.

This is the situation in South Africa. Nannies/baby sitters are women. In cases where there are instabilities in marriage, women fulfil the role of either mothers at home or that of workers at child-care centres, thereby becoming continuously involved in taking care of children. Thus women have the primary responsibility of child care both inside and outside families.

1.2 Conceptualising the Prospective Research

1.2. 1 Thesis Statement

Currently, unfavourable socio-economic and psycho-social changes, globally and locally, have forced communities to place an increasing number of adolescents in foster care or take the necessary steps to accommodate them in orphanages. These drastic interventions had many unsettling consequences. South African orphanages were overfilled by orphans as well as children who had escaped from custody or were removed from their biological parents for some reason or another. Research results have shown that for children to develop normally, they have to be cared for in cordial and constructive family structures (RSA, Department of Social Development, 2009).

In the experience of the researcher, foster mothers are faced with unique challenges in fostering adolescents in the 21st century. Foster mothers do not always have enough money to

cover the needs of adolescents who want expensive clothes and cell phones, and the skills to deal with unco-operative behaviour of adolescents. According to Pasztor, Hollonger, Inkelas and Halfon (2006) all parents, biological and foster, face challenges when raising of children but foster parents may have additional stresses that include: (a) finding it stressful to deal with the children's complex needs, (b) experiencing inadequate training and support to deal with foster children's specific needs, and (c) the realization that there is no one to talk to when crises arise.

This suggests that professionals, prior to placement of children into foster care, need to find out if foster mothers have the physical, social, intellectual, and psychological resources to securely foster adolescents. Secondly, what can professionals such as social workers, educationists, counselling psychologists, and clinical psychologists contribute to ensure that fosterlings are exposed to rewarding and warm familial relationships aimed at enhancing their overall development?

Based on the paragraphs above, the thesis statement would be that foster mothers are faced with unique challenges of caring for foster adolescents of the 21st century and have to utilize Positive Psychology strategies to cope with those challenges.

1.2.2 Purpose of the Study

The researcher's observation has been that foster mothers tend to experience ambivalence in dealing with fostered adolescents, and this ambivalence had a psychological impact on the foster mothers. Khoo and Skoog (2013) assert that research has pointed to many problems associated with placement instability and breakdown, but less is known about foster parents' experiences. There is a shortage of scientific research on the description, analysis and meaningful interpretation of the psychological experiences of foster mothers and how they cope with fostering adolescents.

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of foster mothers who were fostering adolescents at the time of the interview. Secondly, from an understanding of such

experiences a number of recommendations to stakeholders could be formulated. Pasztor et al. (2006, p. 33) supported the focus on foster mothers, stating that 'children who enter foster care often have special health and mental needs'. Unfortunately, researchers have rarely examined how foster parents manage foster children's needs. The problems are of a parent-child relational, partner relational and sibling relational nature. In addition, children come to foster care for a number of reasons. In many cases they have suffered physical or sexual abuse, neglect or abandonment at home, and are placed in a safe environment. The above-mentioned problems emphasize the importance and urgency of dedicated research that explored and analysed psychological experiences of foster mothers from the perspective of Positive Psychology.

1.2.3 Research Questions, Goals and Objectives

1.2.3.1 Research Questions

The number of children placed in foster care due to the AIDS pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa continues to increase at an alarming rate, and South Africa is no exception. This situation has resulted in an increase in the families headed by children, women and grandparents, who are unable to adequately provide for children in their care. According to Pasztor et el. (2006) all parents, biological and foster, face challenges but foster parents may have additional stresses that include: Feeling that there is no one to talk to when crises arise; finding it stressful to deal with the children's complex needs; feeling there is inadequate training and support to deal with foster children's specific needs; feeling frustrated, and so on. Pasztor et al. (2006) further assert that fostering can be a daunting task that affects foster parents physically, emotionally and financially. The question therefore would be: What coping strategies do foster mothers employ in dealing with such challenges?

The study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What has been the foster mothers' experience in fostering an adolescent?

2. How has fostering affected the foster mothers (issues of stress, tension, emotions/anger)?

3. What coping strategies were employed when dealing with issues related to adolescents?

4. Have any emotional adjustment problems on the part of the adolescent been identified?

5. What kind of discipline has been administered to adolescents when behavioural issues arise?

6. Do foster mothers tend to focus on the strong or weak points of the adolescent?

7. What have foster mothers learned from fostering of an adolescent?

1.2.3.2 Goals of the study

According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, and Delport (2005), the researcher's goal is all about 'seeking answers to questions that could possibly have an impact on thinking for over a century. It provides a foundation for knowledge and understanding' (p. 104). The goal of the current study was to describe how foster mothers in the townships specifically in Mamelodi and Atteridgeville in Tshwane/Pretoria region, experience and cope with the challenges they experienced in their fostering of adolescents. A second goal was to formulate recommendations to stakeholders.

1.2.3.3 Objectives of the study

The research objectives that this study focused on were:

(a) An exploration of the challenges faced by foster mothers in the South African context and how foster parenting of adolescents impacts on foster mothers;

(b) The exploration of foster mothers' coping strategies with and experiences of fostering adolescents;

(c) An understanding of lessons that have been learnt by foster mothers from the experience of fostering adolescents;

(d) The formulation of recommendations to potential and actual foster mothers, social workers, and government organizations.

1.2.4 Significance and relevance of the study

The study aimed to be of significance and relevance to the situation of foster care as experienced globally, regionally and nationally. The findings of this study will benefit foster parents upon learning how the respondents coped with the challenges of fostering adolescents. Recommendations are made for foster mothers, social workers and policymakers.

1.2.5 Ethical issues

According to Kvale (2007), ethical guidelines for social science research commonly concern the subjects' informed consent to participate in the study, consequences of participation in the research project and the researcher's role in the study. In this study, the researcher informed the respondents about the overall purpose of the project. Respondents were also assured of confidentiality of their responses and that their names would not appear in the document. Willig and Stainton-Rogers (2008) stated that private data identifying the subjects should not be reported. Respondents were also informed that participation was voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

1.2.6 Scope and limitations of the study

The study was limited to two townships in the city of Tshwane, Pretoria region. As such, results of this study cannot be generalized. It is hoped that the study will lead to greater awareness and more research involving all stakeholders. The study was only concerned about foster mothers of adolescents and the researcher did not interview any foster fathers, social workers or policy makers.

1.2.7 Definition of key words

Foster care

Janie and Woodward (Gale Encyclopedia, 2006) define foster care as full-time substitute care of children outside their own home by people other than their biological or adoptive parents or legal guardians.

Foster Child

A foster child is defined as a child looked after temporarily or brought up by people other than its natural or adoptive parents (www.collins.com, retrieved 16 May 2016).

Foster mother

Foster mother is defined as 'a woman who looks after or brings up a child or children as a mother, in place of the natural or adoptive mother' (www.thefreedictionary.com, retrieved 27 July 2016).

Foster parent

Foster parent refers to a person who accepts responsibility for a (related/unrelated) child who has officially been placed with them by an order of the Children's Court (RSA Social Development, 2009, p.7). This could also include or refer to an active member of an organization operating a cluster foster care scheme and who has been assigned responsibility for the foster care of a child.

Resilience

According to Masten, Cutuli, Herbers and Reed (2009, cited in Snyder & Lopez 2009), resilience refers to a class of phenomena characterized by patterns of positive adaptations in the context of significant adversity or risk.

Spirituality

Peterson and Seligman (2004) assert that spirituality is a strength of transcendence, stating 'Although the specific content of spiritual level beliefs varies, all cultures have a concept of an ultimate, transcendent, sacred, and divine force' (p. 601).

Positive Psychology

Magyar-Moe (2009) noted that 'Positive Psychology is the scientific study of optimal human functioning, the goals of which are to better understand and apply those factors that help individuals and communities to thrive and flourish' (p.3).

1.2.8 Outline of the Study

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

This chapter outlines background information to the study, thesis statement, purpose of the study, research questions, goal, and objectives, significance and relevance of the study, limitations and definition of the key words.

Chapter 2: Literature survey

This chapter outlined previous research conducted on the experiences of foster carers.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework

The chapter focuses on Positive Psychology as a theoretical framework for this study.

Chapter 4: Research methods and procedures

The chapter outlines the research aim and objective, methodological fit with the theoretical framework, research procedure, data collection procedures, method of analysis, and ethical issues.

Chapter 5: Data analysis

The chapter discusses methods to analyze data: thematic networks; issues of validity, reliability and credibility in qualitative data analysis, and reflexivity.

Chapter 6: Results and interpretation of data

This chapter outlined the core themes of crisis, structure, relationships and resilience, and spirituality.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

Chapter 7 highlights the conclusions and recommendations of the study.The following chapter discusses the literature survey regarding the research study that was conducted by the researcher.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE SURVEY

2.1 Introduction

In undertaking a research study, the researcher should have a clear understanding with regard to the way the research topic is viewed by other researchers. This chapter therefore reviews the literature pertaining to the psychological experiences of foster mothers who have fostered adolescents of high school going age. It presents an extensive survey of literature, with the purpose of providing convincing evidence that substantiates the urgency and need for the current study.

The chapter starts by outlining the background to foster care in general, as it happens globally (e.g. in United Kingdom) regionally (in sub-Saharan Africa, e.g. Tanzania) and nationally (with reference to South Africa). In this study, only one country will be used as an example in each case.

2.1.1 Foster care

As stated in Paragraph 1.2.7 Janie and Woodward (2006) define foster care as full-time substitute care of children outside their own home by people other than their biological or adoptive parents or legal guardians. Foster care is also defined as care provided for children whose families are temporarily unable to care for them (www.mercmanuals.com, retrieved 18 May 2016). Foster care is often seen as the optimal care environment because it is meant to give children an ordinary family life until they either return home or are ready for independence (Khoo & Skoog, 2014). Foster care could be informal/kinship or formal.

Formal foster care takes place when children are placed with members of the community outside their own family for a stated period of time. This is usually facilitated by the social worker,

a police person, a private agency or government. In informal fostering, families foster the children, probably without the social worker, for example, an aunt may be taking care of her sister's child/children or the grandmother looks after the grandchildren (Johnson, 2005).

According to the South African Children's Act 38 of 2005 (p.104) as amended, a child is in foster care if the child has been placed in the care of a person who is not the parent or guardian of the child as a result of either an order of the Children's Court or a transfer from a Child and Youth Care Centre or temporary safe care.

2.2 Foster care: A global concept

Foster care is practised throughout the world, but it depends on the needs of the child, the culture and the systems in place. Khoo and Skoog (2014) contend that the society has the overall responsibility to take care of children who cannot grow up with their parents, in order to ensure that children have access to the support and protection they need. Foster care, as indicated earlier, can be short-term or long-term, informal/kinship or formal. Foster care can also be regarded as such when children are living in residential centres (Johnson, 2005). With the kinship or family and friends's foster care, the children are looked after by a local authority, and cared for by people they already know such as aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters or grandparents (Kgomo, 2009). According to Hogan (2001) Western culture continues to link caretaking activities with women. Women are regarded as responsible for providing care to dependent relatives (Nordmeyer, 2002).

Many of the kinship caregivers are grandparents or elderly aunts and uncles (Kgomo, 2009). Kinship caregivers offer family support and stability, and more frequent contacts with parents or legal guardians, and siblings. However, kinship caregivers, especially grandparents, face a number of challenges, for example, economic hardships as they take in one or more of their relatives' children. They may not have medical aid and are unable to afford psychological services needed for the children in foster care. They may not know how to raise children in today's world,

with the amount of freedoms or lack of them that children experience today. They may not be able to help their foster children with homework. However, social service agencies offer counselling, homework help, and even home tutoring for both child and caregiver (Janie & Woodward, 2006).

The Ugandan Children's Act of 1997, states that foster care is 'the placement of a child with a person who is not his or her parent or relative and who is willing to undertake the care and maintenance of the child' ("Ugandan Children's Act," 1997, p.11) The Australian foster care programme defines foster care as 'a form of out-of-home care for children and young people up to 18 years of age, who are unable to live with their families' (Johnson, 2005 p. 7)

2.2.1 Support for foster parents in the United Kingdom (UK)

In the UK, foster care has been defined as being 'a way of providing a family life for children who cannot live with their parents' (Johnson, 2005, p. 5). Foster care in the UK includes long-term fostering in which children who cannot return to their families are adopted. In the UK, both foster parents and foster children are offered social and financial support from the agency that the foster parent is signed up with (Johnson, 2005). The agency supplies a support worker whose role will be to keep in contact with the family to offer support and advice. The support worker's other role is to inform the social worker about issues that may arise and need attention. Support is given more intensely in the initial weeks of placement, but is reduced to monthly or six-weekly visits. However, in most cases there is 24-hour support if needed. There are also support groups for foster parents to meet and plan events for the whole year. Financially, all foster parents in the UK receive non-taxable allowances to cover the cost of caring for the child (Johnson, 2005).

2.2.2 Fostering in sub-Saharan Africa

Grant and Yeatman (2012) contend that the process of child fostering is a common mechanism in sub-Saharan Africa because when parents die, children are necessarily fostered out.

Those authors further note that the majority of case studies for child fostering have focused on West Africa (for example, Akresh, 2009; Eloundou-Enyegue & Shapiro 2004), and the practice is common throughout sub-Saharan Africa. This includes the AIDS-burdened areas of east and southern Africa (Monasch & Boerma, 2004). Akresh (2009) argues that child fostering has been recognized as a coping mechanism by African households to respond to adult mortality. Furthermore, child fostering was used as a mechanism for families to strengthen social connections and kinship ties. However, in southern Africa, fostering emerged as a response to patterns of seasonal labour migration and family division that began during the colonial period (Van Blerk & Ansell, 2006). It is apparent that orphans in sub-Saharan Africa are generally absorbed into the extended family system (Heuveline, 2004).

According to UNICEF, HIV and AIDS pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa is orphaning generations of children and jeopardizing their rights and well-being, as well as compromising the overall development prospects of their countries (*Africa's Orphaned Generations 2006*, p.6). UNICEF further records that in 1990, less than 1 million sub-Saharan African children under the age of fifteen had lost one or both parents to HIV and AIDS. By the end of 2001, 11 million in this age group were orphaned by this pandemic. It was estimated that by 2010, 20 million in this age group were likely to be orphans. According to UNICEF, (*Africa's Orphaned Generations* 2006, p.6*),* the pandemic has deepened poverty and exacerbated deprivation in sub-Saharan Africa because many extended families are being pushed into the responsibility of caring beyond their ability to cope for the orphaned children. This has resulted in many extended family networks being overwhelmed. It has been observed that in many countries, there is an increase in the families headed by women and grandparents, who are unable to adequately provide for children in their care (*Africa's Orphaned Generations*, 2006, p.6).

2.3 Foster care: A regional aspect

According to a brochure on Foster Care in Zambia (www.mcdmch.gov.zm/foster care, retrieved 18 May 2016) foster care is defined as the care offered to a child who is not your own, but has been placed in your care for a specific period of time by a social worker. The foster care order expires when a foster child attains the age of 19 or is adopted as governed by the laws of Zambia. 'Fostered child' is defined in Zambia, as a unique individual with unique personality and experience. The age range is from infanthood to teenagerhood (from birth to 19). A fostered child may have lost parents through death, illness, imprisonment or just abandonment and is placed in the care of suitable and willing parents.

2.3.1 Fostering process in Zambia

In Zambia, the prospective foster parent applies to the District Social Welfare Officer in his or her district for a committal order. The application and assessment report is then be forwarded to the provincial office which submits it to the Commissioner for Juvenile Welfare. The Commissioner then assesses the application and, if satisfied, recommends to the district office through the provincial office for a committal process to begin. A committal order (document) is then made (The Department of Social Welfare, www.mcdmch.gov.zm/foster care, retrieved 18 May 2016).

A prospective parent should have custody of the child for three months before an adoption application can be considered. An assessment by the District Social Welfare Officer is done strictly in the home where the child is living, rather than in a temporary venue like a lodge or hotel. The child's age should be declared in the order committing the child to the suitable or willing person. The Department of Social Welfare (www.mcdmch.gov.zm/foster care, retrieved 18 May 2016) encourages foster parenting for children in need of care as opposed to institutionalization for the following reasons:

(a) It promotes easy integration into the new family,

(b) It provides an opportunity for a child in a family crisis to return to the original family after their family situation has normalized,

(c) It encourages and fosters the child's growth as it is taken care of in a natural environment,

(d) It enhances the human nature in the child, and

(e) It also gives an opportunity for those who do not have a child to have one within the family environment.

At the same time, Grant and Yeatman (2014) contend that the prevalence of out-fostering is highest in southern Africa, where as many as a quarter of non-orphaned children in Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa do not live with either parent. Grant and Yeatman found that in Malawi 14% of children under the age of fifteen are co-resident with their mother, and 31% are co-resident with their father.

Freeman and Nkomo (2006) note that, in Africa the extended family is the traditional social security system where the members are responsible for the protection of the vulnerable, care of the poor and sick and the transmission of traditional social values and education. Current empirical evidence from various African countries clearly shows that the majority of orphaned children are indeed living in or with extended families (Freeman & Nkomo, 2006).

Freeman and Nkomo (2006) further note that many people in sub-Saharan Africa live below the poverty line and any additional pressure on the family substantially strains the family resources financially, socially and emotionally. At the same time, migration to cities has resulted in a massive social shift in lifestyle, in kinship relations, in people's ability to carry out cultural

traditional rituals and roles and in family cohesion and stability. Clearly, all these factors would have a negative impact on the extended families.

2.4 Foster care in South Africa: A national perspective

'One of the integral components of the South African alternative care system is foster care' (Breen, 2015, p. 1). In the South African context, foster care is provided for through *inter alia*, the following Acts: Children's Act of 2005, South African Schools Act of 1996, Social Assistance Act No. 59 of 1992 and the Children's Amendment Act no. 41 of 2007 of South Africa as well as the African Union Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child (The African Children's Charter), which provides the policy guidelines for the African Union (AU) member states.

The Children's Act 38 of 2005 defines foster care as a form of alternative placement a children's court can order. Section 150 of the Act states that a child may be placed in foster care when deemed by the children's courts to be a child in need of care and protection or if a child is transferred to this type of placement in terms of section 171 of the Act. According to Section 180, a child may be placed in foster care with '(a) a person who is not a family member of the child, (b) with a family member who is not the parent or guardian of the child; or (c) in a registered cluster foster care in order to:

(i) protect and nurture children by providing a safe, healthy environment with positive support; (ii) promote the goals of permanency planning, first towards family reunification, or by connecting children to other safe and nurturing family relationships intended to last a lifetime; and (iii) respect the individual and family by demonstrating a respect for cultural, ethnic and community diversity.

Children in South Africa are faced with a number of challenges which include abuse and neglect, abandonment, exploitation, orphanhood, being unaccompanied minors, child labour, child trafficking, lack of access to birth registration, disability and chronic illness, child-headed households, infection and affliction by HIV and AIDS, alcohol and substance abuse, harmful customary and traditional practices and lack of access to services. These challenges have a negative impact on the children as they then suffer multiple vulnerabilities (RSA Department of Social Development, 2009).

Breen (2015) further notes that the number of orphans in South Africa has risen drastically since 2002, with an increase in the demand of foster care placements. To this end, the then Minister of Social Development encouraged relatives caring for children to approach the children's courts seeking foster care orders to place children in their care. This factor (the encouragement by the Minister) according to Breen (2015), caused the number of children in foster care to increase drastically, overwhelming the child care and the protection systems that is, the social workers and the children's courts.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) sets out minimum standards regarding socio-economic rights, including social security, social assistance, and social services. Section 28 (1) states that:

> Every child has the right (a) to a name and a nationality from birth, (b) to
> family care or parental care or to appropriate alternative care when removed
> from the family environment [and] (c) to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health
> care services and social services.

Section 28 (2) avers that 'the best interests of the child are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child'. Section 28 (3) asserts that 'child' means 'a person under the age of 18 years' (p. 14).

According to The Presidency (2009), residential care placements in South Africa because of abuse and neglect constituted 30% of the placements, abandonment constituted 24% and orphaning 11%. Hoseġood (2009) claims that most of the HIV-affected children are absorbed within the extended or re-constituted families. Biemba, Beard, Brooks, Bresnahan and Flynn (2010) believe that such families are very strained. UNICEF (2010) estimated that 3.7 million children in South Africa were orphaned, about half of whom had lost one or both parents to AIDS, and 150,000 children were believed to be living in child-headed households.

Pequegnat, Bell and Allison, (2012) argue that the systemic effects of HIV and poverty result in many South African children losing parental care and requiring social assistance. Both orphaning and abandonment have been found to be on the increase in South Africa (Meintjes, Hall, Marera, & Boulle, 2009), particularly in the rural provinces where services are sparse (De Villiers & Giese, 2008). Fostering has subsequently increased over the last decade (Mokomane & Rochat, 2011).

Rochat, Mokomane and Mitchell (2016) opine however that rates of adoption in South Africa are low while the number of fostered children continually rises. The authors found that fostering in South Africa is driven predominantly by access to subsidies but is also informed by socio-cultural beliefs. In South Africa, fostering placements are formalised through legal custodial processes, needing review by court process every two years (Hall & Proudlock, 2011; Johnson, 2005). Significant backlogs have been documented. Rochat et al. (2016) state that adoption requires extensive initial screening and court procedures, but is distinctive from fostering in its requirement for the termination of parental rights. Unlike most international settings, there are no adoption subsidies or tax credits for adopting parents, and no incentive systems for social welfare or adoption agencies (DeVooght, Malm, Vandivere & McCoy-Roth 2011). It is plausible that the absence of adoption subsidies together with cultural beliefs which discourage termination of parental rights, results in low

adoption rates (Blackie, 2014). Research in the early 2000s found a willingness among families to provide adoptive placements for HIV-affected and vulnerable children (Townsend & Dawes, 2007). However, this has not translated into increased adoptions.

Grant and Yeatman, (2012) note that fostering and foster care are different in the African contexts, when compared to Europe and the United States. In the Europe and the United States foster care is not considered permanent (though it may be long-term in specific legal cases). The State retains guardianship of the child during this interim period of care. Foster care is used until a child can be reunited with a parent, is permanently adopted or reaches adulthood. In the African settings, fostering, and in particular kin fostering is considered a more permanent placement (Blackie, 2014). Children move between and within families to increase access to resources and care, using less formal fostering processes and with less concern for legal process or protection (Abebe, 2010).

According to Freeman and Nkomo (2006), models of placement in South Africa include: extended families; foster parents; community carers; supported child-headed households; and institutional care. The extended family is regarded as the most likely and preferred option by most key planners and organizations. The authors found that caregivers believed that either their partner, grandparent, or another family member would look after the child/children if they are no longer able to.

2.4.1 Criteria for selecting foster parents in South Africa

Johnson (2005) emphasises that the recruitment process involves the screening of potential carers by the welfare organization. Factors considered include the age of the prospective foster parents, their health, family composition and income, suitability of accommodation, general environment, closeness of the school and public transport. Topics such as child-rearing and education, their ability to accept responsibility, their attitude towards the natural parents, and their

motivation to foster a child who is not their own are also taken into consideration. From there, they are either approved or not, by the welfare organizations in collaboration with the children's court. Foster carers must be residents in South Africa at the time of application.

2.4.2 Screening of foster parents in South Africa

Prospective foster parents are screened by welfare organizations to ensure they will bear the responsibility of caring for children (http://christianfostercaresa.wordpress.com/, Retrieved, 18 May 2016). Factors such as the health of prospective parents are taken into consideration. Prospective parents are also interviewed about their level of education, attitude towards the biological parents, and their motivation to foster. Religious and cultural factors are also considered since the country is made up of diverse ethnic groups.

2.4.3 Training programmes for foster families in South Africa

Durand (2007) asserts that training of foster parents is a practical form of support to foster parents. Training of foster parents is crucial because it provides foster parents with information and skills which will ensure that they are able to cope with the issues that might crop up in any foster placement. Durand (2007) further notes that training has to include matters of relationships between the foster child and foster parents.

The RSA Department of Social Development (2009) notes that social workers coordinate the training programmes to ensure the involvement of social services professionals and volunteers in the community when providing training and support to prospective foster parents. Foster parents are advised of this. The aim of training is to equip potential foster parents with the necessary skills and knowledge required to undertake the foster parenting role. During screening, foster families are advised to contact the social worker should any matter needing serious attention arise. At the same time, social workers make regular visits to foster families as a means of providing guidance and

support.   Some foster care families have support groups and come together during the course of the year to attend events and to provide encouragement and support to one another. There are however, problems of human resources, high case loads of social workers and limited suitable training (RSA Department of Social Development, 2009).

2.4.4 Child placement

In South Africa, parties agree on certain obligations. For example, foster parents are obliged to maintain and care for the child and grant reasonable access to the child's parents. The foster parents are however, not allowed to take the child out of South Africa without approval of the Minister for Social Development (Johnson, 2005).

2.4.5 Support of foster parents

In South Africa, maintenance for the child is paid through a foster child grant (FCG) paid by the government to the foster parents. Section 7 of the Social Assistance Act 13 of 2004 allows a foster parent access to a FCG if the child is placed in his or her custody and the child remains in his or her custody. But the foster parent must be a South African citizen, or a permanent resident or a refugee. In promoting family fostering, the Social Assistance Act (Act No 13 of 2004) provides fostering parents with a monthly subsidy (R860 in 2016, R800.00 in 2013 and R830.00 in 2015). The South African Children's Act (No 38 of 2005) promotes family and kinship care whenever possible and residential care as a last resort.

2.4.6 Challenges experienced within the South African fostering context

South Africa is experiencing a number of challenges with regard to social workers required to administer the placing of foster children because of *inter alia*: a shortage of social workers, capacity building and training, unfavourable working environments and remuneration, to name a few. These challenges will be discussed in the sections that follow.

2.4.6.1 Lack of human resources

There is a shortage of social workers in South Africa as the majority leave the country for improved and competitive salary packages and working conditions (Chibba, 2011). Others leave the profession and move into the private sector. Some move into alternative professions (psychology and so on). This challenge is supported by Khumalo (SA News, 2009, www.sanews.gov.za. Retrieved 21 July 2016), who indicated that the Minister of Social Development stated that the country needed about 16 000 social workers to address issues of children, the elderly and the disabled, because the country suffered an exodus of social workers in the late 1990s and early 2000s to countries such as New Zealand and Canada.

At the same time, only a few young people are choosing to study social work as a profession. To this effect, the Ministry of Social Development has declared social work to be a scarce skill and a Recruitment and Retention Strategy for social workers has been developed, including the strategy to recruit students to study social work, and to provide them with bursaries packaged for holiday work service obligations as well as a post-study work requirement (RSA Department of Social Development, 2009).

2.4.6.2 Backlog in foster care cases

In 2005, it was apparent that South Africa has half the number of social workers needed to meet the minimum services to children. The shortage was particularly acute in Gauteng Province, which includes Johannesburg and the capital city of Tshwane, with an average of 5,395 children per social worker (Baldauf, 2007). In that same year, there was a demand of 154,000 beds in children's homes around the country, which is more than ten times the number of beds available. According to the RSA Department of Social Development (2009), 84 000 cases were waiting to be

placed in foster care. This figure is increasing because of the critical shortage of social workers in the country. The increasing backlog will obviously cause delays for families who are waiting to have their applications finalized. The department has, however, developed a service delivery model as a solution to address this problem such that there is one social worker for every 60 children in foster care.

2.4.6.3 Remuneration

Remuneration for social workers is not market-related despite the recent increase in the salary levels of the public service. The primary providers of social welfare services also receive low wages (Chibba, 2011) and at times struggle to access the subsidies provided from the government.

2.4.6.4 Capacity building and training

Research shows that there is a lack of suitable specialist training in the field of child protection and statutory care (Baldauf, 2007). It is proposed that this training be provided during basic training of social work students or in-service training at the respective places of employment. This will prevent a scenario of having a forum of inexperienced social workers and an inability to interpret legislation and policies on matters relating to children (Baldauf, 2007; RSA Social Development, 2009).

2.4.6.5 Unfavourable working environment

There is a lack of appropriate resources, for instance office space, computers, telephones, infrastructure and vehicles for social workers to effectively carry out their jobs. All these impact on the ability of an already limited number of social workers to render a professional and acceptable standard of service to clients (Chibba, 2011).

2.5 Benefits of foster care to children in foster care

A number of benefits for children in foster care have been identified by different researchers and found to include safety and stability as well as relationships.

2.5.1 Safety and stability

Geiger, Hayes and Lietz (2014, p. 238) confirm that family foster placement provides safety and stability for youth who need out-of-home care. Adolescents in foster care must navigate issues associated with involvement in the child welfare system while simultaneously managing the typical developmental and social challenges with this phase of life. The stability and nurturing foster families provide promotes resilience and supports healthy development leading to enhanced outcomes for youth (Ellingsen, Shemmings, & Størksen 2011). According to Schofield and Beek (2009), providing sensitivity, acceptance, cooperation, availability, and family membership allows adolescents the security and support they need to develop trust as they approach adulthood. The foster families also provide a strong foundation for health, physiological, emotional, and social development for adolescents.

Geiger et al. (2014), hold that although foster care for an adolescent is very different from caring for an infant, it is just as important.

> The nurturing and supervision of children at any age remains critical to their
> healthy development. Foster families play an important role in caring for youth
> during a difficult phase of life, and they help prepare these youth to transition
> into adulthood (p. 251).

Geiger et al. further emphasise that there is a need for more families who are willing and able to provide for the needs of adolescents. This is because of the important role foster parents can

play in the lives of foster youth. It is thus crucial to provide a child with love and security at a time when she/he needs it most (Vathsalya Charitable Trust, 2003).

2.5.2 Relationships

It is vital to refer to family relationships in order to understand adolescents in foster care. Morris, Silk, Steinberg, Myers, and Robinson, (2007) assert that even though peers become more important as children develop, families continue to strongly influence children's development during the middle years. The nature of influence from the peers and parents differ because parents have the psychological maturity and experience. This means that parental influence on children can be seen as significant because they draw on their experience and can differentiate between right and wrong. Seifert and Hoffnung (1987) argue tha children may, to some extent, influence the parents, but most of the influence is from parents to child, even in middle years, in at least six different ways, namely modelling of behaviours; giving rewards and punishments; direct instruction; stating rules; reasoning and providing materials and settings.

According to Glover and Mullineaux (2010) parents influence children by praising some of their behaviours and disapproving of others. Sometimes parents tell their children how to act, for instance, 'Come straight home from school without talking to strangers.' Sometimes parents create rules such as, 'In this family, everyone washes his or her own dishes' (Seifert & Hoffnung, 1987, p. 554). Parents use reasoning to influence children's behaviour, for example: 'You did badly in the test because you didn't study hard enough not because you're dumb' (Seifert & Hoffnung, 1987, p. 555). Parents might provide children with computers and clothing or provide space to do homework but may not provide a place to keep pets. Such influences make some behaviour more likely to occur than others.

Foster families provide the strength of relationships and attachment for adolescents. Collins, Spencer and Ward (2010) found that two-thirds of previously fostered youth had at

least one supportive adult and as such were more likely to have completed high school and had lower occurrences of homelessness after leaving foster care. Supportive relationships were found to influence the self-esteem of adolescents. It was clear that adolescents who feel included and supported in a foster family tend to have higher self-esteem (Luke & Coyne, 2008). The relationships established between the foster parents and adolescents can demonstrate positive effects on the youth as they recognize the foster parents' support and encouragement. This can prompt feelings of self-worth even as an adult (Munson & McMillen, 2009).

Furthermore, Leathers (2006) found that the youth's integration into the foster family was shown to prevent disruption and led to more successful placements. The self-worth and healthy identity development in the adolescent fosters resilience as another benefit of foster placements. As adolescents approach the age of majority and the transition to independent living situations, resilience and expanded social networks become increasingly important.

Youth who have supportive adults and ongoing social networks are more likely to have improved psychological and sociological outcomes (Collins et al. 2010). Inclusion in decision-making has consistently been identified as important to strengthening social bonds and placements, as well as helping prepare adolescents for future relationships. Geiger et al. (2014) found that communication between foster parents and adolescents is related to behaviour in that parents' behaviour can either reduce, maintain, or worsen behaviour issues with foster youth.

According to Geiger et al. (2014) previously fostered youth appreciated when foster parents let them play an active role in daily activities, decision-making, and gave the youths responsibility, thereby creating an active role in their own development and successes. Four strategies common to parents fostering adolescents were identified as: (1) setting and maintaining boundaries; (2)

providing higher rates of supervision; (3) responding with sensitivity to the youth's developmental age; and (4) extending warmth and acceptance toward the youth.

2.6 Previous research on foster mothers who have fostered adolescents

As discussed in chapter 1 this study focuses on the psychological experiences of foster mothers who are fostering adolescents. In the sections that follow, previous research findings on foster mothering are discussed. Khoo and Skoog (2014) note that '… less is known about foster parents' experiences' (p. 255). According to Pasztor et al. (2006) it is well documented that children enter foster care with special health and mental health needs, but there is less attention to psychological well-being of foster parents who have the most contact with these children. Clearly, research has been done on foster care worldwide but not much on the psychological experiences of foster mothers.

A psychological experience is anything in a person's life that changed the way the person sees him/herself and or the world around him/her. For example, death in the family may make one become an orphan. Experience comprises knowledge of or skill in something or some event gained through involvement in or exposure to that thing or event (www.learnersdictionary.com).

2.6.1 Roles and responsibilities of foster mothers

Women have traditionally carried the responsibility for care giving in society through their unpaid family-care work tending to children, the elderly and the sick (Critelli & Schwam-Harries 2010). This explains why foster mothers are the key providers within the child welfare system. Many provide 24-hour care to abused and neglected children. Research has shown that a significant number of foster mothers are single and come from poor or working-class backgrounds (Swartz,

2004). Clearly, the scope of foster mothers' responsibilities has expanded over the years, making fostering more challenging than in the past.

Based on the explanation above, it is therefore appropriate to discuss the responsibilities of foster mothers and the factors that motivate foster mothers to foster children. McHugh (2007) notes that literature on care work emphasizes that care work differs from other work, because it includes important emotional and altruistic dimensions. Thus, carers are usually motivated by gendered social norms and values and feel morally obliged to provide care, particularly to family members. Therefore, according to McHugh, many carers found fostering to be more difficult than they had imagined regarding both the foster children and the foster system, requiring good parenting practices, advocacy skills, and assertiveness.

When a child is placed, the foster family takes responsibility for feeding and clothing the child, getting the child to school and to appointments, and doing all the usual things a child's parents or legal guardians might be called to do. The foster parent might also need to meet with the foster child's therapist and will meet regularly with the child's caseworker as well. The foster mother focuses on helping the child develop normally in a safe family environment. Janie and Woodward (2006) point out that foster parents usually receive money for taking in the foster children. They are expected to use the money to buy the child's food, clothing, school supplies, and other incidentals. Most of the foster parent's responsibilities toward the foster child are clearly defined in a legal contract.

2.6.2 Motivation for fostering adolescents

MacGregor, Rodger, Cummings and Leschied (2006) highlight the importance of dealing with the motivation for foster parenting because foster parents can be motivated by a combination of both internal and external processes. The most frequent motivations for being foster parents were intrinsic and altruistic motivators such as wanting to make a difference in

children's lives and a desire to have children in the home. Daniel (2011) also asserts that foster parents' motivation to foster children is related to internal variables, for example, the love of children and altruistic values such as the desire to help those in need. Smith (2014) found that the most influential reasons to foster were: a) wanting to take in children who needed loving parents and b) to save children from further harm. Khoo and Skoog (2014) add that some parents foster to care for a child, to do good deeds and to offer a family.

Doing good deeds to others in the African context is known as 'ubuntu'. According to Nyaumwe and Mkabela (2007) 'ubuntu' is a 'reciprocal belief that an individual's humanity is expressed through personal relationships with others in a community and in turn other people in the community recognize the individual's humanity' (p. 152). Ubuntu is rooted in the spirit of mutual support and the principles of caring for each other's well-being. Thus the relationship between the individual and community is strengthened. Ubuntu is about 'being with others and being compassionate about others' (p. 153). With the ubuntu principle, people recognize the genuine needs of others in the community and are able to help, especially in cases of patients and orphans of the AIDS epidemic. 'In an individualistic society like the present day Africa these orphaned children are looked after by fellow siblings, grandparents or live in the streets' (p. 160).

MacGregor et al. (2006) expanded on intrinsic factors to include for example, wanting to fill an empty nest; increasing the family size; or providing a companion for an only child. The authors explained the altruistic motivation as having to do with a feeling of wanting to give back to the community by taking care of children, wanting to help children, and providing children with a stable environment but also fostering out of a love of children (Barth, 2001; Buehler, Cox, & Cuddeback, 2003). Khoo and Skoog (2014) pointed out that respondents wanted to support, protect and nurture a child more often. Respondents also mentioned wanting to shape independent, well-functioning citizens as the motive for

fostering. To some of Khoo and Skoog's (2014) respondents however, fostering was a lifestyle because they had fostered many children who would come and go.

According to Rodger, Cummings and Leschied, (2006) societal influences such as religious affiliation and feeling an obligation to care for others are another form of motivator found in previous studies by Gillis-Arnold et al. (1998). 'Some individuals feel blessed for what they have in life and have a desire to "give back" to the community' (MacGregor et al. 2006, p. 353). MacGregor et al. (2006) further note that some foster parents have experienced being in the foster system themselves, or have experienced fostering through their family of origin or other relations. As such they identify closely with foster children (Baum, Crase, & Crase, 2001; Redding, Fried, & Britner, 2000). The idea that religion inspires deeds of love for others is supported by Plante (2012) who contends that religion and spirituality inspire the good in the world, for example love, charity, and kindness (p. xi).

Janie and Woodward (2006) point out that children who are removed from their biological or adoptive parents, or other legal guardians, are placed in foster care in a variety of settings. They may be placed in the care of relatives other than the immediate family members involved in the neglect or abuse (kin placement), non-relatives, therapeutic or treatment foster care, or in an institution or group homes. The authors note that children come to foster care when they have suffered physical or sexual abuse, or neglect at home, and are placed in a safe environment. Only a small percentage of children are in foster care because their parents feel unable to control them, and their behaviour may have led to delinquency or fear of harm to others. Some children have been neglected by their parents or legal guardians, or have parents or legal guardians who are unable to take care of them because of substance abuse, incarceration, or mental health problems.

According to MacGregor et al. (2006) one extrinsic motivator is monetary: some studies for example (Isomaki, 2002, on the fuzzy foster parenting; Redding et al. 2000, on predictors of placement outcomes in treatment foster care) have reported that people foster as a means of supplementing family income. However, Smith (2014) and Daniel (2011) found that monetary gain was rated lower as an external motivating factor by their participants. MacGregor et al. (2006) also argue that payment is not the principal determining factor for entering or remaining active in the foster care system. Although one study (Hudson & Levasseur, 2002) found that 70% of the respondents believed that they needed additional funding to maintain their foster home, other research (Kirton, 2001) indicates that monetary compensation is not an exceptionally important motivator. Other research such as that of Pasztor and Wynne (1995) found that if foster parents perceived their reimbursement as adequate, it would positively impact retention.

2.6.3 Psychological impact of fostering on foster mothers

Caring does impact on the foster mothers. McHugh (2007) found the emotional and psychological aspects of fostering to have both a positive and negative impact on carers. Negatively, it was stressful and time-consuming to maintain ongoing relationships with both the fostered children and their birth families and also with the carer's own family (Heymann, Earle, Rajaraman, Miller, & Bogen, 2007). The entire family system is affected by the incorporation of a foster child (Kgomo, 2009). For Mchugh (2007), carers grew stronger from their negative experiences and continued to foster with good humour and resolve.

2.6.3.1 Concerns by foster mothers

According to McHugh (2007) psychology literature has paid little attention to the less positive side of caring, namely 'its highly stressful nature' (p. 86). McHugh also argues that the psychological impact of fostering could be the result of caring for a child who may not want to be

with the carer; working with the agency staff who may be suspicious of the financial motives of the carer; having to facilitate and maintain ongoing contact with members of the foster child's birth family who could be very difficult to work with; attending support groups and training, including mentoring new carers; the impact, both negative and positive, of fostering on a carer's family (spouse and children) and friends; and also on abuse allegations. Pequeǵnat, Bell, and Allison (2012) also found that foster mothers who were raising adolescents experienced many difficulties, including relationship challenges with family members and false accusations of abuse.

Raising foster children can be a challenge, but can also be very rewarding (Pasztor, Hollinger, Inkelas & Halfon, 2006). This document further indicates that becoming a foster parent is a big decision and can require significant commitment. Foster parenting is often described as being more than a parent. The rewards include contributing and making a difference in the child's life, but fostering can be challenging by affecting the foster parents physically, emotionally and financially (Pasztor et al. 2006).

2.6.3.2 Fear of the unknown

It is possible that most, if not all, foster mothers will have some questions about fostering, such as: (a) Will the children have multiple problems? (b) Will they have mental or physical disabilities? (c) What type of background experience will they have? (d) Will I be a good foster mother? (e) How will I know that I am doing the right things? (Vathsalya Charitable Trust, 2003). Sometimes parents do not know how long they will be fostering: a matter of days or permanently, depending on the situation of the biological parents (Pasztor et al. 2006).

Buehler, Rhodes, Orme, and Cuddeback (2006) point out that some parents noted concerns, including financial strain, increased time demands, increased stress, changes in routines and activities, negative effect on birth children, family conflict, marital conflict, disruption due to foster children's visits with birthparents, and a sense of loss when foster

children leave. The results of MacGregor et al. (2006) showed that the most important aspects of support related to emotional support, trust and good communication with workers, respect for foster parents' abilities and opinions, and being considered part of the childcare team.

According to Pasztor et al. (2006) all parents, biological and foster, face challenges but foster parents may have additional stresses that include:

(a) feeling that there is no one to talk to when crises arise;

(b) finding it stressful to deal with the children's complex needs;

(c) feeling there is inadequate training and support to deal with foster children's specific needs;

(d) feeling frustrated, that they can't access information about foster children in relation to difficult or problem behaviours or health problems;

(e) finding it difficult to cope with the cost related to children with special needs;

(f) being unsure of how to deal with the complex emotional reactions of children after they have seen their biological parents;

(g) having mixed feelings towards the biological parents of the child in their care;

(h) fear of disclosing to the foster children who their biological parents are (Bandawe & Louw, 1997);

(i) having difficulty with their own feelings of emotional attachment to the child in their care; and

(j) dealing with social and government agencies.

Foster mothers tend to fear that friends and family may be against their opinions of fostering adolescents and as a result may not support them in their fostering activities. In their study on adoptive parents, Wright and Flynn (2005) found that some adoptive parents had fears of relatives of the child interfering with the adoption process. This may be an experience by adoptive parents but the researcher deems it relevant to the current study. Foster mothers may experience fears relating to identity and loyalty issues and problems in discrimination between foster children and the biological children of foster parents. For example, disciplinary measures; strains and tensions for the foster parents and their own children; redefinition of the family; behavioural problems of the foster child; and working together of the biological and foster families (Wright & Flynn, 2005).

The foster mother might fear that the adolescent will damage her property, or that the adolescent might steal things in her home. This view is supported by Wright and Flynn (2005). In their study of adoptive parents they found that 26% of the adoptive parents agreed that they anticipated disruption including nasty arguments, being called names, drugs, difficult emotions and others. There could be frustration and feelings of inferiority when the foster mother realizes that she is unable to influence the adolescent and when the adolescent does not mature as expected. Parents had fears of dealing with the depression experienced by the adolescent because of the biological mother's death. Other parents had fears that the adolescent will run away. A decision to foster, for some parents, was accompanied by fears that the marriage will fall apart, while others literally lost friends thus, resulting in strain to the foster parents (Wright & Flynn, 2005).

2.6.3.3 Family background

The psychological strain might be complicated by the fact that children who are placed in foster care often come from complex and problematic family backgrounds, for example, children who experienced physical and sexual abuse, neglect, and/or the death of parents (Lipscombe

Farmer, & Moyers, 2003). Some children may have broken the law while living at home, while some could be experiencing emotional, behavioural and physical problems. This would mean that foster parents have to look for help outside their home (Vathsalya Charitable Trust, 2003). Macdonald and Turner (2005), assert that foster children have long been recognized as having high levels of behavioural and emotional problems. Thus, they experience higher levels of mental problems than children in the general population.

Some parents may foster children who are mentally or physically handicapped and caring for such children requires a combination of skills such as: good parenting skills, firm kindness and trained foster parents (Buehler, Rhodes, Orme, & Cuddeback, 2006). It is important for the foster parent to identify his/her personal limitations in order to seek professional help. For example, a foster parent may be fostering a diabetic child with broad and unpredictable daily mood swings. However, no amount of personal background experience or training will cover every situation which may arise in the course of foster parenting because of the uniqueness of each child (Vathsalya Charitable Trust, 2003).

2.6.3.4 Child's behaviour

Wright and Flynn's (2005) research on parents who have adopted adolescents found that parents experienced most negative aspects of adoption because of the stress, tension and emotional drain caused by the adolescent's difficult behaviour. The parents even described the adolescents' behaviour as 'exhausting' (p. 499). To some parents the stress continued even after the adolescent reached adulthood, impacting their physical and emotional aspects of life. The most common amongst foster parents deal with foster children's difficult behaviour, which may be antisocial, violent or sexualized. Managing the difficult behaviour might be a new or out-of-practice skill for foster parents.

A participant in Wright and Flynn's study indicated that she at times wanted to throw the adolescent away because the adolescent was too difficult emotionally. Farmer, Lipscombe, and Moyers (2005) however, observed that specific emotional and conduct difficulties such as theft, aggression, lying and running away were not seen as major influences on the family, just uncooperative behaviour. Foster parents who care for hyperactive children were the most strained (Farmer et al. 2005).

Foster care can be difficult for the parents, of whom a large proportion are single mothers, because children in foster care may have been neglected and thus suffer symptoms of withdrawal, being aggressive, or difficult to reach (Janie & Woodward, 2006). Thus, when foster parents perceive their fostering role as ambiguous and conflicted, they will likely experience dissatisfaction and cease fostering. They are also likely to feel criticized, angry, discouraged and sad. Kgomo (2009) advises that foster parents must treat foster children as if they are their own children. Quinn-Beers (2009), however, alerts the parents regarding the health and behaviour of children by stressing that foster children, just like children and adults in general, are not a homogeneous, typical group with regard to health status and behaviour. This implies that foster parents should expect anything from good to poor health and behaviour.

2.6.3.5 Financial support

Financial issues were also mentioned as negative aspects of adoption by some parents in Wright and Flynn's (2005) research because state contributions were not enough to cater for the needs of adopted children. Lower-income foster mothers in Critelli and Schwam's (2010) research were found to be struggling economically because they do not receive wages or remuneration for their efforts. They are considered volunteers and accommodation rates for foster care are calculated to cover only the costs of the children's upkeep. The authors note that foster parents are regarded as subsidizing the foster care system through their volunteer time and out-of-pocket expenditures.

2.6.3.6 Social support

Foster mothers' care-giving ability is compromised by a lack of sufficient support such as child care and medical insurance (www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/47884865.pdf : Retrieved 15 July 2016). This suggests that these factors are critical for the provision of quality and positive outcome for the foster children. Thus, families experiencing low levels of support from partners/spouses can experience feelings of inadequacy. Also foster parents who experience difficulty in contacting the social workers will be the most strained. This was apparent in research by Farmer (2005) who found that foster mothers indicated that they experience difficulty in contacting the social worker, and the situation was often complicated by changes of social workers.

Farmer et al. (2005) suggest that improvement in social services support should include improving the routine services provided to adolescents. The authors observed that the best antidote for relieving strain on the part of foster mothers was help from friends, since they are more accessible and available than social workers and other professionals and non-social services such as counsellors. Clearly it is essential for foster mothers to have access to social workers in order to reduce psychological strain, on the one hand. On the other hand, families with adequate social support engage in more parent-child interactions and experience better developmental outcomes (MacGregor et al. 2006).

However, Khoo and Skoog (2014) found that other foster parents had difficulties establishing and contacting social workers. They had to telephone or email with specific questions as a way of guaranteeing an answer or developed independence in seeking support from other services, for example the child's school, or the local child and youth psychiatric unit. However, they also expressed an understanding of the difficulties faced by social workers who had too much to do and too little time. The respondents however, indicated a desire for more support or guidance in their role as foster parents. Positive support and

contact with social workers who kept contact and responded immediately when a foster family requested help. Satisfaction at getting support quickly did not necessarily mean that a problem was solved quickly or even that the social worker could deal with the situation directly, but that their immediate response left a positive feeling in the foster home.

2.6.3.7 Inadequate information

Some foster caregivers report that inadequate information regarding the children placed in their care is the main source of stress and a reason for discontinuing fostering (Cole & Eamon, 2007). This suggests that failing to provide foster caregivers with sufficient information regarding their foster children's needs and problems adversely affects the foster mothers' sense of competence in fulfilling the fostering role. At the same time, receiving relevant information when needed is reflected in foster parents' satisfaction and continuing to foster.

2.7 Factors contributing to foster mothers' positive emotions

Positive emotions are classified into future (example: optimism, hope, confidence, faith and trust), past (example: satisfaction, contentment, fulfilment, pride and serenity), and present (example: momentary pleasures and enduring gratifications (Carr, 2004). Yeo (2011) found that positive emotions like joy, love, and serenity broaden humans' thoughts and behaviours and facilitate more adaptive responses to environments, which create greater learning opportunities and accrual of resources, thus facilitating future well-being. The broadening functions help individuals cope during life's challenges.

Presumably every foster parent hopes for success in fostering the adolescents who are believed to be a challenge to their own parents. Lipscombe, Farmer and Moyers (2003) argue that children looked after by foster carers were more likely to be distressed and difficult adolescents, yet little is known about what makes some carers successful in looking after adolescents.

2.7.1 Maintaining the family's equilibrium

Verini (2003) points out that the host family undergoes changes on many levels, including psychological and physical adjustment. To this effect, Verini recommends that foster parents be flexible and able to adapt the environment to meet the foster child's needs; but also maintaining the family's equilibrium. According to Kgomo (2009) family equilibrium is maintained when members are treated holistically, meaning that prior to finalization of placement, the children, spouse, and extended family including the foster child should be prepared for the foster care placement.

2.7.2 Networking

According to Geiger, Hayes and Lietz (2014) foster parents would be better able to foster adolescents if the former had a stronger informal support network, but also more training or education. Janie and Woodward (2006) assert that the foster home must pass an inspection for health and safety and in most United States the parents must attend training sessions covering issues of how to deal with problems. Foster parents are expected to participate in case planning, to assess and share information about children' progress toward goals, and to meet with social workers and other professionals to review progress.

Foster parents in New York are also expected to complete the pre-service and ongoing in-service training during their fostering cycle (Critelli & Schwam-Harris, 2010). Wilson, Petrie, and Sinclair, (2003) at the same time believe that successful foster parenting includes the child, the foster carers and the interaction between the two.

Eamon (2007), emphasizes that high satisfaction with fostering was predicted by aspects such as wanting to take in children who needed loving parents, acknowledgement by agency

workers when foster mothers had done well, agency workers to giving information as and when the need ariose, and shared experiences with other foster mothers (social support).

Westport, Bergen and Garvey (2000) advise carers to effectively work with the foster child's school but to also emphasize the child's strengths and minimize revealing the foster child's personal information. In Zimmerman's (2003) analysis of 8,627 black South African children, 90 per cent of all foster children fostered by close relatives were as likely to attend school as children who lived with their biological parents. Also these foster children spent no more time doing household chores than children living with their biological parents.

Buehler et al's. (2006) analysis of Child Welfare League of America's National Data reinforces the assertion that foster children are vulnerable to poor academic outcomes. It is therefore necessary that foster mothers ensure that children attend school regularly and receive needed school-related services, and be able to complete high school. Parents should assist the adolescent as and when needs arise, to consider advanced schooling or training.

Buehler et al. (2006) emphasise the importance of communicating and cooperating with workers from the agency with whom the child is affiliated as being critical to successful foster parenting. According to Buehler et al. (2006) a good worker-foster parent relationship is a strong correlate of placement stability. Foster parents also might need to work in partnership with judges, therapists, teachers, and birth parents. This kind of teamwork requires good communication and problem-solving skills, as well as a strong commitment.

Since children often come into care with an array of physical health difficulties, many undiagnosed and untreated (Buehler et al. 2006), foster mothers must be able to negotiate with the delegated social worker to get children adequate and proper care. Foster mothers must keep good records of foster children's medical care and forward these materials to social workers so that accurate medical histories can be maintained (Buehler et al. 2006).

2.7.3 Foster mothers' perception of fulfilling their role

Cole and Eamon (2007) identified four factors that might influence the foster caregivers' perception of fulfilling their fostering role: (1) length of time providing foster care, (2) type of foster care, (3) adequacy of the foster child's information and lastly, (4) adult support within the home. Kin care also increases the foster caregiver's perception of adequately fulfilling the role. Westport, Bergen and Garvey (2000) make the following recommendations towards successful foster parenting: spending quality time with the foster children, giving positive reinforcement for small accomplishments, and assuring children of safety.

It is apparent in Lipscombe et al.'s (2003) research that, for successful foster parenting, it is crucial to acknowledge and understand the child's background, manage disturbed and difficult behaviours and adjust to the child's characteristics and defence mechanisms. Foster mothers should be able to develop attachments within the foster family and maintain links with the birth family.

Wright and Flynn (2005), in their study on adolescent adoption, found that adoptive parents believed they were successful if they were able to be a family, to provide adolescents with better quality of life in the present and achieving a higher quality of life in the future. This may be experienced by adoptive parents but is relevant for foster parents as well.

Furthermore, foster families who adequately manage the challenges associated with fostering such that care provision does not diminish the psychological well-being of foster family members or the quality of their interpersonal relationships are regarded as successful families (Buehler et al. 2006). Smith (2014) found that experience was needed for foster parents to foster children who had experienced abuse and neglect and children with special needs, behavioural and medical needs. Smith also found that foster parents considered leaving fostering because of a lack of training, especially in relation to fostering adolescents.

2.7.4 *Child-oriented foster parents*

Various authors, for example Lipscombe et al. (2003), Lipscombe, Moyers and Farmer (2004) and Wilson, Petrie and Sinclair (2003), have suggested possible factors for successful foster parenting: child-oriented foster mothers; behaviour alterations; psychological well-being; child's background and foster mother's background.

Child-oriented mothers spend time with the child doing the things the child likes, and communicating openly and honestly. It also includes being good with adolescents, being tolerant but firm, showing understanding and having appropriate expectations about the young person's contributions to the household. For instance, foster mothers should restructure the young person's day by adding or taking away a nap, and scheduling more outdoor play (Lipscombe et al. 2004).

Westport et al. (2000) encourage foster parents to give foster children new experiences. These include: music, dance, art and sports. They are encouraged to treat foster children as their own children, giving them the best experience possible (Kgomo, 2009). Child-oriented mothers are observant enough to identify situations that lead to undesirable behaviour and change them to influence desirable behaviour (Lipscombe et al. 2004). Child-oriented parents are also good listeners and good explainers, they hear children out and offer explanations for the rules they designed and reasons for requiring behaviour change that suits the developmental needs of the adolescent.

2.7.5 *Responsive parenting*

Wilson et al. (2003) emphasise that other researchers like Doelling and Johnson (1990) and Street and Davis (1999) focused on variables such as responsive parenting and conditions as relating to successful and unsuccessful foster parenting. Responsive parenting focuses on the way the parent deals with the child, whereas conditions are based on prior conditions that make the

interaction more or less likely: for example, the characteristic of the child (attractiveness, difficult behaviour and wish to be in the placement).

Foster parents should be receptive and responsive to the adolescent. This involves the ability to work with adolescents at their developmental or emotional age, and not only at their chronological age. Sensitive responding is defined as 'the degree of understanding and sympathy with which parents handled both anxiety and distress and defiance and misbehaviour' (Lipscombe et al. 2003, p. 248). For example, parents who allowed foster adolescents to talk about their painful past were able to develop specific strategies for eliciting and dealing with the child's anxieties and concerns.

2.7.6 Behaviour alterations

Successful foster mothering requires that both parties alter their behaviour. Previous research, for example, Quinton, Rushon, Dance, and Mayes (1998) in their study on joining new families, suggests that parenting quality is maintained or improved when the carers are rewarded by positive changes in the young person's behaviour. Conversely, where the behaviours are unaffected by the carers' efforts, the ability to continue with strategic approaches to manage behaviour seems to dissipate (Farmer et al. 2005). Buehler et al. (2006) assert that successful foster care results in children whose physical, emotional, psychological, intellectual, social, and familial needs are met; and whose growth in these areas is promoted within a safe, secure family environment.

2.7.7 Positive relationships

Human beings are inextricably linked to one another both as part of the family and the community (Yeo, 2011). Peterson (2013, p. 137) believes that 'others matter' and that it is through character strengths that connect us to others, for example gratitude, that we find satisfaction and meaning in life. Good relationships are fundamental to humans' well-being as they make human

beings happier and function better (Yeo, 2011). For Yeo people in good relationships care deeply about other people and have a mutual understanding and often validate how valuable the other person is.

According to Carr (2004), adolescents in foster families that were characterized by optimal levels of clarity (children knowing clearly what was expected of them), centring (children knowing that their parents were interested in what they were doing), choice (children knowing that different choices, including breaking of parental rules, were associated with different consequences), commitment (children knowing that the family was safe for them without being criticized and humiliated) and challenge (parents provided children with opportunities for exercising their unique skills) reported more frequent flow of relationships.

Buehler et al. (2006) maintain that empathy and tolerance on the part of the foster parent promote nurturing parent-child relationships. Successful foster mothering is indicated by foster children who feel accepted and cared for by their foster parents, and can form satisfying interpersonal relationships. According to Robert, Emmons and Mishra, (2012) gratitude is also crucial in family relationships. It promotes optimal functioning at all levels, including familial and relational. Because gratitude is considered a virtue that suggests that it must be deliberately cultivated, taught, modelled, and practised regularly until it becomes a habit of character. Providing day-to-day supervision and support in a stable and loving home environment will allow an adolescent to reach their fullest potential.

Robert, Emmons and Mishra (2012), assert that gratitude is a crucial virtue to well-being and mental health throughout the lifespan of an individual. Robert, Emmons and Mishra (2012), note that gratitude 'occurs in interpersonal exchanges when one person acknowledges receiving a valuable benefit from another' (p. 10).

Foster parents must be able to promote children's normative social and emotional development. To accomplish this goal, parents need to have adequate knowledge about development at various stages of the adolescent. Buehler et al. (2006) also mention the importance of facilitating developmental tasks, such as achievement of relational autonomy, a stable self-concept and a sense of competence, particularly with children who have been placed in care during adolescence.

A review by Buehler et al. (2006) suggests that 30 to 40 per cent of the children in foster care have serious behavioural problems. Some evidence suggests behaviour problems worsen for children maltreated while in care. The presence of serious foster child behaviour problems means that foster parents must possess a variety of effective parenting skills and competencies.

According to Buehler et al. (2006) it is expected of the foster mother to protect the foster child from additional maltreatment. That includes, but is not limited to an understanding of the effect physical discipline has on abused children and the ability to care for children using positive discipline strategies. The foster mother should ensure that there is improvement in the fostered adolescent's feelings of emotional security (Buehler et al. 2006).

2.7.8 Feelings of competency and self-efficacy

Snyder and Lopez (2007) believe that self-efficacy means 'people's beliefs in their capabilities to produce desired effects by their own actions' (p. 174). Sansom (2010) expands on this definition, claiming that people's beliefs in their capabilities include the level of perseverance in the face of difficulty. Sansom further states that people choose to engage in certain actions and will persevere for a successful outcome. The self-efficacy beliefs play a crucial role in psychological adjustment, and physical health.

Foster parents need to become competent at managing ambiguity and handling loss. About 30 per cent of the foster parents in a Delaware state survey wished they had been better prepared

for the difficulties that arose when children left their homes (Buehler et al. 2006). This clearly demonstrates the important role that the social work system should play in training the foster mothers and preparing them for handling the challenges encountered during fostering of adolescents.

Foster parents would feel competent and grow as foster parents, if interest and effort were invested in enhancing their skills. In elaborating on a developmental model of foster parenting, Buehler et al. (2006, p. 542) state that 'Individuals are at different levels of psychological maturity and therefore approach, interpret, and react to reality differently.' Ongoing training and support can facilitate the developmental process that involves skill acquisition and the promotion of needed competencies. For example, the foster mother must learn to listen, and give clear responses to the adolescent's requests, otherwise the adolescent may think that the foster parent is in agreement when she is actually not.

Buehler et al. (2006) further advice that foster parent must be consistent with clear expectations, keep to the promises made and follow up on commitments made. Behaviour and rules should be discussed when both parties are calm. This means listening to the adolescents' suggestions and not necessarily trying to convince him/her of the validity of the point but keeping things in perspective and sorting out what is really important and not regarding everything as a major issue.

Lipscombe, Moyers and Farmer (2004) believe that successful foster parenting is the result of a combination of good physical health, marital stability, flexibility, the ability to work with the agency and the child's own parents. It also takes into consideration, the developmental histories of the caregiver, the personalities and psychological resources of the caregiver, and the quality of the caregiver's relationship with his/her partner. According to Sansom (2010) parents with high self-efficacy will have knowledge of child care resources, confidence in their own abilities, and belief

that children will respond to the parents' actions accordingly. Such parents will also have the belief that family and friends will be supportive. Such parents see child-raising as a challenge rather than a threat, and are less likely to experience stress in the face of general parenting demands.

2.8 Research on coping and resilience

The preceding section focused on both concerns and positive emotions as experienced by foster mothers in their fostering of adolescents. In this section research on coping and resilience is presented. Magyar-Moe (2009) refers to Positive Psychology as the scientific study of optimal human functioning, with the goals to better understand and apply those factors that help individuals and communities to thrive and flourish. Magyar-Moe further indicates that those who study Positive Psychology subscribe to Strengths Theory or the idea that it is vital to understand and build from one's strengths while managing weaknesses. Magyar-Moe (2009) contends also that when positive emotions broaden momentary thought-action, a variety of personal resources are also built up over time. These resources include physical resources (coordination, muscle strength), social resources (friendships, social skills, and support), intellectual resources (knowledge and problem solving), and psychological resources (creativity, optimism, and resilience).

2.8.1 Research on coping

Coping is defined as 'the cognitive and behavioural efforts an individual utilises to manage specific demands or stressors' (Khan, Siraj & Poh Li, 2011, p. 210) and the altering of cognitive and behavioural efforts to control specific demands that are both environmental and intrapersonal, but found to be taxing or exceeding the resources of an individual (Khan, Siraj & Poh Li, 2011). Coping processes thus include the person's efforts to deal with threats, whether overt or covert, positive or negative, adaptive or maladaptive.

Coping has become one of the central constructs in the area of research on life events, emotions and health but it is not clear yet how to conceptualize it in the most powerful way. Cole and Eamon (2007) refer to the ability to cope with specific tasks or challenges across multiple life roles as self-efficacy. This is the belief by an individual that s/he is competent in meeting specific life challenges. This makes foster mothers set higher goals for themselves and to persevere and engage in adaptive behaviours. Such mothers experience parental satisfaction with their tasks (Cole & Eamon, 2007). The authors note that parents believed they are competent if they can provide a nurturing, responsive and stimulating home environment as well as enhancing the child's developmental outcomes. It means that the accurate understanding of the role responsibilities of fostering will result in more positive experiences for both foster parents and children.

Studies of religion-oriented coping strategies have found that a wide range of strategies people use to deal with stress and difficulties in life include hope e.g. 'God gives you difficulties to help make you strong' (Compton, 2005 p. 200). Religion provides social support from church members and gives a sense of optimism. Religious forms of coping include faith, prayer, and discussing problems with the minister.

2.8.2 Types of coping

2.8.2.1 Appraisal-focused coping involves an attempt to understand the crisis and represents a search for meaning. It occurs when a person modifies the way s/he is thinking. For example, employing denial or distancing oneself from the problem. People may alter the way they think about a problem by altering their goals and values, for instance by seeing the humour in a situation. It may be divided into primary (evaluation of the significance of a stressor or threatening event) and secondary appraisal (evaluation of the controllability of the stressor and a person's coping resources) (www.utwente.nl/.../transactional_model_, retrieved 27 June 2016). Appraisal

focused coping is appropriate when there is no straightforward solution to the problem (chicagobehaviouralhealth.wordpress.com , retrieved 27 June 2016).

2.8.2.2 Problem-focused coping: people using a problem-focused strategy try to deal with the cause of the problem. They do this by finding out information on the problem and learning new skills to manage the problem. Problem-focused coping strategies tend to be employed when an individual has determined that a harmful, threatening, or challenging situation is amenable to change (Khan et al. 2011). Thus, the individual who is experiencing stress perceives the stressful situation to be alterable and within his/her capabilities of control. In other words, an individual evaluates a specific situation as changeable or controllable. In brief, it involves confronting the problem and reconstructing it as manageable. This is further divided into three processes: seeking information and support; involving specific procedures and behaviours; and identifying alternative rewards. Problem focus may allow an individual greater perceived control over their problem.

A problem-focused strategy includes trying to change something about a stressful relationship with another person or between others in one's social environment and may use strategies that include problem-solving skills, changing motivations as well as learning skills in order to deal with the situation. Problem-focused coping includes a number of steps: identifying the problem, exploring possible solutions, considering the options in terms of costs and benefits, making selections between options and finally taking action (Khan et al. 2011). Thus, it is associated with lower levels of emotional distress in response to the stressful events that are perceived as controllable. Conversely, the use of secondary responses such as acceptance, are related to lower distress levels in response to events that are experienced beyond control.

2.8.2.3 Emotion-focused coping includes strategies that involve self-preoccupation, fantasy, or other conscious activities related to affect regulation. It involves

releasing pent-up emotion destructing oneself, managing hostile feelings, meditating and using systematic relaxation procedures (Sodi & Kgopa, 2016).

In short, it involves managing emotions and maintaining emotional equilibrium. It may more often lead to a reduction in perceived control of more effective means of coping for most individuals. It is focused on dealing with the negative emotions that are a product of the stressful situation. It is a more emotional response to a situation that is evaluated as threatening, harmful and unchangeable. It is used when the individual who is experiencing stress perceives the stressful situation to be outside of his/her control and has judged that nothing can be done to modify the challenging environment (Khan et al. 2011).

Emotion focused coping includes strategies like: avoidance, distraction and acceptance in order to deal with the presenting situation. Emotion-focused coping is also used to maintain hope and optimism and to refuse to acknowledge the worst (Khan et al. 2011). This supports the Broaden-and-Build Theory of positive emotion as developed by Barbara L. Fredrickson in 2001 which postulates that positive emotions bring into being optimal functioning, not just within the present pleasurable moment, but over the long-term as well. Snyder and Lopez (2007) contend that an emotion-focused approach involves movement toward, rather than away from, a stressful encounter. Feldman and Kubota (2012) support this in indicating that hope is a virtue that improves people's lives in the absence as well as in the presence of a problem. Ong, Edwards and Bergeman (2006) in their study of hope as a source of resilience in later adulthood, found that individuals with high hope showed diminished stress reactivity and more effective emotional recovery. In other words, hope plays a crucial role in moderating stressful life events. For Ong et al. (2006) hope is directly related to adjustment, psychological health and well-being both intra and inter-personally.

Fredrickson (2001) notes that positive emotions appear to broaden people momentarily through thought-action repertoires and building their enduring personal resources. This notion relates to both problem and emotion-focused coping since positive emotions change an individual for the better and position him/her on ways toward thriving and prolonged existence thus enabling an individual to cope better (Magyar-Moe 2009).

According to Khan et al. (2011) people seem to use one of the three main coping strategies, namely: appraisal focused, problem focused and emotion focused, with different aspects of each type utilized as determined by an individual's cognitive evaluation of the situation and the available resources. Coping thus involves making conscious efforts to solve personal and interpersonal problems in seeking to master, minimize or tolerate stress or conflict. Psychological coping mechanisms are commonly termed coping strategies or coping skills. Unconscious strategies, for example defence mechanisms, are usually excluded. Coping generally refers to reactive coping that is, the coping response follows the stressor whereas the proactive coping aims to head off a future stressor. Greenglass and Fiksenbaum (2009) believe that in the past coping was seen as reactive and was used once stress has been experienced. However, recently coping has come to be seen as something one can use before stress occurs. Greenglass and Fiksenbaum (2009) further note that coping is seen as having multiple positive functions, and thus promotes health.

Khan et al. (2011) mention avoidance-oriented coping as identified by the first generation of researchers. It involves person-oriented responses. Snyder and Lopez (2007) maintain that if people turned their attention away from an unpleasant feeling, there would be very little to learn. Avoidance coping tends to reduce stress over short periods of time as well as prevent anxiety from becoming crippling when confronting uncontrollable stressors. Thus increased hope and courage are possibilities when avoidance coping strategies are used partially, tentatively, or in a minimal manner. Khan et al. (2011) contend that optimistic people are believed to possess more effective coping mechanisms in mitigating the stress that can serve as a barrier to successful performance.

Greenglass and Fiksenbaum (2009) identified four types of coping: Reactive; Anticipatory; Preventive; and Proactive. Reactive coping is an effort to deal with a stressful encounter that has already happened. Coping efforts of this type are directed to either compensating for a loss or alleviating harm since the stressful event has already happened. Reactive coping according to Snyder and Lopez (2007) refers to goal setting, goal pursuit, and personal growth. Anticipatory coping is an effort to deal with an imminent threat and thus this coping is used to deal with a problem at hand, such as increasing effort, getting help, or investing other resources. Preventative coping involves efforts to build up general resistance resources that reduce the severity of the consequences of stress, should it occur and lessens the likelihood of the onset of stressful events. In this coping an individual faces a critical event that may or may not happen in the distant future.

Proactive coping consists of efforts to build up general resources that facilitate the achievement of challenging goals and promote personal growth. Proactive coping is seen as directly reducing negative outcomes, including depression and burnout and especially emotional exhaustion and cynicism as well as anger feelings. It includes self-efficacy or optimism (seen as a prerequisite for coping), and social support. People using this coping do not perceive difficult situations as threat or harm but as challenges. They become proactive and not reactive (Snyder & Lopez, 2007).

2.8.3 Coping determinants of foster mothers

Fostering can be quite stressful especially when doing it for the first time. Some foster mothers find it hard to cope with stress and may give up the fostering. Other foster mothers see the pressure as a challenge to be overcome. Utilizing effective coping strategies can help alleviate the negative effects of stress (Khan et al. 2011). A variety of factors determine whether the foster mothers will cope with the challenges of fostering or not. These are socio-demographic in nature and include: age, education, finance, and prior experience

2.8.3.1 Age of foster caregiver

Foster caregivers' age is positively related to their satisfaction with fostering. Research indicates that foster caregivers older than age 30 provide more stability and are retained longer than younger foster caregivers (Gibbs, 2005). However, caregivers older than 55 years of age frequently experience more physical problems, which could adversely affect their perceptions of caregiving (Cole, 2005). Foster parents with younger own children, who are likely to be younger parents, are believed to experience greater stress in integrating foster children into their families compared to families with older children, thus impacting the role perceptions of the foster caregiver (Cole & Eamon, 2007).

2.8.3.2 Educational level

According to Cole and Eamon (2007) previous research has failed to find a relation between foster caregivers' higher educational attainment and successful fostering and increased foster caregiver retention suggesting that education might not influence perceptions of fulfilling the fostering role. However, higher educational levels might result in enhanced knowledge of appropriate child care behaviour, which for some researchers (e.g. Cole & Eamon, 2007) is necessary for parents to perceive themselves as effective or competent. Some studies support this contention, and indicate that maternal educational levels do affect parenting self-efficacy (Cole & Eamon, 2007).

In addition to being more knowledgeable of appropriate fostering behaviour, more years of education might assist foster caregivers to identify and obtain adequate resources for their foster children. Foster parents with more education also might be better prepared to understand the special needs of their foster children and the complex legal and bureaucratic underpinnings of the child welfare system, which could lead to a more realistic perception of their ability to fulfil the

fostering role. Cole and Eamon (2007) noted that the majority of parents had at least a high school education, although there was considerable variation within the studies.

2.8.3.3 Financial resources

Cole and Eamon (2007) believe that family financial stress and economic hardship have been linked to lower levels of parental efficacy and maternal competence, and parents' ability to handle routine parenting roles (e.g. interactions with children) and provide appropriate emotional support. Parents with fewer financial resources also provide lower quality home environments and live in lower quality neighbourhoods (Cole & Eamon, 2007). This suggests that economic hardship can create stress and other adverse conditions that could impact low-income foster caregivers' perceptions of fulfilling their fostering role and failure. A study that found a relation between higher income and foster caregiver retention is consistent with this expectation (Rhodes, Orme, Cox & Buehler, 2003).

Rhodes et al. (2003) suggested that low foster care payments, which do not always cover all foster care expenses, is one reason for lower retention rates among low-income foster caregivers. This would only add to the financial stress of already economically stressed foster parents, thus adversely affecting their perceptions of fulfilling the fostering role. This may make potential foster parents reluctant to foster adolescents. In this case, it means that financial resources plays a crucial role in determining the retention rates of foster children by foster families (Rhodes et al. 2003).

2.8.3.4 Prior experience of foster mothers

Prior fostering experience has some positive impact on the success of fostering. It includes length of time providing foster care, the type of foster care, adequacy of the foster child information provided by the agency, and adult support within the home. More experience in

performing the fostering role is associated with increased foster caregivers' success in fostering (MacGregor et al. 2006).

2.8.3.5 Commitment and determination

Wright and Flynn's (2005) research on what accounted for success and what advice adoptive parents would give to a friend considering adopting an adolescent, found that parents, despite the problems, showed commitment and determination through hard times. McHugh (2007) also found that commitment of foster parents enabled them to provide better opportunities in life for foster children. Thus, the ingredients of purposeful, goal-oriented persistence are the virtues of endurance, determination and commitment.

For instance, Wilson, Petrie and Sinclair (2003) found that one foster mother experienced problems because the foster child hurt the children in the household and was verbally abusive. She thought of letting him go, but it never happened because the boy began to settle and neither she nor children could let him go. When the boy had done well she would tell him 'I'm so proud of you…' (p.100) and she would give him a little treat. Farmer et al. (2005) emphasise that the adolescent will show commitment if the foster parent also does. As such there is high engagement on the part of the adolescent when the foster parent shows acceptance, support, understanding and concern. This supports the research of Lipscombe et al. (2003), who found that the positive characteristics of carers such as warmth, attention, nurturing and reassurance had important benefits for the recipient.

2.8.3.6 Support groups

Social support is used by persons experiencing stress (Greenglass & Fiksenbaum 2009). Stress may affect people adversely but those that have social support are relatively resistant to the deleterious effects of stressful events. In the study on adoption of adolescents conducted by Wright and Flynn (2005), parents indicated that support groups as well as training and counselling have made it possible for them to cope. They would advise interested adopters to get into groups,

mentoring and use the available resources as much as possible. Most importantly, they would advise interested adopters to obtain information regarding their decision to adopt (knowledge about the adolescent, what it would mean to the family, knowing oneself). This was emphasized as: 'They have to go into it with their eyes wide open' (Wright & Flynn, 2005, p. 504). These mean knowing how to deal with certain behaviours, finding resources to provide education, know what being a parent of a teenager is, spend time with the adolescent, know the impact of adoption on the family, in other words on the other children in the home and on the marriage.

Among the advantages of social support is that it acknowledges the importance of resources in others which can be incorporated into the behavioural and cognitive coping repertoire of the individual. According to Greenglass and Fiksenbaum (2009) the connection between support and coping is stronger in women because women use more coping skills that involve interpersonal relationships. According to gender-role expectations they are sensitive to others' needs. Women utilize support from others through talking with others. Greenglass and Fiksenbaum (2009) note that this supports the Functional Support Model in which close relationships help a person to cope with stress because the person can disclose and discuss problems, share concerns, and receive advice that is keyed to a person's needs. Greenglass and Fiksenbaum (2009) also maintain that social support enhances perceived self-efficacy, which in turn fosters successful adaptation and reduces stress and depression.

Coping strategies therefore play a critical role in an individual's physical and psychological well-being when faced with challenges, negative events and stress. Therefore coping is an approach to life in which an individual's efforts are directed towards goal management and identification and utilization of social resources to achieve that individual's goals (Greenglass & Fiksenbaum, 2009).

2.8.4 Research on resilience

Resilience is a topic of ongoing interest to Positive Psychologists and also a topic of current interest to people in general (Peterson, 2013). Peterson believes that resilience in non-psychological terms refers to the return to original form by some entity. Resilience is regarded as a virtue (http://supporting teachingandlearning.blogspot.com-, retrieved 18 May 2016). It is another name for emotional strength. To overcome adversity, resilient people draw from three sources of resilience, namely: 'I have, I am willing to be responsible for what I do, and I can find ways to solve problems I face.' This website defines resilience as an individual's ability to prevent, minimize or overcome the damaging effects of trauma or adversity. Batool (2012) expanded on resilience research that has previously focused on the individual level of resilience when confronted by challenging or threatening events by including resilience for the whole family. It is about why things go right or wrong. It is all around us, uncles, aunts, and so on overcome considerable odds to do well as adults.

Lopez, Pedrotti, and Snyder (2015, p. 118) define resilience as 'bouncing back'. Resilience is the 'ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change' (Yeo, 2011 p.18). Thus resilience is not just about recovering from a bad event but being accurate about change and having the flexibility to adapt to it. For Masten et al. (2009), resilience refers to a class of phenomena characterized by patterns of positive adaptations in the context of significant adversity or risk. The authors argue that resilience is an inferential concept, in that two major judgments must be rendered to diagnose resilience. First, there is a judgment that individuals are 'doing OK' (p. 118) with respect to a set of expectations for behaviour. Second, there must be significant exposure to risk or adversity that has posed a serious threat to good outcomes. Thus the study of resilience phenomena requires that investigators define (a) the criteria or method for identifying positive adaptation or development, and (b) the past

or current presence of conditions that threaten to harm development or disrupt positive adaptation (Lopez et al. 2015).

Scholars agree that risk or adversity must be present for a person to be considered resilient (Lopez et al. 2015). The authors listed a number of resources that have been translated into strategies for fostering resilience. Among these are: problem-solving skills, faith, positive attachment relationships, authoritative parenting (incorporating significant warmth, structure/monitoring, and expectations), organized home environment, parents involved in child's education. Baumgardner and Crothers (2014) add that social resources are also necessary for resilience. These include quality relationships with others who provide intimacy and social support. The authors believe that as in childhood, resilient responses to challenges continue throughout life. This warrants research on resilience for adults.

Thus, resilience is a family's ability to cope with stress and not only to survive, but to thrive. Resilience is also defined as the capacity for successful adaptation, positive functioning or competence despite high risk, chronic stress or prolonged or severe trauma (Masten et al. 2009). Gilligan (2004) describes resilience as a normal development under difficult circumstances. Lopez et al. (2015) declare that resilient individuals are said to bounce back from stressful experiences quickly and efficiently, just as resilient metals bend but do not break.

Krueger (2011) notes that all families experience stress, which may occur naturally through life events such as giving birth, aging or leaving home. This can be classified as expected stress. By contrast, unexpected stress occurs during the loss of a loved one, serious illness, or loss of a job. Families can therefore respond to stress through humour, physical activity and/or traditions. The current researcher's observation is that most of the research done has focused on resilience in children and youth and less on adults. This is supported by Lemay and Ghazal (2001), who claim that 'in the last two decades many researchers have become interested in identifying factors

associated with resilience in high-risk children' (p. 14). Thus, Batool (2012) argues that children are on the whole more resilient than adults.

Batool (2012) has identified personality traits that contribute to resilience, namely: optimism, sense of adventure, courage, ability to endure, among others. Gilligan (2004) on the other hand, identified three components of resilience as: sense of a secure base (supportive social networks); self-worth and self-esteem; and self-efficacy (self-control and decision-making capacity). The author states that there is a lot to be learned from people who do well despite deprivation and negative life experiences.

One may wonder why some people bounce back after being hit by life's problems while others find it hard to pick themselves up. Beazley (www.positivepsychology.org.uk retrieved 18 May 2016) holds the view that resilience is the end product of intuitive application of Positive Psychology to the management of personal adversity. Resilient people remain well, recover, or even thrive in the face of adversity. They are ordinary people dealing with the challenges and tragedies of everyday, real life. It is the awareness of how to use the resources rather than their presence which creates resilience. For Beazley (www.positivepsychology.org.uk retrieved 18 May 2016) resilience cannot occur in the absence of stressors because in such absence, only the potential to be resilient exists.

In their study of the role of positive psychological strengths and big five personality traits in the coping mechanisms of university students, Khan, Siraj and Poh Li (2011) found that resilient persons appear to be capable and effective problem solvers and also that psychological strengths give the students skills to cope when times are tough, recognizing that there is always hope and a way out from the pit of despair. The authors further emphasise that positive psychological strengths or psychological capital, consists of efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter discussed foster care at the global, regional and national levels. It also elaborated on the psychological experiences of foster mothers, the strain they experienced regarding the difficult behaviour of adolescents, but also the role of the coping determinants on the part of the foster mothers. These coping determinants included the age at which fostering is done, educational attainment, financial resources as well as prior fostering experience. The various coping strategies used by foster mothers, which included support groups, determination/commitment, appraisal-focused strategies, problem-focused strategies and emotion-focused strategies were also discussed. Factors contributing to successful foster parenting, such as providing a nurturing environment, promoting educational attainment, child-oriented mothers, freedom from abuse and neglect, growing as a foster parent, and so on, were explored.

Despite the struggles, challenges, dissatisfaction and issues, foster parents continue to provide care. Parents in Smith's (2014) research indicated that 'their love for children superseded all obstacles' (p. 56). Smith claimed that foster parents' dissatisfaction with the financial aspects of fostering did not impact their ultimate decision to foster. This suggests that the intrinsic variables of fostering for the love of children and altruistic values outweigh the other challenges of fostering as experienced by foster mothers.

Chapter 3 focuses on the theoretical framework used in the current study, which is that of Positive Psychology (Strengths Theory, as well as the Broaden and Build Theory). Positive Psychology was used because of its ability to study the conditions and processes that contribute to the optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the theoretical background used in the study, which is Positive Psychology. It starts by explaining the historical background of Positive Psychology, indicating that it is a relatively new field in psychology in comparison to other areas of psychology. The current and future developments in Positive Psychology are discussed to indicate how this area of psychology was developed and what the future holds. These developments are discussed in the context of South Africa. The ontological underpinnings of Positive Psychology are also discussed in this chapter. The justification for using Positive Psychology in the study and the critique of Positive Psychology are also discussed.

3.2 Brief historical background of Positive Psychology

Positive Psychology is regarded as a relatively new field in psychology in the sense that it was only launched publicly in 1998 by Martin E.P. Seligman during his Presidential Address to the American Psychological Association. Seligman also launched the *Journal of Positive Psychology* in 2006. It was born out of the challenge to psychologists by Seligman to create a 'science of strength and virtue' that would 'nurture what is best within ourselves' (Seligman, 1998a, p. 1), a field of psychology that can articulate a vision of good life that is empirically sound, understandable and attractive and appealing to both social scientists and general public (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

However, literature indicates that the field of Positive Psychology has been in existence for decades (Viviers & Coetzee, 2007). Linley, Joseph, Harrington, and Wood (2006) support this, claiming that although Positive Psychology has been unrecognized and uncelebrated, it has always been present in the field of psychology. These authors further assert that the major achievement for

Positive Psychology has been to lift up, consolidate and celebrate our knowledge of what makes life worth living. The authors trace the existence of Positive Psychology to the years of William James's writings in 1902 on the topic 'health mindedness'. This suggests that Positive Psychology focuses on the fully functioning person as in Rogers's (1961) writings on 'on becoming a person…' (p. 5). Evidence of previous existence is also supported by the works of Maslow (1968), as highlighted by Linley et al. (2006, p. 5).

Strümpfer (2005) also argues that the Positive Psychology paradigm is not new and lists some psychologists who contributed to it during the first eight decades of the twentieth century as: Jung, Maslow, Frankl and Assagioli. It may, however, seem to be a new paradigm because it has only recently become visible in the Western psychology literature and elsewhere.

According to Stebnicki (2016), scientific psychology has neglected the study of what can go well with people and has little to say about the good life. The assumptions of psychology in general embrace a disease or deficit model of human nature in which human beings are seen as flawed, fragile, and victims of cruel environments. This means that other areas of psychology continue to emphasize the negative without accentuating the positives. This is further supported by Linley et al. (2006), who state that it is an undeniable fact that the negatives are dominant in psychology.

In brief, Positive Psychology acknowledges the existence of human suffering, dysfunctional families and so on. However, it aims to study the other side of the coin. That is, the way people feel joy, show altruism and create healthy families and institutions. In this way they address the full spectrum of human experience. This suggests that Positive Psychology intends to have a balanced scientific understanding of human experience including the peaks, the valleys, and everything in between. In other words, it deals with human suffering, happiness and the interventions thereof in trying to relieve suffering and increase happiness. Examples of interventions include writing down

each day three good things that happened, taking note of the five highest strengths one has and to use them daily (Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005).

Positive Psychology therefore proposes that the imbalance between the positive and the negative aspects of psychology be corrected by more focus on strength than on weakness, by building the best things in life more than repairing the worst, and fulfilling the lives of healthy people more than healing the wounds of the distressed (Seligman, 2002). Miller and Gibb (2015) suggest that psychology should be able to document what kinds of families result in children who flourish and how people's lives can be most worth living. This suggests that a better understanding of well-being will allow psychologists to help all people, troubled or not.

3.3 The definitions and meaning of Positive Psychology

In this section a number of definitions and meanings of Positive Psychology are presented and elaborated upon. The section also outlines the aims of Positive Psychology, outlining the scope and extent of coverage of this field of psychology.

3.3.1 Positive Psychology defined

The most basic assumption of Positive Psychology as outlined by Peterson (2006) is that human goodness and excellence are as authentic as disease, disorder, and distress. This implies that psychology should not only focus on the negatives but also on the positives of an individual, groups and institutions.

Positive Psychology is defined as the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the optimal functioning of people, groups and institutions (Gable & Haidt, 2005). Gable and Haidt (2005) define Positive Psychology as 'nothing more than the scientific study of human strengths and virtues' (p. 216). The Journal of Positive Psychology, 2005, cited in Linley et al. (2006, p. 5) defines Positive Psychology as being about scientifically informed perspectives on

what makes life worth living. It focuses on aspects of the human condition that lead to happiness, fulfilment, and flourishing. Seligman, Steen, Park, and Peterson (2005) refer to Positive Psychology as an umbrella term for the study of positive emotions, positive character traits, and enabling institutions. Positive Psychology includes the study of positive subjective experiences (happiness, pleasure, gratification, fulfilment, well-being), the study of positive individual traits (character, talents, interests, values) that enable positive experiences, and the study of positive institutions (families, schools, businesses, communities, societies) that enable positive traits and thereby positive experiences (Weiten, Dunn & Hammer, 2012).

Positive Psychology thus entails the systematic assessment of human strengths and qualities on either a subjective, individual, or institutional level, thus forming the three pillars of positive psychology, namely: positive experiences and emotions, positive traits and positive institutions (Tillier, & Alberta, 2012). According to Tillier and Alberta (2012), Positive Psychology can best be described by four personal traits: subjective well-being, optimism, happiness, and self-determination. Thus Positive Psychology focuses on strengths and in a sense, special abilities (Van Dullemen, 2009). Positive Psychology emphasizes normality, adjustment, and health as opposed to abnormality, maladjustment, and sickness (Linley et al. 2006).

Seligman et al. (2005) argue that research findings from Positive Psychology intend to supplement and not to replace what is known about human suffering, weakness and disorder, but rather to have a complete and balanced scientific understanding of human experiences as indicated above. These authors hold strongly that 'complete science and a complete practice of psychology should include an understanding of suffering and happiness, as well as their interaction, and validated interventions that both relieve suffering and increase happiness – two separable endeavors' (p. 410).

As indicated earlier, an important aspect of Positive Psychology is examining how people cope with the challenges that they have to face, and encouraging positive ways of handling these challenges. This may be considered a useful framework in assisting foster parents in the complex task of raising adolescents. The complex stage of adolescence falls between childhood and adulthood. Adolescent children require parents to be able to assist adolescents to negotiate this stage by positively handling the challenges and by focusing on the adolescents' strong points and good behaviour, and praising them for good behaviour, encourage a hopeful outlook and a positive view of life.

Gable and Haidt (2005) argue compellingly that Positive Psychology does not imply that the rest of psychology is negative. Rather, just as many approaches focus on how people resolve conflict, there should be work focusing on how people have fun and laughter together and how couples respond to each other's triumphs. A great deal of research has been done in the area of negative emotions such as anger, guilt, and so on. However, there are few empirical studies on gratitude, admiration, moral elevation, forgiveness, awe, inspiration, hope, curiosity and laughter, well-being, joy, pleasure, happiness, optimism, love, courage, perseverance, wisdom, and so forth (Gable & Haidt, 2005, p. 105; Snyder & Lopez, 2007, p. 5). This indicates that Positive Psychology is an important framework for this study because looking after adolescents would require for example perseverance, love, hope and wisdom.

Miller and Gibb (2015) emphasise that Positive Psychology assumes a three-level focus, namely: the subjective, the individual, and the group levels. At the *subjective level*, Positive Psychology focuses on valued subjective experiences, for example well-being, contentment, and satisfaction in the past, hope and optimism for the future and flow and happiness in the present. At the *individual level*, Positive Psychology deals with positive individual traits such as the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future-mindedness, spirituality, high talent and wisdom. At the *group level*, Seligman

and Csikszentmihalyi believe that Positive Psychology is about civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship, which include responsibility, altruism, nurturing, civility, tolerance, moderation and work ethic.

When Positive Psychology is applied to organizational psychology it provides an extended view of how organizations can create a sustained competitive advantage since it offers attention to enablers, for example capacities, structures and methods (Levene, 2015). It also offers motivations like unselfishness and altruism, and outcomes or effects such as meaningfulness, vitality and high-quality relationships. Positive Psychology is therefore critical not only to individuals but to organizations as well.

Ferreira (2010) notes that the Positive Psychology movement has opened awareness of a positive attitude towards the treatment methods and therapeutic outcomes within mainstream psychology. The roots of Positive Psychology lie in the Aristotelian frame of reference. Research and theory in Positive Psychology aims at pointing out the state of today's conventional psychology, and this is seen as one of the most positive developments in psychology in the last decade (Linley & Joseph, 2004). Traditional psychology has focused on symptom reduction but Positive Psychology focuses on adjusting psychological thought from a pathology-oriented understanding to an outlook of progress and positive development. 'The field of Positive Psychology has presented itself as an integrative research area where dysfunctional patterns of behaviour, cognitions and emotions are seen as problems in living, not as disorders or diseases' (Ferreira, 2010, p. 9). According to Ferreira, theorists and researchers have adopted a rationale that the ideas of Positive Psychology are sound. Positive Psychology can thus be said to have reclaimed character and virtue as justifiable subject matter in psychological research (Peterson, 2007).

3.3.2 Aim of Positive Psychology

The aim of Positive Psychology, according to Ferreira (2010), is to facilitate people in a process of modification of behaviour, mood and attitude so that they may realize their personal objective. The desired results of Positive Psychology are happiness and well-being. Well-being may be divided into subjective and psychological. Subjective well-being refers to the summation of the person's life contentment and psychological well-being refers to enjoyment, which is indicated by the engagement with and full involvement in the challenges of life. Linley et al. (2006) see the aim of Positive Psychology as being to redress the imbalance in psychology research and practice. Positive Psychology further aims at helping individuals and organizations identify their strengths and use them to increase and sustain their respective levels of well-being. Positive Psychology proposes that human beings have the given potential for positive and constructive character and virtue.

According to Robbins (2008) character within the Positive Psychology framework refers to the complete set of positive traits that have become apparent across cultures throughout history as imperative for good life. Virtues are the foundational characteristics valued by moral philosophers and devout thinkers that contribute to the realization of the human good. Character strengths are the psychological processes or procedures that characterize or display virtue (p. 96).

Examples of character strengths as identified by Lopez, Pedrotti and Snyder (2015) include kindness, open-mindedness, optimism and gratitude.

3.4 Development of Positive Psychology

The development of Positive Psychology in South Africa is discussed in the section that follows. The discussion will highlight the current state of Positive Psychology and its possible

future direction in general. The section will close with a focus on some of the research done using Positive Psychology.

3.4.1 Development of Positive Psychology in South Africa

The development of Positive Psychology can be traced back to Martin E. P. Seligman's Presidential Address during the American Psychological Association in 1998. However, research into Positive Psychology topics has gone on for decades and can be traced back to the origin of psychology itself (Linley, Joseph, Harrington & Wood, 2006). There are already Positive Psychology centres at various universities for instance, University of Illinois, University of Michigan, University of Pennsylvania (Seligman et al. 2005).

According to Viviers and Coetzee (2007), South African universities are currently involved in research that forms part of a world-wide initiative to formalise the field of Positive Psychology. These authors note that after the public launch of the new field of Positive Psychology, the field flourished and the works of researchers like Csikszentmihalyi, Diener, Jamieson, Peterson and Valiant, who also form part of the Positive Psychology Steering Committee, were united. The work of these researchers culminated in numerous Positive Psychology books, sixteen special journal issues since 2000, and the establishment of Positive Psychology networks that span the globe.

Seligman et al. (2005) enlist other works that contribute to the rapid progress of the field of Positive Psychology, including postgraduate, undergraduate and high school courses on Positive Psychology taught throughout South Africa, the rest of the African continent and the world, as well as Positive Psychology Centres at several major universities in South Africa such as North-West University.

Other activities that contributed to the rapid progress in the field of Positive Psychology in South Africa include the First South African National Wellness Conference that took place in Port

Elizabeth in 2000 and the first and second South African Work Wellness Conferences held in Potchefstroom in 2002 and 2004 respectively, culminating in the South African Conference of Positive Psychology: 'Individual, Social Work Wellness', held in Potchefstroom in 2006. The North-West University played a part in some of the programmes and units of Psychofortology and Work Wellness which were initiated at the University itself and funded by the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa (Viviers & Coetzee, 2007).

3.4.2 Positive Psychology at present

Linley et al. (2006) argue that Positive Psychology may be said to have arrived because the structural elements of the psychological discipline are in place. However, in their view, Positive Psychology is at a crossroads and therefore its future and the path it takes will be determined by various factors (see below the areas identified by Linley et al.) Elements in place refer to works such as: growing research, books, handbooks, journal articles and special issues, international associations on Positive Psychology, Positive Psychology courses and many other developments (Linley et al. 2006).

At the same time, focusing on the pragmatic level, the authors strongly believe that the journey is just beginning.

> We are in the early stages of beginning to develop understanding of strengths and virtues, to grasp and build the interpersonal and social infrastructures that facilitate good lives, and to appreciate the nuances of happiness and well-being, their effects as well as their causes (Linley et al. 2006, p. 9).

The information above therefore suggests that Positive Psychology is indeed at a crossroads. This means that Positive Psychology has an opportunity to do things differently, to

create a science of psychology that realizes the discipline's early promise that has possibly become lost along the way.

3.4.3 Positive Psychology in the future

Lazarus (2002, as cited in Peterson & Park, 2003) raises the question whether Positive Psychology has the necessary requisites to go anywhere. In answering this question, Peterson and Park (2003) as well as Linley, Joseph, Harrington and Wood (2006) argued that Positive Psychology has a destination which is the study of the good life. They also claimed that Positive Psychology has a strategy for getting to its destination, as well as the necessary infrastructure such as a steering committee, training institutes, seed grants and web pages, to support scholars along the way.

Linley et al. (2006), point out that some researchers such as Diener (2003) believe that Positive Psychology will eventually disappear because it has been too successful. Linley et al. (2006), in supporting the idea of Diener (2003) foresee that Positive Psychology will disappear precisely because it will have achieved its main aim of redressing the imbalance between the negative and the positive in psychology and also that psychologists will have come to a stage where they take the understanding of the interrelations of strength and weakness for granted.

Linley et al. (2006, p. 11) have identified several areas that require attention for the Positive Psychology movement to develop further. These include:

• synthesizing the positive and negative: an example for integrating how people adapt following trauma and adversity addressing both the post-traumatic stress disorder (business-as-usual) and the post-traumatic growth (Positive Psychology).

• developing historical antecedents and existing knowledge: Positive Psychologists would gain much from establishing links with researchers and practitioners in other areas of

psychology and beyond, including other areas of science and social science, economics, politics, sociology and anthropology.

• integrating across the level of analysis: this includes integrating the insights of neuroscience at the biological level with the understanding of their psychological and social markers.

• building a constituency and reaching out to powerful stakeholders; not everyone will be clinically depressed but it is fair to assume that almost everyone will want to be happy, or to be a good friend, good parents, or effective at work. There is therefore increasing collaboration between economics and Positive Psychology with regard to measurement and achievement of happiness.

• description or prescription: Held (2004, cited in Linley et al. 2006, p. 15) advises positive psychologists to be mindful when describing something as good or prescribing it as good.

Thus, Linley et al. (2006) indicate the difference between a descriptive science of Positive Psychology which simply defines, delineates and documents its findings, leaving them free of value and a prescriptive science of Positive Psychology, which focuses on what an individual should do to operate at an optimal level, as such assuming a level of rationality.

Linley et al. (2006) suggest that there are deficiencies in the manner in which the Positive Psychology movement analyses, synthesizes and integrates the positive and negative aspects in psychology. It is not sufficient just to identify these aspects. They should also be integrated with other psychological and social issues. Held (2004) on the other hand, advises that it is important to consider how the goodness of Positive Psychology is described or prescribed as this may affect its impact.

Linley et al. (2006. p.6-7) mapped the future pathways and applications of Positive Psychology as: (1) The meta-psychological level view which includes a shared language, introducing the positive and integrating the negative, and (2) The pragmatic level view. The meta-psychological level is about understanding the aim of Positive Psychology, which is to catalyse a change in the focus of psychology from dealing with repairing the worst things in life to building positive qualities. With regard to a shared language Linley et al. (2006) explain that Positive Psychology has provided a different angle of understanding human experience and begun the creation of a shared language and understanding for the study of positive traits and states. The authors further assert that researchers in creativity, curiosity and emotional intelligence, for example, would not previously regard these aspects as connected. Only after the existence of Positive Psychology became known did their view change.

The other aspect is of introducing the positive and integrating the negative, by which Linley et al. (2006) mean that Positive Psychology offers an angle for studying and understanding psychological phenomena. This results in negative questions such as: 'what is broken, what doesn't work, what needs to be fixed, and how can we fix it?' However, the positive would be: 'what works? what is right? and what is improving?' (Linley et al. 2006, p. 216). A much broader question would then deal with the generalization and application of what has been learnt, in order to enable more people to improve their lives.

Linley et al. (2006, p. 7) have divided the pragmatic level view into four sub-levels, namely: the wellsprings of interest; the processes of interest; the mechanism of interest; and the outcomes of interest. The wellsprings of interest include aspects of genetic makeup and the early environmental experiences that contribute to the development of strengths and virtues. The processes of interest include strengths and values that result in the good life or the obstacles to it. This suggests that Positive Psychology should focus on factors that facilitate maximum functioning as well as those that prevent it. The mechanisms of interest deal with extra-psychological factors

that facilitate or impede the pursuit of a good life such as social relationships and the working environment. The outcomes of interest are those factors that characterize a good life including subjective, social and cultural factors.

3.4.4 Positive Psychology research

Positive Psychology is primarily concerned with the empirical study of human happiness and strength. It is also concerned with individuals' resilience to negative life events, including caring for fostered adolescents. In other words, Positive Psychology represents an attempt to unite research and theory about what makes life worth living (Richards, Rivers & Akhurst, 2008). Positive Psychology has emerged as a reaction to the pathology-focused nature of much research and intervention work conducted in psychology.

Positive Psychology addresses concepts like happiness which Seligman (2003) believes is attained along three different paths. These are: (a) positive emotion (the pleasant life), which represents a transient state of happiness and is mostly situation based; (b) engagement (the engaged life) which is also situation based and (c) meaning (the meaningful life) that represents purpose and fulfilment of personal potential (Peterson et al. 2005, p. 73). *The last two appear to apply to foster mothers.* According to Seligman et al. (2005, p. 410), those who are most satisfied with life aim towards all three with greater emphasis on engagement and meaning. These two appear to be crucial for positive social relationships.

The researcher was interested in finding out if Positive Psychology has been used widely in the research field, especially in exploring the experiences of those who foster children or those who are fostered. It was apparent that attempts made thus far have focused on adolescents relating to general topics about this age group. Among researchers that have recently used this framework to study adolescents are Akhtar and Boniwell (2010) and Richards, Rivers, and Akhurst (2008). Akhtar and Boniwell applied a Positive Psychology approach to adolescents abusing alcohol

because they argue that Positive Psychology has pledged to improve adolescent well-being. They held eight workshops that were based on Positive Psychology models, including happiness, strengths, optimism and gratitude. The experimental group participated in weekly workshops while a control group received no treatment. The results showed that there was an increase in adolescent well-being and a decrease in alcohol consumption for the experimental group.

Quantitatively, these researchers observed an increase in happiness, optimism and positive emotions as well as a decline in alcohol intake. In the qualitative study the main themes were a rise in happiness and other positive emotions, the development of a future goal orientation, a decline in alcohol and drug intake and an escalation of change amounting to transformation. They found gratitude to be the most successful intervention as it made the biggest impact on happiness. This was revealed to be a concept of appreciation for the good things in life. This therefore, suggests that a Positive Psychology intervention can make an effective contribution to the treatment of alcohol-misusing adolescents (Akhtar & Boniwell, 2010).

In their research Richards, Rivers, and Akhurst, (2008) used Positive Psychology to study bullying in secondary schools. The focus was on the individual strengths of pupils rather than their negative behaviours. The effectiveness of the programme they developed was measured by a pre- and post-intervention design with a control group from another school. The results indicated that among those pupils who experienced the Positive Psychology intervention programme, levels of bullying were reduced and they scored better in general well-being. The authors further found that Positive Psychology encouraged the involvement of pupils in problem-solving the issue of bullying and promoted the development of personal qualities that are valued both socially and individually. This suggests that Positive Psychology is interested in the study of human happiness and strengths. It also deals with the individuals' resilience to negative life events. According to the American Psychological Association (http://www.Studentsuccess.unc.edu/files/2015/08/The-

Road-to-Resilience.pdf, retrieved 19 August 2016, resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems or workplace and financial stressors. It means 'bouncing back' from difficult experiences (Lopez et al. 2015, p. 118).

Clearly there is a need for the use of Positive Psychology to explore the experiences of foster mothers as there is a dearth of information on this topic. Şimşek (2009) notes that the recent developments in the field of psychology declare the need for focusing not only on the challenges individuals face but also the strengths and positive processes that can lead to enhanced well-being. The current study used the Strengths Theory and the Broaden-and-Build Theory of positive emotions.

3.5 Positive Psychology Theories used in the current research

3.5.1 The Strengths Theory

As indicated in Chapter 2, Magyar-Moe (2009,) those who study Positive Psychology subscribe to Strengths Theory or the idea that it is vital to understand and build from one's strengths while managing weaknesses. Cohn and Fredrickson (2006) suggest that when positive emotions broaden momentary thought-action and a variety of personal resources are also built up over time. These resources include physical resources (coordination, muscle strength), social resources (friendships, social skills and support), intellectual resources (knowledge and problem solving), and psychological resources (creativity, optimism and resilience).

Magyar-Moe (2009) emphasises that employers, teachers, parents, and leaders work on the unwritten rule 'let's fix what's wrong and let the strengths take care of themselves' (p.3). This is an error of believing that correcting a weakness will result in making a person or an organization stronger. Another error is believing that there is no need to foster the strengths, as they will take

care of themselves. Yet another error is thinking that strengths and weaknesses are opposites, thinking that showing up weaknesses can be turned into strengths. Lopez (2006) argues that we do not learn about strengths by studying weaknesses. For example, we cannot learn why college students stay in school and make it to graduation by studying those who drop out.

A further error is in believing that people can do anything they put their minds to. Lopez (2006) argues that all people have their own unique sets of strengths that will empower them to be successful in certain areas but not others. However, the reality is that we can try anything we wish to try. A major ingredient in Seligman's happiness formula is for one to discover his or her character strengths and then to find ways to capitalize upon those strengths regularly.

3.5.2 The Broaden- and-Build Theory of positive emotions

Perhaps it would be ideal to indicate that positive emotional experiences such as joy, interest, contentment and love, share the capacity to broaden people's momentary thought action repertoires and build enduring personal resources ranging from physical and intellectual resources to social and psychological resources. Negative emotions include experiences such as anxiety, sadness, anger and despair. The overall balance of people's positive and negative emotions has been shown to predict their judgment of subjective well-being (Fredrickson, 2011). Positive emotions thus not only signal but also produce flourishing. Thus positive emotions are worth cultivating, not just as end states but also as a means to achieving psychological growth and improved well-being over time. Fredrickson describes four ways that positive emotions can broaden our thought-action repertoirs and build our personal resources to increase well-being (see Figure 3.1).

The Broaden-and-Build Theory is another theory that is key to many of the ideas of Positive Psychology. The Broaden-and-Build Theory provides an explanation of the utility and importance of positive emotions in people's lives. According to Magyar-Moe (2009), about a

decade ago, prior to this theory, little or no research existed on the value of positive emotions. However, negative emotions have been studied for many decades and most people understand that negative emotions are important for many reasons, including survival. The Broaden-and-Build Theory comprises the hypotheses: the broaden, the build, the undoing and the resilience.

3.5.3 *The broaden hypothesis*

According to Magyar-Moe (2009), when someone is feeling positive emotions, he/she is able to see more possibilities. This broadening effect of positive emotions is the opposite of what happens when someone experiences negative emotions. Negative emotions narrow momentary thought-action repertoires. It is as if someone is experiencing tunnel vision and the range of possibilities is narrowed. The narrowing thought-action repertoires help to ensure survival in a specific life-threatening circumstance, e.g. running away when feeling afraid. The broadened thought-action repertoires are adaptive over time.

3.5.4 *The build hypothesis*

As indicated above, positive emotions broaden momentary thought-action, and a variety of personal resources are built up over time. These resources include physical resources (coordination, muscle strength), social resources (friendships, social skills, and support), intellectual resources (knowledge and problem solving), and psychological resources (creativity, optimism, and resilience). These personal resources are lasting and can be utilised when one finds him/herself in a potentially life-threatening situation or experiencing hard times. Magyar-Moe (2009) asserts that securely attached adults show superior intellectual resources, they are more curious and open to new information. Thus people learn faster and demonstrate improvements in intellectual performance when in a positive emotional state.

3.5.5 The undoing hypothesis

This hypothesis states that positive emotions have the potential to undo lingering negative emotions or undo the after-effects of negative emotions. 'By broadening a person's momentary thought-action repertoire, a positive emotion may loosen the hold that a negative emotion has gained on that person's mind and body by dismantling or undoing preparation for specific action' (Fredrickson 2011, p. 223). For example, people do crack jokes at receptions following a funeral. Best friends and loved ones often help find meaning in the difficult experience one is faced with (Magyar-Moe, 2009).

3.5.6 The resilience hypothesis

The resilience hypothesis states that positive emotions through their broadening affects, trigger upward spirals of well-being (Magyar-Moe, 2009). This is the opposite of the common notion of downward spirals of depression. Upward spiral allow people to cope and be more resilient in the face of adversities.

> Negative affect results in tunnel vision which leads to negative, pessimistic thinking. This in turn leads to more negative affect that can spiral down quickly. Positive emotions on the other hand remove the blinders, allowing people to see more possibilities and to think more optimistically, thus experience an upward spiral of well-being. The upward spiral serves to build one's toolbox of coping skills, making one better able to cope and more resilient in the face of adversities in life (Magyar-Moe, 2009, p. 11).

3.5.7 The flourish hypothesis

To flourish is to live optimally and to experience the good things in life such as personal growth, generativity, and resilience (Magyar-Moe, 2009). Fredrickson and Lusanda (2005),

indicate that a key predictor of human flourishing within the flourish hypothesis is an estimated ratio of positive to negative affect of 2.9 to 1. Thus for each negative affective experience, one must experience approximately three positive affective experiences over the course of time to keep moving forward in life. Fredrickson and Lusanda believe that this ratio holds true for individuals, marriages, and business teams.
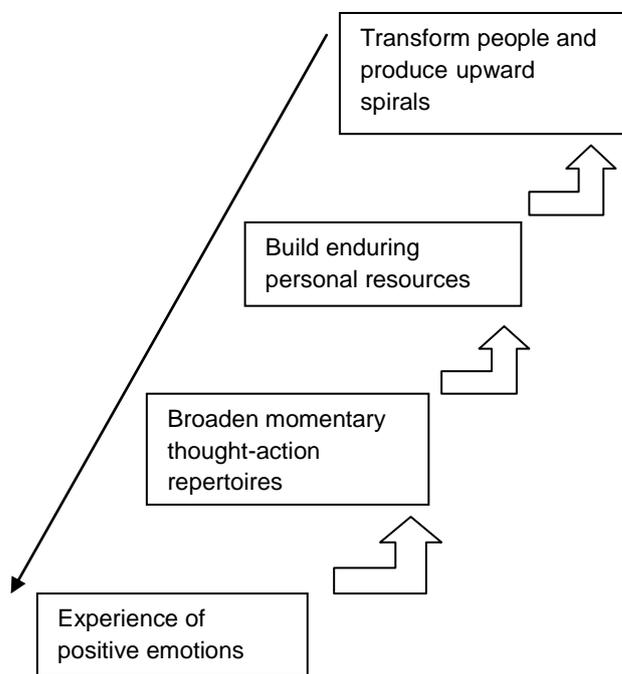
Figure 3.1 The Broaden-and-Build Theory of positive emotion.

3.6 Ontological underpinnings of Positive Psychology

The purpose of this section is to describe some of the underlying philosophical and historical assumptions and forerunners of Positive Psychology. This is done through exploration of the roots of the metatheoretical positions developed or revitalized by Positive Psychology because it is mainly on this level of scientific activity that Positive Psychology contributes to a reorientation of the discipline. On other levels, Positive Psychology however supports mainstream psychology,

which gives priority to negative behaviour. In other words, Positive Psychology concentrates on positive experiences and positive character and virtue, thus articulating the presumptions of the Aristotelian approach to human nature and development (Linley & Joseph, 2004). The discussion of ontological underpinnings will therefore focus on how Positive Psychology views reality, but using an Aristotelian frame of reference.

3.6.1 Ontology defined

The word ontology according to Slife and Richardson (2008) is not easily defined but in this context it means the field of philosophy that studies and postulates what is ultimately real and fundamental, especially regarding the self. The American Psychological Association Dictionary of Philosophy (2007) defines ontology as the branch of philosophy that deals with the question of existence itself. It asks the fundamental question about what reality is. Contemporary existentialism and hermeneutics believe that ontology implies a concern with the meaning of existence that is lacking in traditional metaphysics. However, metaphysics is about what is fundamental, and ontology asks a question 'what does it mean to "be" at all?' The Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion (1980 p. 401) indicates that ontology is from the Greek word *ontos* ('being') and *logos* ('knowledge') meaning 'knowledge of being'.

3.6.2 Ontological view of Positive Psychology

Problems have been discovered regarding Positive Psychology and the self. For example, Christopher and Hickinbottom (2008, p.565) argue that Positive Psychology 'clearly is concerned with the development and enhancement of the self, it fails by and large to offer any reflective or critical discussion of the self it assumes'. The authors strongly argue that Positive Psychology largely assumes the universal truth of a Western atomistic and interiorized self, and thus risks a cultural imperialism that may be damaging to some individuals or groups. Therefore there is a need to clarify the philosophical premise on which it stands.

Christopher and Campbell (2008) support the contention above that psychological theory, research and practice are heavily influenced by Western values and assumptions and therefore, runs the same risk. In order to curb this criticism, the authors strongly recommend that the following two issues be addressed regarding the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of Positive Psychology:

(a) The authors believe the value-laden nature of psychology contradicts and impedes the future growth of Positive Psychology since it provides no incentive for developing the conceptual resources to recognize cultural values and assumptions. Such assumptions are, according to theoretical and philosophical psychologists, embedded in psychological theory and research.

(b) Separation of descriptive science from prescriptive value commitments. This separation, according to Christopher and Campbell (2008), is in the Western culture, for example 'facts vs. value, self vs. other, subjective vs. objective, mind vs. body, reason vs. emotion, and so on' (p. 677). The authors believe that this dualism stultifies the progress of psychology in general and hampers the promise of contemporary Positive Psychology.

Slife and Richardson (2008), focus on two large categories of ontology that are relevant to psychology, namely: abstractionism and relationality. The terms are not universally utilized, but the ideas that anchor these terms are widely discussed and recognizable as central to the questions of psychology, human action and the self (Slife and Richardson, 2008).

(a) Abstractionism

In abstractionism, things are believed to be real and best understood when they are separated from the situation in which they occur. In other words, there is no need to consider the contexts in which things are found or happening. This suggests that the separated thing, including the self, is basically the same in most situations, and thus is real over and above its situation (Slife &

Richardson, 2008). For example, an objective person in this abstracted sense, is to be praised because s/he is not changed by differing contexts. Often, unchanging abstractions define and characterize the fundamental aspects of our world, such as natural laws, truths and ethical principles. These aspects thus apply to distinct contexts but exist apart from them. For instance 'an ethical principle may have to be qualified in a society with strong tribal royalties. However, the law or principle itself remains the same, existing as it does apart from any such changing contexts' (Slife & Richardson, 2008, p. 701).

(b) Relationality

In relationality, it is impossible to understand or describe what is real and fundamental without considering the context in which the real occurs and is used. For instance, a self can appear as honest in one context and as a liar in another 'with neither indicating the "real person" more than the other' (Slife & Richardson, 2008, p. 702). However relationality believes that an object can change from context to context. An example is given of a hammer which can be a nail-driver in one context and an art object in another. The authors argue that the relationist views the abstractionist as elevating similarities over differences and as such ignore the whole or totality of relations that are both similarities and differences in what is real and fundamental.

The two ontologies are therefore not separated by the existence or importance of abstractions or relationships, but rather what each ontology assumes to be the more fundamental and real. For instance abstractionists consider abstractions to be more fundamental and real, while relationists consider relations to be more fundamental and real. This prioritizing however, does not keep either type of ontology from acknowledging the importance of abstractions and relations but that relations for the abstractionists have little ontological status as they are from abstractions such as decontextualized and reified objects, whereas abstractions for the relationist are derived from concrete relations such as practices (Slife & Richardson, 2008).

Linley and Joseph (2004) believe that Positive Psychology associates itself strongly with the Aristotelian model of human nature which focuses on the virtuous individual and the inner traits, dispositions, and motives that qualify the individual to be virtuous. In this model, the virtues of the soul are of two sorts namely: virtue of thought and virtue of character. The former arises mostly from teaching so it needs experience and time, the latter results from habit (ethos) and therefore Aristotle believes none of the virtues of character arise in us naturally.

The next section traces Positive Psychology's central roots, the Aristotelian frame of reference, but at the same time, points out the state of today's mainstream psychology to show why Positive Psychology is needed as a corrective. Linley and Joseph (2004) maintain that Positive Psychology attempts to be an important corrective and demands of predominant mainstream psychology not to continue to marginalize or exclude, but bring in again the positive aspects of human nature. Linley and Joseph (2004) note that the postmodern philosopher Foucault believes that science in different time periods develops regimes of truth about human nature. Hence there is a need to move from a pathology oriented to a growth and positive development perspective.

Joseph (2015) contends that contemporary psychology prioritizes pathology, faults, and dysfunction, which make it a medically oriented psychology, while mainstream psychology prioritizes negative behaviour and various forms of dysfunctions. Positive Psychology concentrates on the positive experiences and positive character or virtues. Therefore, Seligman regards the concept of *good character* as the central concept for Positive Psychology. To this end, Seligman (2002, p. 125) argues that 'any science that does not use character as a basic idea (or at least explain character and choice away successfully) will never be accepted as a useful account of human behaviour'. At the same time Seligman believes that an individual has the capacity for both good and evil.

Positive Psychology therefore aligns itself with the Aristotelian approach to human nature in that it includes the view of the good person; the idea of the individual with a positive experience and positive character , strengths and given virtues; and the idea of man as he happens to be and as he could be (Christopher & Hickinbottom, 2008). Positive Psychology revisits the average person with an interest in finding out what works, what is right, and what is improving (Sheldon & King, 2001).

For Linley and Joseph (2004) psychology and other social sciences view human beings as asocial and egoistic individuals who are constantly consuming, using or exploiting the social, collective and material world with the aim of gaining the best possible results both physically and psychologically. Hobbes (1588 – 1697) was the first to support this perspective, arguing that human beings were bad and not much could be done about this. This view was opposed by Rousseau (1712 – 1778) arguing that human beings are born as moral beings with a potential for goodness. This view was supported by McDougall (1820 – 1903) who claimed that human beings have an empathic instinct. However, this view did not gain approval (Linley & Joseph, 2004).

But, as Linley and Joseph (2004, p. 19) put it 'Positive Psychology takes as its starting point the individual as a socially and morally motivated being'. According to Linley and Joseph, (2004) social relationships were concerned with sharing, giving and taking care of each other. This complements Aristotle, who argues that individuals have characteristics that serve to preserve their own welfare and the welfare of others. This supports the 'Ubuntu' principle as highlighted in Chapter 2 Paragraph 2.6.2.

In the Aristotelian model, an individual is understood as being driven by a dynamic principle toward that which is better or more perfect (Linely & Joseph, 2004). The model further states that the individual introduces positive goals and values and so strives to realize and reach them. The individual in this model therefore, lives a life in which thoughts and ideas about future

positive goals also influence the direction of actions here and now. The model introduces the distinction between the individual's potential and realization of future positive goals. This suggests that it should be a habit for people to realize their positive virtues in a more perfect and complex way so that a goal, moral and goodness become almost instinctive. The model further maintains that an individual experiences joy when exercising his/her inherent or acquired abilities and when realizing them in more perfect ways. Positive Psychology therefore, like Aristotle, believes that human beings enjoy the exercise of their capabilities and therefore goodness and morality do not come from outside the individual, neither do they arise from cultural sources nor from the morals of the society.

Thus, Positive Psychology adopts and revitalizes an Aristotelian frame of reference and argues that the science of psychology should once again include assumptions about the good or essence-driven motivation and the good person within its hard core basic assumption of what a human being is. Linley and Joseph (2004) contend that Positive Psychology, in accordance with Aristotelian roots, takes as its point of departure that human beings are pre-programmed with 'moral software' of justice, courage, fairness, and so on. Aristotle strongly argued that none of the virtues of character arise in us naturally but we are by nature able to acquire them and they are completed in us through habit but must be cultivated. Furthermore, Aristotelian and Positive Psychology approaches associate the concept of optimal functioning with good life, well-being or happiness. According to Christopher and Hickinbottom (2008), good life or eudaimonia as Aristotle calls it, is the 'state of being well and doing well in being well' (p. 148).

According to Seligman (2002), Positive Psychology research could be divided into two, namely hedonic and eudaimonic. Hedonic research would focus on emotions while eudaimonic approach focuses on the fully functioning person. Most positive psychologists, Seligman asserts, take a eudaimonic approach to the good life because it is concerned with the whole person and his or her optimal functioning and development in all areas of life.

3.6.3 Integrated ontology for Positive Psychology

Christopher and Campbell (2008), contend that the two aspects of interactivism namely: implicitness and the knowing levels, will provide a more specific and integrated ontology for Positive Psychology.

(a) Implicitness

Interactivism regards implicitness to be an important aspect both of being-in-the-world and of social practices. Implicitness explains how certain things can be functionally true of an entity in interaction with its environment without having to be anywhere within the entity (Christopher & Campbell, 2008). Implicitness thus provides a way to model and understand how family and culture can influence early development without having to assume that infants have yet acquired the means to cognize those influences.

(b) Reflective Abstractions

Reflective abstraction is 'the relationship between adjacent levels of knowing – in which properties resident in a given level, implicit in the organization or functioning of that level, are explicitly known at the next higher level' (Christopher & Campbell, 2008, p. 685).

Knowing Level 1 comes through interaction in the world. For example, babies know that crying elicits certain kinds of response from the caregiver. According to the hermeneutic philosopher Martin Heidegger (1927/1962), human beings are engaged in the world doing something or being-in-the-world. Heidegger indicates that we are born into, and take over in a pre-conscious way, social traditions and practices along with the meanings that are implicit in them. According to Heidegger (1962, cited in Christopher and Campbell, 2008), knowing Level 1 remains ontologically primary because humans are 'proximally and for the most part' being-in-the-world.

Knowing Level 2

During Level 2, the child begins to understand, know, and make explicit what is implicit at knowing Level 1, the child for instance begins to know himself and is able to know about the goals s/he holds at Level 1. The child's self-knowledge is now in the form of self-beliefs or self-descriptive statements that can be articulated to others. Christopher and Campbell (2008, p. 684) believe that this is how psychologists have usually understood self-conceptions.

Knowing Level 3 and Beyond

At this level, Christopher and Campbell (2008), hold that aspects of knowing levels are potentially infinite because there are new forms of implicitness at each knowing level. Therefore, there is new material to become known at the next higher level. It is at Level 3 where humans form meta-values or values about values, including judgments about what kind of person we are and what kind of person we ought to be. This is what Christopher and Campbell (2008) term 'strong evaluations'. Another example is that given by Wilson (2002) of the discounting principle, where he believes that any activity that is being performed because it brings satisfaction will come to be seen as less valuable if it is done to obtain external reward.

According to Crow (2009), Heidegger's work can supply the ontological underpinning which Positive Psychology needs in order to appreciate the entire human person. It is held that since the 'object' of Positive Psychology's investigation is the human person, a theoretical bias which misinterprets the basic reality of this entity is counterproductive. Positive Psychology must, of course, operate with a 'theory of mind', but this theory should not misconstrue the phenomenon of the human experience of cognition as part of engaged agency, and thus obstruct Positive Psychology's aims (Crow, 2009).

For Crow (2009), ontology means the investigation into the nature of existence of Being as such. Therefore, ontology asks 'what is Being as Being' (p. 7). Heidegger answers this question through the 'analytic of Da-sein' which is the investigation of the ontological nature of the human person in its particular relation to 'Being'. Crow further highlights that each individual has an existential (ontological) reality, and that each person is an exemplar of that entity which relates to being, but the analytic of Dasein relates to ontological structures as such. Heidegger uses the German word 'Dasein' as a starting point for his investigation of the human person but advises that the analytic of 'Dasein' should be kept separate from that of an individual (ontic). According to Heidegger the ontological inquiry is more primordial, over and against the ontic inquiry of the positive sciences.

Dasein, when translated, means 'there-being' or 'being-there' implying that humans understand themselves in relation to their existence, they have the possibility to be or not to be a particular way (Crow, 2009, p. 21). Crow (2009, p. 13) argues that Dasein is 'pre-ontological' in that it is generally not explicit in a theoretical sense, but evidenced in the ways humans think about themselves, their lives, and the ways in which they interact with the other beings they come across. For Heidegger, the present is formed in relation to the past and the future. As Crow points out, if Dasein is not resolute, the present gets entangled in its own self and gets drawn by things, the past becomes a forgetting and the future becomes an expecting.

According to Crow (2009), Heidegger notes that any science is grounded in a tacit ontology of its object domain. Crow (2009) argues that this is true of Positive Psychology because it does not have a developed ontology which informs its relation to, and theorizing on, the existential human person but has taken on an ontology handed down to it along with other natural sciences such as dualism. Dualism believes that the mind and body are separate and ontologically distinct, being here but relating to the world out there. One being the *res cogitans* and the other being the *res extensa.*

Richardson and Guignon (2008) claim that positive psychologists present their enterprise as a conventional branch of modern social science that seeks to uncover principles and processes that can be put to use for human betterment. Most of the 20th and 21st century social science has been guided by explanatory or empirical theory. But only such a theory that permits predictions far beyond what has already been observed is thought to constitute genuine knowledge or benefit the practice.

It is clear from Crow's argument that ontological discussions cannot take place without some reference to epistemological considerations since philosophical honesty requires that one's epistemological bias be highlighted. Crow also believes that Heidegger and Positive Psychology share some similarities. For instance, they both treat authenticity in terms of temporality and give a central place to mood as formative for a person's engagement with the world. But they differ in the sense that Heidegger is concerned with ontological structures of the human being, while Positive Psychology approaches these subjects ontically.

3.6.4 *Seligman's model of good life: Eudaimonic approach*

Seligman (2002) suggested a model of four different forms of the good life: pleasant life; good life/authentic; meaningful life; and the full life. According to Seligman, *a pleasant life* is 'a life that successfully pursues the positive emotions about the present, past and future' (p. 262). 'Using your signature strengths to obtain abundant gratification in the main realms of one's life' is what Seligman (2002) terms *a good life*. In a good life an individual uses his or her special character properties to experience gratification. The experience that comes from using one's own signature strengths is what Seligman terms 'authentic life', suggesting therefore that authentic life is a prerequisite of a good life. Seligman emphasises that a good life is a continuous development of the individual's strength and values. *The meaningful life* is according to Seligman when one uses his or her signature strength and virtues in the service of something much larger than an individual.

Seligman's most complex form of good life is called *the full life*. It encompasses all three of the above, it is a life in which an individual uses his or her capacities in an optional way to serve something larger than himself or herself to give life meaning. This is the same as optimal functioning.

From this discussion one can conclude that Positive Psychology explicitly defends and revitalizes the Aristotelian model in its emphasis on the virtues of self-benefiting and others-benefiting. However, it is worth mentioning that much contemporary philosophy and psychology argues that it is impossible to hold on to the idea of human nature having such common core potentials (Linley & Joseph, 2004). The authors therefore nullify the Aristotelian contention that human beings are pre-programmed with 'moral software' of justice, courage, fairness, and so on. The authors align themselves rather with the psychology that focuses on understanding and attempting to account for social processes in terms of social context and historical time.

3.7 Hermeneutic reflections on Positive Psychology

The term 'hermeneutics' comes from a Greek word for interpretation (Richardson & Guignon, 2008, p. 616). The Hermeneutic's view is that Positive Psychology rarely mentions the challenges that postmodern thinkers (social constructivism or hermeneutic) direct to both mainstream social science and broadly 'descriptive' efforts to orient the field. To the hermeneutic thinker, Positive Psychology, like any development in psychology, grows out of and reflects ways of thinking that are widely accepted in contemporary society. As such it brings a distorted picture of the human world and also tries to cover up the fact that it distorts its own purpose.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented the theoretical framework for this study, Positive Psychology. It indicated that Positive Psychology focuses on the optimal functioning of people, groups and

institutions and also on human conditions that lead to human happiness and fulfilment. The section also indicated that Positive Psychology is a relatively new field in psychology compared to other areas of psychology. Current and future developments in Positive Psychology were also discussed to indicate how this area of psychology was developed and what the future holds. These developments were discussed in the context of South Africa. The ontological underpinnings of Positive Psychology indicating that it assumes a Western culture has also been discussed.

The next chapter examines the research methodology and procedures used in this study.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES

4.1 Introduction

This study was an exploration of foster mothers' psychological experiences of fostering adolescents. Chapter 2 addressed the literature survey and chapter 3 described the theoretical framework used in this study. This chapter examines the research methodology and procedures used. Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were utilised to gain an in-depth understanding of the challenges faced by foster mothers who were fostering the adolescents at the time of interviewing, as well as coping strategies employed by foster mothers in their task of fostering. It commences with a presentation of the research aims. This is followed by a description of the research methodology and a step-by-step outline of the process of data collection, interpretation and analysis.

Ethical considerations are pointed out as the researcher had to obtain permission from the relevant ethics committee, social workers and respondents. Respondents also had to be informed about the overall purpose of the research as well as possible risks and benefits from participation in the project. Reflexivity, its definition and importance in psychological and qualitative research were referred to. Throughout the research process researchers need to reflect upon their actions and biases and how these may affect their research respondents, the nature and quality of the data, and how they will present their findings.

4.2 Study goals

The goals in this study were based on the observation by the researcher that foster mothers seem to experience challenges in dealing with fostered adolescents. For instance, the foster mothers that the researcher has interacted with in the past (and the researcher herself) asked themselves questions such as: Will the adolescent be obedient or antisocial, will s/he be sickly or not, will the

mother cope with the adolescent's behaviour? The goals for this study were to describe how foster mothers experience and cope with the challenges they experienced in their fostering of adolescents and the eventual formulation of recommendations/strategies to mothers, social workers, and government organizations.

4.3 Study objectives

The research objectives that this study focused on were:

(a) An exploration of the challenges faced by foster mothers in the South African context and how foster parenting of adolescents impacts on foster mothers;

(b) The exploration of foster mothers' coping strategies with and experiences of fostering adolescents;

(c) An understanding of lessons that have been learnt by foster mothers from the experience of fostering adolescents; and

(d) The formulation of recommendations to potential and actual foster mothers, social workers, and government organizations.

4.4 Methodological fit with the chosen theoretical framework

Many other methods could have been used in this study, for example, a quantitative approach or a mixture of quantitative and qualitative approaches, but the qualitative approach was found to be the most fitting. Richards et al. (2008) believe that the use of tried-and-tested scientific techniques to investigate the good life is what will make Positive Psychology viable as a theoretical stance. Also, Positive Psychology focuses on descriptions and explanations in order to provide the most inter-subjective data about the phenomenon it studies. It accounts for subjective experiences and meanings (Ong & van Dulmen, 2007).

Positive Psychology uses all the same methods as other domains of psychology, but also develops new strategies such as the Experience Sampling Model (ESM) (Ong & van Dulmen, 2007). This is a method for collecting experiences in situations immediately.

Participants get ESM questions on a specific device and have to answer these questions. Positive Psychology emphasizes the virtues and optimal functioning of individuals and groups. It considers them in totality, accentuating the positives in the midst of challenges.

Qualitative research focuses on individuals and small groups, making it possible to clearly see the relevance of Positive Psychology in those individuals and small groups. In this sense the qualitative design is seen as the most appropriate approach for this study. 'Unlike quantitative research methodologies that employ numerical data, the qualitative approach involves the collection and analysis of non-numerical data through a psychological lens' (Lyons & Coyle, 2007, p. 21). The current study attempted to unveil the feelings, thoughts, resilience of and coping strategies utilized by foster mothers in their fostering of adolescents. Qualitative research therefore, provides rich descriptions rather than thin conclusions, and possible explanations of people's meaning-making. A qualitative research approach was the most relevant for this research as it allowed the researcher to acknowledge the opinions and thoughts of all respondents.

Qualitative research provides the researcher with rich information about social processes as foreseen by Lyons and Coyle (2007). Social processes in this study are regarded as interactions between various groups of people. This means that in the context of the study the interactions are between the foster mothers, foster children, foster fathers, social workers, the family (both immediate and extended), and in some cases the families of the foster children. The foster mothers' rich experiences were obtained in the course of the explanation of their foster parenting roles as they articulated the extent to which they understood and carried out their responsibilities.

Terre Blanche, Durrheim, and Painter (2006) argue for the use of qualitative methods because they allow researchers to study selected issues in depth, openly and in detail as they identify and attempt to understand the categories of information that emerge from the data. In following Terre Blanche et al. (2006), this study allowed for a deeper exploration of the

experiences of the foster mothers in their fostering of adolescents, recording extensively the thoughts, feelings and views of the foster mothers.

Kvale (2007) highlights that qualitative research is intended to approach the world 'out there' (not in specialized research settings such as laboratories) and to understand, describe and sometimes explain social phenomena 'from inside' in different ways (p. x). For instance: analyzing experiences of individuals or groups, analyzing interactions and communications in the making, and by analyzing documents. In this study the researcher intended to approach the world of foster mothers out there not in a laboratory, in order to understand the foster mothers' fostering experiences and thereby how they cope with their experiences.

Researchers in qualitative research form part of the research process, either in terms of their own personal presence or in terms of their experiences in the field and with the reflexivity they bring to the role as members of the field under study. This supports the definition of qualitative research by De Vos et al. (2005), that it is 'active, participating, capacity building, involving, encouraging, mobilizing and enabling research procedure in which the total community and the researcher are seen as equal partners' (p.423). In other words, the researcher and respondents participate equally in generating the data for the study.

In this study, the interview schedule assisted the researcher to ask questions as developed out of the literature review. Creswell (2014) notes that an interview schedule containing a number of open-ended questions requiring the interviewer to act freely in formulating and reformulating the questions is required, it could also use probing. In this study the respondents were given the latitude to share their wealth of experiences with respect to foster parenting without confining it to the questions in the schedule. This allowed the respondents to share at length their experiences and in the process enabled them to become equal respondents in the study. According to Creswell (2014) qualitative research is interpretative in nature. As such the researcher is involved in an

intensive experience with respondents. This brings ethical and personal issues into the research process, requiring the researcher to identify reflexively their biases, values and personal background.

The use of an interview schedule enabled the researcher to order the questions from more general to specific and to start with non-threatening issues and focusing on establishing rapport. For example, How many children are you fostering? More difficult and sensitive questions were asked later in the interview. For example, What were the challenges experienced? The researcher found it necessary to help some respondents with cues to formulate their answers, but the cues did not provide answers to the respondents (Mosimege, 2006).

Qualitative research is naturalistic, holistic and inductive, and is commonly used to explore phenomena and provide 'thick' (i.e. detailed) descriptions of phenomena (Terre Blanche et al. 2006, p. 272). Creswell (2014) adds that qualitative researchers do not bring individuals into laboratories but rather conduct their research in a natural setting having face-to-face interaction with the respondents. A qualitative approach, in this study, offered the researcher an opportunity to explore the phenomenon at hand, through the use of interviews, for obtaining a detailed and thick description of what it means to be a foster mother. It is worth noting that a major part of qualitative research is based on text and writing from field notes, observations and transcripts to descriptions and interpretations and finally the presentation of the findings and of the research as a whole (Kvale, 2007).

The current study chose to use a qualitative approach because the use of qualitative data in basic and applied research work is increasingly emphasized in various domains. For example, in an area that is traditionally endorsing a quantitative approach to research, such as medicine, the National Institute of Health (2011) strongly recommends the use of qualitative information to shed light on psychological and cultural dimensions influencing health.

4.5 Research Procedures

In order to achieve the aims set for this study, semi-structured face-to-face interviews were used to collect data. The research procedure involved the selection of the respondents, developing an interview schedule, collecting data through in-depth interviews, and analyzing the data. Ethical considerations adhered to during the research are also discussed.

4.5.1 Selection of respondents

'One of the most significant issues investigators have to consider when designing a project is the type and number of the people who will be included in the study' (Sarantakos 2013, p. 166). The researcher had to determine whether the whole population or a sample was to be used and if sampling was decided upon, then which sampling procedure and how big would the sample be. For Sarantakos (2013) sampling is the most common in qualitative research because only the target population is studied. Once a decision was made on this as reflected in the criteria below, the researcher started with the selection of the respondents. In the current study the researcher utilized non-probability purposive sampling because it afforded the researcher an opportunity to purposely choose the respondents relevant to the project.

In the current study, the researcher contacted the social welfare offices of Mamelodi and Atteridgeville townships in Tshwane/Pretoria and submitted official letters requesting permission to interview the foster mothers who were fostering adolescents of ages fifteen to eighteen. The researcher had requested a list with names and phone numbers of foster mothers from social workers according to the following criteria:

- Women who were fostering adolescents of ages fifteen to eighteen at the time of the interview

- Would classify themselves as black and fostering children who would also classify themselves as black

- Were between 25 and 50 years old

- Were living in Mamelodi and Atteridgeville in the city of Pretoria/Tshwane

- Also had biological children living at home at the time of the research

- Were employed at the time of the research, that is, not house mothers at children's homes

- Were willing to articulate their experiences and thoughts about the topic in English or Setswana (both languages in which the researcher was fluent).

The social workers invited the researcher to attend a monthly foster parent meeting that was scheduled so that the researcher could meet the foster mothers and introduce herself and indicate in brief the project. This approach made it easier for the researcher when she phoned the respondents to set up dates and times for the interviews. The challenge however, was that most foster children were between the ages twelve and eighteen. The researcher therefore, interviewed foster mothers who were fostering adolescents of ages twelve to eighteen. The other challenge was that some foster mothers who were included were more than 50 years of age, because they were fostering adolescents.

4.5.2 The process of contacting the respondents

On the basis of the explanation provided above, the researcher contacted the respondents on the telephone numbers that were obtained from the relevant social workers from the social welfare offices at both Atteridgeville and Mamelodi townships. Appointments were then secured with the respondents at a venue and time suitable to each of them. The researcher had to ensure that the venue was non-threatening, since most respondents are comfortable in a setting they are familiar with (Lyons & Coyle, 2007) and provided sufficient privacy so that the respondents could tell their story without disturbances from external sources (De Vos et al. 2005). For this study most

respondents chose to be interviewed at the social welfare offices where they attend the monthly meetings.

The researcher indicated to the respondents how and where their details were obtained and that it was a research study for a PhD degree at the University of Pretoria. The interview was introduced by a briefing in which the researcher defined the situation for the respondents, indicating the purpose of the interview, and the use of a tape recorder. This served as a way of building rapport in order for the respondents to feel free to talk to the researcher. The researcher explained to the respondents how important their opinions on the topic were. The researcher asked if the respondents had any questions before starting the interview. It was made clear to the respondents that should the researcher realize that there was missing information the respondents would be contacted again.

4.5.3 Sample size

According to Sarakantos (2013), the question regarding sample size in social research has attracted attention from researchers of all schools of thought. Sarakantos believes that the sample should be as large as necessary but as small as possible. Some qualitative researchers believe the study will stop when saturation point is achieved but others follow the quantitative approach and estimate the sample size in advance (Sarakantos, 2013). In this study, it was not feasible to interview every foster mother within the population. Therefore it was necessary to sample the population in advance. The researcher interviewed 20 foster mothers according to the criteria outlined above and until saturation point was reached.

Potential respondents were recruited through the use of the purposive non-probability sampling technique (De Vos et al. 2005) for in-depth investigation and deeper understanding of the topic by the researcher. In this study, the researcher selected a small portion of the population that

had the specific qualities necessary for obtaining the maximum informative data. This is known as purposive sampling (Sarantakos, 2013).

In purposive sampling, it is essential to clearly identify the criteria for selection of respondents. This idea is supported by the quotation that follows: 'In purposive sampling the researcher must think critically about parameters of the population and then choose the sample case accordingly. Clear identification and formulation of criteria for the selection of respondents is, therefore, of cardinal importance' (Strydom & Delport, 2005, p. 329).

4.6 Demographics

In the first part of the interview the researcher started with the collection of biographical data. For instance, how many adolescents was the foster mother fostering, for how long, the age of the foster mother and of the children, educational level of the foster mother, as well as the marital status of the foster mother. The initial briefing was followed by a debriefing after the interview in which the researcher asked respondents if they have anything to say in addition to what the researcher had asked or had any other questions (Kvale, 2007). See Table 6.1 for detailed demographics.

4.7 Data collection procedure

According to Terre Blanche et al. (2006) data is the basic material with which researchers work and can take the form of numbers (quantitative) or language (qualitative). It is crucial that the researcher ensures that data captures the meaning of what the researcher is observing. Terre Blanche et al. (2006) suggested that the following questions be considered in collecting data: Who do I need to liaise with, including gatekeepers and stakeholders? How many people should I interview (sampling)? How am I going to record data (e.g. audiotape, videotape)? What am I going to collect or record (p. 286)?

4.7.1 Rationale for using face-to-face in-depth interviews

It is noteworthy that qualitative research can be conducted through a variety of approaches such as biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study (De Vos et al. 2005). Researchers using phenomenology mainly utilize observation and interviews. In this study, the researcher opted to use face-to-face interviews in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the respondents' coping strategies with regard to their foster parenting of adolescents. Interviewing is supported by Greeff (2005) 'interviewing is the predominant mode of data or information collection in qualitative research' (p. 292). Creswell (2014) adds that interviews are employed as methods of data collection in qualitative research designs.

Another significant aspect of the semi-structured interview is that it provides flexibility for the interviewee to give as much information as possible (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Kvale, 2007). Moreover, to provide further comments about his/her experiences that are usually not possible if expressed in other techniques such as questionnaires that utilize preconceived categories, while allowing the researcher to obtain the necessary data for executing the study and to gain a deeper understanding of the topic under investigation. Unlike the structured interview where there is lack of involvement on a personal level between the interviewer and the interviewee, the semi-structured interview attempts to establish personal relationships with the respondents without preconceptions of pre-established categories (Creswell, 2014). The researcher established this relationship through developing trust and rapport with the respondents during the course of the interview. The researcher maintained good contact by attentive listening and showing interest, understanding and respect for what the respondents were saying.

In this study, respondents could describe in their language of preference as precisely as possible what they experienced and felt, and how they acted (Kvale, 2007). The intention for this study was thus not to test any hypotheses or generalize findings to a larger population (De Vos et

al. 2005), but rather to explore the psychological experiences of foster mothers and describe what foster mothers do in order to cope with the challenges of fostering the adolescents. Willig and Stainton-Rogers's (2008) work explains this process of exploring and describing how foster mothers cope as similar to the experiences of a miner or traveller in that the knowledge is understood as 'buried metal' and the interviewer is the 'miner' who unearths the valuable metal.

Patton (2014) notes that interviews, open-ended questions and probes yield in-depth responses about people's experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings, and knowledge. In other words, the interviewer attempts to understand the world from the respondents' point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world as far as possible (Kvale, 2007). Therefore, the best way to know how people understand their world and their lives is to talk to them because it is through conversation that we get to know other people, get to learn about their experiences, feelings and hopes and the world they live in.

The other reason for engaging in conversation, particularly face to face interviews, is that we cannot observe feelings, thoughts, intentions, and behaviour that took place at some previous point in time, nor situations that preclude the presence of the observer, and also how people have organized the world and the meaning they attach to what goes on in the world (Patton, 2014). This clearly suggests that we have to ask people questions about those things that cannot be observed.

Through the semi-structured interview, the researcher on the one hand was able to ask about, and listens to what respondents tell about their lived world, and opinions in their own words on family, social lives and so on, and the respondents on the other hand were able to convey to the researcher their situation from own perspective and in their own words. Thus, interviewing allows researchers to enter into the respondents' perspective of their situation or experience and assumes that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit. Hence, interviewing attempts to finding out what is in and on someone else's mind, to gather their stories.

Kvale (2007) points out that the first minutes of an interview are decisive in setting out the interview stage as the interviewees will want to have a grasp of the interviewer before they allow themselves to talk freely and expose their experiences and feelings to a stranger. Therefore briefing of respondents is crucial at this stage.

4.7.2 Recording of interviews

There are various methods of recording interviews. Kvale (2007) mentions these methods: audiotape, videotape, note-taking and remembering but also highlights that the common way of recording interviews has been with the use of a tape recorder. This affords the interviewer an opportunity to concentrate on the topic and the dynamics of the interview. The tape should, however, be audible to the transcriber as the time needed for transcribing depends on the quality of the recording and the typing experience of transcriber.

Once the interview procedure including tape recording, and the audibility thereof, was explained to the respondents, and they gave permission for the recording, an audio-tape recording of the interview was done. An audio tape was used for the purpose of accuracy and in addition, the researcher took notes as the discussions proceeded and took note of the non-verbal cues as well. Recording of interviews was done systematically as advised by De Vos (2005) in order to facilitate the transcription and analysis of data. The researcher ensured this by labelling audiotapes (date, name and place), carrying batteries in case the electricity failed, and finding quiet places for conducting and recording the interviews.

4.7.3 Interview schedule

An interview schedule, is a list of questions that are to be explored in the course of an interview (Patton, 2014). An interview schedule provides the researcher with a set of predetermined questions that might be used as an appropriate instrument to engage the respondents. Greeff (2005), describes an interview guide as a questionnaire that is written to guide

the interviews. Kvale (2007) defines an interview schedule as 'a script that structures the course of the interview more or less tightly' (p. 56). This means that the guide may contain some topics to be covered or it can be a detailed sequence of carefully worded questions aiming at guiding the interview and engaging the respondents. Lyons and Coyle (2007) note that in semi-structured interviews, the investigator will have a set of questions on a schedule but the interview will be guided by the schedule rather than dictated by it, which is the case in the structured interview. The advantages of an interview schedule assisted the researcher in ensuring a careful decision on how best to use the limited time available in an interview situation.

The interview schedule was produced beforehand in order to ensure that the researcher thought explicitly about what she hoped the interview might cover. This forced the researcher to think of the difficulties that might be encountered, for example, in terms of wording or sensitive areas and how these difficulties might be handled. This was done in following Greeff (2005), Lyons and Coyle (2007), and Kvale (2007) who claim that it is important for the researcher to produce the interview schedule in advance as this will force him/her to think about what the interview might cover and to think of the difficulties that might be encountered. The main focus in the questions was to request the respondents to tell their stories of fostering adolescents, both the positive and the negative aspects thereof; how they coped with challenges they have faced; and what resources they used to overcome the challenges. Open-ended questions were used to allow respondents to express themselves freely (Greeff, 2005).

The schedule was constructed from a focused literature study in order to guide the researcher in understanding the topic at hand and to know what questions to ask to cover the topic (Greeff, 2005). The interview questions to be posed to the respondents were generated to address the study-specific research questions (see Table 4.1 below). The researcher followed an interview schedule (see Appendix A) which ensured that the same basic lines of enquiry are pursued with each respondent. It provided topics or subject areas within which the researcher was free to

explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular topic. However, the researcher remained free to build a conversation within a particular topic, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversation style but with the focus on a particular subject that has been predetermined.

Table 4.1 Research questions and interview questions

Research Questions	Interview questions
1. What are the experiences of foster mothers in fostering adolescents?	What has been your experience in fostering an adolescent? Any other thing you would like to talk about with regard to your experience of fostering an adolescent?
2. What are the challenges faced by foster mothers who foster adolescents?	How has fostering affected you? Have you identified any emotional adjustment problems in the adolescent? Have you identified any social adjustment problems in the adolescent?
3. How do foster mothers cope with the challenges of fostering the adolescents?	What coping strategies do you employ, in other words what do you do to cope with the challenges of fostering? What kind of discipline do you administer? For example, do you focus on the strong or weak points of the child?
4. What lessons have been learnt by foster mothers from the experience of fostering adolescents?	What are the lessons you have learnt from fostering an adolescent?

The researcher arranged the questions from simple to complex and from broad to more specific in order to allow respondents to adjust to the pattern of the interview guide. The researcher ensured that the questions were not ambiguous in order to avoid confusion on the part of the respondents and also that the questions covered a logical sequence and were limited to a few only but covered the topic thoroughly in ensuring that the interview gives specific information required. The researcher used probing in interesting areas and followed the respondent's interests or concerns. The researcher did not necessarily follow the sequence on the schedule or ask questions in exactly the same way of each respondent.

A researcher may decide that it would be appropriate to ask a question earlier than it appears on the schedule because it follows on from something the respondent has just said (Lyons & Coyle, 2007). The researcher gave the respondents time to finish answering a question before moving on because often the most interesting question requires more time for a response as fuller answers may be missed if the researcher probes or moves on too quickly. One question was asked at a time because multiple questions can be too difficult for the respondent to unpack (Lyons & Coyle, 2007). The researcher tried to monitor how the interview was affecting the respondent. For instance at one stage with two of the respondents the researcher had to switch off the tape because the respondent felt uncomfortable talking about the adolescent use of drugs and imprisonment as a psychological challenge experienced. The researcher observed this through the respondents' non-verbal cues and the tone of the voice.

One would therefore conclude that a good interview question should contribute thematically to knowledge production (this is the 'what' of the interview) and dynamically (the 'how' of the interview) to promoting a good interview interaction (Kvale, 2007 p. 90). Dynamic questions should promote a positive interaction, keep the flow of the conversation going, the questions should be easy to understand, short, and devoid of academic language. According to Kvale (2007) the quality of an interview relies not only on the questions posed, but also on the way the researcher reacts after an answer, perhaps allowing a pause for the respondents to continue an answer, and by probing for more information in attempting to verify the answers given (Kvale, 2007).

4.8 Method of analysis

Creswell (2014) claims that a qualitative proposal needs to specify the steps taken in analyzing the qualitative data, in order to make sense of the textual data. Creswell likens data analysis to 'Peeling back the layers of an onion' (p. 195) as well as putting them back together. According to Creswell (2014) not all of the information can be used because qualitative data is

rich and dense. Therefore, the researcher has to aggregate data into a small number of five to seven themes.

4.8.1 Steps in data analysis

Steps that the researcher followed in analyzing the data are presented in the form of a diagram below.

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│          Raw data (transcripts)          │
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                     ▼
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│   Organizing and preparing data for      │
│              analysis                     │
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│          Reading through all data         │
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                     ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│             Coding the data               │
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                     │
                     ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                 Themes                    │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                     │
                     ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│           Interrelating themes            │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                     │
                     ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│    Interpreting the meaning of themes     │
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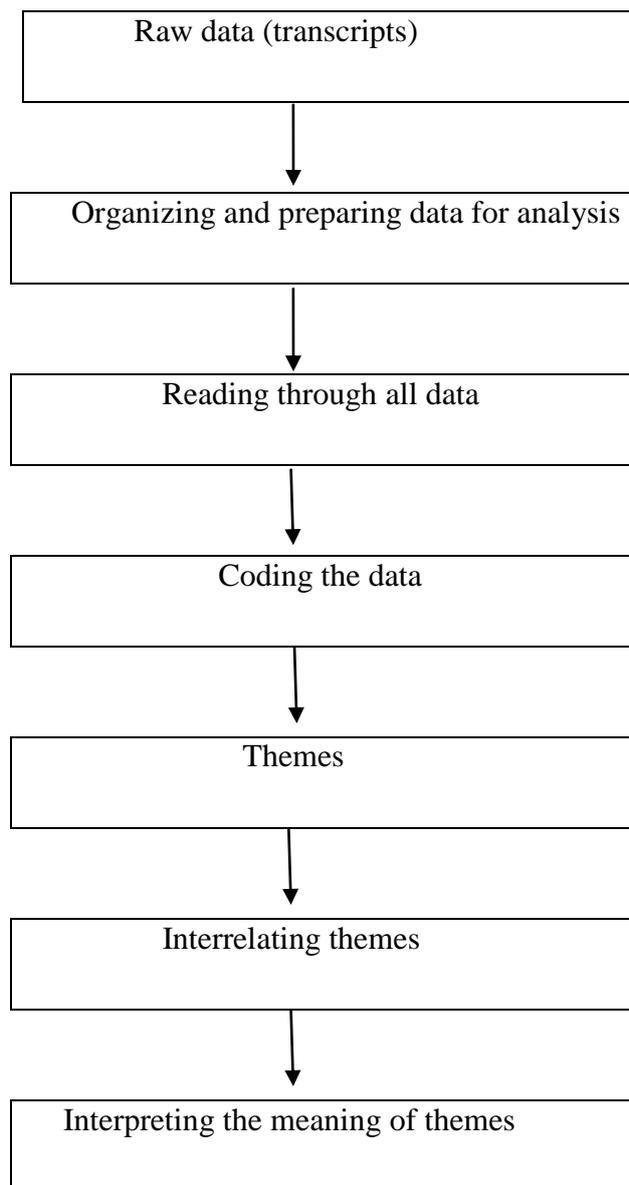
Figure 4.1 Steps in data analysis.

4.8.2 Transcription of the interview data

The first step was the transcription of the entire interview from oral speech to written text in order to have textual data for the analysis process. Stewart and Shamdasani (2007) contend that transcription has to be done thoroughly to ensure that the interview is accurately reflected in the text for facilitating the analysis process. Transcriptions make it possible for the researcher to pick up incomplete sentences, half-finished thoughts, and odd phrases and to rectify where necessary. Proper transcriptions made editing possible and this increased readability and ensured that the researcher had a full text to use for analysis.

Audio tape recordings of the 20 interviews were transcribed and translated into English (if it was conducted in Setswana or Sotho) so as to provide the textual data for analysis. An independent third person was asked to listen to the tape recordings and read the transcriptions and translations to ensure that the researcher had recorded all the words of the foster mothers that were interviewed.

Data analysis for this study was based on the purpose of the topic as well as on the nature of the interview material (Creswell, 2014). At the core of the textual data analysis was the task of discovering themes. Four global themes were identified for this study. The method of analysis that the researcher opted for in this study project was the Thematic Network Analysis as proposed by Attride-Stirling (2001). Thematic Network Analysis does not only summarize the main themes but it also organizes the information into a web-like illustration that can be used to communicate findings with stakeholders (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

Thematic networks has three classes of themes namely: (a) *basic themes*, (these are simple premises of the collected data that say very little on their own. They are clustered together to complement each other and form organizing themes); (b) *organizing themes*, (these assemble basic themes into similar clusters forming an argument or position regarding the

situation); and (c) *global themes*, that filter organizing themes into one insight that summarizes the comprehensive issue (Habre, 2016). Habre notes that thematic networks break down the textual data into manageable clusters of patterns and themes. It also explores the relationships between the idea from a micro to a macro perspective.

The researcher followed the six steps as identified by Attride-Stirling, (2001). Step 1: coding of the material. The researcher reduced the data by breaking the text into manageable and meaningful text segments using coding framework. Step 2: identifying the themes. Once all the text had been coded, themes were abstracted from the coded text segments. Step 3: constructing the networks. The first thing done in constructing the networks was to arrange the themes into similar and coherent groupings. Step 4: describing and exploring the thematic networks. In this step, the researcher returned to the original text and read the text with the help of the Global Themes, Organizing Themes and Basic Themes. Step 5: summary of the networks. Once a network had been described and explored in full, a summary of the main themes and patterns characterizing it was provided. Step 6: interpretation of the patterns. In this final step of the networks analysis, the researcher brought together the deductions in the summaries of all the networks and then the deductions with the relevant theory to explore significant themes, concepts, patterns and structures that arose in the text.

4.8.3 Interpretation of the findings

In interpreting the findings, it is best to ask a question about what the lessons were that were learned. Interpretation of data was done in following Creswell (2014) whereby the meaning was derived from a comparison of the findings with information gleaned from literature indicating whether the findings confirm or diverge from it – see Chapters 2 and 3.

4.9 Ethical issues

As a standard procedure, the researcher submitted an application for ethical clearance at the University of Pretoria and was informed that it was approved on 30th April 2008. No research can be undertaken without ethical clearance and the researcher followed the university's requirements for conducting ethical research. The researcher obtained permission from the relevant ethics committee, social workers and respondents themselves.

Kvale (2007) points out that ethical guidelines for social science research commonly concern the subjects' informed consent to participate in the study, confidentiality of the subjects, consequences of participation in the research project and the researcher's role in the study. This suggests that with informed consent, respondents should be informed regarding the overall purpose of the investigation and the main features of the design as well as possible risks and benefits from participation in the research project. This may include information about confidentiality and who will have access to the interview; the researcher's right to publish the whole interview or part of it; and the interviewee's possible access to the transcription and the analysis of the interviews (Kvale, 2007). In terms of confidentiality, Kvale (2007) and Willig and Stainton-Rogers (2008) state that private data identifying the subjects/respondents should not be reported. Informed consent further involves obtaining voluntary participation of the people involved, and informing them of their right to withdraw from the study at anytime (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008).

Should the study publish information potentially recognizable to others, the respondents need to agree on the release of identifiable information (Kvale, 2007; Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). Any consequences should be addressed with respect to possible harm and expected benefits to the respondents through participation. For this study, permission to conduct the research was obtained from the Social Welfare offices of Mamelodi and Atteridgeville townships in Pretoria/Tshwane, South Africa. Each respondent was given an informed consent

form to sign after explanation by the researcher. Respondents were notified beforehand about the tape-recording and its importance and that they could have a copy of the transcripts upon request. Respondents were also assured of confidentiality and anonymity, thus respondents were not required to write their names anywhere. To emphasize anonymity, the real names of respondents have not been used in the report. Respondents were also informed that recordings would be used with their permission and restricted to the researcher alone for purposes of this study only. Respondents were also informed that participation in the study was entirely voluntary and that they may withdraw anytime during the interview if they feel that way (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008).

Prior to conducting the interview the respondents were told that they were free to express their ideas on the topic clearly and explicitly without interference, and during the actual interview, each mother was allowed an opportunity to finish what she was saying at her own pace, only using probing questions when necessary and for elaboration in order to obtain rich and in-depth data. In this way the researcher tried to create an atmosphere of trust right from the start, and ensured the mothers that all opinions would be valued.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research methodology and methods that guided the study. It gave a brief description of the qualitative research design, and provided information regarding the procedures followed in collecting and analysing textual data. The next chapter discusses the analysis of the textual data.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter presented a brief description of the qualitative research method and the procedures used in collecting and analyzing data about the psychological experiences of foster mothers in their fostering of adolescents. In this section the data analysis is discussed. The reader is informed about how data was prepared for analysis and the rationale behind this preparation. The reader is also assured that a critical interpretation of transcripts was applied to the data. The way in which the researcher's voice affected this process was also described. Issues concerning credibility, reliability and validity as well as reflexivity are addressed.

Data analysis was done to bring order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data as advised by De Vos (2005) with the aim of answering the original research question as highlighted by Terre Blanche et al. (2006). According to these authors, the difference between quantitative and qualitative data analyses is that quantitative techniques employ a variety of statistical analyses to make sense of data, whereas qualitative techniques identify themes in the data and relationships between these themes.

5.2 Transcription of the interview data

Once the interview is complete, the recorded tapes should be systematically transcribed. To transcribe means to transform, to change from one form to another for example, from an oral language to a written language (Kvale 2007). Thus, the tape recordings of the interviews involved the abstraction of interview conversations to a written form. Transcription makes it easier for the researcher to refer back and forth to different parts of an interview when it is on paper rather than the researcher having to find his/her way around an audio cassette (Terre Blanche et al. 2006).

Transcription is not just a simple clerical task, but an interpretative process, where the differences between oral speech and written texts give rise to a series of practical and principal issues. In other words, through transcription, the face-to-face interview becomes abstracted and fixed into a written form (Kvale 2007). Kvale (2007) emphasises further that in most studies tapes are transcribed by a secretary who is likely to be more efficient at typing than the investigator.

In this study however, the researcher chose to do her own transcribing in order to secure the many details relevant to her specific analysis as advised by Kvale (2007). The researcher transcribed everything because the meaning of what is being said in the interview can usually only be interpreted in the context of the sentences which surround it and the conversation as a whole. Terre Blanche et al. (2006) warn researchers against the temptation of skipping over 'filler' chat that may seem to be of little value (p. 302).

In this study the first step was the transcription of the entire interview from oral speech to written text in order to have textual data for the analysis process. The researcher ensured the reliability of transcription by reading through it while listening to the recording. Reading through it while listening to the recording was not only a technical exercise but it also gave the researcher an increasingly clear image of the interview as a whole (Terre Blanche et al. 2006). Thorough transcriptions ensured that the interview was accurately reflected in the text for the purpose of facilitating the analysis process. Transcriptions made it possible for the researcher to pick up incomplete sentences, half-finished thoughts, odd phrases and other characteristics of the spoken word during the discussion, and to rectify these if necessary. Handwritten notes were also used to enhance and substantiate data from the transcripts. Proper transcriptions made editing possible, which increased readability and ensured that the researcher had a full text to use for analysis (De Vos et al. 2005).

All the audio tape recordings of the twenty interviews were transcribed and translated into English (whenever it was conducted in Setswana or Sotho) to provide the textual data for analysis (transcriptions can be provided upon request). Although this was time consuming, with a maximum of six hours per one hour interview as proposed by Smith and Eatough (2007), it allowed the researcher to immerse herself in the interviews and recognize phrases that were not as prominent during the interviews. The audiotape for each participant was reviewed several times to obtain adequate impressions of the discussion climate and to make verbatim transcriptions in which hesitations, silences, enthusiasm and other psychological indicators were observed (Indongo, 2007). During the transcription of interviews the researcher identified gaps (for instance on the biographical data) and filled them in by phoning the interviewees and requesting the information.

5.3 Thematic Network Analysis

Researchers have many well-established methods for recording and collecting rich, qualitative data. It is imperative for researchers to analyze and synthesize the collected data into meaningful, actionable design insights (Habre, 2016). The researcher opted to use thematic networks for the analysis of data in this study because it provided a methodology that helped the researcher work through the challenges of analyzing textual data using a formulaic, step-by-step methodology. Thematic Network Analysis does 'not only summarize the main themes but it also organizes the information into a web-like illustration that can be used to communicate findings with stakeholders' (Harmon, p. 176, Ellieharmon.com. retrieved 6 July 2016).

Thematic Network Analysis excavates three classes of themes namely: (a) B*asic themes*, (these are simple premises of the collected data that say very little on their own. They are clustered together to complement each other and form organizing themes); (b) *Organizing themes*, (these assemble basic themes into similar clusters forming an argument or position regarding the

situation); and (c) *Global themes*; these filter organizing themes into one insight that summarises the comprehensive issue (Habre, 2016). Habre further notes that thematic networks break down the textual data into manageable clusters of patterns and themes. It also explores the relationships between the ideas from a micro to a macro perspective. The advantages of thematic networks are that they: (i) explore multiple relationships between the understanding of an issue; (ii) analyse complex data; and (iii) allows categories to emerge from data (Habre 2016).

Attride-Stirling (2001) identified a gap with regard to the analysis of textual material especially for social science researchers. She believes that researchers have omitted the 'how' question from accounts of their analyses (p.386). To this end she developed thematic networks as an analytical tool for qualitative data as it draws on core features that are common to many approaches in qualitative analysis. According to Attride-Stirling (2001) 'thematic networks is simply a way of organizing a thematic analysis of qualitative data' and 'seeks to unearth the salient themes' …in a text at different levels' (p. 387). It aims to 'facilitate the structuring and depiction of these themes' (p.387). It has however, been noted that the process of deriving themes from textual data is well established in qualitative research. To this end, thematic networks 'is not in any way a new method, but one that shares the key features of any hermeneutic analysis' (p. 387).

Attride-Stirling (2001) further notes that thematic networks are developed from the basic themes, working inward towards the global theme. Once basic themes have been collected, they are then classified according to an underlying story they are telling and these become organizing themes. Organizing themes are then reinterpreted in view of the basic themes and are brought together to illustrate a super-ordinate theme that becomes a global theme. Thematic networks are then presented as web-like nets in order to remove any notion of hierarchy. Once a thematic network has been constructed, it will serve as an illustrative tool in the interpretation of the text, thus facilitating disclosure for the researcher and understanding for the reader.

The researcher followed the six steps in the thematic networks analysis as identified by Attride-Stirling (2001). The six steps are represented in the diagram below (see Figure 5.1 below).

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              Step 1: coding of the material                 │
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│              Step 2: identifying the themes                 │
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│              Step 3: constructing the networks              │
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│       Step 4: describing and exploring the thematic networks │
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│              Step 5: summary of the networks                │
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│           Step 6: interpretation of the patterns           │
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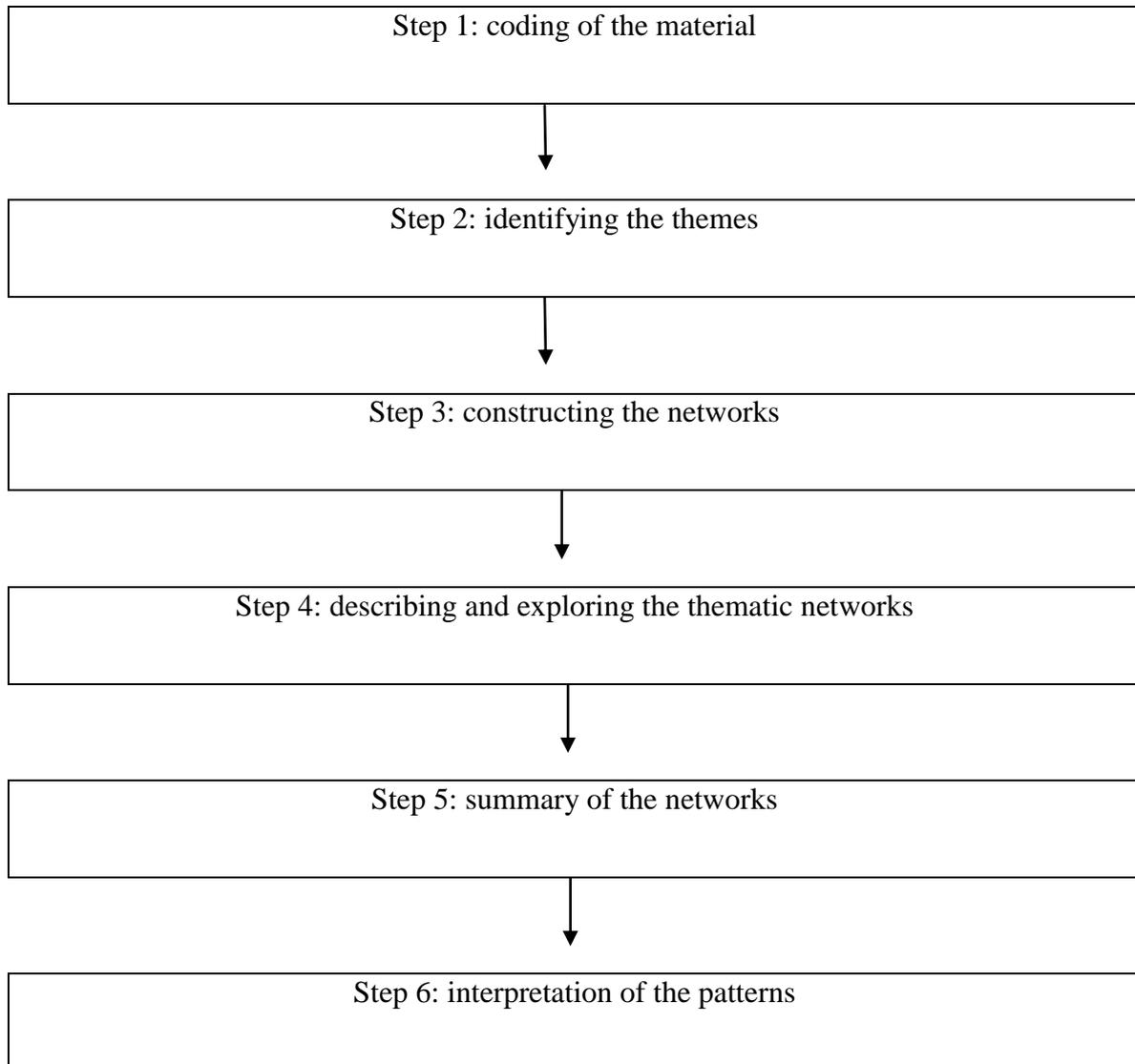
Figure 5.1 Steps in a Thematic Networks Analysis.

Step 1: Coding of the material. The researcher reduced the data by breaking the text into manageable and meaningful text segments using the coding framework. The coding framework was done on the basis of both the researcher's theoretical interest and the pre-established criteria. The researcher then dissected the text using the coding framework, in other words, the codes were

applied to the textual data. The researcher ensured that the codes were explicit and not interchangeable or redundant and avoided coding every sentence in the original text.

Step 2: Identifying the themes. Once all the text was coded, themes were abstracted from the coded text segments. The researcher read through the text segments in each group of codes and extracted common themes in the coded segments. This procedure allowed the researcher to reframe the reading of the text and identification of the underlying patterns and structures. Once the themes were abstracted from the coded segments, the researcher embarked on the process of refining the themes. In other words, the researcher went through the selected themes and refined them further into themes that are specific enough to be distinct and broad enough to summarize a set of ideas contained in the text segments. By so doing, the researcher reduced the data to a more manageable set of significant themes that summarized the text.

Step 3: Constructing the networks. The first thing done in constructing the networks was to arrange the themes into similar and coherent groupings. The themes were arranged on the basis of the content and on theoretical grounds. Those that were few enough and approximately similar were put under one network. But when the themes were numerous or distinct, more than one grouping of networks was made. The themes that were assembled into groups were used as Basic Themes in order to render a conceptual division between identification of themes and the creation of the thematic network.

Basic themes that shared issues were grouped into the Organizing themes. The main argument or assertion was summarized in an attempt to deduce Global themes. All three themes were then illustrated as non-hierarchical, web-like representations. Each Global theme produced a thematic network. Once all this was done, the researcher went through the segments related to each Basic theme to ensure that the Global theme, Organizing themes and Basic themes reflect the data but also that the data support the themes. Adjustments were made where necessary. The themes

were created by working from the periphery (Basic themes) inwards to the Global themes with the aim of summarizing particular themes in order to create larger, unifying themes that condense the concepts and ideas mentioned at a lower level.

Step 4: Describing and exploring the thematic networks. In this step, the researcher returned to the original text and read the text through the Global themes, Organizing themes and Basic themes. In other words, the researcher described the content of each network and explored the underlying patterns. In this way the networks not only become a tool for the researcher but also for the reader as s/he will be able to anchor the researcher's interpretation of the summary provided by the network. 'It is suggested that the networks be read in a sequential order (e.g. clockwise), to facilitate the presentation and understanding of the material' (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 393).

Step 5: Summary of the networks. Once a network has been described and explored in full, a summary of the main themes and patterns characterizing it is provided. This involves summarizing the principal themes that emerged in the description and making explicit the patterns emerging in the exploration. These are done in such a way that they are presented succinctly and explicitly for the reader.

Step 6: Interpretation of the patterns. In this final step of the networks analysis, the researcher brought together the deductions in the summaries of all the networks and then the deductions with the relevant theory to explore significant themes, concepts, patterns and structures that arose in the text. This was done with the aim to return to the original research questions and the theoretical interests underpinning them.

5.4 Issues of validity, reliability, and credibility in qualitative research

To ensure the quality of the study, a qualitative researcher should take note of validity and reliability when designing the study and analyzing the results (Patton, 2005).

5.4.1 Validity

Noble and Smith (2015) argue that it is necessary for the researchers to make judgments about the soundness of the research in relation to the application and appropriateness of the methods undertaken as well as the integrity of the final conclusions. These authors regard validity as 'the precision in which the findings accurately reflect the data' (p. 34).

Validation of the findings occurs throughout the steps in the process of research (Creswell 2014). Creswell defines validity as checking the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures. Creswell notes that other terms are used to address validity such as, trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility. Only the first three of these will be discussed in detail below. Creswell identified eight strategies for ensuring validity, for example, triangulation; member checking; use of rich, thick descriptions to convey the findings; clarifying the bias the researcher brings to the study; presenting the negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the themes; spending prolonged time in the field; using of peer debriefing to enhance the accuracy of the account; and using an external auditor to review the entire project (p. 201-202).

Creswell further emphasises that '… having an independent investigator to look over many aspects of the project (e.g. accuracy of the transcription, relationships between the research question and the data, the level of data analysis from the raw data through interpretation) enhances validity of the qualitative study' (p. 203). In this study, an independent third person was asked to listen to the tape recordings and read the transcriptions and translations to ensure that the researcher has recorded all the words of the foster mothers as interviewed.

5.4 2 Reliability

Noble and Smith (2015) believe reliability is 'the consistency of the analytical procedures, including accounting for personal and research method biases that may have influenced the

findings' (p. 34). In order to ensure reliability of a project, Yin (2009) suggested that qualitative researchers need to document the procedures and the steps of their case studies as far as possible. Gibbs (2007) identified procedures to be followed in ensuring reliability of the study, among them: (a) checking transcripts for obvious mistakes made during transcription; and (b) ensuring that there is no drift in the definition and meaning of the codes.

'Qualitative researchers do consider reliability an important parameter of research but instead use concepts such as credibility and applicability or confirmability' (Sarantakos (2013, p. 105). According to Sarantakos (2013) the following terminology seems to be popular in qualitative research: trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, and confirmability. All these concepts are defined below. In ascertaining reliability the question asked is 'does the instrument produce the same results, every time it is employed' (Sarantakos, 2013, p. 107). Punch and Oancea (2014) simply define reliability as consistency (p. 237).

Noble and Smith (2015) note that quantitative researchers apply statistical methods for establishing validity and reliability of the research findings, but the qualitative researchers aim to design and incorporate methodological strategies to ensure the 'trustworthiness' of the findings. Examples of such strategies are:

> Accounting for personal biases which may have influenced the findings; acknowledging biases in sampling and ongoing critical reflection of the methods to ensure sufficient depth and relevance of data collection and analysis; including rich and thick verbatim descriptions of respondents' accounts to support findings (p. 35).

Noble and Smith (2015) further highlight the importance on the part of all qualitative researchers to incorporate these strategies in order 'to enhance the credibility of a study during research design and implementation' (p. 35). In this study, the

researcher was able to obtain trustworthiness of the findings through the use of systematic collection of data and utilizing acceptable research procedures and allowing the findings to be open to critical analysis from others.

5.4.3 Credibility

De Vos et al. 2005) suggest that the quality of a study has to be judged by the paradigm in which it was conducted and claim that credibility, confirmability, dependability and transferability are essential to the qualitative research paradigm.

In this study the researcher addressed credibility through the interpretation of textual data based on the literature review of the psychological experiences of foster mothers who were fostering the adolescents. This allowed for believable accounts and descriptions of the foster mothers' experiences, thoughts and feelings. The researcher further believed that credibility was achieved through clearly delineating the context, as well as the relevant theory that related to the data. Credibility was again enhanced through accurate identification and description of the respondents' stories or narratives. The other factor that enhanced credibility was that the analysis presented repeating and similar information.

5.4.4 Generalizability/transferability

Noble and Smith (2015, p. 34) refer to generalizability as 'the transferability of the findings to other settings and applicability in other contexts'. Sarantakos (2013) believes that generalizability 'means to generalize the findings beyond the boundaries of the research sample' (p. 113). According to Creswell (2014 p. 203) qualitative generalization is limited because the intent is not to generalize the findings to individuals, sites, or places outside of those under study. It however, occurs when qualitative researchers study additional cases and generalize findings to the new cases (p.204).

De Vos et al. (2005, p. 346) add that generalization of qualitative findings to other settings is seen as a weakness in this approach and advise researchers to counteract this by referring back to the original theoretical framework to show how data collection and analysis will be guided by concepts and models. In the current study, the aim was not to generalize the findings to the whole population of South Africa but to the foster mothers of adolescents in Mamelodi and Atteridgeville.

William (2006) defines transferability as 'the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings' (www.socialresearchmethods.net, retrieved 6 July 2016). As a way of enhancing transferability, the researcher described the research context and the aims of the research. The researcher also used triangulation whereby several sources were used to corroborate, elaborate, or illuminate the research in question (De Vos et al. 2005). Triangulation was enhanced through the use of more than one theoretical framework.

5.4.5 Dependability

'This is an alternative to reliability in which researcher attempts to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for study…' (De Vos, 2005, p. 346). William (2006) asserts that dependability 'is concerned with whether we would obtain the same results if we could observe the same thing twice' www.socialresearchmethods.net, retrieved 6 July 2016). Unlike the positivist notion of unchanging social world, in qualitative research the social world is always being constructed (De Vos, 2005). In order to ensure that the findings were consistent and reproducible, similar to testing for reliability, to describe the research process and procedures in great detail the researcher ensured this through revisiting the data numerous times at different stages of the analysis as advised by De Vos (2005).

5.4.6 Confirmability

William (2006) defines confirmability as 'the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers (www.socialresearchmethods.net, retrieved 6 July 2016). This involves 'evaluating the findings in terms of neutrality and questioning whether they were representative of the participants' views and the inquiry process, also methods for analyzing the data and reflecting on the researchers' own assumptions in order to reduce any biases and prejudices that could have confounded the outcome of the study' (De Vos et al. 2005, p. 346). This was enhanced by ensuring that the data confirmed the general findings of the current study. Thus, the researcher was constantly involved in the process of self-reflection, continually checking and rechecking the data throughout the study, checking the questions and interpreting the findings (De Vos et al. 2005).

5.5 Reflexivity

In this section the definition, importance, and types of reflexivity are presented and elaborated upon. It is crucial for researchers to be reflexive and to be aware of the multiple influences they have on the research process and how it affects them.

5.5.1 Definition of reflexivity

By reflexivity De Vos (2005) means the ability to formulate an integrated understanding of one's cognitive world, especially understanding one's influence or role in a set of human relations, thinking about one's perceptions and ideas. In other words, the researcher reflects on the nature of her involvement in the research process and the way this shapes its outcomes. Reflexivity is required throughout the research process, for instance in trying to be aware of how the researcher's own assumptions about the phenomenon being studied might influence the way the researcher formulates her question and the issues highlighted in the interview guide

In qualitative research, the enquirer reflects about how his/her role in the study and his/her personal background, culture, and experiences have potential for shaping the interpretations of the data (Creswell, 2014). This is more than merely advancing biases and values in the study but how the background of the researcher may shape the direction of the study. In this study, some of the questions were based on the researcher's own experiences of fostering an adolescent.

5.5.2 Importance of reflexivity in psychological and qualitative research

Reflexivity has become an important topic for qualitative researchers to consider and experiment with. Gilgun (2010) believes that all researchers, irrespective of the methods and perspectives they use, must be reflexive if their research is to be useful. Furthermore, it is a given assumption in methodological principles in most forms of qualitative research that researchers influence the research processes and the research processes influence the researchers. Awareness of the importance of reflexivity is part of human sciences, whose traditions extends back to the origins of social science research in the middle of the nineteenth century (Gilgun 2010).

5.5.3 Types of reflexivity

Various researchers have suggested different types of reflexivity. For instance, May (1998 cited in Wagner, 2003) specified endogenous and referential reflexivity and Wilkinson (1988, cited in Wagner, 2003, p. 101) identified personal, functional, and disciplinary reflexivity. These types are described in table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3 Types of reflexivity

Types of reflexivity	Description
Endogenous	This is the examination of the process by which communities constitute their social reality. It may refer to a community under study and or it can refer to the research community itself.
Referential	This refers to the study of the relations between the person who engages in the research and the person or groups who are the focus of that research.
Personal	In this type, the researchers' work is often an expression of the own values and interests; the topic of the study that researchers choose is often a reflection of something that concerns them personally. Thus, the focus is on researchers and the way they influence the research process.
Functional	This examines how the choice of methods and the way data is interpreted is shaped by who the researchers are as individuals. It also refers to how the choice of methods influence the knowledge researchers construct when doing research. A continuous analysis of the practice and process of research is important for revealing the research' assumptions, values and biases.
Disciplinary	This refers to the self-awareness of the nature of the discipline and the influence of the form it takes on the generation of knowledge and methods of inquiry.

The types of reflexivity described above suggest that there are two parties involved in the research process, namely: 'Researchers with their own identity, disciplinary characteristics and methodological preferences and the researched who contribute to and reflect on their own life-worlds' (Wagner, 2003, p. 101). In the context of this study the two types of reflexivity that appear to be applicable are endogenous and personal. Endogenous reflexivity is useful in the consideration of the choice of the communities of Mamelodi and Atteridgeville in Pretoria/ Tshwane. The two townships were identified because of their social reality and challenges in terms of foster parenting. The examples drawn are typical of the kinds of foster parents in black communities.

The second type of reflexivity is the personal one. In this instance the researcher was influenced by her own personal experience of fostering an orphaned adolescent a few years prior to the study. The successes and the challenges that the researcher experienced generated interest to explore further the successes and the challenges that other foster mothers in the black communities experienced. The study was intended to reflect on the researcher's experience and determine the extent to which these experiences relate to similar contexts.

5.6 The role of the researcher in constructing the research process

Researchers are reflexive when they are aware of the multiple influences they have on the research process and how the research process affects them (Gilgun 2010). In Gilgun's view, researchers become reflexive in three general areas:

(i) The topics they wish to investigate, thus accounting for the personal and professional meanings their topics have for them;

(ii) the perspectives and experiences of the people with whom they wish to do the research. This includes the participants/informants/subjects as well as research partners who have a stake in the research, such as funders and agencies/settings in which the research takes place; and

(iii) the audiences to whom the research findings will be directed. In other words, researchers write to specific audiences, presenting ideas and evidence for ideas in language that audiences can understand.

It is imperative to account for all the three areas as this will enhance the quality of both the process and the outcome of the research. Being reflexive in these areas can increase the researcher's accountability not only to the participant, but to other audiences such as practitioners who may apply findings to the lives of living human beings. It can also add to the integrity of the research as researchers will be less likely to impose their perspective on the accounts and actions of

research informants (Gilgun, 2010). Gilgun advises researchers to include only those parts of reflexivity that add to the understanding of the research processes, findings, and applications.

Gilgun also notes that researchers can account for reflexivity in several ways and at different points in the research process: (a) before and during the design process; (b) during the implementation process; (c) while conducting the analysis; (d) during the write-up; (e) in the course of dissemination; (f) and while applying findings to practice, teaching, and other research projects. Throughout the research process, the researcher wrote, reflected upon, and discussed what was going on for her and how what she was doing could affect the research participants, the nature and quality of the data, and how findings would be presented.

The qualitative analyst is reflective of her or his own voice and perspective (Patton, 2005). Therefore a credible voice conveys authenticity and trustworthiness; complete objectivity being impossible and pure subjectivity undermining credibility. The researcher's focus becomes balanced, understanding and depicting the world authentically in all its complexity while being self-analytical, politically aware, and reflective in consciousness. This awareness comes to the fore during analysis and reporting.

Wagner (2003, p. 99) asserts that "researchers continuously monitor the progress of the research and make modifications where necessary or report on their awareness of the role that subjectivity has played in that particular study". In this way, the audience's understanding of how the researcher reached understanding of the phenomenon is obtained.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher had to familiarize herself with the phenomenon of fostering in the townships. This meant that the researcher had to understand the policies and the policy-making processes related to foster parenting. Contacts were subsequently made with the Republic of South Africa (RSA) Department of Social Development to explore these processes and

obtain copies of policies. There was also a need to make contact with the social workers for purposes of identifying foster mothers who met the criteria of the study.

An in-depth literature study was crucial so that the researcher could gain the necessary knowledge for the study. The researcher had to identify the relevant method for the study which was qualitative in nature. The researcher's role also entailed analyzing and interpreting the data as well as integrating the information obtained from the study. For this purpose, the researcher consulted with her supervisor as often as possible and adhered to the basic standards and criteria of credibility.

The researcher also had to do self-reflexivity, and reflexivity about the respondents as well as the audience (Patton, 2005). Reflexivity about the self included the following questions (see Table 5.4):

Table 5.4 Reflexivity about the researcher, respondents, and the audience.

Self-reflexivity	Reflexivity about the respondents	Reflexivity about the audience
1. What do I know?	How do those studied know what they know?	How do those who receive my findings make sense of what I give them?
2. How do I know what I know?	What shapes and has shaped their world view?	What perspective do they bring to the findings I offer?
3. What shapes and has shaped my perspective?	How do they perceive the researcher?	How do they perceive me?
4. How have my perceptions and background affected the data?		How do I perceive them?
5. How do I perceive those I have studied?		How do these perceptions affect what I report and how I report?
6. With what voice do I share my perspective?		

Rephrasing Creswell's (2014) contention of reflexivity, the researcher reflected on her role in the study and her personal background as well as her experiences of having been a fostered an

adolescent herself. The researcher's experience influenced her to suggest the current topic, the themes to some extent and the meaning ascribed to the data. 'This aspect of the method is more than merely advancing biases and values in the study, but how the background of the researchers actually may shape the direction of the study' (Creswell, 2014, p. 186). The researcher's role was therefore, to decide on the research topic, what questions to ask, how to go about asking those questions, who will be approached for answers and what will be done with the answers. This clearly indicates that self-awareness, even a certain degree of self-analysis, forms part of qualitative inquiry.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the data analysis which was obtained through semi-structured interviews and Thematic Network Analysis. Finally, the chapter closed with information on how validity, credibility, and reliability were achieved in the data through the research process and also discussed the concept of reflexivity in the qualitative research process. The next chapter will present the results and interpretation of data.

Chapter 6

Results and Interpretation of Data

6.1 Introduction

Data was collected from twenty foster mothers aged between 25 and 83, using individual semi-structured interviews. The verbal data was transcribed to provide textual data for purposes of analysis. The data from this study offers insight into the experiences of foster mothers who were at the time of the interviews fostering adolescents. The analytical process yielded four core themes related to motivation for fostering the adolescents, the challenges experienced and coping strategies employed during the fostering period.

In this chapter, a summary of the stories of the respondents is given, highlighting important biographical details of each foster mother and the core themes that emerged from her experiences. The biographical data of the foster mothers is presented in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Biographical Data of Foster Mothers

Participant	Foster mother's age	Marital status	Educational level	Em... status	...ing fostering	...of fostering	Biological children number, gender, age	Number & age(s) of foster child/ren	Gender of foster child/ren	Grade of foster child/ren
1.	37	Traditional (married)	Diploma	Unemployed	Yes	6 years	2: boys, 2 &12	Four :12, 18,21 & 23	Boy & girl (adolescents)	Grade 5, & 18 year old is not at school
2.	83	Widow	None	Pensioner	No	6 years	2: married	2: 19 & 12	Boy & girl,	Boy completed matric, girl in Grade 7
3.	75	Widow	None	Pensioner	No	4 years	Boy: married	1: 18	Girl	Grade 11
4.	25	Single	Diploma	Intern	Yes	13 years	1: Girl, 4	1: 17	Girl	Grade 10
5.	59	Married	Form 2 (Grade 9)	Unemployed	No	10 years	1: Girl, 25	2: 17 & 22	Girls	Grade 11
6.	81	Widow	Standard 6 (Grade 8)	Pensioner	No	13 years	1:Boy; 2 Girls (all married)	2: 16 & 17	Girl & boy	Grades 9 & 10
7.	61	Married	Standard 3 (Grade 5)	Pensioner	No	6 years	1: Girl, independent	2: 12 & 15	Girl & boy	Grades 5 & 8
8.	28	Single	Grade 12	Employed-contracts	Yes	3 years	2: Boy 6 & Girl 7	2: 13 & 17 years	Girls	Grades 7 & 11
9.	53	Single	Grade 11	Piece-jobs	Yes	6 years	1:Boy, 17	3: 17, 20 &22	Boy, boy, & girl	Grade 11 adolescent
10.	55	Married	None	Employed-contracts	Yes	10 years	1: Boy-married	1: 17	Boy	College
11.	54	Single	College	Unemployed	Yes	13 years	1: Boy-adult	2: 12 & 17	Boy & girl	Grades 6 & 9
12.	45	Married	Grade 12	Unemployed	Yes	11-12 years	None	1: 16	Girl	Grade 10
13.	66	Married	Standard 2	Pensioner	Yes	1 year	1: Boy, 23	1: 17	Girl	Grade 10
14.	70	Divorced	Standard 3	Pensioner	Yes	9 years	1: girl-adult	1: 17	Boy	Grade 9
15.	76	Widow	Standard 6	Pensioner	Yes	14 years	1: boy-deceased	1: 17	Boy	Special school
16.	58	Married	Standard 5	Unemployed-heart problems	Yes	8 years	5: Boys-3, Girls-2 doesn't know the ages	1: doesn't know the age	Girl	Grade 10
17.	55	Single	Standard 6 (Grade 8)	Unemployed	Yes	7 years	1: Girl, 32	1: 15	Girl	Grade 8
18.	42	Single	Grade 12	Unemployed	Yes	1 year	2: Girls, 14 & 21	2: 17 & 22	Boys	Grade 9-adolescent

| 19. | 41 | Married | Form 2 (Grade 9) | Unemployed | Yes | 11 years | None | 2: 15 & 23 | Boy & girl | Form 2 (grade 9)- adolescent |
| 20. | 42 | Single | Matric | Employed | Yes | 5 years | 1: Boy 18 | 1: 12 | Girl | Standard 4 (grade 6) |

Swartz (2004, p. 571) notes that research has shown that a significant number of foster mothers are single and come from poor or working-class backgrounds. In this study, seven foster mothers were single, eight were married, four were widowed and one divorced.

6.2 Core themes

The themes extracted across all respondents' narratives were systematized and described by way of four thematic networks, each consisting of one core or global theme, as well as a number of organizing and basic themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The themes that were identified were extracted from coded text segments. The researcher went through the text segments in each code and extracted salient, common or significant themes in the coded text segment. The researcher then refined the themes by going through the selected themes to check if they were specific enough to be discrete and broad enough to encapsulate a set of ideas contained in numerous text segments. By so doing, the researcher was reducing the data to a more manageable set of significant themes that succinctly summarizes the text (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The four core thematic networks were captured in Figure 6.1 below: (1) crisis, (2) structure, (3) relationships, and (4) resilience and spirituality.
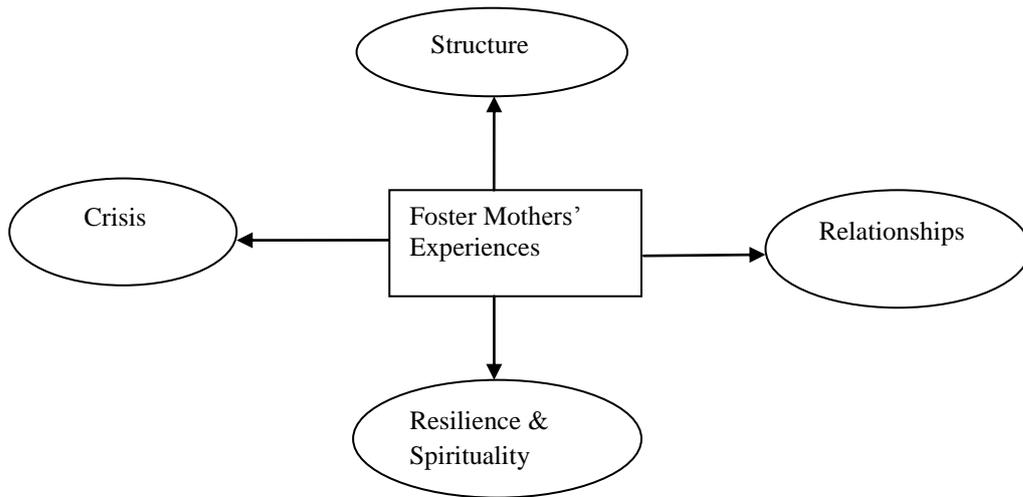
Figure 6.1 Core Themes.

The core themes will be illustrated and explained together with their organizing as well as basic themes below. The first of these is 'Crisis' as a core theme:
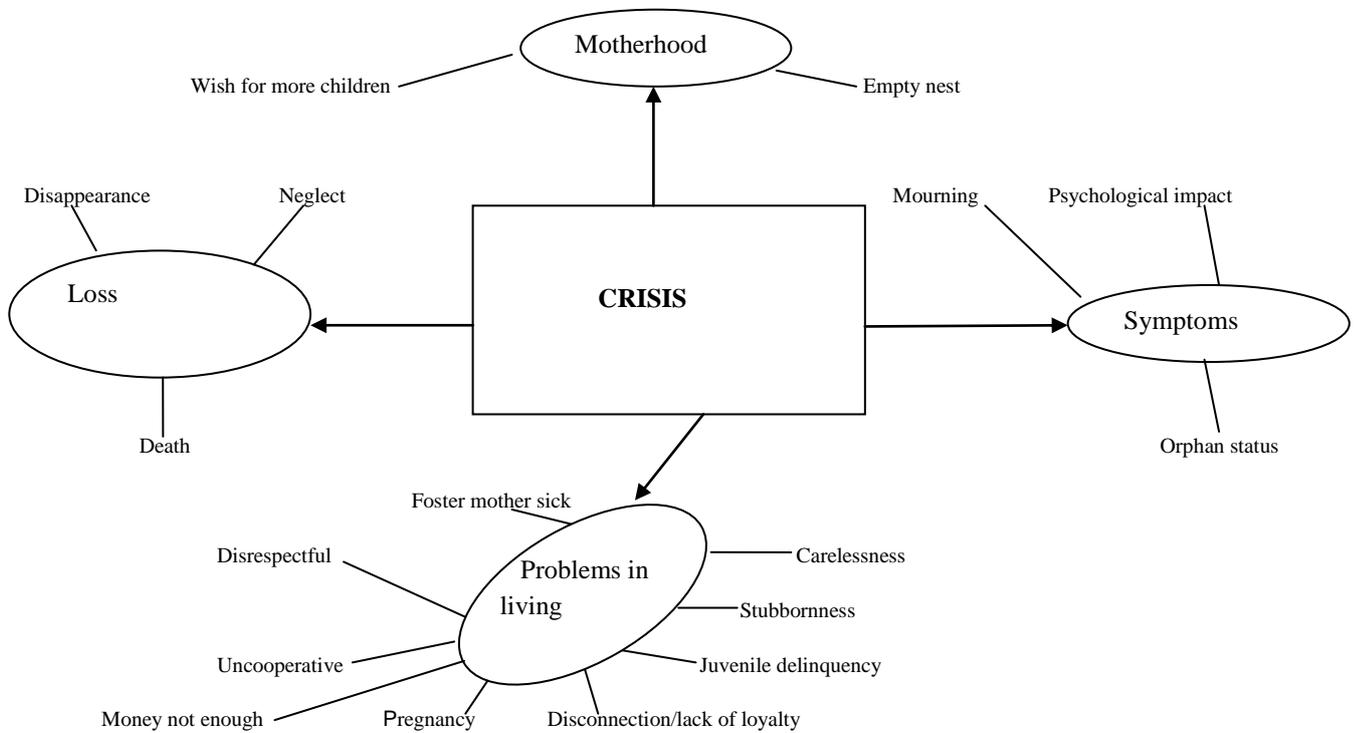

Figure 6.2 Crisis as core theme.

6.2.1 Crisis

When respondents were asked about what motivated them to foster the adolescents, most of them indicated that the children lost their parent/s through death. Most foster mothers were pensioners looking after their grandchild/ren. Some foster mothers were the sisters of the foster child/ren. Some were not related to the foster children. In most cases foster mothers indicated that they looked after the children from a very tender age and that children were used to them and they were also used to the children. With some foster mothers, the fathers of the child/ren were not known to them and it would be stressful to look for those fathers to assist financially. The organizing themes included loss, motherhood, symptoms, and problems in living. These, together with their basic themes are discussed below. Most motivating factors mentioned by foster mothers were in line with those of Bandawe and Louw (1997) in that foster parents were fostering because some were not able to have children of their own; some couples wanted to have a child of another sex; some were fostering because they wanted to have more children of their own; some couples were fostering for charity's sake; and some were fostering because their children had grown up and started families of their own.

6.2.1.1 Loss

Loss as an organizing theme encompassed the following basic themes: disappearance, neglect, and death.

Disappearance

In one case, the foster mother indicated that the boy was 'dumped' by his mother, and was taken care of by the foster mother's mom, who was the boy's great grandmother. The foster mother said that the great grandmother could not cope because she was very old, over 93 years old. Seeing that the great grandmother was struggling with the child, the grandmother decided to foster the boy. Although the other grandmother to the boy was alive

(the wife to the foster mother's brother), the foster mother indicated that the wife to her brother liked beer and did not want to take care of the boy. The foster mother stayed with the child from then until the time of the interview. The foster mother indicated that the mother of the child was alive, and was pregnant again with the fifth child. She would come and go, not taking care of her own children. The other children were taking care of themselves at their great-grandmother's house. The foster mother indicated that she would tell the interviewer the full story regarding the biological mother if the interviewer stop recording the interview. This indicated that there were issues that the foster mother regarded as too confidential to be tape recorded.

Respondent 15: Yes, so my mother could not cope because she was old, over 93 years

Respondent 15: Then it was that, the wife to my brother likes beer. She said she does not want a small child. So, she got rid of the child, taking her to my mother.

Death

Most foster children had lost their mother and/or both parents to death. In most cases the mothers were sick before they died. One foster mother indicated that there was no one to look after the little girl in the yard because the mother had passed away, and as such the granny had to foster the little girl. The foster mother was fostering the children of her brother who had passed away and the wife to her brother had also passed away. The foster mother was retired and over 60 years old.

In another instance the foster mother indicated that the children were fostered by the grandmother, but the foster mother had to take over when the grandmother passed away. The other foster mother lost an in-law through death and so left two children as orphans. One of the orphans had a child, but the child had already passed away at the time of the interview.

She was worried as it looked like it was stressful, because their uncle repeatedly would not treat them well.

Respondent 15: The boy was dumped by his mother with my mom, who is his grandmother. My mother could not cope because she was old, over 93 years old. I saw the old lady struggling with the child and I took him because his mother had deserted him. Even today she is there, she is pregnant again. She comes, she goes. She dumped her as I say (meaning that the mother abandoned her own baby boy). Now she is pregnant, the fifth child. I will tell you when you are not recording.

Respondent 7: The parents passed away, they got sick.

Respondent 19: The girl is my sister's child who passed away in 2001.

Neglect

Some children were being fostered because their mother was a drunkard and could not take care of the children. She fell ill and died.

Respondent 1: She was drinking.

The psychological strain might be complicated by the fact that children who are placed in foster care often come from complex and problematic family backgrounds, for example, children who experienced physical and sexual abuse, neglect, and/or the death of parent (Lipscombe et al. 2003).

6.2.1.2 Motherhood

Barren and wish for more children

One foster mother had no children of her own, thus she fostered the children, with whom she had no biological relationship. Another foster mother had one biological child but

wanted to have more children hence, fostering. She was fostering two children, and was happy because she had three children including her biological one.

Respondent 10: I had to take them to stay with, I will see where it ends, as for me, bearing children I failed, I could only bear one child.

She was happy that she had three children with the two that she was fostering. She said she always wanted to have more children.

A 45 year-old foster mother was married but did not have biological children, she was fostering a 12 year old girl. Another foster mother of 41 was married but did not have biological children. She was fostering a boy and a girl.

MacGregor et al. (2006) found that foster parents were fostering because some were not able to have children of their own; some couples wanted to have a child of another sex; some were fostering because they wanted to have more children of their own.

Empty nest

Another foster mother experienced an empty nest, whereby all her children had grown up and married and were working, thus, no longer staying with her. She indicated that her children did not allow the grandchildren to stay with her, and for that reason, she decided to be a foster mother, otherwise she would have had to stay alone.

Respondent 6: I would be staying alone. My children are big and married. They do not allow their children to stay with me.

The results of MacGregor et al. (2006) showed that the most frequent motivations for being foster parents were intrinsic, altruistic motivators, wanting to make a difference in children's lives and a desire to have children in the home. Examples of intrinsic factors are

the 'empty nest' and companionship for the biological child and examples of extrinsic factors would be monetary (supplementing the income).

6.2.1.3 Symptoms

Symptoms included mourning, psychological impact, and orphan status. All these symptoms are explained in the paragraphs below.

Mourning

Foster mothers experienced stress when the foster children were showing symptoms of orphan status, for example, mourning their mother's death or saying that they miss their mother and would go to sit in a corner alone and cry. The foster mother would not know what to do especially if she was the eldest sister taking care of her siblings because she was also missing her mother, and said that they still needed their mother for guidance and love. She indicated that the death of their mother affected the siblings even at the time of the interview. She said that the children still needed their mother, and the foster mother herself still needed her mother. She said it was not easy to forget the mother, and was not possible to do so.

Psychological impact of the biological mother's death on the foster children

For one foster mother, the children were initially under the care of the grandmother, but when she passed away, the foster mother had to look after the children. The children were psychologically affected by their mother's death and were still showing symptoms of this, for example, the girl did not want to go to school, but no psychological assistance had been sought. The foster mother had to take the girl to a prophet in order to make her accept her mother's death. The prophet (church Minister) advised the foster mother to go to the grave of the late mother of the foster child and take some soil to drink in water. The foster mother did

as was directed by the prophet and she indicated that the foster child got well thereafter because she even agreed to go back to school.

Orphan status

One foster mother was concerned about the loneliness of the child and asked what the problem was, but the foster child said there was nothing wrong. The foster mother said that the child was losing weight, and promised to take the child to the clinic after the September examinations.

With regard to psychological well-being, Buehler et al. (2006) claim that successful foster care results in children whose physical, emotional, psychological, intellectual, social, and familial needs are met; and whose growth in these areas is promoted within a safe, secure family environment. Foster families who adequately manage the challenges associated with fostering such that care provision does not diminish the psychological well-being of foster family members or the quality of their interpersonal relationships are regarded as successful families.

In this study, foster mothers took care of the foster children. For physical needs, one foster mother sent the boy who had just come from circumcision to the clinic because he had flu. The foster mother was also careful not to let the foster child go near the dog as she did not want the foster child to become infected by the dog since the foster child was suffering from bronchitis. Another foster mother took the child to the prophet for psychological needs, and another foster mother who discovered that the child was a slow learner, took the child to VISTA where there were psychologists to assist in such matters.

Another foster mother arranged a teacher to assist the foster child with mathematics for intellectual needs. For a secure family environment, one foster mother indicated that she would never leave the foster children alone in the house when she visited her own parents in Maboloka.

The foster mothers' problem solving skills were similar to what Khan et al. (2011) call problem-focused coping as highlighted below. People using problem-focused strategies, try to deal with the cause of the problem. They do this by finding out information about the problem and learning new skills to manage the problem. Problem-focused coping strategies tend to be employed when an individual has determined that a harmful, threatening, or challenging situation is amenable to change (Khan et al. 2011). Thus, the individual who is experiencing stress perceives the stressful situation to be alterable and within his/her capabilities of control. In other words, an individual evaluates a specific situation as changeable or controllable. In brief, it involves confronting the problem and reconstructing it as manageable. This is further divided into three processes: Seeking information and support; involving specific procedures and behaviours; and identifying alternative rewards. Problem-focused strategies may allow an individual greater perceived control over their problem.

6.2.1.4 Problems in living

This organizing theme was divided into the following basic themes: Carelessness; stubbornness; juvenile delinquency; disconnection and lack of loyalty; disrespect; uncooperative attitude; foster mother's sickness, and pregnancy. In some cases, the family situation was difficult in the sense that the grandmother was sick and so the older sibling had to look after the grandmother as well as her own siblings. This is called a 'hierarchical inversion of the family structure'(Gehring, Debry & Smith, 2013, p. 141) The older sibling was the only one working but not getting enough money, so grandmother's pension and the foster grant for the foster children were very helpful to sustain the family to some extent. Some foster mothers were not working and depended on the government to approve the foster grant so that they could get necessities for the children.

Foster mothers' sickness

One foster mother was fostering her daughter's child, the daughter was working but not staying with the mother, only the foster child was staying with the grandmother. When the daughter fell sick she came and stayed with the mother as such the foster child saw her biological mother sick and dying. Another foster mother was suffering from arthritis and would sometimes have to sleep and ask the foster child to assist with house chores.

Another foster mother was a house helper working at different houses at Khayalami after having done contract work for long period, she suffered from knee problems. One foster mother was suffering from high blood pressure and diabetes. Another was having heart problems and had undergone several operations. All these foster mothers were dedicated to taking care of the foster children and ensure that they obtained at least Grade 12.

Respondent 17: Sometimes I have to sleep because of arthritis.

Respondent 5: I am suffering from sugar and high blood.

Respondent 16: I have heart problems.

Respondent 10: The knees don't want.

Money not enough

Some foster mothers indicated that fostering the adolescents was stressful and 'tough' and as such needed perseverance. Sometimes before the foster grant could be approved, the family would have no food and had to ask from neighbours. They also open an account for food at the shops, which they would pay whenever they got the money. The foster grant would sometimes take up to two years being processed. For some families there was no one employed.

One foster mother indicated that the child was attending a German school which was very expensive, as such the foster grant was not enough to cover the needs of the child. The foster mother indicated that R800.00 from government per month at the time of the interviews would not cover the books, uniform, school fees, money for lunch to school, and the clothes the child wanted. The child wanted expensive clothes (labels such as Nike, and Carvela). The foster mother had a challenge because the child did not understand that the money should be mainly used for school and food.

Respondent 11: He wanted expensive clothes and I told her that the money is not enough.

Respondent 5: No one is working.

One foster mother indicated that municipal electricity was very expensive making it difficult for the foster mother to afford the costs without the grant.

Respondent 2: I owed a lot on electricity, and the council told me that he will sort it out, I must pay only a certain amount. That man really helped me. I would get food on account from the shop nearby and pay whenever I have money.

Respondent 15: I just do with mine and his. The money we get is not enough but what shall we do.

Respondent 15: I would not be able to bring him up well without money.

The finding of this study supported Wright and Flynn's (2005, p. 500) research which found that financial issues were also mentioned as negative aspects of adoption by some parents because the state's money was not enough to cater for the needs of the children adopted. Lower-income mothers in Critelli and Schwam's (2010, p. 128) research were found to be struggling economically because they did not receive wages or remuneration for their efforts.

According to Janie and Woodward (2006), when a child is placed, the foster family takes responsibility for feeding and clothing the child, getting the child to school and to appointments, and doing any of the usual things a child's parents or legal guardians might be called upon to do. Foster parents usually receive money for taking in the foster children. They are expected to use the money to buy the child's food, clothing, school supplies, and other incidentals.

Stubbornness

Some foster mothers indicated that stubbornness was a big problem, but would try to reprimand the children, and move forward with them, and talk to them. The children would behave only for that moment and go back to the unacceptable behaviour. One mother indicated that she was the parent, and so if the child doesn't want to stand up to do the chores as requested by the foster mother, she would just say, 'hey, stand up' and the boy will have to listen and stand up because the foster mother would not leave him before he got up to do the chore. It would get tough such that she would tell the biological child to behave like he doesn't see the stubbornness of the foster child. As such the foster mother and the biological child would just persevere, hoping that the foster children will grow, and have their own families.

Respondent 9: I won't leave them until they do the thing.

Respondent 9: I told my child that we must persevere, they will grow.

Respondent 9: Stubbornness, hey that is problematic. But I keep going forward with them.

One foster mother said that it was difficult for her to bring up the foster children though it was not the first time bringing up grand-children. She said children of the 21st

century were different from her own children. The children were demanding labels (expensive clothes) and not focusing on education.

The other foster mother indicated that it was strenuous to look after the foster children, because the grandmother and the mother passed away, she even lost weight but could not abandon the children, but she would just foster them and see where it would end.

Her wish was for the children to get matric (Grade 12) and be knowledgeable. The other challenge was that no one was working in the house and she waited for the foster grant which took eleven years to be approved. She was doing washing for black residents and she was sick and her knees were troubling her. The other challenge was that she would work hard ensuring that the child attended school but at the end of the year the child would say that he passed only to find that he did not pass. The foster mother had to go an extra mile looking for a college for the foster child to register because he was beyond eighteen years of age, not fit for normal curriculum school. The college took him and he did well working with his hands than at a normal curriculum school. The foster mother indicated that she even lost weight, but couldn't abandon them, that they were children. The family was saying take these children to an orphanage.

With the other foster mother, the children's performance would deteriorate unexpectedly, and this would stress the foster mother because the child used to be clever but the school report was indicating something else when the child entered his/her teens. The foster mother was actually shocked that the child's report was a fail. "The child was not studying, there were always things on the ears (ear phones), and chatting on the phone", she said. The foster mother was concerned that the child was not concentrating at school, because she focused on the BIS for the Blackberry phone.

Respondent 5: She would not eat, but rush to get this thing called BI… for Blackberry.

Respondent 10: I pulled hard with him. He goes to school, at the end of the year he will say he has passed, but no report at the end of the year.

Respondent 5: I was shocked the results were not good.

Literature on care work emphasizes that care work differs from other work, because it includes important emotional and altruistic dimensions (McHugh, 2007). Thus, carers are usually motivated by gendered social norms and values and feel morally obliged to provide care, particularly to the family members. Therefore, according to McHugh, many carers found fostering to be more difficult than they had imagined regarding both the foster children and the foster system, requiring good parenting practices, advocacy skills, and assertiveness.

Pregnancy

The other challenge was that the foster child fell pregnant and the foster mother could not cope because she was sick and so had to ask the biological child to assist with most of the chores.

Respondent 9: The girl is pregnant.

The other foster mother said it was very tough once the girl reached the adolescent stage. The girl was going in the night, running after boys. The mother was concerned that the girl would fall pregnant or even contract diseases. The foster mother had to stand and be a parent to her siblings because there was no one the children could cry to. The foster mother experienced challenges because when she tried to discipline the foster child, the foster child would look at her as if she was saying, 'If my mom was alive … the person that we trusted is not taking good care of us, where would we go.'

Lack of loyalty

In another situation, the foster mother got the identity documents for the girl and the girl left the house without saying anything to the foster mother. The foster mother was worried that the other girl would also leave as soon as she got her identity document. Another foster mother also obtained the foster child an identity document in which he refused to use the foster mother's surname, he left forever without saying where he was going.

Respondent 6: These were three children. There is a girl, big trouble. She has an identity document. She left me just like that. I did not want anything from her, she could see I have piece jobs. I said this is not how we work here. She is gone.

Respondent 6: After getting the identity document, he did not use my surname, he departed.

In South Africa, children older than eighteen who no longer attend school do not qualify for foster grants, but can obtain identity documents. This appeared to contribute to the foster children leaving the foster system. So, if the older foster child was not working, the foster mother would struggle with finances. When she reprimanded the children, they would say she was not their mother, and this was a real challenge to her. She was, however, concerned that other foster mothers let the foster children suffer because they get children's money but they are not doing enough to uplift the children. This was showing lack of loyalty on the part of the foster mothers.

In other instances, the foster children would find a way to connect with their biological mothers, as in one situation the foster mother saw a woman coming to her house to fetch her child. The foster mother was distraught, and surprised to see a woman claiming to be the biological mother to the foster child. The woman and the foster child left the house to

go and call the police. The foster mother refused to give up the clothes of the child because that woman had been away, not even buying things for the foster child.

In some cases fostering took place when the child was still very small and so did not know that the mother passed away and for some children, both parents had passed away and the woman taking care of the children was not the biological mother. The older brother was calling the foster mother 'aunt' and the young girl was calling her 'mom'. As she grew older, she was told that the foster mother was actually the 'aunt'. The girl was distraught and confused, but the foster mother said that she had to be told before she could hear it from the streets.

Respondent 12: I agreed with the family that the child must be told about her mother. After I told her, she cried and then asked what must she call me. I said it's up to you. She decided to continue calling me mom. I said it's fine.

Respondent 12: With other people outside we see children suffer, they get children's money, but they are not doing enough to uplift the children.

Bandawe and Louw (1997) found that foster parents did not disclose to the children who their biological parents are and this was also not disclosed to the neighbours because of the fear that they might inform the foster children, and this would upset the development of the foster child. The study found that there was no contact between the biological parents and the foster children.

The finding that children enter fostering at an early age is in line with Janie and Woodward (2006) who found that the foster care population is quite young, about one fourth of all children entering foster care for the first time are infants. Sixty per cent of foster

children are under four years old. Half of all children in foster care live with non-relative foster caregivers, about one-fourth live with relatives, and this number is growing.

In the current study some foster mothers informed the children that they are the foster mothers, but some did not tell the children and so the children found out on their own. That is why one foster mother was surprised to see the woman entering her house saying that she wants her child.

Another foster mother indicated that she could not discipline the child because the child was a big boy and she was scared that he would fight back. Another foster mother said that the child took the phone to school and so when the foster mother noticed, the child wrote a letter telling the foster mother was not her biological mother.

Respondent 18: It is difficult to foster a teenager because sometimes you come across difficult task, they are smoking. If you tell them they tell you that you are not their mother.

Respondent 18: Even at school when they call you to say this child is doing this and this. When you talk to him hey, he is a boy, he even wants to fight with you. Hey, is difficult.

The foster mother indicated that other grandmothers said that they gave the foster children the bank cards because the foster children wanted their cards.

Wright and Flynn's (2005) research on parents who have adopted adolescents found that parents experienced most negative aspects of adoption because of the stress, tension and emotional drain caused by the adolescent's difficult behaviour. The parents even described the adolescents' behaviour as 'exhausting'. To some parents the stress continued even after the adolescent reached adulthood, impacting their physical and emotional aspects of life. A participant in Wright and Flynn's study indicated that at times she wanted to throw the adolescent away because she was too difficult emotionally.

Carelessness and forgetfulness

Some foster mothers indicated that the foster children were careless and lazy. Another foster mother indicated that the foster child was too forgetful at home and at school. She would then shout at the foster child saying he did not study, that he was playful. She said the foster child would say 'but mom, you also forget'.

Respondent 14: His is just forgetfulness at home and at school. He will say mom, we were writing this test, I remembered when it was done.

Another foster mother was fostering three children, one passed away. The other teenager was described as lazy and careless. The foster mother was concerned about the fact that the foster child would go and play until it got dark.

Respondent 15: Is just that he is careless, even if I try to teach him, I don't know, he is lazy. I bought him a bicycle, he will say I am going on a bicycle, I am coming. It will even get dark.

Respondent 8: Hey, when she comes from school she would throw the books, nothing about cooking, or whatever, she wouldn't care. That children must bath, yes it's my children. To help, no, it's me. I would wash, I would say help me with the washing, no she is in the streets. In the night is her.

Uncooperative

The foster mother indicated that it would stress her when the teenagers argue with the foster mother who was their grandmother, but had somehow accepted because she said that the foster children would argue among themselves as well. The foster mother was fostering her sister's children the girl was two years old when fostering started, and was a teenager at the time of the interview. But the foster mother was also fostering the brother who was 25 years old at the time of the interview.

Respondent 11: They argue with me, but also among themselves.

One foster mother was fostering her daughter's child because the mother had passed away, and the father did not support the child when the mother passed away. By the time she was wanted at the court she was still busy with burial arrangements and she could not go to the court. The foster mother was very worried that she even said she doesn't know what she brought up, it was a twelve year-old small girl but would fight the foster mother. The girl was not sleeping at home, she would not cook, nor clean the house. The child would not bath, she smelled, and was sick of diseases not known to the foster mother. The other girl in the house would not even want to sleep with the foster child in the room because the room also smelled even when cleaned. When the foster mother cleaned the room, she would find nappies hard as condensed milk. This made the foster mother very miserable.

Respondent 16: So, this child, I brought up, I don't even know what I brought up. This child even fights me. It's a small girl. She doesn't sleep at home. She does nothing, she doesn't cook, she doesn't clean.

Respondent 16: This child does not bath, she smells, she is in diseases that we don't even know.

Respondent 16: She won't, even the aunt failed. She is difficult. I have a girl at Lotus, she failed, even her daughter passed matric, she can't even come here, that one does not want to see her, she turns and goes back. She met her at Lotus with boys, and just looks at her, passing in front of her, that one just keeps quiet. There's nothing she can do.

Another foster mother was fostering her cousin's child who was first fostered by the foster mother's mother. But the foster mother's mother passed away, and the foster mother was the only child of the initial foster mother. The foster mother indicated that it was difficult

to foster a teenager because sometimes you come across difficult tasks, they would smoke and when she speaks to them, they would say she is not their mother. So the foster mother was not supposed to say anything about their bad behaviour. The foster mother indicated that it was very difficult to look after a teenager, even at school she would be called to be told that the boy was troublesome, she would try talking to him but because it's a boy, he even wanted to fight the foster mother when the foster mother tries to guide him. The other foster mother indicated that the foster child would not assist in anything after school. As such most foster mothers indicated that it was tough to foster adolescents.

Respondent 12: I met challenges, but when I took these children I did take them as my sister's children.

Respondent 8: I had a big challenge with the 17year old, as they grow they get to the stage, hey it's really tough.

Respondent 10: Some challenges are really painful, because even at the police station, they saw us every day.

Respondent 8: Is because I have experienced a lot of things in my life. Because even after my mom passed away, hey, it was tough.

Respondent 8: To foster a foster care child is tough. You don't have to shout, when you shout you confuse her. Is like she says if my mom was alive it wouldn't be like this, she wouldn't be shouting at me.

Respondent 9: It is difficult, bringing up grandchildren. Not only starting now. Now I know how children are like. Older ones to these were also stubborn.

Respondent 14: Other children, their grandmothers tell me that they gave the children the cards because they said they want their cards.

Respondent 14: There is my other in-law, who passed away, she left two orphans. The other one left a grandchild. The other has a child, she finished. But she passed away. The way I saw, it looks like its stress, and time and again their uncle does not treat them well.

In the last scenario, it looked like the foster mother utilized the emotion focused coping which focused on dealing with the negative emotions that are a product of the stressful situation. It is a more emotional response to a situation that is evaluated as threatening, harmful and unchangeable. It is used when the individual who is experiencing stress perceives the stressful situation to be outside of his/her control and has judged that nothing can be done to modify a challenging environment (Khan et al. 2011).

Juvenile delinquency

Another foster mother, the foster child was jailed and this experience made her feel ashamed because even the neighbours knew what was going on in her house. She was hesitant to tell the interviewer the reasons for imprisonment, she promised to say it when no audio recording was done. She said that the foster child was put in prison with criminals. But at the time of the interview the foster child was not in jail probably because he was a minor and would be released to the care of the parents. It looked to be a big problem because the foster mother was emotional when talking about the prison experience.

Respondent 10: Some challenges are really painful, because even at the police station, they saw us every day. They put him at the back with the criminals. Even the neighbours know my issues.

6.2.2 Structure

The next core theme to be discussed was 'structure'. As recommended by Attride-Stirling (2001), the networks were designed to be read clockwise from the left-hand side of the page.
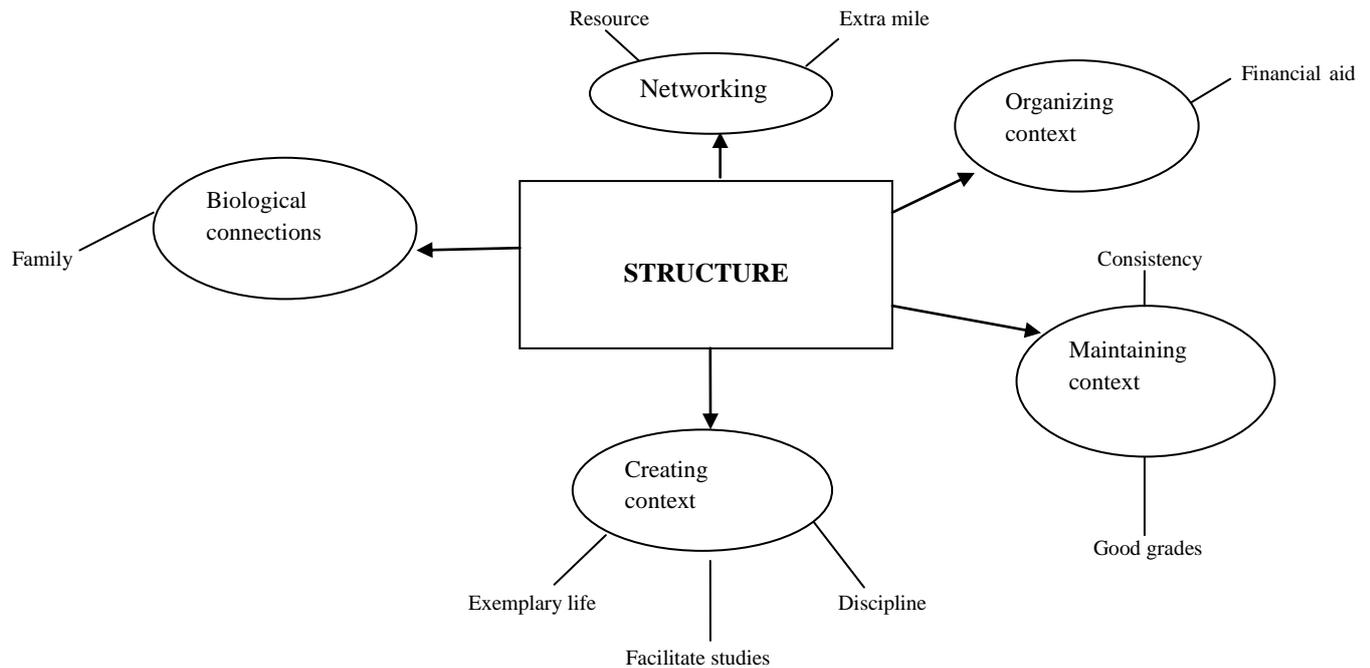
Figure 6.3 Structure.

Structure as a core theme, had the following organizing themes: biological connections; networking; organizing context; maintaining context; and creating context. Each organizing theme had one or more basic themes. The organizing themes were discussed simultaneously with the basic themes.

6.2.2.1 Biological connections

It was clear from the interviews that 95% of the foster mothers had family biological connections with the foster children, resulting in some form of structure. One foster mother was the older sister to the foster mother, one was the younger sister to the biological mother, one was a cousin to the foster mother, one was fostering her brother's children, one or two were fostering their siblings, and most were grandmothers to the children. One indicated that she was retired pensioner above 60 years old but also a pastor of a church.

Family

Grandmothers indicated that:

Respondent 16: It's my daughter's child.

Respondent 17 It's my grandchild.

Respondent 14: It's my child's child.

The other foster mother indicated that the children were not under her care but under the grandmother's care, but she had to look after her siblings because the grandmother passed away.

Respondent 18: That child was fostered by my mother so my mother passed on last year, so I take over.

A 76 year-old widow and pensioner was fostering a child who was left with the grandmother aged 93 years at that time.

A 58 year-old foster mother, married but unemployed was fostering a Grade 10 girl who was her daughter's child.

A 55 year-old single and unemployed mother was fostering her grandchild.

Respondent 17: This is my grandchild and she stays with me.

A 42 year-old, single and unemployed foster mother indicated that she was fostering her cousin's child who was initially fostered by the foster mother's mother but she passed away.

One foster mother was fostering her sister's children. The boy was two when fostering started but was 25 years old at the time of the interview, and the girl was thirteen at the time of the interview.

Respondent 11: The mother was my younger sister.

A 41 year old, married and unemployed mother was fostering a fifteen year-old boy and a 23 year-old girl. The boy was still under the foster grant but not the girl because the grant is approved up to age eighteen. She was biologically connected to the children because they were her sister's children, she was their aunt.

Respondent 19: Is my sister's child. I am the aunt, small mom in our language.

A 42 year-old single and employed foster mother was fostering a twelve year-old girl, who was her younger sister's child.
Respondent 12: The girl is my sister's child who passed away in 2001.

According to Freeman and Nkomo (2006), models of placement in South Africa include: extended families; foster parents; community carers; supported child-headed households; and institutional care.

It is clear from discussion above that most foster mothers were grandmothers of the foster children. This is in line with Janie and Woodward (2006) who noted that many of the kinship caregivers are grandparents or elderly aunts and uncles. However, kinship caregivers, especially grandparents, face a number of challenges, e.g. economic hardships as they take in one or more of their relatives' children. They may not have medical aid and are unable to afford psychological services needed for the children in foster care. They may not know how to raise children in today's world, with the amount of freedoms or lack of them that children experience today. They may not be able to help their foster children with homework.

6.2.2.2 Networking

With regard to networking, foster mothers had to follow a particular procedure as set by the government of South Africa. They had to contact a number of stakeholders involved in the foster parenting process, for example, social workers, police, schools, SASSA, and

children's court. Foster mothers had to go the extra mile finding out what the procedure was, in order to foster the children. They would go to the social workers, where they will be expected to complete the forms and would take those forms to the SASSA. One foster mother also had to go to the police station to make an affidavit indicating that she stayed with the foster child. They also had to go to the children's school to obtain the school report as evidence that the child attended school. The mothers indicated that the children should be of school-going age. When the child is more than eighteen years old, but still attended school, the foster grant would be extended until the child completed schooling. However, if the foster girl fell pregnant, the foster grant would lapse.

Extra mile

One foster mother indicated that she followed the foster parenting procedure of going to the social workers.

Respondent 1: We went to the social workers and took the letter.

She indicated that she did go to the social workers' offices where the interviews for this study were taking place. She filled in the forms and told them that her mother was no longer alive.   Another foster mother said that the grandmother who was fostering the children passed away, so, she had to stand up and go to the social workers to seek help so that she could take care of her siblings.

 Another foster mother said that she met with the social workers and the court to confirm whether she stayed with the foster child, and how she took care of him to ensure that they didn't give each other problems, whether the child was not troubling the foster mother in any way. The social workers would come to the house to check whether the foster child would be welcomed and wrote a report.

Janie and Woodward (2006) support the findings in this study when saying that the foster home must pass an inspection for health and safety and in most states, the parents must attend training sessions covering issues of how to deal with problems.

One foster mother indicated that she went to the court but had not obtained the foster grant yet at the time of the interview.

Respondent 16: Then we went to court, till now.

Another foster mother indicated that she started at the social workers, and then she went to the court but thereafter she went back to the social workers, with court papers. Respondent 20: And then we went back to the social workers, with court papers.

One foster mother could not remember the procedure she had followed, she indicated that she was confused because of the death of her daughter. She however, could recall that she went to the hall, where the interviews for this study were taking place, which was actually at the social workers's offices, and later went to the police station but thereafter, she went back to the social workers.

Another also followed the normal procedure for fostering in which she went to the social workers, but also went to the police station to make an affidavit and certified a copy of the death certificate.

Respondent 1: …to make an affidavit and certified a copy of the death certificate.

She went to the social workers and even to the children's court trying to get the matter in order.

Respondent 15…: … trying to get the matter in order.

The above finding is in line with Khoo and Skoog (2014) who found that some respondents contacted social services themselves to become foster parents, while others had previous contact with social services and eventually had foster children placed in their homes.

The South African National Council for Child and Family Welfare (1987) states that another source of strain for the foster parents results from working with social workers. Thus, being a foster parent does not only include caring for the child, coping with the child's problems, and working with the natural parents but it also includes being subjected to a higher authority who supervises the child. Foster parents live with and care for the child but social workers have control over the future of the child. Foster parents are said to view social workers as a threat and a potential source of criticism. But social workers must obtain valuable information such as the child's adjustment, problems and visiting of natural parents. This suggests that foster parents and social workers are partners in the fostering of the children.

Resources

Most foster mothers indicated that they were able to cope with the challenges of fostering adolescents because of networking with social workers, school, relatives and God. They also indicated that the foster grant, pension grant and the child grant were of assistance to them financially. However, few foster mothers indicated that they did not receive support from relatives.

One foster mother indicated that she attended meetings as arranged by the social workers, and observed that many foster mothers attended the meetings. Another one also said that she would attend meetings as arranged by social workers. They indicated that the social workers meetings were helpful because social workers would give them advice on how to take care of foster children.

Respondent 18: Last we had a meeting they spoke about things like these.

Respondent 17: We do attend meetings.

Respondent 13: I do come when they call me. They say we must exchange advice on how to deal with the children. We help each other. You are able to see that all mothers have burdens, some indicated that their children had babies at age 18. All these need prayer.

Respondent 15: When they call us, I go. The last time I was there, they asked the way you are asking, asking us individually. Some say these children are troublesome, they are silly. I told them, this one is not troublesome, it is just that he is lazy and forgetful.

Successful foster parenting requires the foster parents to participate in case planning, and to assess and share information about children's progress toward goals, and meet with social workers and other professionals to review progress (Critelli & Schwam-Harris, 2010).

Foster mothers indicated that the social workers strongly advised them not to administer corporal punishment to the foster children at any time, but that if foster children are troublesome, they must report to the social workers who would then talk to them. As a result, when the foster children were troublesome, foster mothers reported to the social workers. For example, when they did not sleep at home, when they did not perform well at school and so on.

Respondent 8: They told me straight that these children must not be beaten.

She indicated to the social workers that the foster child was a slow learner and they promised to follow up. The foster mother however, indicated that there had not been meetings for a long time.

Respondent 8: That is, if you have a problem with your child you need to discuss with your social worker to explain that I have a problem of this nature.

This shows that the foster mother was networking with both the social workers and the school which forms part of the structure as a global theme for this discussion.

Respondent 11: She is slow in education, very slow of course.

Respondent 16: I don't know if she will do, because they have been calling her, she said she is coming up to now.

She said that the foster child was not performing well at school, because she was not studying. She told the social workers about the foster child's poor school performance and they addressed her and the child, she was able to see progress because the foster child would show the foster mother the books 'saying Mom, I wrote 1 2 3'.

She indicated that the foster child was not studying enough and that would make her angry. She took her to the social workers but they said the child is playful. The foster mother could not understand this because she had known the child to be a quiet person.

Respondent 16: ... But now the grades have gone down. I don't see a pass this time.

Respondent 18: I did come to the social workers to tell them that the child is repeating the standard for the second time, he is not coping. They gave me a form to fill, saying may be they will help after school.

The foster mother indicated that the foster child was intelligent but failed in the first school term. The foster mother sought help from the social workers and she got it and the foster child did well by getting a distinction in geography.

Respondent 9: She got distinction in geography.

Respondent 4: Social workers assist with uniform or stationery.

Foster mothers indicated that they would receive letters from social workers inviting them for a meeting during which sometimes foster mothers would be separated from foster children to address issues of raising adolescents, while foster children would be addressed separately on behavioural issues. Foster mothers would, during these meetings, share their experiences with other foster mothers on how to cope with the challenges of fostering the adolescents. Another said that she attended the meeting that was arranged by the social workers and other foster mother's experiences were heartbreaking.

The foster mother indicated that she had applied for the foster grant so she went to the social workers, and to the court and while waiting for the approval they were given food parcels which had to be collected by showing the letter from the social workers. The foster mother indicated that social workers used to take the children for outings during the holidays, but for two to three years it was no longer done. She would sometimes get the letter late when events had already happened. However, she however, said that in the previous year of the interview social workers called the children in during the school holidays to assist them with school work and for outings. She said her foster child was able to attend for two days. She nonetheless suspected the social workers probably had too much work to do, or they could reach only a few people and realized late that they did not reach everybody.

Respondent 12: Social workers used to take the children for outings during the holidays. But it's like two to three years not being done.

Khoo and Skoog (2014) found that foster parents had difficulties establishing and contacting social workers. They would have to telephone or email with specific questions as a way of guaranteeing an answer or seek support from other services, for example the child's school or the local child and youth psychiatric unit. However, they also expressed an

understanding of the difficulties faced by social workers who have too much to do and too little time.

> The respondents, however, indicated a desire for more support or guidance in their role as foster parents. Positive support and contact with social workers was described as social workers kept contact and responded immediately when a foster family requested for help. Satisfaction at getting support quickly did not necessarily mean that a problem was solved quickly or even that the social worker could deal with the situation directly, but that their immediate response left a positive feeling in the foster home (p. 263).

One foster mother however, indicated that she had a challenge because when social workers call meetings, the foster mother would be at work because she was employed and as such she would miss out on the advice on raising foster children, as would be discussed in those meetings.

Some foster mothers however, indicated that they had not been called for meetings for a long time. One foster mother suspected that the social workers could be overburdened with work and not able to call the meetings.

Respondent 12: It's long they haven't called us you know, it's long they haven't called us.

Networking also took place with the school where the foster children were attending. The foster mother communicated with the school to obtain a report on the behaviour of the foster child and realized that the foster child was moved to another class because she was stubborn. However, the foster mother indicated that the foster child had never had signs of disobedience because she would always do as requested.

Another foster mother also was networking with the school and even went to fetch the school report but was told to come with the foster child so that the problem could be discussed with both of them. She had reported the child's school performance to the social workers and they asked to see the foster child.

Respondent 12: I've been there last week to take the report. They said mom, there is a problem we want the child to be here so that we explain this matter.

Respondent 16: At school is the same. She doesn't write her tests well.

One foster mother, in trying to resolve the problem of lower performance at school for the foster child, took the foster child to the psychologists at Vista.

Networking was a way of resolving problems using problem-focused strategies that included trying to change something about a stressful relationship with another person or between others in one's social environment (Khan et al. 2011). Strategies that include problem solving skills, changing motivations as well as learning skills so as to deal with the situation may be used. Problem-focused coping includes identifying the problem, exploring possible solutions, considering the options in terms of costs and benefits, selecting between options and finally taking action (Khan et al. 2011). Thus, it is associated with lower levels of emotional distress in response to the stressful events that are perceived as controllable. Conversely, the use of secondary responses such as acceptance, are related to lower distress in response to events that are experienced beyond control.

It appeared that foster mothers used appraisal-focused coping strategy, which involves an attempt to understand the crisis and represents a search for meaning. It occurs when a person modifies the way s/he is thinking. For example, employing denial or distancing oneself from the problem. People may alter the way they think about a problem by altering their goals and values

such as by seeing the humour in a situation. It may be divided into primary (evaluation of the significance of a stressor or threatening event) and secondary appraisal (evaluation of the controllability of the stressor and a person's coping resources) (www.utwente.nl/.../transactional_model_...-, retrieved 6 July 2016). Appraisal- focused coping is appropriate when there is no straightforward solution to the problem. Instead of changing the cause you modify how you think (chicagobehaviouralhealth.wordpress.com-, retrieved 6 July 2016).

One foster mother indicated that she obtained assistance and support from her brother's children who were providing her with wood for fire and money to buy food. She also indicated that the foster children's uncle and his wife also assisted her with money. Another foster mother said that her own mother, who was the grandmother to the foster children, was a resource for coping with the challenges of fostering the adolescents because she would go to her for assistance and advice.

Respondent 4: I go to my mom, she is still alive, she assists me a lot.

Another indicated that she was not working and so she would sell ice cubes to be able to take care of the foster children. But also that the foster child's sister was working even though she was not making enough money, it was helpful as she could buy herself toiletry and relieve the foster mother of that expense. She was also receiving financial assistance from the husband who had broken up the marital relationship.

Respondent 5: I am selling ice blocks. And then that man whom we are no longer together sometimes gives something.

She was able to cope financially because her son and brother were working and they usually helped but she also used her pension money to add to the foster children's grant. Another said that she received support from her sister and the brother.

Respondent 20: My sister use to talk to her and my younger brother as well. My younger brother is her mom's twin, her mother was a twin.

Respondent 3: You know how our money is. Now I say help here and here, uncle helps. Child's money is for school only. I also have societies.

The above finding is in line with Geiger et al. (2014) who said that foster parents could be able to foster adolescents because of receiving stronger informal support network, more training or education.

One foster mother said that her main resources and networking were God and the husband. She thanked God, for having given her an understanding husband.

Respondent 12: I thank God, He gave me, an understanding husband. Not everyone would take your sister's children and bring them up when he does not have his own on this earth. Not everyone. I am saying if your partner supports you, it's very lucky. When you get to the house you won't even notice that he is not the father of those children. The support he has given me, even now when I am not working is great support. Actually we are all looking up to him, if there is shortage of anything at home. Even when I feel stress, he says these are our children. Is just that people are not perfect but I would give him ninety eight per cent.

Wright and Flynn, (2005) argue that a decision to foster, for some parents, was accompanied by fears that the marriage will fall apart, while others literally lost friends, thus resulting in strain to the foster parents. In the current study the foster mother was surprised of the support she received from her husband.

Successful foster parenting involves communicating and cooperating with workers from the agency with whom the child is affiliated (Buehler et al. 2006). A good worker-foster parent relationship is a strong correlate of placement stability. Foster parents also might need to work in

partnership with judges, therapists, teachers, and birth parents. This kind of teamwork requires good communication and problem-solving skills, as well as a strong commitment to the partnership model. Clearly in this study, foster mothers were networking with all the relevant stakeholders and that made them cope with the challenges of raising foster children.

6.2.2.3 Organizing context

Financial aid

Foster mothers had to go an extra mile to find out what the procedure was in order to obtain the foster grant. The foster grant was an amount given to foster mothers to assist them in taking care of the foster children, which increased every year in April. There was however, a period of waiting for foster mothers to receive the child's grant. To some foster mothers it took as long as eleven years to obtain the grant but to some it took only six months. Some foster mothers believed that it depended on the efficiency of the social workers.

Respondent 4: The foster grant increases each year, by April of course.

Respondent 4: It depends on the flexibility of the social worker. How is she active in investigating the process and proceeding with the paperwork.

The foster grant was regarded as a form of financial relief to foster mothers as soon as approval was granted for them to receive the grant because it made it possible for foster mothers to buy food and clothes for the foster children. Foster mothers however, indicated that one had to be patient while waiting for the grant. But, at the same time constantly follow up with the social workers.

Respondent 4: Because if one does not make a follow up, the case will take even much longer.

The foster mother said that the grant would lapse if the social workers report indicated that the foster child was found to be neglected by the foster mother. But the foster mother was concerned that some social workers do not remind foster mothers to renew the foster mothering agreement when the foster child was eighteen years old but still attending school.

Respondent 4: If they feel that the child is not attending school anymore, or the child is pregnant. You won't get the money anymore. And if the child is still at a bad situation.

Respondent 4: Sometimes you forget to sign before the grant can lapse, then the social worker will just close the grant and the procedure is a long process.

A 60 year-old pensioner indicated that she was coping because of the pension fund and the foster grant. She indicated that the foster grant did not take long to be approved.

To another foster mother the processing procedure for the grant took two years. Before the grant could be approved, she had to use her children's grant to take care of the foster children. For another foster mother, it took her two days to finalise the foster mothering process. For yet another foster mother it took eleven years for the foster grant to be approved. The other one indicated that the process took three to four months before she could receive the grant.

Respondent 17: It took two years. Maybe we started getting the money around 2008.

Respondent 15: It took about two to three years, because they have just responded.

Respondent 10: But it took about eleven years.

Respondent 4: At first by 2000, it took maybe five to six months. Because you, the foster mother, you must go to the social worker now and now, to ask how far is the process coming. Because if you don't go, it will take long, long.

It was around May when they went to apply for the grant. She said, it did not take long because the foster child was already receiving a child grant, it was done in two months. The foster mother said that the foster child was staying with the foster mother's mom at Maboloka. Therefore the social workers said it would not be possible to receive the grant where she was staying, but rather where the foster mother was staying. For this reason, the foster grant approval took long because the mother passed away seven years prior to the interviews and the foster mother's mother passed away a month before the interviews. She did not have enough money to take care of the foster child.

Respondent 14: I just do with mine and his. The money we get is not enough but what shall we do? In some cases I ask from his aunt who has just got a job. And you see she has a husband, you can't just be troubling her. She is able to help here and there, even when I say, I have shortage.

The foster mother would take accounts for the foster child and pay, adding with her pension grant. She said, social workers had advised her to save something for the boy. Therefore she would sometimes put away R200.00 to be able to give him when need arise. She felt that it would haunt her if she used the child's money for her own things.

Respondent 14: You see, what will you say you have done with the child's money, if you don't save anything.

One pensioner estimated that it must have taken her two years for the foster grant to be approved. She was receiving R800.00 a month at the time of the interview.

Respondent 15: I would not be able to bring him up well without money … It took me almost two years. I would go and even cry. I struggled, my heart was pained.

One indicated that it took her eight months, before she could receive the foster grant.

Respondent 18: But it takes long, eight months, before they can give me the money.

Some foster mothers indicated that before the grant was approved, they were given groceries. They indicated that the social workers were very helpful and the foster grant approval did not take long.

Respondent 19: Before they helped me, there were small projects, that gave us groceries before we could get the grant. They really helped, we work well with them. It did not take long. It looks like I stayed for three months.

Respondent 11: I got it in 2007, but before I got the pay, we were given some food parcels with the letter from social workers.

Respondent 3: Even now the social workers still look after her, they put her money in my pension.

Respondent 3: They did not trouble us, they did not waste our time.

6.2.2.4 Maintaining context

Consistency

Some foster mothers indicated that they fostered the children from a very early age and saw them change as they go through the adolescent stage. This was part of consistency in the developmental phase of any individual. Some had hope that the children will change for the better after passing the adolescent stage because nothing stays forever.

One foster mother was fostering her brother's children since when they were attending crèche and moved to primary school and were at high school by the time of the interviews. She got them identity documents when they turned eighteen as it is the

requirement in South Africa for children to have obtained identity documents at eighteen years of age.

Another foster mother indicated that the eldest foster child was seventeen years old but she was not worried by the behaviour because the foster mother herself, was once an adolescent.

Respondent 11: The eldest is 17, she is in adolescent, and I was once there.

Respondent 31: I try to talk to her, if mistake happens, is the stage, we also gone through.

Respondent 19: Once they have reached the stage they are troublesome, but while they are young, oh, they are just kids.

Respondent 19: Yes, you can see that he is a child. But when he gets to the stage, he is troublesome.

Respondent 19: But they are troublesome, these foster children. Once they have reached the stage they are troublesome, but while they are young, oh, they are just kids.

The finding upholds the findings of Lopez et al. (2015) in stating that hope is about being optimistic, future-mindedness, future orientation. It is about expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it, believing that a good future is something that can be brought about. Feldman and Kubota (2012 cited in Plante 2012) support the findings in indicating that hope is a virtue that improves people's lives in the absence as well as in the presence of a problem.

Ong et al. (2006) in their study of hope as a source of resilience in later adulthood, found that high-hope individuals showed diminished stress reactivity and more effective emotional recovery. In other words, hope plays a crucial role in moderating the stressful life

events. Furthermore, hope is directly related to adjustment, psychological health and well-being, both intra and inter-personally (Ong et al. (2006).

Good grades

One foster mother said that it was still dark for the thirteen year-old, meaning that the girl was not troublesome with things like running after boys. But that the girl was focused on her studies because even the school never complained about the performance of the foster child. She said that the foster child was intelligent and loved school. Another foster mother also indicated that her foster child was not troublesome at school, and was performing well.

Respondent 15: Even at school, there was no complaint.

Respondent 15: She was intelligent.

Respondent 15: She is not troublesome. She loves school. She passes well at school.

One foster mother was concerned that the school the child was attending was far from home and very expensive. She was however, happy with the school performance of the child and that the child was first class and she loved school. She said that the school had never called her with complaints about the child.

Respondent 15: No, the school doesn't complain. She is first class.

This core theme covered basic themes such as discipline, assisting with studies, and being or living an exemplary life/ leading by example, to the foster child thereby, securing context and aiding development of the foster children. Foster mothers facilitated schooling and development of the fostered adolescents in different ways. All foster mothers prioritized schooling. As such, they encouraged the foster children to go back to school, promising the necessary support in the foster children's school matters.

6.2.2.5 Creating context

Facilitate studies

One foster mother said she would not take the foster child to a day school but rather to an adult school so that the foster child could get the necessary attention because she was a slow learner and needed more encouragement from the teachers. The other reason was that the foster child was already eighteen years old. In the South African education system, the child must have completed high school by age eighteen. If not, other arrangements should be made. The foster mother was keen to take the foster child to school because she wanted the foster child to be able to take care of herself in future, because she (foster mother) did not know where she will end up, thus facilitating autonomy on the part of the foster child.

Respondent 1: I will not take her to a day school but to an adult school so that she can get the necessary attention.

Respondent 1: …because she must help herself as time goes. Because I don't know where am I going to end up.

One foster mother was prepared to spend R250.00 for school trips, as a way of facilitating schooling and she indicated that the foster child loved school. The foster mother believed she had a role to play in taking care of the foster child but said that perseverance was crucial when dealing with adolescents.

Respondent 3: I am even prepared to spend R250.00 for school trips.

The foster mother indicated that the teacher had requested her to assist the young girl with mathematics, because she was struggling. The foster mother was happy with the young girl's behaviour in general, and said that the foster child loved school. The foster mother sought help because she did not want the foster children to be uneducated like her.

Respondent 12: Now, I tried to get somebody to help her with Maths Lit. The teacher is there, this lady is renting at home. I said this is an opportunity in the yard. Now that I have been telling you from January, and you failed this term.

She said that foster mothering needed perseverance. The foster mother emphasised the fact that they wanted a future for the foster children, she was trying to gather the children together so that they can have a future and to ensure that they go to school,

Respondent 19: I am fostering, trying to gather them together so that they can have a future. That they go to school, they must attend school.

Analysis of national data reinforces the assertion that foster children are vulnerable to poor academic outcomes (Buehler et al. 2006). It is therefore necessary that foster mothers ensure that children attend school regularly and receive needed school-related services, and are able to complete high school. Parents should assist the adolescent as and when the need arises, to consider advanced schooling or training. With regard to psychological well-being, it is the view of Buehler et al. (2006) that successful foster care results in children whose physical, emotional, psychological, intellectual, social, and familial needs are met.

Most foster mothers facilitated studies for the foster children because they wanted the foster children to be educated and have a better future than their own. This was in agreement with the Aristotle model because the individual in the Aristotle model, lives a life in which thoughts and ideas about future positive goals also influence the direction of actions here and now. Christopher and Hickinbottom (2008) note that good life or eudaimonia as Aristotle calls it, is the 'state of being well and doing well in being well' (p. 148).

It can be said that foster parents were living a meaningful life, using their strengths or capacities optimally to serve the foster adolescents. *Meaningful life* which is, according to

Seligman (2002), when one uses his or her signature strength and virtues in the service of something much larger than an individual. Seligman's most complex form of good life is called *the full life*. It is a life in which an individual uses his or her capacities in an optional way to serve something larger than himself or herself to give life meaning. This is the same as optimal functioning.

One foster mother said that she had to constantly ask the foster children to give her the school reports, otherwise she would not have received those school reports. That was her way of facilitating learning and she would persistently do so. Another foster mother indicated that the foster child was at a technical college and the lecturers promised to get him a piece job because he knew his school work very well so as to aid autonomy.

One foster mother further indicated that the eldest foster child obtained matric, something that would have not happened had she rejected the children. She however, indicated that the road was not easy, it was tough to raise foster children. She said that the family had suggested that she send the children to an orphanage but she felt sympathetic and took the children in for fostering. She advised the foster child to focus on studies and not on boyfriends but also that the foster child must not worry about age at school but to obtain matric.

Another foster mother emphasized the fact that a child must not have a child, as a way of facilitating studies. Therefore the foster mother suggested that the foster child go to the clinic not that she was promoting sex or prevention but for the child to receive sex education because, she believed, one can take the child to the clinic for prevention but the child may still fall pregnant. So, she advised the foster children to follow the steps of their mother who did not trouble the foster mother but also that the eldest should be an example to the younger siblings.

Respondent 11: So the best thing is to focus on education, and you will then later, get a boyfriend at tertiary.

Another foster mother tried to facilitate autonomy and gave guidance with assistance from the girl's brother who suggested that the girl be taken to the clinic because they cannot guard her, they will prevent the child but can't prevent sickness. At the clinic, the nurses would explain to the foster girl the process of avoiding to fall pregnant. Then it would be up to her whether she will want to prevent or will abstain from sex. The foster mother's fear was that, if the foster child brings a child it will be a problem on top of the other.

Respondent 12: So, last my sister's son, Kagiso (not real name), we are very close, I am staying with him, was saying to her, that we will take you to the clinic because we cannot guard you.

She would monitor the foster children when they work on the internet to ensure that they check only the school work, which she would then print for them at her work. She would not allow foster children to study at school in the evenings because she was concerned about safety of the foster children especially the girls.

Respondent 11: They are free to go onto the internet, you monitor.

Another foster mother advised the child to avoid comparison but to focus on schooling:

Respondent 13: I explain to her, not to compare with other children who have expensive phones. Check your life at home, life is school. You have to get education. Once you are grown up, God having helped you, you will be able to buy your own things. But as for now, you can see how life is.

Discipline

When foster mothers were asked what kind of discipline they administered when the foster children were misbehaving, most foster mothers said that they would sit and talk with the foster children. They said they were advised by the social workers not to use corporal punishment on the children. But even if they were to punish the foster children, foster mothers said that some foster children were big boys and thus afraid that the boys would fight the foster mothers back. Other foster mothers indicated that they kept quiet when the foster children made them angry.

Respondent 5: And these children, I am sick with sugar and high blood, they make me angry, such that I wouldn't know what to do. I would just keep quiet-tu! (Meaning that she would not talk to the foster child at that point in time).

Respondent 8: But I end up not talking. I keep quiet-tu. I want to see what will she do at the end. I was glad when she came and said sister I want to change.

Respondent 6: If he has made me angry I go to the social workers to report even funny actions he makes. I explain everything to Dineo (not real name). They will call him, they first talk to me and then call him in. Even when they don't perform well at school I make a photocopy of the results and show to the social workers. I am sure even my file shows. Last quarter they did not perform well and even now they did not perform well.

Respondent 17: Even at school when they call you to say this child is doing this and this. When you talk to him hey, he is a boy, he even wants to fight you. Hey, is difficult.

Respondent 16: This child even fights me.

The task of foster parents is described as a difficult one by the South African National Council for Child and Family Welfare (1987) because they have to fulfil the role of parents

but without all the rights of parents and with the knowledge that they may lose the child sometime in future. The role of foster parents is therefore seen as demanding, and often with little or no thanks. The tasks include: physical care task of ensuring that the foster child gains physical security in the new home; the emotional task of foster parenting involves not only food and clothing but love and security, they must report to the social workers any behavioural problem they observe from the foster child; social tasks of foster parenting involve helping to establish a positive relationship between the foster child and their own children; educational tasks of foster parenting involve assisting the child to adjust to the new school, informing the principal about the status of the child and the role that they as foster parents will be playing in the foster child's life such as helping with homework, arranging for remedial classes, encouragement to participate in sport; cooperation with the social workers. These would result in effective relationship between the foster mother and the foster child.

The foster parents should accept their limitations and refer any serious problems of the foster child or problems within the family to the social worker because of the foster child's presence. The other task is that of severance from the foster parents. This is the most difficult and feared by foster parents for the fact that they have to return the child to its parents at some stage while they have become attached to the child (p. 90).

Some foster mothers used withholding of food as punishment, they would cook and not give the foster children food in trying to get them to do the house chores they were requested to do. One indicated that she used a belt for the younger children but not for the bigger children. Some foster mothers indicated that the older siblings would assist by talking to the foster children to advise and guide them. For example, a cousin of a foster child was a student at the University of Pretoria and would advise the foster child to focus on her studies.

Respondent 16: She won't, even the aunt failed. She is difficult.

One foster mother indicated that the uncle of the foster child assisted by talking and giving advice to the foster child. Another indicated that the uncle of the foster child would assist with discipline but used corporal punishment which was something that the social workers forbid. At this the foster mother would get angry with the uncle because that was regarded as abuse and the foster child would report the foster mother to the social workers, which would mean that the foster mother was not caring but abusive of the foster child.

Respondent 8: They told me straight that these children must not be beaten. If I have a problem I have to go to the social workers. They will come here or I must take the child to them.

Respondent 8: What angered me most was my brother whom I come after. Problem, my brother cannot talk to the child, he beats her. And that is what the social workers don't want. Respondent 20: But the 12 year-old, I am still trying to, using the belt because he is still young. He must try to respect all the way.

One foster mother indicated that she once held back the food but would not do it any longer because the when she did that, the foster child told her that her own mother would not have done such a thing. Another foster mother said that she would advise foster mothers to be strong to the extent that even when they see a small mistake, they must not wait wanting to see what will happen, but act while there is time, because waiting, will make it too late to do anything about it.

Respondent 1: No, I don't take food. Because, this other day she told me, I don't think that if my mother was here. And then eish!

Some foster mothers believed that it was better to foster the child at a very young age, because they believed that children listen and follow the rules when they are still young than

at an older age. But also that it was easier to discipline a young child than an older one. Another foster mother said that the child should be told what happened to end up being fostered and the child will grow knowing that the foster mother is the parent, and there is no other who will influence him. He won't know where to go when he decides to leave unexpectedly.

Bandawe and Louw (1997) found that foster parents believed it is easier to foster an infant than an older child because the younger child can be trained easily. Some of the foster parents experienced behavioural problems with the children becoming withdrawn and some becoming delinquent. The foster parents who fostered children related to them indicated financial burdens on the usually impoverished families. Regardless of this, the study found that there was no sense of remorse or negative feeling toward the children.

Geiger et al. (2014) also hold that although foster care to an adolescent is very different than caring for an infant, it is equally important. 'The nurturing and supervision of children at any age remains critical to their healthy development. Foster families play an important role in caring for youth during a difficult phase of life... (p. 251)'. Geiger et al. (2014), highlight that there is a need for more families who are willing and able to provide for the needs of teens, because of the important role foster parents can play in the lives of foster youth.

Exemplary life

When the foster mothers were asked about what advice they would give to a prospective foster mother, a foster mother suggested that foster mothers should advise the foster children about a lot of things, but added that foster mothers should be an example to the foster children. She said foster mothers should explain the reality of life to the foster children so that they can make right choices, and be assisted to understand that attending

school will give them better life. She said that she would advise foster children to forget about street things such as, roaming about in the streets of the location after school. She however accepted that it would not be easy for the foster children to avoid street life because of the bad influence of friends.

One foster mother indicated that she would lead by example because she would inform the foster children about her whereabouts, and she did not have boyfriends, as such the foster mother expected the foster child to behave the same as the foster mother. The foster mother even indicated that older men would stop to talk her but she was not interested in the older men because she focused on the foster children, to give them a better future first and that is why she advised the foster children to focus on their studies.

Respondent 8: I say yes, because in most cases I show her my example, not about other people in the streets.

Foster mothers in the current study were fostering to benefit the foster children and not for personal egotism. This finding is supported by Lopez et al. in their definition of altruism. They defined altruism as a behaviour aiming at benefiting another person. It could be motivated by personal egotism, or it can be promoted by 'pure' empathic desire to benefit another person, irrespective of personal gain (Lopez et al. 2015, p. 288). Volunteerism is thought to be a naturally related concept to altruism (Haski-Leventhal, 2009).

Respondents described wanting to care for a child, to do a good deed and, most importantly, to offer a family as motivation for fostering the children (Khoo & Skoog, 2014). These authors note that their respondents more often wanted to support, protect and nurture a child. Respondents also mentioned motives for fostering such as wanting to shape independent, well-functioning citizens.

Successful foster mothering requires that both parties alter their behaviour (Lipscombe et al. 2003). Previous research (e.g. Quinton, Rushton, Dance, & Mayes 1998) suggests that parenting quality is maintained or improved when the carers are rewarded by positive changes in the young person's behaviour. Conversely, where the behaviours are unaffected by the carers' efforts, the ability to continue with strategic approaches to manage behaviour seems to dissipate, in other words, when a parental approach does not bring positive feedback, carers in Quinton and colleagues' research, would lose the momentum to manage the adolescents' behaviour.

One foster mother said that she would advise the prospective foster mother to actually teach the children how to behave; children must not be walking in the streets. The child must be in the yard by 6:00 pm. She said that the foster children should come straight home from school just as she comes home directly after work.

Respondent 17: No, they must actually teach the children of course!

One foster mother indicated that she would have loved to enjoy life by going to parties, but had to reduce taking part in such social activities. She stopped going out with her peers and had to be a parent, and look after the foster children. She said that she had learnt parenthood, was proud of herself, and believed that her parents wherever they were, were proud of her, and so was God.

Respondent 9: I have learnt parenthood. I am proud of what I am. I thank myself and I am sure that God and my parents where they are, they are satisfied, they thank me, they are proud of me.

Respondent 9: It has made me grow a lot because I decrease lot of social things, I am taking part of being a mother.

Caring does have an impact on foster mothers. McHugh (2007), found the emotional and psychological aspects of fostering to have both a positive and negative impact on carers. Regarding the negative, it was stressful and time-consuming to maintain ongoing relationships with both the fostered children and their birth families and also with the carer's own family (Heymann, Earle, Rajaraman, Miller, & Bogen 2007). Actually as Kgomo (2009) suggests, the entire family system is affected by the incorporation of a foster child. Positively, carers grew stronger from their negative experiences and continued to foster with good humour and resolve.

This supports the work of Magyar-Moe (2009) when stating that to flourish is to live optimally and to experience the good things in life such as personal growth, generativity and resilience. It is also supported by (www.learnersdictionary.com) in the folloeing definition: 'A psychological experience is anything in a person's life that changed the way the person looked at him/herself and or the world around him/her'. Experience on the other hand, comprises knowledge of or skill of something or some event gained through involvement in or exposure to that thing or event.

6.2.3 Relationships

The next core theme that was identified was 'relationships'. This core theme had the following organizing themes: Relationship quality; peer pressure; change; hands-on-style and rewards. The organizing themes were further grouped into basic themes. These will be discussed together with their organizing themes. This core theme explored the quality of the relationships between the foster mother and the foster child; the foster child and the biological children of the foster mother; and foster children and their peers.
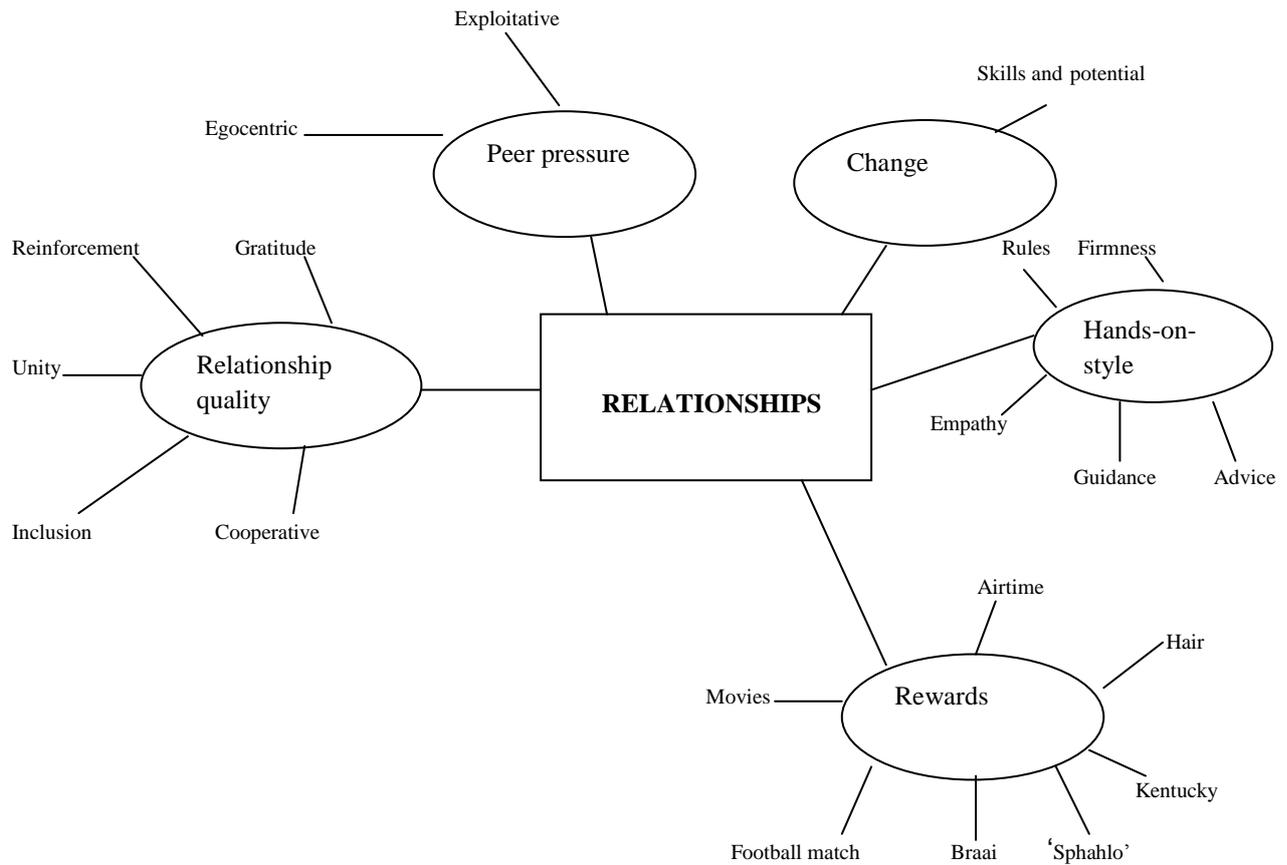
Figure 6.4 Core theme: Relationships.

6.2.3.1 Relationship Quality

Relationship quality comprised the following basic themes: Unity; reinforcement; gratitude; cooperative; and inclusion.

Unity

The foster mothers indicated that the foster children in general did not cause them stress, and that the foster children were not troublesome. The children were good listeners and would carry out the tasks as requested. For example, one boy had to do painting before the rainy season. Another foster mother was happy that the foster child would not come home drunk. She indicated that the foster child loved the foster mother and she also loved him.

Another foster mother said that she would never leave the foster children alone when she went to her parents' home in Maboloka. Another foster mother indicated that the foster child related well with the biological children, and loved them.

Respondent 2: They are not stressing me. He says granny take this and add for food. No, I get satisfied because he does the work I want. Even now he is painting, I said paint before rain comes.

Respondent 6: They are all right, can't leave them alone will never leave them alone. Even when I go home I can't leave them alone here, I go with them they love their foster mother very much. She also loves them. Actually they love me very much.

Respondent 8: But I told myself I am remaining with my siblings. Who will they cry to?

Respondent 9: When we are relaxed, we would talk and laugh. It becomes nice in the house.

Respondent 11: I don't have anger on them, they don't have anger on me.

Respondent 11: I don't have children who love fighting.

Respondent 12: They alternate with the boy. Today this one cleans, tomorrow the other one.

Respondent 20: They relate well, he even loves the brother more.

Reinforcement

As a form of reinforcement, a foster mother indicated that she would never shout at the foster child. Another foster mother said that she had put the foster child in her will to be eligible to own the house when she dies. Another foster mother indicted that she was saving at least R100.00 monthly at the bank for the foster child. Another indicated that she had children of her own but wanted the foster child to be the heir of her property when she dies.

Respondent 2: Even this house is his, at ABSA they said I must do the will.

Respondent 6: Even with money, from the R800.00, you must bank R100.00 for him.

Respondent 19: I have no children of my own, so even for my things he is the heir.

Gratitude

When foster mothers were asked if they ever appreciate it when foster children have done well, all foster mothers indicated that they do appreciate good behaviour and let the foster children know. One foster mother fostered four children, but only two were eligible for receiving the foster grant and for taking part in the study as per the criteria set by the researcher, an eighteen year-old boy and a twelve year-old girl. Being asked what the reaction of the children was when she fostered them, the foster mother indicated that the children were happy, because at least they had someone to look after them. The foster mother added that she was actually doing better than the biological mother of the foster children in taking care of them because she was giving them nice things like Kentucky when the biological mother was giving the children bread and sweet aid.

Respondent 1: I was doing better than their mother. She was drinking. Even the food, their mother was giving them bread and sweet aid. I take them to Kentucky.

When foster mothers were asked about appreciating the good behaviour of the foster children in doing the house chores, all the foster mothers indicated that they do give words of appreciation for good behaviour regarding the house chores. They said that they acknowledged and thanked the children. They would say thank you, to show that they see and accept good work.

Respondent 1: I say thank you, thank you, I appreciate this.

Respondent 3: She takes care of herself, even at school friends are from school, they are well behaved.

Respondent 5: And how I praise her... You would love when she has cleaned, you will think a woman from somewhere has been cleaning.

Respondent 11: I say thank you very much, keep it up!

Respondent 12: I usually tell her, actually she likes hugging, even when she goes to sleep she does good night and kisses.

Respondent 14: You can say my child, thank you. You did the work so and so. That's how I want, you see.

The extractions are examples of character strengths as identified by Lopez et al. (2015). These include kindness, open-mindedness, optimism and gratitude. Lopez et al. (2015) regard appreciation as gratitude: being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen, taking time to express thanks. Parks and Schueller (2014) define gratitude as a feeling that occurs in exchange-based relationships when one person acknowledges receiving a valuable benefit from another.

Clearly much of human life is about giving, receiving, and repayment. In this sense, gratitude, like other social emotions, functions to help regulate relationships, solidifying and strengthening them. Lopez et al. (2015) admit that though they could not locate research relating to psychophysiology and gratitude, research does exist on appreciation.

Robert, Emmons and Mishra (2012) note that gratitude 'occurs in interpersonal exchanges when one person acknowledges receiving a valuable benefit from another' (p. 10).

Cooperative

With regard to cooperation by the foster children, most foster mothers indicated that the foster children were cooperative and respectful. The issues of disrespect and uncooperative behaviour were discussed earlier.

One foster mother indicated that she was happy because the foster child did not run after boys she did not have to look for her not knowing where she was. Another foster mother indicated that a person would love it when the foster child had cleaned. Another foster mother said that there were flowers to be watered and the dog to be fed. So, she would ask the foster child to water the flowers after school. She would also ask the boy to bring a dish for the dog so that the foster mother could pour the food for the dog. She would not let the boy feed the dog because the boy had chest problems and she would not want him to get infected.

Another foster mother was happy that the foster child did the work even though he did it in his own time. One foster mother indicated that the older girl was pregnant and so the boys would help the foster mother with the washing, and prepare for cooking, so she would just finish up the cooking. Another foster mother was happy with the behaviour of the foster child because when money was left on the cupboard, it would still be found there, saying that the foster child would not steal the money. Another foster mother was happy because the foster child would do the house chores even when not requested to do so. Most foster mothers said that to win the foster children and get their respect, there was no shouting at them.

Respondent 1: The eighteen year-old has some respect.

Respondent 2: You see this one is a boy but at least when I talk he calms down.

Respondent 2: No, I don't get to that point of shouting, no.

Respondent 3: Yes, she listens when you say don't do this and this.

Respondent 3: No, we don't have problems. Even with school we don't struggle. She wakes up, baths and get to school.

Inclusion

The other basic theme that was established from the organizing theme of relationship quality was 'inclusion'. It was apparent that foster mothers made it a point that foster children

were welcome and formed part of the family, not being discriminated against during planning of family activities. Foster mothers indicated a number of ways in which they made foster children feel part of the family.

One foster mother suggested that a foster child can be given a bank card to experience working with money, which is what she did. The child would be told how much to withdraw and given a list of items to buy. In that way the foster mother believed that the foster child would be able to learn and to prioritize the items. Another foster mother indicated that time came for her to tell the foster child the truth about her being fostered in order to make her feel that she was part of the family once she had heard the story. Another indicated that she made foster children to be part of the family by involving them in everything she did, for example, selecting the colour of the paint for the house.

Respondent 4: She must feel welcome. What you can do is, once a month you can give her a card, a kere (of course) now she is grown. I would say, take your card and go and withdraw money.

Respondent 4: You are writing a list down, take so much, may be R500.00. Go and buy this and this.

Respondent 12: Then time came that I had to tell her the truth and explain why things are like that.

Respondent 18: I try to include them in everything I do. And I tell them to assist with 1 2 3. They become part. Even when I want to do something in the house, may be to paint, I ask them what colour can we use.

It was clear that adolescents who feel included and supported in a foster family tend to have higher self-esteem (Geiger et al. 2014). The relationships established between the foster parents

and adolescents can demonstrate positive effects on the youth as they recognize the foster parents' support and encouragement prompting feelings of self-worth even as an adult (Munson & McMillen, 2009). Furthermore, Leathers (2006) found that youths' integration into the foster family was shown to prevent disruption and led to more successful placements. Inclusion in decision-making has consistently been identified as important to strengthening social bonds and placements, as well as helping prepare adolescents for future relationships.

According to Geiger et al. (2014) previously fostered youth appreciated foster placements when parents let them play an active role in daily activities, decision-making, and acceptance of responsibility creating an active role in their own development and success.

6.2.3.2 Peer pressure

Peer pressure was revealed as one of the organizing themes for the core theme 'relationships'. It had the following basic themes: egocentric; and exploitative. The egocentric theme included aspects such as laziness; forgetfulness, selfishness; and being playful. With exploitative relations, it included issues regarding bank cards; absenteeism; and sleeping out.

Egocentric

Some foster mothers indicated that peer pressure was so serious such that friends were first in the life of the foster children. Foster children would not care about the family but only about themselves and their friends.

One foster mother indicated that the foster child would be gone with friends in the night when she was supposed to be home. Some foster mothers agreed that there was peer pressure but had accepted that peer pressure was part of life as it was common to adolescents.

Another foster mother complained about the carelessness of the foster child who would after school throw clothes and school bag on the bed and go away with the friends.

Another foster mother indicated that the child was lazy and spent most of the time playing. When the foster mother tried to teach the child to do house chores, the child would show no interest because of laziness. The foster child would go on a bicycle and come home late in the evening. One foster mother agreed that there was peer pressure because foster children would go to parties with friends. Another foster mother said that the child was cooperative but would sometimes seem disillusioned.

Respondent 3: Peer pressure is there, it's the stage of course.

Respondent 4: The age group also has influence, because sometimes they want to go to parties.

Respondent 5: To tell the truth, her friends were first.

Respondent 15: His is just to play. I bought him a bicycle, he will say I am going on a bicycle, I am coming.

Exploitative

Fosters mother indicated that the foster children would demand a bank card because of the influence of the friends. Another indicated the exploitative peer relations to the foster child by the friends because one foster mother said that the foster child would miss school because she had to take the 'sangoma' friend back home before they could reach the school. The other foster mother indicated that the girl was sleeping around and she was worried because she did not even know where the girl was and was wondering whether the girl was at a 'shebeen' (house where liquor is sold) or any unacceptable place.

One foster mother indicated that the boy went to circumcision because of friends and the boy came back sick because they went in winter and he had to be taken to the clinic. Another foster mother indicated that the foster child was bullying other children at school, taking their cell phones and the parents would come to the foster mother's house with the foster child in the car expecting the foster mother to pay for the stolen cell phones. She believed the foster child was doing all that because of the influence from friends as the girl was always with a gang of boys.

Another said that she had to stand on her feet (meaning that she had to make sure that the grant is used well) after withdrawing the money for foster grant because the foster child would want her grant in cash. The foster mother believed that was the influence from friends because when they were at the parents' meeting arranged by social workers, some foster mothers said that when it was month end, the foster children would want the bank cards to withdraw the grant.

Respondent 14: Some foster children demand bank cards.

Respondent 16: That is when I come from getting the grant, I have to stand on my feet, because she wants her money.

Respondent 1: But the teenager, this one who is 18, started sleeping around.

Respondent 6: But the main problem is friends. And they love him. Actually we also grew up like that, there were gangs, and there were bigger ones to us. Now they love him because it is like he is their boss.

Respondent 6: … but the boy, friends make him, he is difficult to control, but I try to get him to listen to me.

Respondent 16: I don't know where this cell belongs. This man would say, I say they took the child's phone, you will buy it.

Even though peers become more important to children as they grow up, families continue to strongly influence children's development during the middle years (Morris, Silk, Steinberg, Myers, & Robinson, 2007). The nature of influence from the peers and parents differ because parents have the psychological maturity and experience. This means that parental influence on children can be seen as significant because they draw on their experience and can differentiate between right and wrong. Children may, to some extent, influence the parents, but most of the influence is from parents to child, even in the middle years, in at least six different ways, namely: Modelling of behaviours; giving rewards and punishments; direct instruction; stating rules; reasoning; and providing materials and settings.

6.2.3.3 Change

Skills and potential

This basic theme was about change for the better on the part of the foster child and indicating that she/he had skills and potential to do good deeds, improve school performance and live a good life.

One foster mother indicated that the boy was playful and school performance had gone down. She reported the poor performance of the foster child to the social workers who spoke to the boy. The foster mother was happy as she observed that the boy was showing some improvement in school performance and in general behaviour because he would listen when the foster mother spoke to him. Another foster mother indicated that she had a big challenge with the seventeen year old because she was an adolescent. She told the girl that the life she was living was not right. She said the girl told her that she wanted to change and to stop going out in the night. She wanted to start a new life, and be a good girl. The foster

mother was happy because the girl had realized that running after boys, will get her nowhere except for making children and catching diseases and she would have no one to look after her when sick. The foster mother was happy that the girl could cook and do the washing, something that the foster child refused to do at the time when she was running after boyfriends. The foster mother was surprised as she never thought the girl would change.

One foster mother said that foster children had anger but the foster mother would talk to the foster child until she/he understands and changes. She said the foster child must be taught to respect every person in the street because a person is a person because of other people ('ubuntu'). Another foster mother indicated that the foster child would avoid doing house chores and would discipline himself because he will not ask for lunch box but only when he had corrected the mistake would he ask for the money from the foster mother.

This thinking supports that of Nyaumwe and Mkabela (2007) who define 'ubuntu' as a 'reciprocal belief that an individual's humanity is expressed through personal relationships with others in a community and in turn other people in the community recognize the individual's humanity' (p. 152). For a detailed description of Ubuntu, see Chapter 2 Paragraph 2.6.2.

Respondent 6: And the boy is trying to change because when I talk he is attentive.

Respondent 8: And she can cook, she can do the washing. Hey, it was tough, I never thought she will change.

Respondent 11: Some have anger but you change her until she understands.

Respondent 18: He knows that he has done wrong. Tomorrow he does the work he was supposed to have done, and then he comes to me to ask for money.

Linley and Joseph (2004) contend that social relationships were concerned with sharing, giving, and taking care of each other. Aristotle therefore argues that individuals have

characteristics that serve to preserve their own welfare and the welfare of others (Linley & Joseph, 2004).

6.2.3.4 Hands-on-style

This organizing theme had the following basic themes: rules; firmness; advice/love; guidance/care; and empathy.

Rules

Most foster mothers emphasized the fact that foster children had to be home between 6:00 and 7:00 pm. in the evening. Some only said that the children know what time they should be home. One said that the foster child must come home directly from school. Another said that the foster child can be in the streets but be home at a set time. Another said that the child must not be walking about in the night. The other foster mother said that the child must be home at 6:00 pm. because she is home herself at that time and when she is not home they knew where she was.

Respondent 1: Must be home by 8:00, actually by around 6:30 to 7:00, he must be home.

Respondent 11: I tell all of them that 6:00, in the yard. Because even myself, I am in the yard. If I am not in the yard, they know where I am. I never go without telling them.

Respondent 17: No, not that she musn't go to the streets but at a certain time she must be home.

Geiger et al. (2014) identified four strategies common to parents fostering adolescents: (1) setting and maintaining boundaries; (2) providing higher rates of supervision; (3) responding with sensitivity to the youth's developmental age; and (4) extending warmth and acceptance toward the youth.

Firmness

With this basic theme, it was clear that most foster mothers maintained firmness in guiding the foster children. One foster mother for example indicated that she could still use the belt for the twelve year-old but not for the older siblings as she was scared they would fight back. Another said that her brother would discipline the child by beating the child up, yet that was something that the social workers discouraged. At the same time, the foster mother said that the child must be corrected immediately after doing something wrong, the foster mother should not wait until the mistake is big and the child got out of hand. Another foster mother said that foster mothers must stand firm and not allow girls to be women in the house and boys to be men in the house. She said that the foster mother must be in control of the children and not be controlled by the children.

One foster mother indicated her firmness in saying that she would deal with the foster child's stubbornness by cooking the food and then she would say 'no eating'. Another said she did not allow liquor in her house, she told the foster children that no one must drink liquor because she also did not drink. She also would not allow foster children to go with boyfriends or sleep out. Another one did not allow a girl to put on a very short skirt even if the child would say she has pantyhose on, she would not allow that because she believed that people must not see the under clothes and the worst signs of menstruation when the girl bends her knees.

Respondent 1: But the twelve year-old, I am still trying to, using the belt.

Respondent 8: Problem, my brother cannot talk to the child, he beats her.

Respondent 8: Small mistake, don't wait to see what will happen. Act while there is time.

Respondent 10: I get strict and say when I come you must have done this work.

This basic theme resonated with the findings of Glover and Mullineaux (2010) in saying that parents influence children by praising some of their behaviours and disapproving others. Sometimes parents tell their children how to act, for instance 'come straight home from school without talking to strangers'. Sometimes parents create rules such as 'in this family, everyone washes his or her own dishes'.

Advice/love

The foster mothers tried to advise the foster children and show love to them. One foster mother advised the foster child not to sleep out because it was not good since the child was going to school in the morning, but the foster child would not stop. The foster mother however, continued to call the child, sit and advised her until the child listened and understood the foster mother. Another foster mother believed that she must be good to the foster child and be exemplary so that the child could see and be good also. In that way the child would end up loving and understanding the foster mother. Another foster mother said that she would advise the prospective foster mother to love the foster child as if it was her own child. One foster mother would advise the foster child about friends, indicating that friends would not help when things go wrong, they would just laugh at the foster child. So the foster mother would tell the friends not to come to her house anymore.

Respondent 1: Just call the child, sit down and try to advise her.

Respondent 1: Try to study the children, what kind of a child she or he is. … try to compromise, to sacrifice and then … and love that child as is hers or his.

Respondent 4: Be good to the foster child.

Respondent 4: Make the child to love or understand the foster mother.

The above statements are supported by Vathsalya Charitable Trust, (2003) when stating that the most effective way to care for the wide variety of foster children's needs usually involves a combination of skills. These include good parenting skills and firm kindness, coupled with the skills gained in the foster parent training. It is always heart-warming to provide a child with love and security at a time when s/he needs it most.

Guidance/care

Foster mothers would guide the foster children and show that they care for them. One foster mother indicated that the prospective foster mother must not shout at the child but guide the child properly. She said shouting at the foster child is not the same as shouting at her own child, because it would seem as if she is discriminating against the foster child. Most of them indicated that they sit and talk with the foster children to guide them and show that they care for them. One foster mother indicated that there were no secrets between the children and herself, she would tell them everything about life.

One indicated that she had to do the work of picking up papers to ensure that the children were taken care of so that they should not suffer and be seen that they don't have parents. Another foster mother indicated that the sister to the foster child assisted in providing guidance to the foster child trying to ensure that the foster child does not get to struggle in life as it was the case with her sister. The foster mother told the girl to be very careful of boys because they pretend to love the girl when they actually don't but want sex only. She indicated that the girl was still young and the mind still weak so she would guide her so that she is not led astray by boys and get infected by AIDS.

The foster mother said she would advise the prospective foster mother not to promise the foster child things which she cannot afford but to rather say that she will buy when she

got money. She also indicated that children must be taught that things are worked for, and also that the child would not stress her by asking for labels because she taught them that way.

Respondent 1: I sit down and talk to them.

Respondent 1: Even if she is talking to him or her she must, she mustn't shout.

Respondent 3: I will talk hard to her. You see, even with this one, the sister talks hard to her, saying granny what this child is doing is not right. She must take the right path, because if she takes mine she will struggle like me.

Respondent 8: Is not that when I pick up papers there in the streets, I like it. I am being pushed by you to work. It doesn't show that they don't have parents or what.

Respondent 11: I sit down and tell them about life. No secret between me and them.

Respondent 11: Not the child at sixteen years to be having a child, doing things that are wayward.

Respondent 30: You tell her that you buy clothes three or two times a year.

Respondent 12: Give love, as to your own child. Don't promise the child something you can't afford. I taught them to know that if they want something, like she would say mom I need tekkies (running shoes). I will tell her that I don't have money, I tell them I will buy when I have money.

Respondent 14: Foster children are demanding. Inform them if you can't afford.

Respondent 14: If you want a child you must treat him like your own child. Don't say this is not my child.

Geiger et al. (2014) found that communication between foster parents and adolescents is related to behaviour in that parents' behaviour can either reduce, maintain, or worsen behaviour issues with foster youth. Thus foster parents offer ongoing support and guidance.

According to Lipscombe et al. (2003), successful foster mothers are child oriented. This means that they spend time with the child doing the things the child likes, and communicating openly and honestly. It also includes being good with adolescents, being tolerant but firm, showing understanding and holding appropriate expectations about the young person's contributions to the household.

Empathy

The foster mothers showed empathy when saying for example, foster children are still kids. Another foster mother said that foster children can't do a thing for themselves as such needed parental love (meaning that children were not yet independent thus needed to be guided with love). The other foster mother indicated that the prospective foster mother needed to have empathy for the foster children. Another foster mother indicated that she treated the foster children and the biological children equally so that the foster children should not feel that their mother is no more and feel lonely.

Respondent 1: I try but cannot abuse them by being too strict, they are still kids.

Respondent 10: Pathetic. Can't do a thing for themselves, they need parental love.

Respondent 13: Prospective foster mother to treat foster child with empathy.

Respondent 18: I try to treat them equally, mine and them. I don't want them to see that their mother is not there so they become lonely.

Buehler et al. (2006) maintain that empathy and tolerance on the part of the foster parent promote nurturing parent-child relationships. Successful mothering is indicated by foster children who feel accepted and cared for by their foster parents, and can form satisfying interpersonal relationships. A healthy environment allows adolescents to reach fullest potential by providing day to day supervision and support in a stable and loving home environment.

Lopez et al. (2015) defined empathy as an emotional response to the perceived plight of another person. One view is that it involves the ability to match another person's emotions. Empathy may entail a sense of tenderheartedness toward that other person. Evidence strongly supports the view that having empathy for another leads to a greater likelihood of helping that other person.

6.2.3.5 Rewards

When asked how they showed appreciation to the foster children, foster mothers indicated a number of things that served as rewards for the foster children. These included movies, games, airtime, money, hair salon, sweets, Kentucky, 'sphahlo' (a quarter loaf of bread filled in with polony, atchar and chips), braai, and football match. One foster mother made the child comfortable by buying him movies and games so that the foster child could relax and watch movies and games at home. Another foster mother indicated that when the foster child had requested something, maybe a new pair of trousers, she would bring that item as a form of reward for good behaviour. One foster mother indicated that she would give the foster child the money to go and watch the football match as a form of appreciation.

Movies and games

Respondent 23: When she has done very well, sometimes we go out to the movies, like here at Beatrix, is the cheapest. Or I take her to the salon. What she likes is sweets,

sometimes I can give her R50.00 on Friday, just to say today, this is yours just for the whole weekend not for the whole week.

Respondent 15: I buy him movies, he watches while relaxing. I try to make him comfortable, it's his money of course.

Airtime

Respondent 12: So the day they cleaned very well, you find me saying today you cleaned very well, there's improvement. She will laugh. I clap hands for her. Sometimes I buy them airtime.

Respondent 20: Sometimes I buy her R5.00 airtime and load in her phone, she is still young.

Hair

Respondent 20: Hey, I thank her. Sometimes I promise her money for the hair, to do it nice.

Respondent 12: When she wants to do the hair, I will say next month I will sacrifice something to do the hair you want.

Kentucky

Respondent 1: I take them to Kentucky, I will say Brenda (not her real name), today we are going to eat this and this, she says (with excitement), and she will say oh mommy. I make them dessert sometimes, but is not all the time. They say oh, mommy you do nice things for us.

'Sphahlo'

Respondent 17: If you can buy me cool drink and 'sphahlo'. I buy for her.

'Braai'

Respondent 4: Cook for them, you know sometimes on weekends you can go buy 'wors', rolls, make a small braai at home so that, is bad for a child to always eat nice food when there are parties, when there are weddings.

Respondent 11: I say thank you. I hug them. If I have some coins I buy some cake and drink and meat, we 'braai', and sit as family.

Respondent 18: The day he has done well, I bring him that thing.

Football match

Respondent 19: I give him money to go to the ball.

Westport, Bergen, and Garvey (2000) make the following recommendation towards successful foster parenting: spending quality time with the foster children, giving positive reinforcement for small accomplishments, and assuring children of safety.

One can in brief say that Positive Psychology acknowledges the existence of human suffering, dysfunctional families and so on; however, it aims to study the other side of the coin that is, the way people feel joy, show altruism, and create healthy families and institutions, in this way addressing the full spectrum of human experience. This suggests that Positive Psychology intends to have a balanced scientific understanding of human experience including the peaks, the valleys, and everything in between. In other words, it deals with human sufferings, happiness and their interventions in trying to relieve suffering and increase happiness (Seligman et al. 2005).

The most basic assumption of Positive Psychology as outlined by Peterson (2006) is that human goodness and excellence are as authentic as disease, disorder, and distress. This implies that

psychology should not only focus on the negatives but also on the positives of an individual, groups and institutions.

6.2.4 Resilience and Spirituality
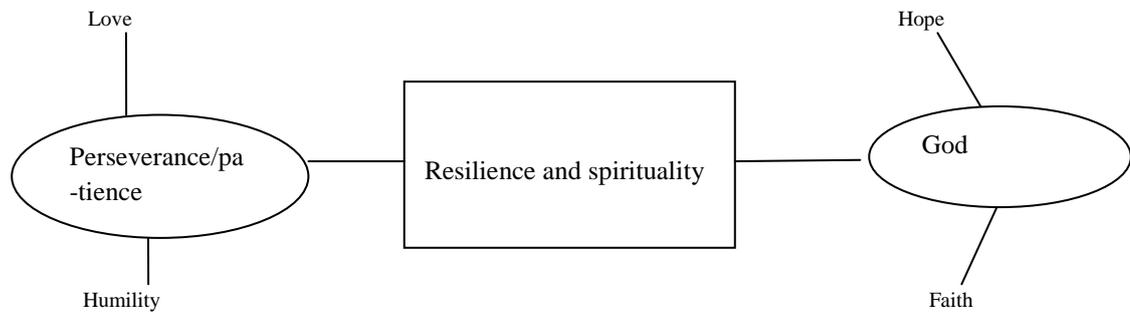
Figure 6.5 Resilience and spirituality.

6.2.4.1 Resilience

When foster mothers were asked about what made them cope, it was clear that they had resilience. They mentioned aspects such as humility, love, and perseverance. A foster mother indicated that she had to be humble because if she goes high, the foster child also went high and it was not helpful (meaning that she would avoid becoming emotional and angry because the foster child would do the same). Another foster mother indicated that the prospective foster mother should be humble.

The aspect of religion inspiring deeds of love for others is supported by Plante (2012) who contends that religion and spirituality inspire the good in the world for example love, charity, and kindness (p. xi).

Lopez et al. (2015, p. 118) define resilience as 'bouncing back'. According to Masten et al. (2009), resilience refers to a class of phenomena characterized by patterns of positive adaptations in the context of significant adversity or risk. The authors argue that resilience is an inferential concept, in that two major judgments must be rendered to identify resilience. First, there is a judgment that individuals are 'doing OK' with respect to a set of expectations

for behaviour. Second, there must be significant exposure to risk or adversity that has posed a serious threat to good outcomes. Thus the study of resilience phenomena requires that investigators define (a) the criteria or method for identifying positive adaptation or development, and (b) the past or current presence of conditions that threaten to disrupt positive adaptation or harm development. Lopez et al. (2015) state that scholars agree that risk or adversity must be present for a person to be considered resilient. Lopez et al. (2015 p. 109) listed a number of resilient resources that have been translated into strategies for fostering resilience. Among these are: problem solving skills, faith, positive attachment relationships, authoritative parenting (high on warmth, structure/monitoring, and expectations), organized home environment and parents involved in child's education.

Humility

Respondent 13: Prospective foster mother should have perseverance, love and humility for foster children.

Respondent 18: If you go high, he also goes high. You will end up both high. You won't understand each other, one has to be humble.

Respondent 19: …of all the three children, he is the one who loves me a lot. He is humble.

Love

The foster mothers indicated that loving the foster child was very important to be able to cope with the challenges of foster mothering. The foster mother must have true love for the foster children, and treat them as her own biological children.

Respondent 4: …and give the child love.

Respondent 4: Look for what is the best thing I can do to make this child to love me or to understand me.

Respondent 5: Treat her as your own.

Respondent 7: Love is showing the child that you trust him, you help each other and he trusts you.

Respondent 8: …is not that when I pick up papers there in the streets, I like it. I am being pushed by you to work. It doesn't show that they don't have parents or what (meaning that she worked as a cleaner of streets in town for the municipality).

Respondent 13: Yes. You need to try give her love, it helps a lot. Give her everything with humility. No matter how the child is, but if you give her the love, she will see that mom loves me. Even if she does bad things she knows that mom loves me. Even if friends try to change her, she can see that mom loves me.

Respondent 13: Love, even if you get very angry, love comes first. Just think that she is your child.

Respondent 13: Prospective foster mother should have perseverance, love and humility for foster children.

Respondent 15: Yes, you must show him the warmth.

The finding supports those of Lopez et al. (2015) who mention love as a virtue and strength for Positive Psychology in indicating that humanity (what we call 'Ubuntu' in the African language), is an interpersonal strength that involves tending and befriending others. It includes love and kindness. Love is about valuing close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated being close to people; kindness: care, compassion altruistic love, that is doing favours and good deeds to others, helping them, taking care of them.

Patience/ Perseverance

95% of foster mothers indicated that they had to persevere in order to cope with the challenges of raising foster children. Some spoke about patience, some indicated that it needed one to be strong, and others said the foster mothers had to hold fast no matter what

people would say. One foster mother advised her biological child to persevere, because the foster children will grow and understand life. The other foster mother said that she had to hold on, because there was nowhere else for the foster children to go, she had no option but to look after them. The other foster mother, who said that she was not lucky in bearing children but bore only one, believed that it was better to persevere in taking care of the foster children than abandoning them in the streets. She would also advise the prospective foster mother to persevere. The foster mother indicated that she had thought that the time was going to come when it gets tough, but would not know. She had to look after the children, so that children must not be silly, and must not walk about in the night, such things.

Respondent 5: So we have to persevere.

Respondent 8: Don't be impatient, because when you are impatient, they get lost, saying this person we trusted, where will we go.

Respondent 9: Let's persevere, they will grow.

Respondent 10: Patience, perseverance.

Respondent 13: Prospective foster mother should have perseverance, love and humility for foster children.

Respondent 13: Yes, for the young people you need perseverance.

Respondent 13: The main thing is perseverance …

Respondent 15: Don't shout at him, yes, you will confuse him.

Respondent 18: Fostering another person's child hey, is difficult. It needs perseverance with the child who is going to do things that you don't like.

This finding supports that of Snyder and Lopez (2007, p. 5). Those authors mention perseverance as a virtue and strength of Positive Psychology in defining perseverance/persistence as 'finishing what one starts in a course of action despite obstacles'.

Patience has long been considered a crucial component of the virtuous life (Schnitker & Westbrook 2014). Parks and Schueller (2014) indicated that there is a connection between the virtue of patience and well-being as verified by Schnitker (2012), who found that patience protects against negative affect and increases positive affect in some samples. Thus, people use patience as a strategy for successful goal pursuit. Parks and Schueller (2014) advise that patience should not be taken as passive resignation, but instead it should be thought of as the demonstration of ego strength by choosing to actively wait in the face of difficult circumstances. This distinction is supported by the positive correlation between patience and goal effort. Parks and Schueller (2014) conceptualise patience as a character strength akin to Rothbaum, Weisz, and Snyders's (1982) concept of secondary control, where, instead of seeking to change the situation, people exert control by changing themselves for the situation. Thus, patient people are not being passive, but are actively adapting to face their circumstances.

Wright and Flynn's (2005) research on what accounted for success and what advice adoptive parents would give to a friend considering adopting an adolescent, found that parents despite the problems, showed commitment and determination through hard times. McHugh (2007) also found that commitment of foster parents enabled them to provide better opportunities in life for foster children. Thus, the ingredients of purposeful, goal-oriented persistence are the virtues of endurance, determination, and commitment. Resilient individuals are said to bounce back from stressful experiences quickly and efficiently, just as resilient metals bend but do not break (Lopez et al. 2015).

Tillier and Alberta (2012) identified personality traits that contribute to resilience for instance: optimism, sense of adventure, courage and ability to endure. Gilligan (2004) identified three components of resilience: sense of secure base (supportive social networks); self-worth and self-esteem; and self-efficacy (self-control and decision making capacity). That author avers that

there is a lot to be learned from people who do well despite deprivation and negative life experiences.

Magyar-Moe (2009) notes that 'Positive Psychology is the scientific study of optimal human functioning, the goals of which are to better understand and apply those factors that help individuals and communities to thrive and flourish' (p. 3). Magyar-Moe (2009) indicates that those who study Positive Psychology subscribe to Strengths Theory or the idea that it is vital to understand and build from one's strengths while managing weaknesses. Fredrickson (2011) declares that when positive emotions broaden momentary thought-action, a variety of personal resources are also built up over time. These resources include physical resources (coordination, muscle strength), social resources (friendships, social skills, and support), intellectual resources (knowledge and problem solving), and psychological resources (creativity, optimism, and resilience).

Gable and Haidt (2005) argue compellingly that Positive Psychology does not imply that the rest of psychology is negative, rather, just as many approaches focus on how people resolve conflict, there should be work focusing on how people have fun and laughter together and how couples respond to each other's triumphs. A great deal of research has been done in the area of negative emotions such as anger, guilt, and so on, but there are few empirical studies on gratitude, admiration, moral elevation, forgiveness, awe, inspiration, hope, curiosity, laughter, well-being, joy, pleasure, happiness, optimism, love, courage, perseverance, wisdom, and so forth (Gable & Haidt, 2005; Snyder & Lopez, 2007). This indicates that Positive Psychology is an important framework for this study because looking after adolescents would require, among others, perseverance, love, hope and wisdom.

6.2.4.2 Spirituality

With regard to spirituality, most foster mothers indicated that God was their hope and strength for coping with the challenges of raising the adolescents. Some indicated that

relatives were helpful both financially and by giving advice to the foster children. Some however, said that relatives were not helpful, saying that they were dependent on the foster grant and social grant of their own children and pensioners were dependent on the pension fund and the foster grant.

One foster mother encouraged the foster children to always pray, when they need something they must pray to God because God was the only one who could help them. She said that the foster children did pray, for instance when they eat the young child would say 'no, we didn't pray'.

Another foster mother indicated that she would advise the prospective foster mother to be strong and pray to God when she met challenges of fostering an adolescent. She took the foster children to church and the boy was playing the trumpet at church. She was also a retired pastor of her church and believed God was a resource to her coping.

Respondent 2: He goes to church, he does the trumpets at church.

She also believed that it was God who made it possible for her to obtain the foster grant in arrears because she was able to pay and close all the credits. God made it possible for her to be able to use the foster grant to buy food which would last a month and clothes for the foster children but also to pay rent and electricity.

Respondent 2: I buy food to last a month.

She was able to provide for the foster children, she was independent and no longer asking food from the neighbours, and no longer went hungry. She also indicated that God answered her prayers because the church comforted her when she had lost one of the foster children and they also gave her blankets.

Respondent 2: Church helps with prayers.

Respondent 2: I then went to a man of our church to check the child. Then he told me to take the child to her mother's grave.

She believed that she was able to cope with the challenges of fostering adolescents because of the support she received from the social workers but also through prayer to God. Another one believed that she was coping because of the capability given to her by God. Yet another said that they pulled hard (meaning that it was not easy because of insufficient resources) raising the foster children and thanked God for helping her cope with the challenges of raising adolescents. One foster mother suggested that foster mothers should not stress but rather 'pray for the foster children because God answers prayers offered by any person'.

The foster mother was coping because of her faith in God, the church was praying for her. She would talk to the social workers who were very helpful because they would talk to her but also talk to the foster child. Another one also indicated that she believed in prayer, and it has helped her cope with the challenges of being a foster mother. Yet another one said that she coped through keeping quiet when the foster children made her angry and believed that God saw everything, He will help.

Respondent 10: I keep quiet and say God will see him. But as long as I know that he is pushing he is only left with graduation.

The finding is similar to that of Lopez et al. (2015) in referring to spirituality as a virtue and strength of Positive Psychology. They indicate that spirituality is about religiousness, faith, purpose. It is about knowing where one fits into the larger scheme, having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of life that shape conduct and provide comfort. Lopez et al. (2015, p. 280) define spirituality as 'a state of mind which is universally accessible'. They contend that a widely accepted description of spirituality is a 'search for the sacred'. It is shown through religion

by prayer and attending church services. Spirituality is a strength of transcendence. 'Although the specific content of spiritual level beliefs varies, all cultures have a concept of an ultimate, transcendent, sacred, and divine force' (Peterson and Seligman 2004, p. 601). Spirituality was also found to be good for individuals of low socio-economic status who were religious as they showed better physical health and greater well-being than one would expect given their environments (Steffen, 2012).

Respondent 13: We struggled in the farms. But God helped.

Another one said that raising foster children needed prayer:

Respondent 15: You must pray. God help me to carry these challenges, I must raise this child properly.

Another foster mother indicated that she would cope because she put all before God because God was the one giving her the strength for the foster children to grow, go to school, and be able to become independent.

Respondent 15: I just kneel and pray. This child, you can't do her a thing, she keeps changing. Sometimes you won't know where the problem is or what is happening. Prayer reduces a lot of things for me, because when she is angry and I start to pray, she calms down.

Respondent 13: I put all before God. Yes, God is the one giving me strength for these children to grow, go to school, and be able to stand-independent.

6.3 Conclusion

The chapter focused on the results as well as the interpretation of the current study. Four themes were identified: Crisis, Structure, Relationships, and Resilience and Spirituality. The results indicated that foster mothers were fostering because of the love they had for the

children. Foster mothers were cooperating well with the social workers and this made fostering much easier for them. They also cooperated with the children's schools to check the progress and performance because they wanted the children to complete school and become independent and responsible citizens. Foster mothers were able to cope with the fostering challenges that they were faced with because of their positive attitude that children are just children and needed to be taken care of, guided and loved. Generally foster mothers had strong social support systems and networks but also believed that God made it possible for them to cope with the challenges of fostering the adolescents. Foster mothers also coped because of their resilience to the challenges facing them. They emphasized love, humility and perseverance as critical to coping with challenges of fostering the adolescents.

Chapter 7 will deal with conclusions and formulate recommendations that will assist the social services providers to suggest strategies that will help foster mothers cope with the challenges of fostering the adolescents.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to draw conclusions and formulate recommendations that will assist social services providers to suggest strategies that will help foster mothers cope with the challenges of fostering adolescents. The literature search done thus far shows that many foster mothers experience challenges in dealing with the foster adolescent. The outcomes of this study intend to assist the foster mothers to attain resilience during the fostering period through hearing the success stories of other foster mothers. The information obtained from interviews with the foster mothers on the successes and failure stories will be shared with institutions and individuals in terms of suggestions, success stories, and the commonly encountered challenges.

This study was exploratory, aiming to explore the challenges faced by foster mothers who were fostering the adolescents and the coping strategies that were employed by foster mothers. In an attempt to understand the experiences of foster mothers, this study was conducted in an exploratory manner using semi-structured individual interviews to obtain an in-depth view of the lived world of foster mothers. Exploratory research attempts to respond to the 'what' of a phenomenon by asking, for example, what are the experiences of the foster mothers (De Vos et al. 2005).

The lack of literature, particularly on the experiences of foster mothers who were fostering the adolescents, inspired the study. Khoo and Skoog (2014), in their investigation of placement breakdown, state that research has pointed out many problems associated with placement instability and breakdown, but that less is known about foster parents' experiences. 'Although studies of placement breakdown are numerous, few studies have included foster

parents, and if they do, the focus has been on foster parents' view of children's problems and not on their own experiences' (Khoo & Skoog, 2014, p. 256). Bandawe and Louw (1997) note that there is a paucity of qualitative research into the experience of family foster care from the perspective of the caregivers of children in care.

The current study contributes to the limited knowledge on family foster care and the experiences of foster mothers in particular. The researcher explored the foster mothers' experiences using a qualitative approach with semi-structured individual interviews and Thematic Network Analysis of the textual data as suggested by Attride-Stirling (2001). Four core (global) themes, each consisting of organizing and basic themes, were identified. The four core themes were: crisis, structure, relationships, resilience and spirituality.

7.2 Objectives and Outcomes

The purpose of the study was to explore the psychological experiences of foster mothers in fostering adolescents, the challenges they are faced with, and how they cope with these challenges. The study focused specifically on foster mothers in the black community who were fostering adolescents at the time of the interview. Foster parenting was defined as a commitment to help a child and family through a specifically difficult period by providing consideration, understanding, and guidance to the child.

Changes (economic, social, for example, death through HIV and AIDS) in the whole world and in the South African communities have made it necessary to place more adolescents in foster care (Lipscombe et al. 2004). The orphanages in South Africa are full of orphans and other children who have escaped or been removed from their biological parents for a variety of factors. For children to develop normally, they have to be cared for in a family context (RSA Department of Social Development, 2009). However, there is a lack of research on how foster mothers cope with the challenges of fostering adolescents. This study

attempted to address this issue and it is believed that its outcome will positively impact the lives of both foster and non-foster mothers, encouraging them to assist in fostering or adopting adolescents.

Pasztor et al. (2006) supported the focus on foster mothers by stating that children who enter foster care often have special health and mental needs, but researchers have, unfortunately, rarely examined how foster-parents manage foster children's needs. In addition, children come to foster care for a number of reasons. In many cases, they have suffered physical or sexual abuse, or neglect at home and are placed in a safe environment. The negative behaviours of children that were mentioned by foster mothers emphasized the necessity and urgency of dedicated research that analyses and evaluates foster parent and foster child interrelations from the perspective of Positive Psychology. However, in this study most children were fostered because they had lost one or both parents and a few were neglected by their biological mothers and the fathers of the foster children were not known to the foster mothers.

The targeted areas were Mamelodi and Atteridgeville townships in Pretoria (Tshwane), Gauteng Province. Twenty foster mothers, ten from each township, were selected from the social workers' registers of foster mothers who were fostering adolescents at the time of the interviews. Most foster mothers were single and were grandmothers of the foster adolescents. Some had biological children of the same age as the foster children, especially those who were aunts. Janie and Woodward (2006) note that many of the kinship caregivers are grandparents or elderly aunts and uncles. According to Kgomo (2009) the grandparents and elderly aunts were usually pensioners. However, kinship caregivers, especially grandparents, face a number of challenges, for example, economic hardships, as they take in one or more of their relatives' children. They may not have medical aid and may not be able to afford psychological services needed for the children in foster care.

The current study indicated various challenges that were faced by foster mothers and also indicated their various ways of coping with the challenges of fostering the adolescents, for example, adolescents who were found to be uncooperative. The most common coping strategies employed by foster mothers in this study included prayer and talking to the adolescent.

7.3 Conclusions

Most foster mothers indicated that they fostered because the children had lost their mothers through death. Some fostered because their own children had grown up and were married and so left the house. This is what Rodger et al. (2006, p. 1131) refer to as the 'empty nest'. Some were fostering because of the wish to have more children in the home. Some fostered because they had no children of their own but wished to raise children and contribute to the society. This is called 'ubuntu', doing good to others, in the African context (see Chapter 2 Paragraph 2.6.2. Others fostered because they wanted to have more children in the home.

Challenges faced by foster mothers included symptoms related to loss of a mother exhibited by the foster children. For example children would stay in a corner talking to themselves that they were missing their mother, lack of interest in schooling, feeling lonely, and so on. Some foster mothers indicated that foster children displayed unacceptable behaviour, including carelessness, stubbornness, uncooperative, disrespectful and delinquent behaviour. The common form of discipline that the foster mothers used in order to deal with unacceptable behaviour was to sit and talk to the children. Some foster mothers tried to withhold food but the foster children would feel that they are being ill-treated because they did not have mothers. The latter form of discipline seemed more like punishment, unlike the former which seemed to develop reasoning and responsibility for the foster children. Discussing the problem and reasoning about the consequences is a positive way of resolving problems.

The South African National Council for Child and Family Welfare (1987) notes that the demands made on the foster parent by the foster child include: problematic behaviour (aggressiveness, stealing, and so on); child testing the foster parent, thus resulting in the foster parent's uncertainty about handling the situation and hesitating to punish the child. This suggests that foster parents must be informed and prepared for this type of reaction, preferably in the form of training by the social workers.

Foster mothers also employed positive character strength such as expressing gratitude to accentuate the good behaviour of foster children. Gratitude results in a happy mood for both the foster mother and the foster child. Positive emotions help people build enduring resources and recover from negative experiences (Snyder & Lopez 2007, p. 137). This explanation is based on the Broaden-and-Build Theory of positive emotion which holds that positive emotions bring into being optimal functioning (explained in Paragraph 3.5.2). Gratitude is a crucial virtue for well-being and mental health throughout the lifespan of an individual (Robert, Emmons & Mishra 2012), note that gratitude 'occurs in interpersonal exchanges when one person acknowledges receiving a valuable benefit from another' (p. 10).

Gratitude was mentioned by almost all the foster mothers. They gave appreciation and even rewards as positive reinforcement to the foster children whenever house chores were done as requested by foster mothers. This ranged from a mere thank you to airtime, money, going out for nice food, giving them money for cheaper movies, making 'braai', buying Kentucky and so on as pointed out in Figure 6.4.

Most foster mothers indicated that the foster grant was not enough to cater for the needs of the foster children. Most foster mothers indicated that they had to use their own pension grant to cover the children's cost as some children attended expensive schools in the city. Some foster mothers, especially younger ones, used their own children's social grant to augment the foster

grant. This finding supports that of Wright and Flynn (2005) who found that financial issues were mentioned as negative aspects of adoption by some parents because the state's money was not enough to cater for the needs of the children adopted. Critelli and Schwam (2010) also found that lower-income mothers were struggling economically because they did not receive wages or remuneration for their efforts of taking care of the foster children. However, most foster mothers in the current study strongly felt that love for children rather than money should be the motive for fostering.

In this study it took some foster mothers time to know that there are foster grants but also that the process of receiving the foster grant took long. This experience suggests that there is a need for the distribution of information to the community by relevant officials which could include churches and schools during parents' meetings and church services as well as women's societies/stokvels. However, foster mothers were aware of the amount for social grants each year and knew that it increases annually on 1st April. Foster mothers were also aware that the grant lapses if not renewed when the foster child turns eighteen.

Foster mothers had strong networks with the social workers and the schools. They attended meetings that were arranged by the social workers for sharing information and experiences with other foster mothers and to obtain guidance from social workers on how to care for the foster children. Foster mothers would discuss the foster children's performance with the social workers and obtain assistance on school matters. Buehler et al. (2006) highlight the importance of communicating and cooperating with workers from the agency with whom the child is affiliated as critical to successful foster parenting. Networks helped foster mothers to cope with stress because they could disclose and discuss problems, share concerns, and to receive advice that was relevant to their needs.

Foster mothers indicated that they would discuss the children's performance with the relevant teachers to ensure that children passed. This corroborated the work of Westport et al. (2000), who advised carers to effectively work with the foster child's school. This shows that foster mothers had the interest of foster children at heart and were committed to ensure that foster children become better people. McHugh (2007) also indicated that the commitment of foster mothers helped them provide better opportunities for foster children.

Some foster mothers had strong social support. For example, they obtained assistance from relatives. Foster parents could be able to foster adolescents because of receiving stronger informal network support (Geiger et al. 2014). Wright and Flynn (2005) argue that a decision to foster, for some parents, was accompanied by fears that the marriage will fall apart, while others literally lost friends resulting in strain on the foster parents.

This was not the case in the current study because most foster mothers received support from family members. Some received money, while others received groceries bought by their own grown up children who were married and working. Greenglass and Fiksenbaum (2009) maintain that social support enhances perceived self-efficacy, which in turn fosters successful adaptation and reduces stress and depression.

Other coping determinants as highlighted in Paragraph 2.8.3 were applicable but some were not applicable in this study. For example, some foster mothers who were older than 55 years of age complained about arthritis, diabetes and high blood pressure which impaired their foster parenting, but were committed to ensure that fostered adolescents receive the necessary care, and attended school. Cole (2005) indicated that caregivers older than 55 years of age frequently experience more physical problems, which could adversely affect their perceptions of caregiving.

However, younger foster mothers also showed commitment and growth in their fostering because they were even prepared to stop going out with peers and prioritised caring for the foster

children and to lead exemplary lives. This supports the flourish hypothesis (see Paragraph 3.5.7) as advocated by (Magyar-Moe, 2009), who believes that to flourish is to live optimally and to experience the good things in life such as personal growth, generativity and resilience.

Foster parents with younger own children experienced challenges in creating good relationships between foster children and own children because in other instances foster children would feel that own children are being favoured but in other instances it was the opposite especially when foster mothers were buying clothes per child and not for all children at once. Other foster mothers would use a lay-by to secure clothes at a clothing store in order to avoid conflict being seen as favouring one child over others. Thus positive emotions allowed foster mothers to think more optimistically, leading to experiencing an upward spiral of well-being as highlighted in the resilience hypothesis (Paragraph 3.5.6).

In this project, as it was with Cole and Eamon (2007) no relation was found between foster caregivers' higher educational attainment and successful fostering. 15% foster mothers had a diploma qualification, 20% had Grade 12, 50% had qualifications lower than matric, and 15% had none.This suggests that education might not influence perceptions of fulfilling the fostering role. However, it is important to show commitment and growth in fostering adolescents.

Most foster mothers in this project had less than 10 years of fostering experience and a few had more than 10 years. More experience in performing the fostering role is associated with increased foster caregivers' success in fostering (MacGregor et al. 2006). In this project however, love, commitment and dedication played a major role in foster mothers' retention of foster children. McHugh (2007) also found that commitment of foster parents enabled them to provide better opportunities in life for foster children. Thus, the ingredients of successful foster mothering are goal-oriented persistence and the virtues of endurance, determination and commitment.

Coping strategies therefore play a critical role in an individual's physical and psychological well-being when faced with challenges, negative events and stress. Coping therefore is an approach to life in which an individual's efforts are directed towards goal management and identification and utilization of social resources to achieve that individual's goals (Greenglass and Fiksenbaum 2009).

Resilience and spirituality were found to be the most critical strategies for coping employed by foster mothers. Snyder and Lopez (2007) regard spirituality as a strength that forges connections to the larger universe and provides meaning. Spirituality is when one has coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of life that provide comfort (p. 22). Foster mothers emphasized that patience/perseverance, love and humility are among the best ways of winning over the foster children, to impart understanding of life in general and to help foster children become responsible citizens and future leaders.

Foster mothers emphasised that love for children should be prioritised by all foster carers. They indicated that they would advise prospective foster mothers to treat foster children as their own children in order to avoid creating a feeling of discrimination among the foster adolescents. This supports findings by Kgomo (2009) who contends that foster children should be treated as own children. When foster children are treated by foster parents the same way as biological children are treated, foster children will feel that they are being loved genuinely. The aspect of religion inspiring deeds of love for others is sustained by Plante (2012) who contends that religion and spirituality inspire the good in the world, for example love, charity, and kindness (p. xi).

Regarding the character, strengths and virtues of Positive Psychology, Snyder and Lopez (2007) identified persistence/perseverance as a strength of courage. These authors define perseverance as 'finishing what one starts, persisting in a course of action despite obstacles' (p. 19). According to Snyder and Lopez (2007) altruistic love is a characteristic of humanity, and is

about doing good deeds for others, helping them, and taking care of them. The same authors regard humility as a characteristic of temperance and it is about not regarding oneself as more special than others.

Humanity in the African context is referred to as 'ubuntu'. Ubuntu is a 'reciprocal belief that an individual's humanity is expressed through personal relationships with others in a community and in turn other people in the community recognize the individual's humanity' (Nyaumwe & Mkabela, 2007 p. 152). This picture painted by the present day Africa needs the revitalization of ubuntu in order to nurture the responsibility to care for others in ways that will reduce and if possible eliminate the existence of child-headed families in Africa.

Foster mothers believed that their faith and hope in God helped them cope with the challenges of raising adolescents. They believed that God was the provider of strength and material needed for raising foster children. Feldman and Kubota's (2012) research supports these findings in indicating that hope is a virtue that improves people's lives in the absence as well as in the presence of a problem. This clearly suggests a connection between hope and positive outcomes. Hope seems to be an important virtue as an individual continues to age and has to cope with challenges that often arise (p. 52).

Hope is about expecting the best in the future and believing that the best can be brought about by working towards achieving it (Snyder and Lopez, 2007). Ong et al. (2006) in their study of hope as a source of resilience in later adulthood, found that individuals with high hopes showed diminished stress reactivity and more effective emotional recovery. In other words, hope plays a crucial role in moderating stressful life events. Ong et al. (2006) further assert that hope is directly related to adjustment, psychological health and well-being both intra- and inter-personally.

The current study explored foster parenting from the perspective of foster mothers. The intention was not to interview the foster fathers although it would be necessary to interview them

in future studies in order to explore their psychological challenges. According to Hogan (2001) traditional Western culture continues to link caretaking activities with women. Women were regarded as responsible for providing care to dependent relatives (Nordmeyer, 2002). There is an assumption that women are and should be responsible for uncompensated, dependent care, and 75% of family caregivers were women (Nordmeyer, 2002). Nordmeyer claims that care giving entails many challenges, for example, financial, social, psychological, emotional and physical burdens for the caregiver.

It appears that the role of women as defined by traditional Western culture has empowered women with resilience to withstand the challenges faced during their upbringing of children. Nordmeyer (2002) notes that older caregivers experienced constrained gender roles and were socialized to view care giving as a 'natural' role for women (p. 5). Nordmeyer further declares that the role of women as care givers is assigned at birth as the girls identify with their mothers who are care givers and adopt their traits.

Given the history above, one would conclude that women obtained perseverance and resilience in care giving from their upbringing in which it was expected of women to do the unpaid and selfless work of care giving that would allow them to be regarded as 'good women' (Hogan, 2001, p. 4).

It was highlighted in Paragraph 1.1 that in many cultures, especially in traditional Western ones, a mother is usually the wife in a married couple and mothers have a crucial role in raising offspring (Adshade, 2014).This means that in traditional Western societies, women not only bear children, but are also primarily responsible for caring for them in the infant stage of development. Women spend more time with children and develop stronger primary emotional ties with infants than men do. In instances where biological mothers do not parent a child, other women rather than men usually take the women's place (Adshade, 2014).

This is the situation in South Africa where nannies/baby sitters are usually women. In cases where there are fluctuations in marriage patterns and fertility rates, women fulfil the role of either mothers at home or that of workers at child-care centres, thereby becoming continuously involved in taking care of children. Furthermore, women are actually gratified by the mothering process and for having succeeded at their mothering (Adshade, 2014).

All foster mothers had established rules to ensure smooth running of the house. For example, foster children were expected to be home around 18h30 in the evening. Children were advised to avoid peer pressure and be independent and well behaved. This finding supported those of Seifert and Hoffnung (1987) indicating that parents develop rules for their families. Some foster mothers indicated that they served as role models for the foster children by, for example, coming home on time, avoiding peer pressure and saving money rather than buying expensive clothes.

Foster mothers appeared to have used problem-focused coping (as emphasised by Khan et al. 2011) as well as proactive coping strategies (as advocated by Snyder & Lopez, 2007). People using problem-focused strategies try to deal with the cause of the problem. They do this by finding out information about the problem and learning new skills to manage the problem. In other words, an individual evaluates a specific situation as changeable or controllable. In brief, it involves confronting the problem and viewing it as manageable. For example, foster mothers contacted the social workers to try and positively resolve the behaviour of the foster children. Foster mothers would also sit and talk to the foster children to find out what was bothering them when found sitting in the corner. One foster mother contacted the priest to assist in resolving the behaviour exhibited by the child regarding loss of the biological mother.

The current study found that foster parents ensured that they included foster children in decision-making, for instance, colour for painting the house, withdrawing money from the ATM and buying groceries and learning to prioritize shopping items per needs, not wants. This finding

supported that of Geiger et al. (2014) who found that previously fostered youth appreciated foster placements when parents let them play an active role in daily activities and decision-making. One would conclude that involving foster adolescents in decision-making processes made them feel part of the family and not outsiders and observers.

7.4 Reflections on the researcher's position

This sub-heading deals with the possible personal biases or preconceived ideas and values that may have impacted research questions, the analysis of results and the related recommendations. These biases include but are not limited to the researcher's role as a mother as well as government employee.

7.4.1 *Researcher as a mother*

The researcher is a mother of three grown up children, the last born child being 21 years old at the time of the conclusion of the study. The researcher brought up her children in a particular way subscribing, to certain morals and ethical values. She would expect foster mothers to instil certain values on the foster children, for example, respect for one another, respect for the parents (foster) and other elderly people, to have the spirit of ubuntu, and so on. The researcher had an opportunity to foster an adolescent at some stage of her life (long before the study commenced) and was faced with a number of challenges arising from the process. For example at times there were conflicts between the foster child and her biological children and she had to mediate these conflicts. This and many other challenges had to be resolved through different coping strategies which included appraisal-focused, problem-focused, and emotion-focused strategies.

7.4.2 Researcher as a Christian

In addition to the coping strategies used by the researcher during her fostering experience, she depended on God for wisdom and strength and in a way she expected this to be part of the coping strategies employed by the foster parents in the study.

7.4.3 Researcher as a government employee

The researcher has worked at two national government departments and she is still an employee at one of the departments. As a government employee, she has been exposed to and involved with policy formulation, analysis and implementation. This experience made the researcher to expect foster mothers to be aware of policies that have been developed for foster care. She also expected that there would be evidence of the implementation of such policies by relevant governments departments and responsible agencies.

7.5 Recommendations

7.5.1 Recommendations to mothers

Children's needs differ in age, temperament, and preference. Some foster mothers indicated that foster children were slow learners. It is recommended that mothers should have a deeper understanding of the needs of the children they are fostering. This could be achieved through organized sessions of training by the social workers. Foster mothers should be trained on how to identify different needs of the children and what to do or who to contact for various identified needs. For instance when the child has been identified as slow learner an educational psychologist could be contacted.

A child displaying symptoms of loneliness, or withdrawal could be referred to a counselling psychologist. This suggests that there should be a system (a kind of family therapy) of professionals (for example therapist, doctor, school psychologist, teacher, pastor) attending to the

child to improve his/her well-being. The church could also form part of the system that disseminates information about foster parenting to the foster mothers. The church could share such information with women during women's meetings or with men during men's meetings or in any other form of gathering as considered fitting for the church. Mothers could be encouraged to form groups for sharing experiences on foster parenting. Mothers could even utilize the existing 'women's societies/stokvels' as a platform to discuss issues of foster parenting. This will revitalize even the spirit of 'ubuntu', but also encourage spirituality and resilience in fostering the adolescents.

It appeared that foster mothers were fostering from their general knowledge but not according to official policies. Foster mothers therefore need to be informed of the available policies on fostering, for example the Social Assistance Act and the Children's Act and other relevant sections be made available to foster mothers. This could be the task of the social workers.

Foster mothers need to understand the possible challenges in the fostering of adolescents of the 21st century who are surrounded by media and advanced technology and were found to be different from foster mothers' own children who were married and staying in their own homes at the time of the interviews. Just as foster mothers set rules for the home, for instance what time to be home, rules must be set for the use of cell phones and adolescents must be involved in setting the rules and their consequences. The rule could be that the foster parent takes the phone during the night and gives it back to the adolescent in the morning. This and other rules agreed upon by the adolescent and the parent could be written out and signed so that each party has a copy.

Since a foster grant was found not to be enough to provide for the needs of foster children, foster mothers should be advised by social workers and the church to foster out of love, kindness, charity, and 'ubuntu', and regard foster children as their own to help children to become better

citizens, and not foster for financial gain. Actually this is an element of 'ubuntu' which comes naturally from the conscience of human beings, to share the little one has with others.

Foster mothers should be encouraged to include foster adolescents in decision-making regarding the home in order to make them feel part of the family rather than intruders. For example, they could be involved in budgeting, including their foster grant so that they are not left with the mentality that foster parents are using the grant for own gain.

Foster mothers should be encouraged to accentuate the positive behaviour of foster adolescents because it is good for the well-being of both the foster mother and the foster child. Parents tend to try fix what is wrong with children, leaving the strengths to take care of themselves. For example, teenagers usually comment that parents complain when the dishes are not washed but do not comment when the dishes are washed.

7.5.2 Recommendations to social workers

It is recommended that social workers assess the needs of foster mothers according to their contexts and locations. Social workers should visit the homes and assess whether there are any transport problems to school, find out if the homes are in good condition for the health of the foster children, remind foster mothers when the grant is about to lapse when the foster child turns eighteen. Reports should be regularly compiled on these matters in order to assist and advise foster mothers in time.

Training and workshops should be conducted (in collaboration with government) and support groups established and approximately six counselling sessions be conducted for foster mothers to empower them with skills that will assist them in coping with the challenges of fostering the adolescents of the 21st century, who are exposed to extreme peer pressure, high technology and media influences.

Government policies should be made accessible to the social workers and the latter should be trained to understand how policies work. For instance, social workers advise foster mothers to refer the foster children to counselling psychologists after the death of the foster child's mother to assist them in coping with the loss.

Social workers should work with schools to assist foster mothers in identifying the educational needs of the children and provide intervention at an early stage to ensure well-being of the children.

Social workers should arrange workshops which will promote healthy relationships between the foster parents and foster children.

7.5.3 Recommendation to policymakers

It appeared from the researcher's observations, that the policy guidelines on foster care have not been fully implemented. It is recommended that policymakers monitor the implementation of the policies regularly to ensure that they are understood by the implementers, including social workers.

Policymakers should encourage spouses to support the foster mothers in taking care of the fostered adolescents so that foster care is not regarded as the role of mothers only but as a responsibility of the whole family.

Policymakers should invest adequate resources to ensure that foster care is of good quality. Foster parents should be involved in developing the policies to ensure that their concerns are addressed.

7.6 Limitations of the study

The study was limited to two townships in the city of Tshwane, Pretoria region. As such results of this study cannot be generalized but the themes extracted in this study may contribute towards understanding the challenges faced by foster mothers in raising adolescents and comprehending coping strategies utilised by foster mothers in these townships. This is in line with the work of Creswell (2014) who notes that it is not the intention of qualitative research to generalize the findings to individuals, sites, or places outside of those under study. It is hoped that these findings may lead to more general research efforts in this field.

The study focused only on foster mothers, and the researcher did not interview any foster fathers, social workers or policymakers. These respondents should be included in future studies.

7.7 Recommendation for future studies

It is recommended that future studies explore the implementation of policies on foster parenting by social workers, while attempting to ensure that foster mothers have access to information on foster parenting and the implementation thereof.

Respondents such as foster fathers, social workers and policymaker makers should be accessed in future studies.

The researcher's observation has been that most research done on resilience has focused on resilience in children. It is therefore recommended that future research should be undertaken in exploring the resilience of foster mothers in raising adolescents during the era of high technology.

Another observation was that most research undertaken on foster care focused on the experiences of foster children but less so on the experiences of foster mothers. It is recommended that future research should expand the exploration of the contributions of Positive Psychology and the experiences of foster mothers in the fostering of adolescents.

7.8 Conclusion

The researcher believes that the overall purpose of the current study has been achieved. The findings will raise the awareness of prospective foster mothers, social services and policymakers about the challenges faced by foster mothers and the positive coping strategies employed in dealing with the challenges. Through the recommendations made in this chapter the social services will be able to improve their efforts in ensuring implementation of the policies. Both current and prospective foster mothers will be encouraged to foster adolescents as motivated by altruism and 'ubuntu'.

The current study reveals a link between Positive Psychology, foster mothering, and religion. The foster mothers employed Positive Psychology virtues such as perseverance, love, hope and gratitude, in coping with the challenges of fostering adolescents. Results of the current study will be made available through an article which will be published in an accredited journal and made available to the public.

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Appendix A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

What has been your experience in fostering an adolescent child?

How has it affected you (issues of stress, tension, emotional/anger) both in terms of the positive aspects and the difficult parts?

What coping strategies do you employ? In other words, what do you do to cope with the challenge of fostering?

Have you identified any emotional adjustment problems in the adolescent?

Have you identified any social adjustment problems in the adolescent?

What kind of discipline do you administer? For example, do you focus on the strong or weak points of the child?

What are the good lessons you have learnt from fostering an adolescent?

Any other thing you would like to talk about with regards to your experience of fostering an adolescent?

Appendix B

INFORMATION LEAFLET

RESEARCHER: KEOLEBOGILE MOSIMEGE

TEL: 079 496 7562

SUPERVISOR: PROF. F.J.A. SNYDERS

TEL: 012 993 5311

TITLE OF THE STUDY

The psychological experiences of foster mothers in fostering adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

You are invited to volunteer for a research study concerning foster mothers' experiences in fostering adolescents. This information leaflet is to help you to decide if you would like to participate. Before you agree to take part in this study you should fully understand what is involved. If you have any questions, which are not fully explained in this leaflet, do not hesitate to ask the researcher. You should not agree to take part unless you are completely happy about all the procedures involved.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

You have been identified as a foster mother that is currently fostering an adolescent and the researcher would like you to consider taking part in this study exploring the experiences of foster mothers' fostering adolescents.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME DURING THE STUDY?

If you decide to take part, you will be one of approximately 20 participants who will be interviewed individually. The study entails foster mothers who will be sharing their experiences with the researcher who has also fostered an adolescent. You will be free to express your opinions in a language of your choice so as to be explicit, and to reveal as much or as little of your own experiences that you feel comfortable with. With your permission a tape recorder will be used to record information for transcription purposes. Your anonymity is ensured in that no personal details will be revealed in the academic report. The interview may last approximately 1 to 2 hours, and will be conducted at a time and venue of your convenience.

MAY ANY OF THE PROCEDURES RESULT IN DISCOMFORT OR INCONVENIENCE?

As indicated above, the interviews will be tape-recorded for transcription purposes. You can reveal as much or as little about your experiences of being a foster mother as you wish. The transcripts will be made available should you wish to see whether you are correctly quoted or not. The procedure should not result in any discomfort or inconvenience.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MY PARTICIPATION?

The outcomes of the study will be made available to you should you want access to the shared experiences of foster mothers fostering adolescents.

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AS A PARTICIPANT IN THIS STUDY?

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntarily and you can refuse to participate or stop at anytime without stating any reason. Your withdrawal will not affect your progress as a foster mother.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information obtained during the course of the study is strictly confidential. Data that may be reported in scientific journals will not include any information that identifies you or your child as participants in this investigation.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICAL APPROVAL?

A research proposal was submitted to the Research Committee and Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria, and written approval has been granted. The study has been structured in accordance with the required ethical procedures, which deals with the recommendations guiding research involving human subjects, a copy of which may be obtained from the researcher should you wish to review it.

SOURCE OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If at any stage you feel that you need more information regarding the study and its purpose, please do not hesitate to contact me, Keolebogile, at 079 496 7562, or my promoter, Prof. Snyders 012 993 5311.

Appendix C: Confirmation of editing

Astute Editing and Research

14 September 2016

To Whom It May Concern

Dear Sir/Madam,

This is to certify that I have to the best of my ability fully edited the DPhil thesis of Ms Keolebogile Mosimege entitled "The psychological experiences of foster mothers in fostering adolescents" for the University of Pretoria. The text was checked for clarity and ease of reading, grammar and usage, spelling and punctuation, consistency in the use of text and figures in illustrations and tables, completeness and consistency in references, consistency in page numbering, headers and footers and suggestions were offered. The editor makes no pretension to have improved the intellectual content of the thesis and did not rewrite any text. The editor's suggestions are to be accepted or rejected by the author. The author effected the final changes herself.

Yours sincerely,

C.D. Schutte (D Litt et Phil, Member, Professional Editors' Guild)

Telephone 028-514-1460   Mobile 083-310-1806

28 Van Eeden Street, Swellendam 6740 Cape Province, South Africa.