The influence of acculturation on the self-concept of black adolescents

By

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Yet, O Lord, you are our Father

We are the clay, you are the potter;

We are all the work of your hand.

(Isaiah 64)

This research study has been another step for me in the journey my life. It has only been made possible through God's belief in my abilities and His loving guidance, enlightenment and inspiration. Thank you Lord.

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SUMMARY

The goal of the research was to explore the influence of acculturation on the self-concept of black adolescents. Only since 1994 have black South African children become more exposed to the previously white only privileged culture, based on westernized norms and values. This has come about through the schooling system and alternate care.

The process of assimilating ideas of a new culture into one's existing cultural framework is known as the process of acculturation. In South Africa this has happened in a relatively brief space of time.

Adolescence is also one of the most difficult developmental stages to negotiate successfully and the dramatic physical, emotional and psychological changes which occur during this time have a significant influence on the self-concept of the adolescent. Much of the developmental energy of adolescence is devoted to identity issues which is an integral part of the self-concept.

The researcher believed that it must be that much more difficult for the adolescent who is placed in a diverse cultural setting and is confronted with confusion about his ethnic identity, his present cultural milieu and the physical and psychological changes which challenge him in forming a new adult identity. Overseas studies and some local counseling centres have highlighted the negative impact of acculturation in terms of psychological and emotional adjustment problems in relation to acculturated youth.

The objectives of the study included making conclusions and recommendations regarding the influence of acculturation on black adolescents in terms of therapy interventions, guidelines for schools in terms of life-orientation programmes and guidelines for organizations involved in placement of children in trans-racial care. As there was also very little literature on the subject of acculturation within the South African context, another objective of the study was to compile a theoretical frame of reference regarding acculturation within the South African context.

Six adolescent black youth in trans-racial adoptive and foster care placements were identified as respondents. They were of mixed gender and between the ages of twelve and twenty.

The researcher used a qualitative research approach of an applied nature and a phenomenological strategy of enquiry. Non-probability purposive sampling was used to select six respondents for the study. A semi-structured interview, with an interview schedule as a guideline was used as well as gestalt play therapy techniques as means of information collection.

Various domains of the adolescent self-concept were explored on a physical, psychological, social level.

The research findings showed that black adolescent youth in trans-racial care who had some connection and knowledge about their cultural roots were more able to begin the process of ethnic identity achievement which led to the development of a positive self-

concept. This in turn led to better psychological and emotional adjustment and healthy ways of coping with problems and life in general. In contrast those adolescents who had relinquished their own culture for the new white culture they were emerged in, led to the development of a negative self-concept, poor adjustment and negative ways of coping with problems.

For expediency, the male pronoun is used to refer to either sexes and the term family refers to foster family unless otherwise stated.

OPSOMMING

Die doel van die navorsing was om die invloed van akkulturasie op die selfbeeld van swart adolessente te eksploreer. Alleenlik vanaf 1994 word swart Suid-Afrikaanse kinders blootgestel aan die eertydse bevoorregte wit kultuur, wat op westerse norme en waardes gebaseer is. Dit geskied hoofsaaklik deur die skoolsisteem en alternatiewe sorg.

Die proses om idees van 'n nuwe kultuur in 'n persoon se bestaande kulturele raamwerk te assimileer staan bekend as akkulturasie. In Suid-Afrika het dit oor 'n betreklike kort periode geskied.

Adolessensie is boonop een van die moeilikste ontwikkelingstadiums om suksesvol in aan te pas. Die dramatiese fisiese, emosionele en psigologiese veranderinge wat in dié tydperk plaasvind het 'n wesenlike invloed op die selfbeeld van die adolessent. Baie van die energie in die ontwikkeling van adolessensie word aan identiteitskonsepte toegewy en dit is 'n integrale deel van die selfbeeld.

Die navorser was daarom van mening dat vir die adolessent wat homself in 'n multi-kulturele opset bevind, dit soveel moeiliker moet wees wanneer hy met verwarring aangaande sy etniese identiteit, die kulturele milieue waarin hy homself bevind, asook die fisiese en psigologiese veranderinge konfronteer word, omdat dit hom in die vorming van sy nuwe volwasse identiteit uitdaag. Buitelandse navorsing, asook sekere plaaslike beradingsentrums beklemtoon die negatiewe effek van akkulturasie in terme van die psigologiese en emosionele aanpassingprobleme met betrekking tot die geakkultureerde jongmens.

Die doelwitte van die studie sluit in gevolgtrekkings en aanbevelings aangaande die invloed van akkulturasie op swart adolessente in terme van terapeutiese intervensies. Dit sluit ook in riglyne vir skole met betrekking tot lewensvaardigheidsoriëntering en riglyne vir organisasies wat betrokke is by die plasing van kinders in transkulturele sorg. Aangesien daar min literatuur oor die onderwerp van akkulturasie in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks beskikbaar was, is 'n verde doelwit daargestel naamlik om 'n teoretiese verwysingsraamwerk ten opsigte van akkulturasie in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks, op te stel.

Ses swart adolessente jeugdiges in transkulturele pleeg- en aangenome plasings is as respondente geïdentifiseer. Hulle was van albei geslagte en tussen die ouderdomme twaalf tot twintig jaar.

'n Kwalitatiewe navorsingsbenadering en 'n toegepaste ontwerp van die fenomologiese strategie is deur die navorser gebruik.

'n Nie-waarskynlikheidsteekproef is gebruik om die ses respondente vir die studie te identifiseer. 'n Semi-gestruktureerde onderhoud met 'n onderhoudskedule as riglyn, asook gestalt-spelterapietegnieke is benut om inligting te versamel.

Verskeie aspekte van die adolessent se selfbeeld op fisiese, psigologiese en sosiale vlakke is ondersoek.

Die bevindinge van die navorsing dui aan dat swart adolessente jeugdiges in transkulturele sorg met 'n mate van begrip en kennis aangaande hulle kulturele agtergrond makliker daartoe instaat is om te begin met die proses van identifisering van hul etniese identiteit wat weer die ontwikkeling van 'n positiewe selfbeeld tot gevolg het. Gemelde proses lei weer op sy beurt tot beter psigologiese en emosionele aanpassing, asook gesonde wyses om lewensprobleme te hanteer. Daarteenoor het die ontwikkeling van 'n negatiewe selfbeeld, swak aanpassing en negatiewe wyses van probleemhantering ontwikkel ten opsigte van daardie adolessente wat hulle eie kultuur vir die nuwe wit kultuur oorboord gegooi het.

Vir bondigheid, sluit die manlike voornaamwoord beide geslagte in en die term gesin verwys na die pleeggesin tensy anders aangedui.

KEY CONCEPTS

Acculturation	Akkulturasie
Self-concept	Selfkonsep
Adolescence	Adolessensie
Black	Swart
Black adolescent	Swart adolessent
Culture	Kultuur
Identity	Identiteit
Self-esteem	Selfbeeld
Ethnic identity	Etniese identiteit
Identity foreclosure	Identiteitsafsluiting

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

CHAPTER 2

ADOLESCENCE

CHAPTER 3

CULTURE AND ACCULTURATION

CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL INFORMATION

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the major changes South Africa went through since the African National Congress came into power in 1994 is that for the first time in our country's history there has been freedom for the various racial and cultural groups to mix with one another without restriction.

In the post apartheid era the new policies and laws and the resultant changes in social structures in South Africa has resulted in an influx of black South Africans from townships and rural areas into the previously only white residential areas and schools (Demographics of South Africa, 2004).
As a school counsellor the researcher became aware of the increased intake of mixed race children into the schools. Many black children have been exposed to the previously white only 'privileged' culture based on more westernized individualistic norms and values.

Another way that black South African children have also been exposed to westernized culture is through alternate care. Although many black families have managed to function adequately during the pre and post apartheid time there are those whose difficult life circumstances and dysfunction have led to an increase in single parent families, abandoned babies, child abuse and neglect, and an increase in street children. The Aids epidemic has also led to an increase in aids orphans. With the increase in the amount of black children needing alternate care some of them are being placed trans-racially either by adoption or in foster care (Coetzee, 2004).

The process of assimilating ideas of a new culture other than one's existing cultural framework is known as the process of acculturation. The term acculturation is described by Landrine and Klonoff (1996:1) as "the extent to which ethnic-cultural minorities participate in the cultural traditions, values, beliefs and practices of their

1

own culture versus those of the dominant "White" society." Orshan (1999:2) describes acculturation as the process by which individuals, families and communities of a distinctly unique cultural background begin to start sharing aspects of a second culture.

Thus the researcher assumed that through the process of acculturation many black South African children have been immersed into the dominant white culture in a relatively brief space of time. This process has come about primarily through the schooling system but also through alternative care.

However this is not always a smooth transition and is often fraught with problems especially during the adolescent stage. This is highlighted by the study done by Landrine and Klonoff (1996:5) who examined the relationship between acculturation and substance abuse in Latino youth. The traditional Latino youth (immersed in the Mexican American culture) did not drink or take drugs but highly acculturated Latino youth did. The children with problematic behaviour were the acculturated ones and not the traditional children.

 Thom (1991:441) refers to Erikson's theory of development stating that the adolescent stage of self-identity versus identity confusion is the most difficult developmental stage to negotiate successfully. Several authors agree that the main tasks of this stage are to develop a sense of identity by integrating all the identifications of the previous stages. (Compare Thom, Louw, van Ede and Ferns, 1998: 426-429; Thomas, 2000:151-152; Berk, 1997:17.)

Erikson refers to the above mentioned process as ego synthesis and Thom *et al* (1998:426-429) explain how the adolescent must believe in his selfsameness and must experience a sense of continuity in order to be aware of his identity. Thus he must have the sense that he is a unique person but still the same person he was during his childhood. This process entails separation from his family and the development of autonomy and independence. It is also at this time that the adolescent starts to question the beliefs, customs and values of his family and culture. #

According to Erikson any dramatic change in the individual's body, abilities or social status has a major effect on the self-concept, which is often why adolescents often experience an identity crisis. Much of the developmental energy of adolescence is devoted to identity issues, which is an integral part of the self –concept. (Compare Thom *et al*, 1998:426-429 and Berk, 1997:17.)

Berk (1997:428) describes the self-concept as the sum total of attributes, abilities, attitudes and values that an individual believes defines who he or she is. Self-esteem is the evaluative side of self-concept, which involves judgements about one's self-worth and feelings associated with those judgements.

Evans and Poole (1991:20) highlight the fact that there are many aspects of people's concepts about themselves and researchers are of the opinion that these concepts are not unitary in nature. Different authors give different weight to various aspects of self-concept of the adolescent namely, the self in relation to physical self, the self in relation to psychological and cognitive aspects, the self in peer relations, the self in relation to school activities and career choice, the self and family relations and the self in relation to religious and cultural norms and beliefs. (Compare Berk, 1997:428; Schaffer, 1999:434; Thomas, 2000:151-152.)

The researcher is of the opinion that under normal circumstances the adolescent stage with the newly emerging self-concept is fraught with symptoms and difficulties. How much more difficult must it be for the adolescent who is confronted with confusion between his ethnic identity, his present cultural milieu and the physical and psychological changes which challenge him in forming a new adult identity? Thus the researcher believes that the psychological tasks of acculturated adolescents are exacerbated and made more complicated.

Therefore the researcher was interested in the seeming significance of the influence of cultural diversity on these children. The multiracial school system is relatively new. The research participants are living in a culture that differs from their own by birth and are being exposed to different cultural values and norms. Some of them not only have a biological parent but also foster/adopted parents whose values, beliefs and cultural

norms may be very diverse and conflicting. The researcher wanted to investigate the influence of this environment on the developing self-concept of the adolescent.

Social workers in South Africa are involved in many fields of service which include the following: contemporary social problems such as poverty, homelessness, violence and substance abuse; family, youth and children's services including preventative and protective services as well as permanency planning, foster care and adoption; school based services which include child and family services and the designing and implementation of appropriate life orientation programmes. More recently many social workers are going into private practice (Fields of practice, 2003).

 In all the above services it is possible that social workers are dealing with youth who are presently being exposed to environments with many different and varied cultural influences. Thus research in this area can help to guide social science practitioners in their understanding, interventions and treatment of this new emerging generation of acculturated black adolescents in South Africa when they present with emotional or psychological problems. Having a better understanding of these adolescents will also facilitate the development of proactive measures when dealing with acculturated youth such as relevant life orientation programmes for teachers in schools, as well as the counselling and guidance needed for prospective adoptive and foster parents.

In South Africa few studies have been conducted on the influence of acculturation on the black adolescent and there is also lack of knowledge in this field. Thus the researcher hoped to explore and describe the phenomenon of acculturation within the South African context.

1.2 PROBLEM FORMULATION

As a school counsellor the researcher has dealt increasingly in the past years with adolescent black children who are now attending previously white only schools. Some of these children still live in the township areas, whereas others are now residing in the previously 'white only' areas. There have also been cases where white families have

fostered a few of the children.

Many of these children have been caught between the modern day white culture and their own black heritage and culture with very different norms and value systems. The reasons they were referred for counselling and their presenting problems ranged from mood disorders such as depression, eating disorders, stress, anxiety and self mutilation, to delinquent behaviour such as drug abuse and stealing. In treating these adolescents a common theme which often emerged was confusion and tension around the culture they were born into and the predominant culture they were now part of.

Burkhalter and Manala (2001:1) state that recently in a local counselling centre in the Gauteng area there has been an increased intake of troubled black adolescent youth who have been exposed to a culture milieu different from that of their birth and this is manifested in varying emotional and psychological symptoms.

Burkhalter and Manala (2001:2-5) also describe experiences and feelings of black adolescents in white foster care. These include confusion, conflict, feelings of dislocation, loss of a distinct cultural identity and feeling 'too white' for black friends and 'too black' for white friends. What is common to these children is that they are children of black domestic workers who have been fostered by the white families of their mother's employers.

Overseas studies with Mexican American females indicated that acculturation did significantly predict suicidal ideation when combined with depressive symptoms and low self-esteem (Rasmussen, Negy, Carlson and Bums, 1997:390-407).

As more children have needed alternative care over the years there has been an increase in trans-racial fostering and adoption. Trans-racial adoption was formally recognized and introduced by Johannesburg Child Welfare from 1991 and the number of trans-racial adoptions that have taken place in this agency from 1991 to 2003 is one hundred and seventy nine inclusive (Wilson, 2003). With the current state of affairs this is likely to be on the increase.

An increasing common South African phenomenon is to find white South African families fostering the children of their black employees. This involvement varies from financial assistance and support to parenting and sometimes even adoption or formally fostering their employee's child (Burkhalter and Manala, 2001:2-5).

Kruikshank (2004), a white adoptee of three black children feels that her adopted children are very secure within their own family environment. However she is also of the opinion that if she could speak Zulu fluently this would help to breach the racial barrier. There have been some problems in relation to their school in terms of other children finding it difficult to accept the fact that the parents and children in the family have a different skin colour. She does a lot of reading on the phenomenon of acculturation and is trying to gain as much information as possible before her children reach adolescence as she anticipates that this may be the time that problems could manifest.

Thus South Africa as a whole is trying to address the increasing need for alternate care for black children in both formal and informal ways.
However children are being immersed into a culture through alternate care as well as through the schooling system that may be very foreign to their own ethnic beliefs, norms and values.

Therefore in summary the influence of culture diversity and the resultant acculturation of the child are becoming growing phenomena in South Africa. This has not happened gradually over time but has been sudden and extensive. Therefore the researcher is of the opinion that the process of acculturation in South Africa is unique and may manifest its own unique problems especially during the adolescent stage when the development of self identity which is reliant on the integration of the many facets of the self-concept is paramount.

However the problem is that although this phenomenon is growing, there is a lack of research and knowledge on the impact of acculturation on the self-concept of black adolescents and this prevents the optimal intervention of social workers when dealing with acculturated youth in different practice settings.

1.3 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the research was to explore the influence of acculturation on the self-concept of the black adolescent in South Africa.

The aim/objectives of the study were:

- To compile a theoretical frame of reference regarding acculturation and the self-concept of the adolescent by means of the literature study and in consultation with experts.

- To explore the adolescent's reality with regard to the influence of acculturation on their self-concept.

- To make conclusions and recommendations regarding the following:
  o The influence of acculturation on black adolescents in terms of therapy interventions.
  o Guidelines for schools in terms of life-orientation programmes.
  o Guidelines for organizations that are involved in the placement of children in trans-racial alternate care.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION FOR THE STUDY

According to Fouche and Delport (2002:87) qualitative research is formulated in the form of a research question. The researcher aimed to explore and to describe the phenomenon of acculturation and therefore used the following research question, namely:

What is the influence of acculturation on the self-concept of the black adolescent in South Africa?

The research question was formulated from the assumption that acculturation has an influence on the emerging self-concept of the black adolescent.

1.5 RESEARCH APPROACH

The objectives of the research would determine the research approach.

Fouche and Delport (2002:79) state that qualitative research endeavors to elicit participant's account of meanings or experiences as well as the values and beliefs that may underlie phenomena. Descriptive data either written or verbal is an important part of the research material.

As the researcher's objective was to explore and gain insight into the phenomenon of the influence of acculturation on the self-concepts of black adolescents and describe the adolescents' social settings and their personal experiences of being immersed in a culture other than their own, the researcher followed a qualitative approach.

1.6 TYPE OF RESEARCH

Fouche (2000a:108-l09) and Babbie (1992:44) describe two main types of research mainly basic and applied research.

These authors propose that the goal of applied research is the scientific planning of induced change in a troublesome situation. It thus addresses the immediate problems facing the professional in practice. The aim of applied research is to expand knowledge, with the emphasis being on practica1 knowledge.

Thus the researcher's project was of an applied nature as the researcher investigated a problem situation in practice, namely the influence of acculturation on the self-concept of the black adolescent. The research objective was mainly of an exploratory and descriptive nature, gaining insight into existing theories and exploring the meaning of acculturation and its influence on the self-concept of the black adolescent within present day South African culture.

Therefore, although applied research the research project did not fall strictly into any of the subtypes of applied research. However the findings served as a platform for further developmental research and indicated some programmes, therapeutic guidelines and frameworks when dealing with acculturated youth and their families.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

Fouche (2002b:272) proposes that qualitative research does not supply the researcher with a step-by-step plan to follow but rather the researcher during the research process will create a research strategy best suited to their research.

The researcher used a phenomenological strategy of inquiry.

Cresswell (1998:61) regards phenomenology as a study "that describes the meaning that experiences of a phenomenon, topic or concept has for various individuals." The experiences of individuals are reduced to a central meaning or essence and the product of the research would be a description of this central meaning. The researcher was of the opinion that this strategy would be most suitable in developing an understanding of the influence of acculturation on the self-concept of the black adolescent.

However according to Fouche (2002b:273) in order to accomplish this it will be necessary to enter the "life-world" of the individual, in this respect the adolescent, by means of naturalistic methods of study such as interviews and subsequent analyses of the interviews, conversations and interactions with the researcher. Thus in following a phenomenological strategy, multiple black adolescent youth were interviewed. The meanings, themes and descriptions they gave in relation to their experience of themselves (self-concept) in their particular acculturated setting was analyzed and reduced to an essence of experience. This core or essence of experience of themselves (their self-concept) was then described by the researcher in the final product of the research.

1.8 RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The next step in the research process involves the procedures used for the gathering and analysis of research data. As the approach was of a qualitative nature, qualitative data collection methods and analysis were used.

1.8.1 Qualitative information collection

According to Strauss and Cobin (1998:11-12) and De Vos (2002a:321) the main forms of information collection from a qualitative approach are unstructured or semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis.

The researcher used phenomenology as the research strategy in order to explore and describe the influence of acculturation on the self-concept of each respondent and therefore made use of the following information collection methods.

1.8.1.1 Document analysis: According to Strydom and Delport (2002a:322) documents can be of a personal or official nature. The researcher used documents such as official reports, court reports, casework and process reports or documents which were relevant to the research process and which explained the context of research participants' backgrounds and present living arrangements.

1.8.1.2 Semi-structured one-to-one interviews: Greef (2002:302) explains that semi-structured interviews gain a detailed picture about participant's perceptions and beliefs about a particular topic. An interview schedule with a few predetermined questions acts as an instrument to engage the respondent and to focus on the topic at hand. However it is used only as a guide for the researcher and does not dictate the course or direction that each individual interview may take.

The researcher conducted one or two semi-structured interviews depending on what suited the research participants, using a few predetermined questions to elicit and explore the influence of each respondent's acculturated environment on their self-concept.

1.8.1.3 The researcher also made use of gestalt play assessment techniques to facilitate the communication process. According to Thompson and Rudolph (2000:273) play is children's symbolic language and provides them with a way to express their experiences and emotions. Oaklander (1998:160) states that play "serves as a language for the child (adolescent), a symbolism that substitutes for words."

Therefore although the researcher dealt with adolescents she was of the opinion that the gestalt assessment techniques would facilitate the communication process, help to bridge cultural differences and add to the richness and depth of data collection.

1.8.2 Data Analysis

De Vos (2002:340-341) refers to a number of models such as Morse and Field's approach as well as Marshall and Rossman's approach of data analysis from a

qualitative perspective. Creswell (1998:142-165) describes data analysis and interpretation as a data analysis spiral. All of these models overlap to some extent and the researcher has identified the following main steps:

1.8.2.1 Collecting and recording data:

Data recording should be done in a systematic and organized manner in order to facilitate the research process and the management of data at a later stage. Therefore the qualitative researcher needs to cultivate habits such as labeling audiotapes, carrying extra batteries for tape recorders and making notes as soon as possible after interviews.

1.8.2.2 Managing data:

According to De Vos (2002a:343) this is the first step of data analysis away from the site, the first loop in the spiral and begins the process proper.

Data is organized into files, computer files or index systems. Data can also be organized into text units such as words, sentences and stories. The literature review, earlier notes and memos as well as the researcher's transcript are a valuable part of data analysis. The researcher developed a filing system whereby tapes and post interview notes of individual sessions were labeled and then filed alphabetically. The products of play therapy were also either filed according to the session or photographed and then filed if it was not possible to keep the intact product. The transcripts and researcher's own perceptions of each interview were also filed accordingly.

1.8.2.3 Reading and memoing:

Marshall and Rossman, as quoted by De Vos (2002a:342) state that the researcher needs to read and reread the transcripts a number of times in order to become familiar with them in intimate ways. De Vos (2002a:343) suggests the writing of memos in margins of field notes and transcripts or under photographs helps to explore the data base. Memos consist of ideas, phrases, or key concepts that occur to the reader. As well as the above the researcher also reflected on and linked the verbal interview content and process with the play therapy assessment medium used, namely a sand tray or clay.

1.8.2.4 Describing, classifying and interpreting:

This phase of qualitative data analysis is described by De Vos (2002a:344) as the heart of qualitative data analysis. Salient themes, recurring ideas or language and patterns of belief start to emerge. The researcher endeavors to identify salient grounded meanings held by participants in the setting. Thus information is taken apart and classified into themes or categories. Usually five or six themes are identified from which sub-themes can be formed. Interpretation is the stage that makes sense of the data, with the researcher both observing the patterns that are emerging and yet at the same time challenging and being critical of explanations that may be forming. Marshall and Rossman, as quoted by De Vos (2002a:344) propose that all plausible explanations should be examined and the researcher should be able to justify the explanation offered as the most plausible of all.

The researcher used this method in her data analysis and interpretation and in this way gained insight into the themes, sub-themes, patterns and relationships of the phenomenon of acculturation in relation to the self-concept of each black adolescent respondent.

1.8.2.5 Representing and visualizing:

De Vos (2002a:344) describes this as the final stage whereby data are presented in a text, tabular or figure form. Different levels of abstraction can also be represented by using symbols. The researcher presented the research findings by using text as well as tabular, visual representation and photographs.

1.9 PILOT STUDY

In order to determine whether the intervention will work pilot tests are designed. According to Barrett (1998:27) it is often very useful to conduct a pilot study to try out in advance the methods, materials and equipment before embarking on a full scale study. It should be conducted using a smaller group of subjects who have similar characteristics to those subjects who will be used in the main study itself.

De Vos (2002b:411) points out that participants can assist the researcher in highlighting some of the problems and deficiencies in the system. The aspects of the

pilot study that are included in this proposal are the feasibility of the study, as well as a pilot test of the semi-structured interview and the play therapy assessment techniques that were used in the main study.

1.9.1 Feasibility of the study

Once the researcher had sufficiently articulated the research problem it was necessary to assess the practical feasibility of conducting the research.

Babbie and Mouton (2001:102) concur with Barrett (1998:23) stating that the following need to be considered carefully:

- Subject availability: Namely what type of subjects with what type of characteristics will the researcher require? The researcher identified adolescent black youth who have been either fostered or adopted by white families for a period of at least two years. Coetzee (2004), who heads the foster section of Johannesburg Child Welfare identified a sample of thirteen possible respondents currently in foster care that fitted with the researcher's criteria and gave the researcher permission to undertake the research.
- Equipment and materials required for the research: This includes the transport, consumables and funds available for the research. The researcher used her own transport and funded the cost of the research herself.

- Time: It is often appropriate to provide a schedule for the various stages of the research and a timeline for accomplishing steps in the research process. The researcher aimed to complete her research during the course of 2004 in accordance with the MSD Play Therapy Programme.

1.9.2 Testing of interview schedule

Strydom and Delport (2000b:337) and Franklin and Jordan (1997:106) emphasize that as qualitative research is undertaken over a longer period of time and in greater depth than quantitative research it is imperative that as accurate an assessment as possible of the real situation, is investigated.

For the pilot study the researcher used the following:

- A semi-structured interview schedule, using a number of open ended questions as a guide to focus on the research topic. This was supported by the gestalt play therapy assessment techniques using clay and the sand tray as mediums of self-expression.

- The researcher selected two black adolescent youth who were currently in foster care and who were not part of the main study to test the interview schedule and the gestalt play therapy assessment techniques.

1.9.3 Limitations of the study

- The sample size was small and non-probability purposive sampling was used to select respondents. Therefore the sample is not representative of the whole population and the findings cannot be generalized to all adolescents in trans-racial alternate care.

- There was very little literature to refer to, with regard to acculturation within the South African context.

1.10 DESCRIPTION OF THE UNIVERSUM, DELINEATION OF SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHOD

The universe is referred to by Strydom and Venter (2002:198) as all potential subjects who possess the attributes that the researcher is interested in. Population refers to the aggregation of elements from which the researcher draws his sample.

Thus according to the researcher's topic the universe included all those black youth in South Africa who have been adopted or fostered by white parents for a period of two years or more. The population referred to all the black adolescent youth in Gauteng who have been adopted or fostered by white parents for a period of two years or more and the sampling unit consisted of all the above black adolescent youth in Gauteng who were considered for inclusion in the study. The sampling frame was the list of names of fostered or adopted black youth that the researcher acquired from

Johannesburg Child Welfare. The observation unit consisted of the respondents that the researcher actually used for the research.

Strydom and Venter (2002:199) highlight that the main reason for sampling is for feasibility. A complete coverage of the total population is usually not possible. However it is important that the sample drawn is as representative as possible, that is, it has the same characteristics as the population relevant to the research in question.

Goldenberg (1992:156-157) and Grinnell (1997:239-245) give guidelines in relation to the two major groups of sampling procedures namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling. From a qualitative perspective non-probability sampling methods are used, in particular theoretical and purposive sampling.

1.10.1 Non-probability/purposive sampling

Denzin and Lincoln (2000:370) highlight that qualitative researchers identify individuals and settings where the specific processes or phenomenon under study are most likely to occur. As the researcher had to identify black adolescent youth who have either been adopted or who were in foster care the sampling method most suitable was purposive sampling. Strydom and Venter (2002:207) describe purposive sampling, as a method of sampling whereby participants will be selected, judged on the knowledge of the population, and it's most characteristic and representative attributes in relation to the researcher's aims.

Characteristics for inclusion in sampling:
- The researcher identified 6 adolescent youth between the ages of 12-20 years.
- Members of both genders were represented.
- The respondents had the characteristic of being either trans-racially adopted or fostered for at least a period of two years.
- Only respondents in the Gauteng geographical area were part of the study population.
- Respondents had to have a basic command of the English language.

As the researcher used non-probability sampling the results could not be generalized to the wider population.

1.11 ETHICAL ISSUES

There are a number of ethical guidelines to follow for social work research in order that a standard is set on which each researcher can evaluate their own conduct and ethical decision making should effectively become part of the researcher's total lifestyle. (Compare Strydom, 2002:62-74; Babbie & Mouton, 2001:520-525; Grinnell, 1997:133.) The researcher has used these guidelines as proposed by the above authors to identify and explore potential ethical issues which need to be considered as part of this research study.

The researcher used a pre-interview with the respondents and the foster/adoptive parents to inform them about the ethical issues.

1.11.1   Informed Consent

Strydom (2002:65) stresses that the consent of participants should be voluntary and informed. The goal of the research, the extent of each respondent's participation, the procedures to be used, the advantages and disadvantages of taking part and the potential dangers of participation was discussed in detail before the research study began so that their consent was indeed informed.

The researcher received permission from the organizations that have placed the youth, the adoptive or foster parents as well as the participants that were included in the study. The researcher gave accurate and clear information about the concept of acculturation, self-concept and the developmental stage of adolescent in language and at a level that all parties concerned could understand. The researcher also explained the process of information collection, namely using two interviews and the gestalt play therapy assessment techniques so that respondents could ask questions or gain clarity on the methodology beforehand.

1.11.2   Harm to experimental subjects and/or respondents

Research participants should be protected from any undue mental and physical harm and distress. Strydom (2002:64) stresses that respondents should be thoroughly informed beforehand about the potential impact of the study as this gives them the opportunity to withdraw from the study if they so wish. Participants were warned beforehand that due to the sensitive nature of the research, they might need some therapeutic intervention subsequent to the interviews. The researcher's interactions with the respondents may have lead to the surfacing of emotional and psychological issues or problems in relation to their adoption or foster placement. Issues dealing with acculturation may also have become highlighted. Debriefing took place after the research procedure. At this point in time no respondents have needed or requested on going therapeutic intervention however if necessary the researcher will put them in contact with organizations or private professionals who can assist them therapeutically. The researcher made arrangements with members of the South African Association of Social Workers in Private Practice (Saaswipp), Edenvale/Bedfordview Branch, to assist with debriefing or on going therapy with respondents if necessary. (Contact person Joy Clark, 011-4543219)

1.11.3 Deception of respondents

Corey, quoted by Strydom (2002:66) states that deception involves withholding information from subjects to ensure participation when subjects may have otherwise refused. Intentionally misleading subjects about the real intention of the study is also a form of deception.

As the researcher was aware of possible cross-racial barriers to communication the researcher endeavored to make the goal of the study as clear as possible and create an environment whereby research respondents felt comfortable enough to ask questions or gain clarity in the initial interview or as often as necessary during the course of the study so as to make the researcher's intention, questions and interactions as transparent as possible. In this way no intentional deception occurred and if unintentional deception unwittingly entered the study the researcher discussed it with the respondents as soon as possible.

1.11.4   The principles of confidentiality, privacy and anonymity

The researcher must uphold the principles of confidentiality, privacy and anonymity. Strydom (2002:67) points out that this principle can be violated in many ways and by upholding this principle the researcher is showing respect for the respondent and the right to self-determination.

Firstly, the researcher received permission from the participants and professionals involved in their cases to access any relevant court, case or process reports. Discussion of the services or cases were only done for professional reasons and only with the professionals and people directly involved. The researcher received permission from the participants to interview individuals who may be able to give in depth information about the case at hand. The participant had the right to decide the extent of information shared so as to respect his/her privacy.

All the interviews with respondents were done privately and the content of the sessions were not discussed with the foster or adoptive parents or with the organization that the adolescent may be affiliated to. Confidentiality would have only been broken if the researcher felt that the respondent was in danger of any immediate emotional, physical or psychological harm and would only be done by informing the respondent first and giving him/her control over the necessary process.

The researcher also explained to the participants the extent of confidentiality. In all research reports respondents would be assigned a pseudonym or number as means of identification. Therefore their anonymity was protected. It was made clear to respondents that the contents and findings of the research would be reported but their identities would remain anonymous. The researcher obtained permission from the participants to use a tape recorder for the interviews as well as to take photographs of the play therapy products.

1.11.5 Actions of competence of the researcher

Strydom (2002:69) states that researchers are ethically obliged to ensure that they are competent and adequately skilled to undertake the proposed research. Grinnell (1997:136-137) highlights the areas of concern when working cross-culturally. As the researcher worked with adolescents that were from a different culture than her own, she was aware of

the importance of showing respect for their cultural and ethnic beliefs and values and not be judgmental in any way. The researcher needed to take extra care not to assume to know the meanings they gave to their life contexts and experiences. More time had to be given to explore the meanings and experiences of the respondents.

As the researcher was dealing with sensitive issues she ensured that the sessions remained focused on the collection of empirical data and did not become of a therapeutic nature.

1.11.6 Cooperation with contributors

Strydom (2002:70) identifies that the involvement with colleagues or contributors either on a formal or informal basis should be formalized by means of a contract. This will help to prevent any misunderstandings from parties concerned. The researcher drew up a contract with colleagues with reference to the debriefing/therapy sessions as regards the payment and length of sessions in case this is necessary.

A contract was drawn up with the organization that had placed the youth in adoption or foster placements with regard to continued therapeutic assistance and support for the respondent and family if necessary. The researcher gained written permission from Johannesburg Child Welfare, Foster Care to undertake the research. Refer to appendix B.

1.11.7   Release and publication of findings

Strydom (2002:72) proposes that the research report needs to be written as accurately and clearly as possible and should not be misleading in any way. The researcher only took credit for the work directly done by her own research endeavors. The researcher gave feedback to the respondents and their families as well as the organizations that assisted in identifying respondents for the research study.

This is a form of recognition and an expression of gratitude for the assistance received and participation from respondents and the community.

1.11.8   Debriefing of respondents

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:475) debriefing can help respondents work through their experience and minimize any potential harm caused by the research experience.

The researcher included a debriefing session with the respondents after the completion of the two interview sessions. This was either be done by the researcher herself or a colleague as discussed in 11.2.

1.12   DEFINITIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.12.1 Acculturation

The process of assimilating new ideas into an existing cognitive structure and the adoption of the behaviour patterns of the surrounding culture (Hyperdictionary, 2000).

This refers to the extent to which ethnic-cultural minorities participate in the cultural traditions, values, beliefs, and practices of their own culture versus those of the dominant 'White' society (Landrine & Klonoff 1996:1).

The researcher viewed acculturation as the process whereby individuals internalize and integrate the beliefs, norms, values and practices of a new culture with their own existing culture.

1.12.2 Self-concept

The sum total of attributes, abilities, attitudes and values that an individual believes defines who he and she is (Berk, 1997: 428).

One's perceptions of one's unique attributes or traits (Schaffer, 1999:434).

The researcher viewed self-concept as the sum total of all the adolescents' perceptions of the self in relation to abilities, attitudes, values, identity as well as the self in interaction with others.

1.12.3 Adolescence

This refers to the developmental stage between childhood and adulthood. Because of the individual and cultural differences, the age at which adolescence begins varies from 11 to 13 and the age at which it ends varies from 17 to 21 (Thom, 1992:377).

The period of development marked at the beginning by the onset of puberty and at the end by the attainment of physiological or psychological maturity (Reber,1985:13).

The researcher viewed adolescents as youth between the ages of twelve to twenty years or youth who are presently in high school.

1.12.4 Black

A person with dark skin who comes from Africa (Hyperdictionary, 2000).

Of the Afro-American peoples or their culture (Webster pocket dictionary, 2002:63).

The researcher viewed black as all those peoples belonging to the different ethnic African groups in South Africa, including Indian or Coloured youth.

1.12.5 Black Adolescent

For the purpose of this study black adolescent referred to all those adolescents belonging to the different ethnic groups in South Africa, including Indian and Coloured youth, between the ages of twelve to twenty years or youth who were presently in high school.

1.13   CONTENTS OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

Chapter 1. General introduction and background of the study

An introduction to the phenomenon of acculturation and its application to the South African context were discussed. The aims and objectives of the study were explained and the steps and procedures of a qualitative research strategy were delineated.

Chapter 2. Adolescence and the self-concept

The theory of the adolescent developmental stage on a physical, psychological, social and moral level was outlined. The self-concept was defined and discussed with focus on ethnic identity development. Finally the link between adolescent development and the self-concept was explored.

Chapter 3. Culture and acculturation

The literature review defined and discussed culture and acculturation as well as the link between the two. Acculturation as existing on a continuum was explored both internationally and within the South African context. Finally acculturation theory was discussed and the controversy regarding acculturation and its influence on mental health was described.

Chapter 4. Empirical research

A phenomenological research strategy was employed using semi-structured interviews and gestalt play therapy assessment techniques as data collection methods. Findings were analyzed and interpreted by means of qualitative data analysis.

Chapter 5. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions and recommendations were made based on the findings of the study in terms of the influence of acculturation on the self-concept of the adolescent and the importance this has for therapy interventions and guidelines for school curriculum and alternate care.

CHAPTER 2

ADOLESCENCE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

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This well known poem by Broughton quoted by Thom *hw#do* (1998:425) is a reminder of how confusing adolescence can be as the adolescent loses the stable self-concept of childhood. The researcher believes that the black adolescent placed in a cultural diverse environment is dealing with not only the normal adolescent transition stage but is also confronted with confusion with his ethnic identity, his present cultural milieu and the physical and psychological changes which challenge him in forming a new adult identity. Thus the psychological tasks of these adolescents in forming a positive integrated self-concept are exacerbated and made more complicated.

In this chapter the researcher will discuss the adolescent developmental stage with focus on physical, cognitive, personality, social and moral development. Thereafter the multi-faceted composition of the self-concept will be discussed and explored. Special attention will be given to identity development as this has a major impact on the adolescent self-concept.

In the following chapter the researcher will explore the important influence of culture on the individual and how it affects every person on a daily basis. The link between culture and acculturation will be discussed and the theory of acculturation and its

effects will be related to the adolescent stage of development with focus on the black adolescent in trans-racial care.

Thom *hv#lo#*(1998:384) view adolescence as a process moving towards adulthood. In all cultures adulthood is seen as the ultimate goal of human development. Adolescence as a separate developmental stage begins between the ages of 11 to 13 years and usually ends between the ages of 17 to 21 years.

According to Erikson's theory of development the adolescent stage of self-identity versus identity confusion is the most difficult stage to negotiate successfully and several authors agree that the main tasks of this stage are to develop a sense of identity by integrating all the identifications of the previous stages. (Compare Thom *hv#da*, 1998:426-429; Thomas, 2000:151-152; Berk, 1997:17.)

A study of the literature focusing on the many physical, psychological and social changes of the adolescent stage of development will now be discussed.

2.2 PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Thom *hv#da* (1998:388-389) and Gumbiner (2002:24-25) agree that the most visible change in adolescents is the rapid and extensive growth, known as the growth spurt as well as the development of sexual maturity. As adolescents are acutely aware of the physical changes an important developmental task during adolescence is the acceptance of a changed physical appearance.

Shaffer (1999:170) states that the physical changes do not occur in a vacuum and there are psychological effects as a result of the rapid physical changes that take place in puberty. For example boys may become embarrassed by the changes in their voice as it becomes deeper. Girls may be concerned about their sudden increase in weight.
Coleman and Hendry, as quoted by Thom *hv#la* (1998:393) state that the age at which adolescents reach physical maturity can affect their psychological development. This is especially true if they reach maturity either much earlier or later than their peer group.

Gumbiner (2002:26) highlights the fact that each human's biology unfolds at its own rate. The author states that in order to study the relationship between physical and psychological development, researchers have categorized girls and boys into early and late maturers. Boys who mature earlier are likely to be more confident than their peers especially if they are tall and muscular. Findings in relation to early maturing girls are that they are likely to date at an earlier age and seek independence from their parents. However Papalia, Olds and Feldman (1998:376-277) state that early maturing girls may be at risk for drinking, smoking, depression, eating disorders and advances from older men.

According to Gormly (1997:378) physical appearance is a significant contributor to a teenager's sense of self esteem especially during the transition years from junior to high school. However self esteem seems to improve as they become more comfortable with themselves and their peer group.

Thom *hv#dla* (1998:393) state that cultural differences can also effect the psychological adjustment of adolescents to their perception of physical changes. In westernized culture a slender body is the norm whereas in Zulu culture girls were fattened up to promote weight increase.

The researcher believes that the black adolescent's body image and perception of what constitutes an attractive body will be challenged when being exposed to westernized culture.

Berk (1997:186-187) and Thom *hv#dol* (1998:400) concur that as a result of the physical development adolescents become more aware of their sexuality. They discover their sexual orientation and sexual attraction is usually focused on the opposite sex. Heterosexual relationships provide adolescents with a certain amount of sexual gratification and they develop their identity as sexual beings.

Papalia *hv#tla* (1998:377) refer to research done by Day who found that rural teens are more likely to have intercourse as well as younger adolescents with lower self esteem and less autonomy are also more likely to do so. An important development task is for

them to satisfy their sexual urges in a socially acceptable way and in this way contribute to the development of their identity.

The researcher believes that a healthy body image and satisfaction with one's looks plays an important part in developing a positive self-concept which will contribute to high self esteem. However the westernized version of the perfect female body is prepubescent and underdeveloped and is unrealistic and unattainable for most adolescent girls. Many young girls who try to attain this image become anorexic and bulimic.

In the next section there will be focus on the cognitive development during adolescence and its impact on the adolescents thinking and reasoning.

2.3 COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

The cognitive development in adolescence changes the child's concrete way of thinking to more comprehensive thinking skills.

 Thom *hvida* (1998:412) refer to Piaget's theory of cognitive development and state that formal operational thought is the highest level of thought that can be attained and is characterized by the following: abstract thinking, hypothetico-deductive reasoning, reasoning from the possible to the real, scientific thinking, reflective abstraction, interpropositional reasoning and combinatorial thinking.

A very significant psychological development pointed out by Berk (1997:241) is the transition from concrete operational thought whereby children can only operate on reality to formal operational thought where adolescents operate on operations. This means that concrete things and events are no longer required as objects of thought and instead adolescents can come up with new more general rules through internal reflection.

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Thom *et al* (1998:423-424) and Berk (1997:242-244) highlight how these more advanced cognitive abilities effect the adolescent's development in the following areas:

- Adolescents want to make their own decisions when confronted with several alternatives or solutions to a problem. They often want to do this without their parent's guidance as they are striving for autonomy.

- Adolescents require explanations from their parents with regard to parental expectations, rules, values and belief systems as they now have the ability of hypothetico–deductive reasoning. They no longer just accept what parents say or do. If parents fail to supply adequate reasons this could lead to conflict. Adolescents could question parents'own behaviour or values and this could also lead to conflict between them.

- They have the ability to evaluate existing religious, political and social structures critically and can enter into a discussion about them assessing alternative systems or advantages and disadvantages of existing systems.

- Scientific thinking promotes adolescent idealism whereby adolescents create theories about ideal families, societies, relationships. This gives them the opportunity to examine norms, values, belief systems, roles and political and social systems.

- With the increase of introspection and reflection adolescents become more aware of themselves and are thus able to consider various possibilities regarding themselves. They can thus consider various self images either on a cognitive or physical level and compare these to the perceptions that their peers may have of them. Peer-group norms give them the opportunity to evaluate these self images in terms of the peer group. Self evaluation can lead to self criticism especially if adolescents do not fit in with or are rejected by the peer group.

- Inner reflection can either lead to dissatisfaction with the self resulting in mood swings or depression or satisfaction with the self resulting in joy and happiness.

The researcher believes that the increased ability of introspection and reflection enables the adolescent to make comparisons between himself and his peers on all levels. Thus when the black adolescent is exposed to a new cultural environment his

developmental stage makes him more acutely aware of differences and he is more vulnerable to be influenced by the other culture.

Berk (1997:244) states that culture seems to play a role in attaining formal operational thought. In some cultures due to the lack of opportunity to solve hypothetical problems abstract thought may not occur in some societies. Thom *hv#la* (1998:415), suggest that it is highly valued in Western cultures and therefore individuals are encouraged to achieve this type of thinking. Many cultures do not consider abstract and hypothetical thinking as the ideal.

Thom *hv#la* (1998:415) quote Mwmwenda who mentions that many black communities do not perform as well as persons from Western cultures when formal-operational thought is tested with Piagetian-type tasks. However when using metaphors and analogies to solve problems, a high level of abstraction can be observed.

The researcher feels that it is important to recognize these differences. Certain ethnic groups in South Africa express themselves in more traditional and cultural ways than do their westernized counterparts. The use of narrative and the meanings that are given to different customs and traditions are an important part of expression and need to be understood within the cultural context.

The following section will focus on the adolescent's personality development as well as the many psychological aspects which contribute to the formation of the personality.

2.4 PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

Thom *hv#la* (1998:425) suggest that identity formation, the self-concept, emotions and career choice all influence the development of the adolescent's personality.
Papalia *hv#la* (1998:368) emphasize Erikson's viewpoint that the teen's effort to make sense of the self is not part of "a kind of a maturational malaise." Rather it is part of a healthy and necessary process that builds on the achievement of earlier stages namely

trust, autonomy, initiative and industry and lays the groundwork for coping with the crises of adult life.

2.4.1 Identity formation

Shaffer (1999:457) describes identity as "a mature self definition; a sense of who one is, where one is going in life, and how one fits into society." The author refers to Eriksons theory stating that this is the major developmental task that adolescents are faced with.

Thom *h∨#∥α* (1998:425) and Papalia *h∨#∥α* (1998:370) agree with this and state further that although identity development begins in infancy and continues throughout life the greatest degree of identity development occurs during adolescence. The profound physical, cognitive, sexual, social and moral development threatens the adolescent's sense of wholeness and security of who they are. Identity forms as young people resolve three major issues: the adoption of values that they internalize and can live by, the choice of an occupation and the development of a satisfying sexual identity. Therefore a vital task of adolescence is to integrate these developments in order to develop an identity.

Erikson identifies five main tasks in order to develop their own identity
(Thom *h∨#∥α* 1998:426).

- Ego-synthesis needs to take place. This means that the adolescent has to form a continuous integrated and unified image of the self. In spite of the passing of time or changes, the person should still feel that they are the same person.

- Sociocultural identity has to be formed. This means that the adolescent needs to include the value-orientations of their culture.

- Gender-role identity needs to be well established. They have to adjust and accept the changes as a result of sexual maturity and accept their identities of male and female.

- A career identity must be formed. Adolescents need to realistically assess their abilities and achievements in order to make a realistic career choice.

- Gormly (1997:380) and Papalia *h∨#∥α* (1998:370-371) also highlight the difficulty and complexity for minority groups to forge an ethnic or racial identity. An ethnic identity refers to a sense of belonging to an ethnic or racial

group that becomes part of one's thoughts, feelings and behaviour. The awakening of ethnic identification can take place at any point in adulthood, however it occurs most often in adolescence.

Papalia *et al* (1998:374) add that identity development is even more complex for young people in minority groups who need to integrate multiple identities. The above authors refer to the research done by Spencer and Markstrom–Adams who found that skin colour and other physical features, language differences and stereotyped social standing are extremely influential in moulding minority adolescents' self-concepts.

The researcher concurs with this and feels that a negative self concept could develop especially if the adolescent perceives the dominant group as better than their own ethnic group.

2.4.2 Identity confusion

Identity diffusion or confusion occurs when adolescents become confused about their roles or themselves. If they cannot integrate their roles or if they are exposed to contradictory value systems they may not have the ability or confidence to make decisions. This could lead to anxiety, apathy or hostility towards roles and values. (Compare Berk, 1997:438; Thom *et al*, 1998:427 and Papalia *et al* 1998:369.)

This could lead to the following:

- Identity foreclosure: This occurs when the adolescent resolves the identity crisis by a series of premature decisions about their identity based on other people's expectations of what one should be.
- Negative identity: The adolescent may rebel and form an identity contrary to the expected norms and values of his/her culture.
- Identity diffusion: The adolescent will be aimless and without goals feel unhappy and have only superficial relationships.

2.4.3 Self-concept

 Thom *et al* (1998:433) state that the adolescent's view of themselves, in other words their self-concepts is greatly influenced by the adolescent's identity development. As

their identity develops over the course of time so their views of themselves will change accordingly.

As children develop they begin to include all aspects of themselves including their cognitive, physical and social skills in a comprehensive opinion of themselves. In adolescence new dimensions of the self have to be incorporated including changing physical appearance, sexuality, changes in social relationships, romantic relationships and choosing careers. Berk (1997:430) defines self-concept as "judgements we make about our own worth and the feelings associated with those judgments." Thus during adolescence the self esteem has to be modified further to include these new dimensions which need to be evaluated.

Thom *hvtla* (1998:434) and Gormly (1997:379) state that in adolescence there is most likely to be a temporary decline in self-esteem as a result of the many physical, cognitive and social changes that the adolescent has to adjust to. Gormly adds that self-esteem is lowest between the ages of 12 and 13 which corresponds with physical changes that are more dramatic and conflict with parents is most intense. However as they adjust to these changes feelings of self-worth usually return. Factors such as poverty, poor and over crowded housing, family disorganization, lack of parental love and support and lack of meaningful relationships could have an effect on the adolescent's self-concept.

The researcher feels that adjustment difficulties can be further exacerbated if the adolescent is removed from parental care and placed in alternate care such as a foster home even though the removal may be very necessary. It will be incumbent on the social worker to assist them in processing the change and adapting to their new environment.

2.4.4 Emotions

According to Thom *hvtda* (1998:434) the adolescent stage of development is characterized by mood swings and emotional outbursts as a result of the high rate of development on a physical, cognitive, social level.

Berk (1997:182-183) cites that adolescents experience more negative and less positive emotions than younger children. There is an increase in anger and depression in girls whereas boys experience positive and negative emotions, sometimes feeling energetic and focused and at other times feeling irritated and aggressive. These changes are usually related to their higher hormone levels.

Thom *et al* (1998:434) state that as adolescents also focus more on themselves they are also more likely than younger children to experience feelings of guilt, shame, anxiety and embarrassment. However they are also more able to show insight into their own and other people's feelings. Thus their ability to experience empathy develops further.

2.4.5 Career Choice

One of the most important tasks of adolescence is career choice and preparation for a career which contributes to defining an identity and a first step to fulfilling the adult role. (Thom *et al* 1998:435).

Gormly (1997:398) stresses that parents and family members provide the first models of what workers do and how one feels about work.

 The following factors pinpointed by Thom *et al* (1998:440-444) influence career choice of the South African adolescent namely:

- The democratizing of South Africa and the development of information technology has led to many new possibilities and challenges for those entering the work force.
- Socio-economic status: There is a relation between the choice of career and socio-economic class. Young people from a higher socio-economic class usually choose careers with a higher prestige value.
- Gender differences also influence career choice. In the past the male's career was regarded as more important and a woman's career came secondary to her role of wife, mother and homemaker. However nowadays more and more young women are becoming professional career women.

- Parents also exert an important influence on their children's career choice. Adolescents will have high ideals for themselves if their parents have high ideals for them and encourage and reward them for their efforts despite their social class and abilities.

- Mass media such as television, newspapers, magazines and radio can make adolescents aware of different career opportunities. However the adolescent can be misled as often only the positive aspects of the career are advertised.

The researcher assumes that the adolescent's self concept will also effect their choice of career. If an individual lacks confidence and belief in their abilities this may lead them to choose a less challenging career or lead them to agree albeit unwillingly to their parent's choice for them.

The following section will focus on the important changes that take place in adolescence with regard to the adolescent's social context.

2.5 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The social context of the adolescent plays an important role in the adolescent development process as it is within this setting that the physical, sexual, cognitive, personality, moral and social development take place and it could either promote or hamper development (Thom *hvttlol* 1998:444).
The social context in adolescence is formed mainly by parents and peers.

2.5.1 The parent-adolescent relationship
It is understandable that within the parent-adolescent relationship some conflict should develop as the adolescent is becoming an autonomous and independent young person and therefore accordingly the parent-adolescent relationship undergoes significant changes and reorganization.

Thom *hvttlol* (1998:445) also refer to a study done by Thom where he found that White adolescents agree more with their parents on political issues, relationships and sexual behaviour with the opposite gender, than African adolescents do with their parents.

The reason that the author gives for this is that African adolescents are often more westernized than their parents.

The above authors also refer to another study done by Beukes who found that conflict is more prevalent in African families than in other population groups. This conflict is the result of poverty, alcoholism, overcrowding, ethnic differences between mother and father and illiteracy of the parents.

2.5.2 Parenting styles

Parenting styles exert a powerful influence on the adolescent's identity development. There are three main parenting styles are identified and described by Baumrind as discussed in Berk (1997:543-545) and Thom *h*$v#la$ (1998:447).

Authoritative parents encourage their adolescents to behave independently within a framework of limitations and control. Parents are affectionate and caring and adolescents are allowed to reason with their parents and parents give reasons for rules and limitations set. Adolescent children raised in this democratic environment are more responsible and can rely on themselves.

Authoritarian parents enforce adolescents to behave according to the rules of the house and explanations and discussions are not entered into. This restrictive and punitive style is associated with socially incompetent behaviour from adolescents as well as poor communication skills.

Permissive parenting is characterized by not exercising control over the adolescent's behaviour and they are left to make their own decisions. These adolescents show socially incompetent behaviour and limited self-control as they have never learnt to control their own behaviour.

The researcher believes that the parenting style in alternative care also has an important influence on adolescent identity development. It will be even more challenging for foster parents to put structure and boundaries in place when dealing with psychological damaged adolescents whose behaviour is difficult to manage.

However it is these children that need loving authoritative leadership to help them shape their will and behaviour and in this way develop a positive self-image.

2.5.3 Peer group relationships

Social development in adolescence is characterized by an increasing interest and involvement with the peer group as they have an intense desire to belong and according to Berk (1997:590) peer acceptance is a powerful predictor of long-term psychological adjustment. Thom *hv#dol* (1998:449) and Gormly (1997:392) state that the interpersonal contact beyond the family relationship with the peer group and friends are important for the adolescent's psychosocial development. The above authors propose that peer group interaction is an important source of socialization and contributes towards the satisfaction of their emotional needs. Thus the peer group can be regarded as a separate culture which helps to ease the transition from childhood to adulthood.

Gormly (1997:392) proposes that peer groups provide adolescents with a group with which to compare themselves. More supportive relationships emerge from within the peer group in the form of friendships.

Thom *hv#da* (1998: 454) highlight the value of friendship and state that friendships help teenagers cope with the changes and stressors of adolescence as they can identify with one another. Close friendships can help to deal with loneliness and isolation and contribute to adolescents' self-concept development. Honest communication and self-disclosure between friends promotes self awareness and assists adolescents to become more sensitive and empathic toward others. Adolescent friendships can substitute for parental support as adolescents seek greater independence from their families.

According to Gormly (1997:392) an important development in adolescence, as a result of friendships within the peer group is mutual role taking. This is the ability to keep one's own view and that of another in mind simultaneously and this will help them achieve a level of intimacy within a social relationship.

The researcher agrees that peer relationships are of extreme importance at this age. In her own counselling experience it has become evident that if the adolescent feels that friends will be there to offer support during difficult times the adolescent will have hope and motivation to overcome the problem. However adolescents who are not accepted by their peers often feel rejected and very isolated and this is exacerbated especially if they have an unsupportive family environment.

In this final section the moral development of the adolescent, which is one of the most important areas of change during this stage of development will be discussed.

2.6 MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Moral development is regarded by Thom *hv#dol* (1998:459) as one of the most important developmental tasks in adolescents. With the expansion of their social involvement a personal value system assists them to practice socially and morally responsible behaviour. In order to develop a value system, adolescents need to question the existing value, decide which are acceptable to them and incorporate them in their personal value system.

Thom *hv#la* (1998:466-467) and Papalia *hv#la* (1998:352-255) state that the following factors influence moral development in adolescence:

- Cognition: Formal operational thinking enables the adolescent to investigate and interpret the social environment and issues regarding morality in a new and different way. Thus they can form a hypothesis, investigate and test them. Abstract thinking enables them to consider alternative values and to assess them rationally.
- Parental attitudes and actions: It is important that moral values become internalized and owned by adolescents. However this depends to a large extent on the relationship that they have with their parents. If parents are warm and loving, model good moral behaviour and encourage their adolescent children to participate in decision making, they promote moral maturity in their children.

- Peer interaction: Interaction among peers who have differing viewpoints and perspectives on life issues as well opportunities for adolescents to discuss and debate moral issues promotes moral development.

- Religion: Youth who are religious show greater moral development than youth who are not. They also tend to experience more feelings of security and are less anxious than there nonreligious peers and also identify more with their parents attitudes, values and behaviour.

- Socio-economic class: Cross-cultural studies done by Snarey (Thom *hv#dol/* 1998:468) showed that middle class persons are more likely to reach a higher level of moral development than lower class individuals.

Although research is helpful the researcher is of the opinion that unless the context of the research is explained, this could lead to individuals stereotyping people who belong to a lower class. It is important to remember that each individual is different and one should not approach any "class" with preconceived ideas.

The changes in adolescence are dramatic and numerous. This has a major impact on the adolescent self-concept. In the following section the self-concept will be defined and discussed with emphasis on ethnic identity development.

2.7 THE SELF-CONCEPT

The researcher believes that the self-concept is a complex concept that is not easily defined and the formation and development of the self-concept is dependant on a multitude of different familial, cultural, environmental and religious influences as well as daily life experiences. The individual's perception and response to these will all contribute to the development of the self concept.

In this section the researcher will attempt to define and describe the self concept. As identity is a focal point of the self-concept the influence of ethnic identity conflicts on the self concept will be explained and the stages of ethnic identity development will be discussed.

2.7.1 Definition of the self-concept

According to Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (1989:379) the Rogerian view of the self-concept is the "picture" which the person has of himself and the value he attaches to himself. Thus it is the conscious experience the individual has of himself. Only conscious experiences and experiences which are allowed are incorporated into the self-concept. The self-concept is a relatively stable pattern of integrated perceptions however it is nevertheless both flexible and changeable.

Shallcross and Sisk (1985:10) refer to Roger's conception of the individual, that is a person in the process of becoming and that individuals have only one goal and that is to achieve self-actualization. However this occurs through a continual process of growth and development and because self perceptions are organized into a whole change in one part of the self-concept influences the whole self image.

Meyer *hwtla* (1989:379) refer to Roger's ideal self which is the self-concept the person would most like to have. The ideal self in a psychologically healthy person provides the person with guidelines for growth and development. In this way it reveals the characteristics and ideals the individual needs to strive towards for self actualization.

Botha, van Ede and Piek, (1991:282-283) state that in its simplest form the self–concept is described as a person's view or evaluation of himself or herself and is an important part of their personality development. Berk (1997:428) elucidates on this describing the self-concept as the sum total of attitudes, values, abilities and attributes that an individual believes defines who he or she is.

Thus there are many aspects of people's concepts about themselves and Evans and Poole (1991:20) are of the opinion that these are not unitary in nature and in fact the term self concept has been related in theory to identity, ego-identity, identity status, self-esteem and personal attributes.

Botha *hwtla* (1991:282-284) describe self–concept as the person's view or image of themselves and includes aspects such as self-image, self-esteem and self-acceptance.

Shaffer (1999:441) indicates that the evaluative part of the self-concept is one's self-esteem. As children develop they not only understand more and more about themselves and "construct more intricate self portraits" but they also begin to evaluate the qualities they believe that they have acquired. The author describes global self-esteem as self appraisal based on strengths and weaknesses we display in many different domains. In dimensions such as job competence, romantic appeal, and close friendships and these become important contributors to global self-esteem during adolescence.

The researcher recognizes the importance of defining and understanding the self-concept in terms of all aspects which contribute to the individual's make-up. The individual's "view" of himself is shaped through the interaction with and feedback from the environment and as well as within relationships which assist in the development of the self-concept.

2.7.2 Threat to the self-concept with regard to ethnic identity conflicts

Phinney, Lochner and Murphy (1990:55) quote Tajfel who states that "individuals who belong to a group that is disparaged and treated stereotypically by the majority group face a threat to their self-concept. However stereotypes which lead to a poor self-concept only occur if they are accepted and believed. The above authors suggest that conflicts may result from differences in the norms and values of distinct cultural groups and Tajfel, as well as Berry and Kim in (Stiffman and Davis, 1990:57) suggest a number of responses or ways of coping with ethnic identity conflicts.

- Alienation/Marginalization: In this situation individuals will accept the negative self-image presented by society. They will then become alienated from their own culture and will not adapt to the majority culture.
- Assimilation: Individuals do not maintain ties with their own ethnic culture and attempt to become part of the dominant culture.
- Withdrawal or Separation: In this instant individuals emphasize their ethnic culture and withdraw from contact with the dominant group. This may offer temporary protection from internalization from negative stereotypes.

- Integration/Biculturalism: Individuals adapt to the dominant culture by learning the necessary skills but at the same time they retain their ethnic culture.

2.7.3 Process of ethnic identity development

Phinney *hv‡dol* (1990:64) describe the process of ethnic identity development when individuals are exposed to or immersed in a culture other than their own. This is especially difficult for adolescent youth who according to Erikson are already dealing with the key developmental task of attainment of a secure identity which forms an integral part of the self-concept.

The authors describe the following three stages of ethnic identity development:

- Ethnic Identity Diffusion/Foreclosure: This stage is characterized by a lack of exploration of ethnic issues. In this stage of development individuals accept the values and attitudes of the dominant culture and this may include internalizing negative views of their own group. Thus there can be lack of interest with one's own ethnicity (diffusion) and attitude's about one's ethnicity that are derived from others (foreclosure).

- Ethnic Identity Search/Moratorium: It is believed that the initial stage continues until individuals have an experience with racism, which forces an awareness of themselves as members of a minority group held in low esteem by the majority. This leads to a growing awareness that not all cultural values of the other cultural group are beneficial to the individual and leads to an ethnic identity search or moratorium.

- Ethnic Identity Achievement: In terms of ethnic identity achievement the individual accepts and internalizes his or her ethnicity and the identity process results in an achieved identity. Phinney and Alipuria (in Stiffman and Davis, 1990:680) state that adolescents with an achieved ethnic identity show better psychological adjustment.

2.8 SUMMARY

Adolescence is the most difficult psychosocial stage to negotiate successfully.
The adolescent is changing and developing at a rapid rate on a physical, cognitive and psychological level. The adolescent has to adapt to this change and has to integrate this new self into the self-concept of childhood and ultimately emerge as a fully functioning young adult with a positive self identity.

Thus the development of identity is not a smooth transition and is further complicated by ethnic identity conflicts which can have a major impact on the individual's self-concept.

The researcher is of the opinion that family support and understanding can ease the transition of this stage. If the adolescent is also dealing with the transition of a new cultural environment this could further exacerbate the developmental changes he is going through and lead to the emergence of a confused self identity and ultimately a negative self concept. Failure to identify with any culture may result in marginalization, negative outcomes and possible self destructive delinquent behaviour.

In the following chapter the concepts of culture and acculturation will be defined and discussed and the influence of these phenomena on the practical daily living and psychological functioning of individuals will be explored.

CHAPTER 3

CULTURE AND ACCULTURATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Culture is an all encompassing phenomenon that each person is immersed in from the time of birth until their death. Jenks (1993:8) and Duarte (1996:9) concur that each is born into a cultural system of beliefs, traditions, norms, values, and ways of interacting, communicating and living. Culture not only defines who we are but also directs our thoughts, decisions and actions.

When an individual is exposed to a new culture and begins to adopt the values, beliefs and practices of this culture, and begins to move away from his birth culture, acculturation has taken place (Orshan,1999:2). However in order to become acculturated the individual initially needs to be immersed in his own culture.

This chapter will firstly define and describe culture and then briefly describe the characteristics of culture. Thereafter acculturation as a concept will be defined and discussed. Acculturation as existing on a continuum will be explored in terms of the different models, ranging from traditional to multicultural. A model of African American acculturation will be depicted with reference to its utility regarding the South African context. Finally the controversy relating to mental health issues associated with acculturation will be addressed.

3.2 DEFINITION OF CULTURE

Culture is defined as a highly specific pool of information, categories, rules for categorization, intersubjective meanings, collective representations and ways of knowing, understanding and interpreting stimuli as a result of a common history (Landrine and Klonoff, 1996:37).
 Culture is described more simplistically by Kielhofner (1995:95) who states that it consists of perceptions and beliefs, values and norms as well as customs and

behaviours that are shared by a group or society and are passed on from one generation to the next through both formal and informal learning.

According to Jenks (1993:8) the idea of culture embraces such a range of topics, processes, differences and even paradoxes that to define it singularly is indeed a difficult task. However its impact on society and the individuals who are part of that society is very significant. The author suggests that sociologists and anthropologists account for the concept of culture in a number of different ways. In its most general sense culture is considered to be all that which is symbolic, namely the learned and ideational aspects of human society and in this way can be used to holistically appraise the ways of life of people, their beliefs, rituals and customs.

Duarte (1996:9) refers to Coon, who defines culture in an all-inclusive way. He emphasizes that culture is learned and it influences both interpersonal as well as intergroup relations. His definition includes the manner in which individuals expend energy including speech, music, the visual arts and the human body itself.

Van Der Hoorn, as quoted in Duarte (1996:9) refers to an unknown author who compares culture to an onion that consists of many layers. Each individual lives within an invisible sheath called culture. This sheath has many layers fashioned by different influences such as neighbourhood, religion, race and country and even to climate and geography.

The researcher concurs with this description. Culture becomes integrated with our personhood. It is an interwoven web which makes up our psyche and directs our experiences and behaviour in conscious and unconscious ways.

3.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURE

Duarte (1996:10) quotes Rohner who proposes that there are four basic assumptions of culture, namely that culture is learned, culture is a way of life, culture is shared and culture is organized.

3.3.1 Culture is learned

The above author states that culture is passed on from one generation to the next by means of teaching and learning and this process is known as enculturation. Thus culture is transferred from birth to death and ways of living, values, ideas and concepts are internalized and exist for long periods of time.

Berk (1997:27) directs attention to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. His theory focuses on "social interaction – particularly what he calls cooperative dialogues between children and the more knowledgeable members of society and in this way culture –the values, beliefs, customs and skills of a social group is transmitted to the next generation." Vygotsky stresses that this is necessary for children to acquire the ways of thinking and behaving that make up a community's culture.

Klonoff and Landrine (1996:37) concur with this assumption of culture and state that their definition of culture emphasizes the cognitive rather than the behavioural aspects of culture. They state that "to be a member of a culture is less a question of what one does and more a matter of how and what one perceives, believes and understands – which then predicts what one does." Thus in this way culture becomes a way of life.

3.3.2 Culture is a way of life

Culture is a way of life for individuals and this encompasses people's material world, their spirituality, their heritage, their traditions, their designs for living and their scripts. Thus culture influences each one of us from birth to death in all the most important aspects of daily living and in the way we conduct our relationships. As Kahn (1995:x) describes it "our lives have become fully culturalized."

Landrine and Klonoff (1996:37) concur with this and explain further that culture operates largely at the unconscious level, and can be compared to an unwritten dictionary that tells its members what things are and what they mean.

3.3.3 Culture is shared

Certain aspects of understanding are shared by all members of a particular culture.
Schaffer (1999:394) explains this with reference to how each society in their particular cultural setting has a set of emotional display rules that specify which emotions can or

cannot be expressed. For example children in the United States learn very quickly that they are supposed to express happiness and gratitude when they receive a gift from grandma even if the gift turns out to be underwear and they feel really disappointed.

However emotions that are considered socially acceptable may differ from one culture to another. Schaffer (1999:394) refers to research done by Levine who studied the interactions between Gusii mothers in Kenya who hardly have any face to face play with their babies and prefer to keep them as calm and content as possible. Thus Gussi babies learn to restrain both positive and negative emotions whereas American babies learn that intense emotion is okay as long as it is positive. Thus even at this young age culture plays a very powerful role and is shared by means of cultural attunement that is learned very early in life.

3.3.4 Culture is organized
There is organization within shared understandings for people to interact socially.
Thus the child may pretend to like the gift bought by his grandma but if his father brought home the same gift it would be okay for him to vent his feelings and say that he did not like it. Both the child and the adult know which shared understanding is more important and in what circumstances or context it should be implemented. Thus the fact that culture is organized prescribes ways of behaving that are socially acceptable to different cultures.

The researcher is of the opinion that the family and environment which the child is exposed to exerts a very powerful influence in transmitting cultural norms, values, behaviours and ways of thinking to the child. This may also happen in a subtle, covert and undetected manner.

With regard to the child in foster care, it is important to take cognizance, that each child prior to his foster care placement was immersed in his own traditional culture which up to the point of removal or placement has exerted a powerful and indelible influence on him. However when a child is placed in a different cultural environment it is inevitable that this new culture will influence him to some extent. In the next section acculturation as a phenomenon will be defined and described.

3.4 ACCULTURATION

Comas-Diaz and Grenier (1998:219) describe acculturation as the degree to which an individual has adopted the values, beliefs, culture and practices of the host culture. Orshan (1999:2) refers to acculturation as the process by which individuals, families and communities of a distinctly unique culture background begin to start sharing aspects of a second culture. Landrine and Klonoff (1996:1) describe acculturation as "the extent to which ethnic-cultural minorities participate in the cultural traditions of their own culture versus those of the dominant 'White' society."

According to the above authors acculturation can be viewed on a continuum from traditional to acculturated. Traditional individuals are those who maintain the beliefs, practices and values of their own culture. Bicultural individuals are found in the middle whereby they have retained the beliefs and practices of their own culture but have also assimilated the beliefs and practices of the dominant White society and simultaneously participate in two very different cultural traditions. Then there are those on the other end of the continuum who have rejected the beliefs of their own culture in favour of the dominant white culture. The authors state further that studies have found strong relationships between an ethnic minority person's level of acculturation and psychiatric disorders, coronary heart disease, drug and alcohol abuse, cigarette smoking and hypertension.

Comas-Diaz and Grenier (1998:219) state that acculturation is consistent with the concept of transculturation meaning that a new hybrid culture develops out of both the original and the host culture. They define assimilation as migrant's loss of their original cultural identity as they acquire a new identity and a second culture. The above authors state that cultural transition can affect individuals differently according to their stage of development.

Comas-Diaz and Grenier (1998:223) highlight that for the adolescent "translocation during the identity versus role confusion stage could have profound effects." They refer to Erikson's stages of development and state that this stage can result in role

confusion and with the addition of cultural translocation this can exacerbate the role confusion thus adding more pressure and complexity to an already-complicated task. Els (1993:26) concurs with this and explains that during the process of acculturation a transfer of ideas occurs when the individual is exposed to the new culture which causes psychological conflict and can disrupt the personality structure of the individual.

This is the stage where adolescents often over-identity with the peer group and often seem to lose their identity. In a situation where there is migration it could affect the adolescent's ethnic identity and thus formation of their general identity. The authors state further that many adolescents migrating in this period face many difficulties including linguistic, educational, cultural and adjustment problems.

Gumbiner (2002:98-99) states that two important ways to assess acculturation is firstly language preference. The respondents are asked about the degree to which they prefer to use their native tongue and in what specific contexts: at home, at work, in thinking or with friends. Another easy way to measure acculturation is to ask respondents who they socialize with. For example do they socialize with their own ethnic group only or with members of other ethnic groups.

The researcher views acculturation as a complex process which can have varying degrees of influence on adolescents who are exposed to new cultural environments. However in South Africa, black homeless, abandoned and orphaned children and adolescents have increased over the last few years and some of these children have been placed in trans-racial settings. The researcher feels the manner in which the adolescent perceives and experiences the new culture will determine the impact it will have on him/her. In addition to this the unseen, hidden meanings the person gives to these experiences may determine positive or negative outcomes.

There have been very few studies done in South Africa with reference to acculturation and its effects. The researcher has therefore used African American studies in order to place acculturation in a theoretical framework so as to create a better understanding of acculturation and its influence on the black adolescent in the South African context.

3.4.1 TOWARDS A THEORY OF ACCULTURTION

Landrine and Klonoff (1996:43) point out that there are many models of acculturation with regard to the processes and outcomes of adaption of ethnic minority individuals to a multicultural society in which their culture is one of the many subcultures and is not the dominant culture.

In a review of the literature on acculturation LaFromboise, Coleman and Gerton (1993:396-401) state that there are five models which can be used to understand the process of change between and among cultures. These models are assimilation, acculturation, alternation, multiculturism and fusion.

In addition to these Berry (1997: 568) also adds two additional groups in describing the concept of acculturation namely separation and marginalization.

3.4.1.1 Separation

According to Berry (1997:8) separation occurs when people choose to remain segregated and do not take on the culture and customs of mainstream society.

3.4.1.2 Assimilation

This is the classic use of the term and refers to the absorption into the dominant culture.

Drennan (2003:399) and Berry (1997:568) concur that the assimilation model of acculturation infers that ethnic minorities will adapt to a multicultural society by relinquishing their culture of origin in favour of the dominant culture. Thus they replace their native culture and customs with the customs and culture of mainstream society. The authors describe this process as a one way street whereby assimilation is unidirectional (one way) process of adaption. The outcome will be fully acculturated (assimilated) minorities. Thus the underlying assumption of all assimilation models is that the person of a specific culture will lose his or her original cultural identity as they acquire a new identity in a second culture.

The problems inherent in assimilation are the following:

- Rejection by the majority group

- Rejection by the culture of origin

- The stress of the process of assimilating.

Therefore the individual will suffer from a sense of alienation and isolation until he is accepted by or perceives a sense of acceptance from the new culture.

Thus assimilation can be regarded as an all-or-none model whereby the culture of origin is fully replaced by the dominant culture for the individual. In African American acculturation these individuals are referred to as assimilated-acculturated meaning that all major aspects of the culture of origin are absent from the individual's cultural behaviour.

According to Drennan (2003:399) psychiatric research has become important in Africa where internal migration has become prevalent for social, economic and political reasons. The researcher would like to point out that many of our black South Africans, as well as many black individuals from neighbouring countries have migrated to South African cities over the passed ten years and have been exposed to different cultural contexts. The authors emphasize that the absence of a familiar cultural context has shown to give rise to enormous stress which can result in high incidence of psychiatric morbidity among immigrants and refugees.

The researcher is of the opinion that in present day South Africa many of our black youth have relinquished their cultural traditions for more westernized culture which is more attractive as it is based on more individualistic and liberated norms and values and therefore they are vulnerable to the stress induced during the process of assimilation.

3.4.1.3 Acculturation

In this model there will be absorption into the dominant culture through the process of assimilation however some important aspects of the culture of origin will be retained (LaFromboise *hv#la*,1993:397 and Orshan,1999:2).

The acculturation model proposes that minorities adapt to a multicultural society by giving up most but not all of their culture. This is also a unidirectional or one-way-street from the culture of origin and its outcome is highly acculturated individuals. Therefore the culture of origin is almost fully replaced by the dominant culture. In the African American model of acculturation these individuals are referred to as highly acculturated to indicate that many but not all important aspects of their African American culture are absent from the individual's cultural-behavioural repertoire.

3.4.1.4 Alternation

LaFromboise *hv#da* (1993:397) refer to an additive model of acculturation. In this model the individual participates in two cultural traditions whereby the dominant culture is added to the culture of origin thus assuming that minorities adapt to a multicultural society by adding the society's dominant culture to their own cultural–behavioral repertoire. Therefore the outcome of alternation will be bicultural individuals.

Berry (1997:568) refers to this as integration or biculturalism and adds that by maintaining their own values and customs and adding them to the values and customs of mainstream society enables the individual to become full participants in society.

The above authors state that although all alternation models assume that minorities are necessarily bicultural some of these models argue that biculturalism consists of switching from one cultural repertoire to the next. Some models argue that individuals may exhibit the behavioral repertoire of their own culture of origin in some settings and of the dominant culture in others. Other models suggest that biculturalism consists of selecting some aspects of the culture of origin such as music, food or religion and some aspects of the dominant culture such as the speech or values. Thus this new mix will constitute the individuals cultural-behavioural repertoire. The African American model of acculturation refers to these individuals as alternating-bicultural as they alternate between two distinctly different, cultural-behavioural repertoires. Thus those who have selected parts of their own culture of origin as well as aspects of the dominant culture are referred to in the model as blended-bicultural.

The researcher feels that with maturity youth who have diverted from their own culture may at a later stage reengage with their own culture and incorporate aspects of both cultures.

3.4.1.5 Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is a term used to describe societies where there are a number of different cultures in existence simultaneously (Multiculturism, 2004). The term multicultural can also be used to refer to areas or cities where people of different cultures co-exist to serve common national or economic needs (LaFromboise *hv# da*,1993:401).

3.4.1.6 Fusion model

This model represents the assumptions behind the melting pot theory, suggesting that cultures which share an economic, political or geographic space will fuse together until they are indistinguishable and form a new culture
(LaFromboise *hv#la/* 1993:401).

3.4.1.7 Marginalization

Berry (1997:568) states that marginalization occurs when individuals fail to fit into either mainstream society or their own native culture. Drennan (2003:399) elucidates that the person is not able to sustain identification with their culture of origin or take on the culture of the new environment and marginalization holds the greatest risk of contributing to mental health problems.

However Landrine and Klonoff (1996:45) are of the opinion that none of the above theories adequately describe the process of acculturation.

Azar (1999:1) concurs with this and states that there are problems with regard to how researchers have traditionally conceptualized and measured acculturation which limit the findings. Problems occur when researchers link the acculturation level to one factor such as drug use. Researchers often explain increased drug use as been associated with increased levels of acculturation assuming that when people lose their

traditional cultural values this makes them more vulnerable to destructive behaviours. This view is linear and simplistic.

Azar (1999:3) quotes Suinn, who states that "A multidimensional model of acculturation allows a more refined analysis of people's experiences." The traditional model is linear assuming that when people take on the values, culture and language of a new culture they drop their own native language, values and culture. A multidimensional model of acculturation allows for people adopting values and customs of the new culture and maintaining the values and customs of their own culture.

The researcher recognizes that acculturation is a complex phenomenon that can not be measured or explained in a linear, causal manner. In addition each culture and the process of acculturation will differ depending on the country and its unique circumstances. Therefore the above model can only be used as a guideline to understand the process of acculturation within the South African context.

3.5 A THEORETICAL MODEL OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ACCULTURTION

Landrine and Klonoff (1996:46) outline four basic concepts which they state apply generally to all ethnic minority groups and are important to refer to when developing a model of acculturation.

Although the black population is the majority group in South Africa, the cities and areas where they have migrated to over the last few years is dominated more by white westernized culture rather than the black cultural traditions and therefore the researcher is referring to these concepts in order to create an understanding of the process of acculturation within the South African context.
These concepts are duplicate institutions, ethnic enclaves, parent groups and ethnic socialization.

3.5.1 Duplicate Institutions

Ethnic-minority groups can be defined as cultural groups whose culture is not the dominant one in a multicultural society. However according to van den Berghe, as quoted by Landrine and Klonoff (1996:47) all ethnic-minority cultures function as semiautonomous entities or subcultures within the dominant culture and each possesses its own "analogous, parallel, noncomplementary (yet duplicate) institutions."

These duplicate institutions include the ethnic groups own schools, clinics, churches, night clubs, magazines, organizations, restaurants, stores, indigenous healers and so on. Through these institutions as well as being part of their family assists members of ethnic groups to maintain their culture. It is through these means that ethnic-minority groups learn as well as acquire culturally specific behavioural and cognitive repertoire. These institutions are most prevalent in ethnic enclaves, the second aspect exhibited by ethnic minority groups.

3.5.2 Ethnic Enclaves

The word ethnic enclave when used in the context of North American cities implies a community or population that is essentially trapped within walls and completely surrounded by an unfriendly population or government. Communities refer to recent immigrants who have voluntarily chosen to cluster together in neighbourhoods or suburbs (TheFreeDictionary, 2004).

Landrine and Klonoff (1996:47) describe ethnic enclaves as the result of voluntary or involuntary physical spatial segregation and concentration. As a result of choice or discrimination ethnic minorities tend to live, work and spend time together within a homogenous neighbourhood or community.

Contact is maintained among enclaves through newspapers, magazines, political organizations and informal networks as well as relatives and friends. Contact within and between enclaves assures consistency of cultural socialization and in this way the repertoire of behaviours are acquired and maintained.

Through the process of ethnic socialization people within the enclave "have acquired the behaviours, ways of understanding, taxonomies, interactional rules, dialect and cognitive schema specific to their culture." Thus individuals who are socialized in homogenous communities tend to be more traditional members of their community. The authors state that the best predictor of level of acculturation is where a person lives or spends most of his/her time.

There are three main features which characterize these culturally homogenous enclaves:

- A high degree of interaction among members of the group.
- Infrequent contact with the dominant group as well as little interest with the internalization of its culture.
- Friendships and kin relations are mainly restricted to the ethnic-cultural group with a tendency to marriage within the cultural group.
- If individuals have lived in an enclave for a considerable amount of time they can avail themselves of considerable resources. Such resources include social support, money, goods, influential contacts and the like.

The researcher can make a comparison to our South African context. There are many duplicate institutions which have been founded and developed by the ethnic groups in our society. Each black ethnic group not only has its own language but also its own traditions and customs. The rural areas are the birth place and ancestral home to many of our black people. In addition to these, within and between our cities there are many formal and informal ethnic enclaves which are homes to many of our black population. We call them townships, low cost housing developments and squatter camps. Within these communities all kinds of entertainment exist such as "fafi and marubbarubba."

Networks and support systems exist such as the society (collecting money for funerals), stokvel (the pavement market), intlombe (ancestral feast) and oukusoka (traditional circumcision) (Stuurman 2004).

3.5.3 Parent groups

The parent group can be defined as those who live within the enclave and never leave as did their parents and grandparents. These individuals are the most traditional of the culture and are well respected members of their community. They retain the oldest traditions, practices and beliefs and the original language of the ethnic group.

The parent group never acculturates. The elder members of the enclave remain staunchly traditional and in this way the culture remains stable. They believe that they will derive no benefits from the dominant culture and all their needs can be taken care of within their own enclave with its own traditions. "Rather than changing any of their old ways they lament the extent to which the young deviate from the traditions and values of the culture of origin."

Many South African elderly black folk still remain in their place of birth in the rural areas taking care of grandchildren and upholding the norms and values of their traditional cultures. The researcher believes that it is often due to their example and teachings that the cultural traditions are passed on to the next generation.

3.5.4 Ethnic Socialization

Ethnic socialization is defined as "the ways in which group membership affects development and the development processes by which we acquire the behaviours, perceptions, values and attitudes of an ethnic group to come to see ourselves and others as members of such groups"(Classes/Fam357….).

Landrine and Klonoff (1996:51-52) refer to studies done by Thompson, as well as Chan and Buriel, who state that ethnic socialization refers to the messages about Africans, Whites and the status of African Americans concerning Whites that are communicated and taught to children.

Thus ethnic socialization focuses on the following:
- The nature and meaning of being a member of an ethnic group.
- The relative status of one's ethnic-minority group with reference to the dominant cultural group.

- The degree of discrimination and unfair and hostile treatment that the individual can expect to experience as a result of being a member of an ethnic-minority group.

- Explanations of the dominant group's discrimination and hostility in terms of the causal attributions regarding racism.

The authors hypothesize that ethnic socialization occurs for any minority group that experiences considerable discrimination and that occurs early in life.

Ethnic-minority parental figures communicate one of the following explanations for the dominants group's behaviour.

The dominant group is all bad:

All members of the dominant group are racist and are biased against our ethnic group. You can expect to be treated in a hostile or discriminatory manner and they cannot be trusted. They cannot change because it is in their nature and therefore group relations cannot change.

The dominant group is composed of individuals who differ significantly in their biases against members of our ethnic group:

Thus the child will be told that some members of the dominant group will discriminate against you whereas others will treat you fairly. Those who do discriminate do so out of ignorance and lack of intelligence whereas those who treat you fairly do so because they are intelligent and can learn to treat you in a fully indiscriminate manner. With increased information, education and intercultural knowledge inter-group relations can be changed and improved upon.

The dominant group is all good:

The dominant group is seen as more cultured, sophisticated, normal, mature and intelligent than members of our own ethnic group. Our group is "All Bad," with a few exceptions. Some members of the dominant group may discriminate against you because they perceive you as "All Bad" because you belong to the group. Therefore you must show that you are not like members of the group but rather an exception and then the dominant group will treat you fairly (Landrine and Klonoff, 1996:47-53).

The researcher suggests that much of our opinion of the "other" group is formed as a result of the messages we received from our parents and traditional cultural environment we are exposed to. While growing up this would have a powerful affect on our receptiveness, inclusion and integration of the "other's" culture and thus the process and influence of acculturation. This could have a significant effect with relation to the adolescents perception of and response to the trans-racial setting in which they are placed.

3.6 MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

The authors Davis and Stiffman (1990:13) draw our attention to the tremendous growth that that took place in the United States of America in the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's that created civil, social, economic and political opportunities for minority youth. However they also highlight that many other minority youth of colour are in danger of experiencing mental health problems and being left without a future. They are being labeled as mentally disabled and are not seen as being able to contribute to productive society. They therefore are at risk of being part of a generation of lost youth whom society will have little need and not much will be done.

Gibbs (1990:21) states that black adolescent youth are one of the most vulnerable and victimized groups in society. The author attributes this to the generations of discrimination, prejudice, and economic deprivation which have contributed to the high rates of psychological and behavioural disorders. In addition to these there are a number of problematic psychosocial behaviours among black youth namely school drop-out rates, juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy and parenthood, suicide and homicide.

Thus many overseas studies have employed acculturation theory to examine the relationship between acculturation and the mental and physical health of immigrant populations. Flores (Acculturation and Segmented Assimilation, 2004) states that studies have shown that positive attributes such as higher immunization rates, less

smoking, less suicidal ideation, tend to deteriorate with increased acculturation. Thus researchers conclude that acculturation is bad for the health of Latino residence.

The local research that has been done concurs with overseas findings. Drennan (2003:399) highlights that there is an association between the absence of familiar cultural context and a high incidence of stress which results in a psychiatric conditions among immigrants and refugees. Burkhalter and Manala (2001:1) draw attention to an increase in emotional and psychological symptoms in black adolescent youth, in the Gauteng area who have been exposed to a different cultural milieu from that of their birth.

The researcher is of the opinion that because we have knowledge of some of the negative outcomes of acculturation in other parts of the world it is incumbent on us as mental health professionals to make use of these theories and knowledge to gain a better understanding of the experiences of our black South African youth when immersed in a cultural diverse environment.

However authors Hunt and Gutman (Acculturation and Segmented Assimilation, 2004) highlight that in recent years the definition and operationalization of acculturation has been criticized. The use of acculturation in health issues has been misunderstood and most research studies have made the assumptions that the associations between acculturation and health are linear. Acculturation is often judged from the viewpoint of modern versus traditional values. Researchers are calling for complex models that assist our understanding of the role of acculturation or assimilation. This more complex approach is called segmented assimilation and it suggests that people choose to adapt certain societal norms but not others.

There is little research into the understanding of the processes and the influence of acculturation within the South African context. However from the international theory and research it is evident to the researcher that the conceptualization and operationalization of acculturation has changed over the years. Any study or measurement needs to take a more comprehensive view especially when one is

employing acculturation to examine the physical and mental health of migrant populations.

3.7 SUMMARY

Culture is an all-encompassing phenomenon that consists of shared beliefs, attitudes, values and symbols and effects and influences individuals from the time they are born until their death. Acculturation can only be understood in the context of deviating from one's culture of birth. Acculturation exists on a continuum of well adapted to poorly adapted individuals. Some individuals adapt to a new culture by adding the society's dominant culture to their own culture and are known as bicultural individuals. People who are able to retain their fundamental values, traditions and beliefs have more positive outcomes when exposed to a dominant culture. On the other side of the continuum there are those individuals who in the absence of a familiar cultural context experience enormous stress which can lead to adjustment problems, psychiatric disorders and negative ways of coping such as increase in substance abuse and other destructive behaviours.

The following chapter will describe each respondent who took part in the study and the present environment that they are currently living in. The empirical information gained from the respondents in terms of their experience in living in a diverse cultural environment will be discussed, in terms of the themes and sub-themes which emerged.

CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL INFORMATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature on acculturation points out that a multidimensional measurement of acculturation is important and therefore individual aspects of this phenomenon should be measured such as ethnic identity, social networks and individuals attitudes (Azar,1999:1).

Therefore the researcher has identified the different facets of the self-concept of the adolescent in order compile as comprehensive view as possible of the effect of acculturation on the self-concept of the black adolescent. From the questions and mediums used seven different themes have emerged.

In this chapter the respondents and the context of their past and present life situation will be briefly described. The themes and sub-themes will then be represented in tabular form and thereafter there will be in depth focus, exploration and discussion on the themes and sub-themes that emerged during the interviews.

The criteria for the selection of respondents for the empirical study was that they are all black adolescent youth residing in the Gauteng area, between the ages of twelve and twenty who have either been trans-racially adopted or who have been in trans-racial foster care for a period of two years or more.

Respondent No.1 is a black male of Xhosa descent and is thirteen years old. At birth he was abandoned by his mother and lived sporadically with his great grandmother and then grandmother, but was then abandoned again at about seven years. He has been in foster care with a single elderly white foster mother for a period of four years. There is very little contact with his biological family.

Respondent No. 2 is a black male of Xhosa descent and is twenty years old. His father passed away in 1996 and the whereabouts of his mother are unknown. There is no

contact with any biological family. He has been in foster care placement with his sister with a single white foster mother for the last eight years.

Respondent No.3 is a coloured female of thirteen years. Her father was murdered when she was still a baby and she and her siblings were removed from her biological mother's care as there was a history of unemployment and chemical dependence and because of physical neglect and abuse. There is no contact with her biological mother. She has been in foster care with a retired white couple for the last five years and sees her brother from time to time.

Respondent No. 4 is a black male of Venda descent and he is fifteen years old. He was placed in a children's home when his mother died in 1997. The whereabouts of his father are unknown. He has been living with a white foster family for a period of just over two years.

Respondent No. 5 is a black female of Zulu descent who is fifteen years old. Her mother died a few years ago and the whereabouts of her father are unknown. She is in foster care with a single middle aged foster mother. There is some contact with a maternal aunt and an elder sister.

Respondent No. 6 is a black male of Xhosa descent who is eighteen years old. He has been in informal foster care with a white family for the whole of his life. His mother was the maid for the family and stayed on the property. His upbringing was shared between his "white parents" who he refers to as mom and dad and his own biological mother.

TABLE 1 THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

	SUB-THEMES
THEME 1 **THE SELF-CONCEPT IN RELATION TO THE PHYSICAL SELF**	1. Under identification with one's own physical characteristics. 2. Over identification with white physical characteristics. 3. Denial of physical differences between races. 4. Self acceptance and conscious awareness of white and black physical characteristics.
	SUB-THEMES
THEME 2 **THE SELF-CONCEPT WITH REFERENCE TO PEER RELATIONS**	1. Respondents have friends of all races. 2. The importance that respondents attach to friendships. 3. Friendships are determined for other reasons. 4. Peer friendships are restricted mainly to school. 5. Preference to heterosexual relationships exists on a continuum.
	SUB-THEMES
THEME 3 **THE SELF-CONCEPT IN RELATION TO SCHOOL, SPORTS, ACTIVITIES AND HOBBIES**	1. Feelings of gratitude. 2. Taking an active part in school activities and extra murals.
	SUB-THEMES
THEME 4 **THE SELF-CONCEPT IN RELATION TO DAILY LIFE**	1. Dress code. 2. Eating habits. 3. Music. 4. Religious beliefs. 5. Traditional / Cultural beliefs. 6. Dating. 7. Language. 8. Career choice.

TABLE 2 THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

THEME 5 THE SELF-CONCEPT WITH REFERENCE TO FAMILY	**SUB-THEMES** 1. There is no contact with biological family. 2. Friends are seen as family. 3. Support and care in the foster family. 4. Better adjustment in the foster family than in the family of origin. 5. Two district family groups.

THEME 6 THE SELF-CONCEPT IN RELATION TO A GUIDING FORCE OR BELIEF SYSTEM	**SUB-THEMES** 1. Self reliance. 2. Fear. 3. Foster family. 4. One's nation. 5. Biological family and cultural beliefs. 6. Friendships. 7. Religion. 8. Determining goals and planning.

THEME 7 THE SELF-CONCEPT IN RELATION TO PERSONALITY TRAITS AND CHARACTER AS WELL AS FOCUS ON PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL ASPECTS	**SUB-THEMES** 1. Integrated view of the self-concept incorporating both positive and negative characteristics. 2. Only a positive view of self. 3. Defensive and repressed view of self. 4. Negative view of self.

4.2 THEME 1
THE SELF-CONCEPT IN RELATION TO THE PHYSICAL SELF

The researcher asked the following questions to explore the adolescents' perception of their physical appearance and characteristics.

Ghvfuleh#rxu#sk|vlfdo#dsshdudqfh#wr#ph#uhvhqglqj#kdw#L#dp#edqg1#

Zkdw#gr#rx#klqn#lv#rxu#ehvw#sk|vlfdo#dwwulexwhB#

Zkdw#gr#rx#klqn#lv#rxu#zruvw#sk|vlfdo#dwwulexwhB#

#

Sub-theme 1: Under identification with one's own cultural physical characteristics.

In general there seemed to be lack of identification with respondents' inherent culture and ethnicity. There was no reference to their own race or ethnic group unless respondents were directly asked about it.

Only one respondent referred to himself as black. The others did not mention skin colour except two who referred to themselves in the following manner, "I am light in skin colour" and the other as "I am dark brown in colour."

Sub-theme 2: Over identification with white physical characteristics.

There was a rejection of their own inherent physical characteristics and a wish to be more white in "looks" especially among the female respondents. There was a comparison between themselves and white girls as been prettier and smaller in body size. Thus there was a more general sense of dissatisfaction about their physical appearance.

However with the male respondents there was dissatisfaction with one or two characteristics only. There was also reference to wanting to have "straight hair like Elvis Presley" and shaving the head so as not having to deal with knots. One of the respondents also felt that his nose was too big and he wished he could change it.

Two of the female respondents could find nothing about themselves that they liked physically accept their smile and the fact that they make friends happy and make them laugh. The researcher feels that this is a defence used to hide their inner dissatisfaction with themselves on a physical level and to make up for their lack of confidence with reference to their looks. One of the female respondents has an all consuming

unhappiness about the fact that these white characteristics are unattainable and this has led to a low of self esteem and general dissatisfaction with life.

Miller and Pumarigea (1999:2) hypothesize that thinness is gaining more value with the African-American culture. Studies that have been done by Robinson, Killen and Litt (1996:384-493) showed greater body dissatisfaction among black girls than white girls. Local studies done by Burkhalter and Manala (2001:1) have also shown black youth who when exposed to a different cultural milieu other than there own have adjustment problems and a sense of dissatisfaction with themselves.

Studies done by Simon (1992:1) using projective tests to assess young children's racial identities, awareness and attitudes report that white, black and coloured children in two major urban centres, namely Johannesburg and Soweto have a strong white preference.

White is associated with being pretty, smart, good, kind, clean and nice.

Simon and Alstein (1992:129) are of the opinion that children generally develop racial awareness between the ages of three to four and a half years and therefore messages from the environment could also affect the child's and later on the young adult's opinion of his own culture or ethnic group. As Landrine and Klonoff (1996:52) state that if the individual has grown up believing that the white group is more cultured, sophisticated, normal, mature and intelligent than their own there will be a rejection of those physical characteristics that associate him with his own ethnic group.

Berk (1997:443) states that different skin colour, native languages, and neighbourhoods set minority ethnic groups apart and in this way prejudices and stereotypes increase.

Monroe, Goldman and Smith (1988:98-99) quote a young African American looking back on his youth. He says "If you were black, you didn't quite measure up. You didn't see any Black people doing certain things… Well it must mean that white people are better than we are. Smarter, brighter-whatever."

Sub-theme 3: Denial of idea of physical differences between races.

The idea that the researcher was asking the respondents to describe themselves physically was annoying to some respondents. They did not want to be associated with their own race and dissatisfaction with their own characteristics such as having short curly hair was compensated with braids. However they were not willing to talk about the fact that their hair was braided. Another respondent also described her eyes as hazel when they were in fact brown.

Thus there seemed to be a denial of racial differences even to the point where in fact it was visibly evident that they were denying the factual evidence of the situation.

In this case it seems that the individuals concerned had a preference for white looks and characteristics as discussed above.

Sub-theme 4: Self acceptance and conscious awareness of white and black physical characteristics.

The male respondents were much more accepting of their physical characteristics and also defined their physicality more in terms of having strong legs, being tall and athletic and being fast in running or in sport. This concurs with developmental theory as discussed in Thom *h*#*do*#(1998:393) which states that in most cultures physical attractiveness in males is associated with height, broad shoulders and a muscular body. There was also the ability for more objectivity, honest self evaluation and enough confidence to state what realistic changes they would like to make on a physical level if they were able. They did not allow their physical characteristics to determine there happiness and contentment with life as did the female respondents.

Thus it seems as though acculturation has made the respondents more aware of white physical characteristics and what is thought to be attractive, pretty and desirable from a white perspective. The female respondents are much more aware of the differences between themselves and their peer group than their male counter parts. This leads to different degrees of unhappiness about the physical self and a negative physical self-concept.

4.3 THEME 2

THE SELF-CONCEPT WITH REFERENCE TO PEER RELATIONSHIPS

The researcher asked the respondents to describe their friendships in terms of numbers, different races and their preference of race when socializing with friends. There was also focus on what kinds of activities the respondents are involved in, with their friends.

In all cases the respondents do not categorize their friends in terms of race. In some cases it was obvious that the respondents were uncomfortable with the researcher's focus of questions regarding preference of race in determining friendship.

Sub-theme 1: Respondents have friends of all races.

All the respondents have friends from various race groups. The main criteria for friendship was not colour but rather that there needs to be trust, mutual support and understanding between friends and that friends are an important part of socializing and having fun.

Within this group there are two categories.

In the first category there are those respondents who have a very close network of a mixed racial group of friends. They enjoy the diversity, learning about the other's culture and sharing ideas and socialising together. According to Gumbiner (2002:98-99) an indicator of assessing acculturation is when individuals start to socialize with other ethnic groups in varying degrees.

In the second category the respondents although having friends from all races their best and closest friends are from the same race as themselves. They feel they can identify with them more and have the same tastes in food and entertainment.

One respondent has been through the process of first having almost only white friends but now has more friends of his own race.

Thus it is evident that acculturation has influenced choice of friends in varying degrees.

Sub-theme 2: The importance that respondents attach to friendships.

There is a difference between the boys and the girls. The boys saw their friends as a means of support, sharing advice with one another, helping each other out of difficult situations, standing up for each other and socializing. This concurs with Thom*lnvtdol* (1998:459) who state that boys value the companionship provided by friendship.

Although the girls' friendships included all of these factors some of their relationships were much more intense. According to Berk (1997:452) emotional trust and closeness are more common in girls. The female respondents shared more in depth information with their friends, told them secrets no one else knew about and some perceived their future happiness as dependant on the quality of their relationships with their friends. In one specific case the friends took over the foster family relationships and there seemed to be a deeper attachment and emotional bond with friends rather than with foster family.

Although Thom*lnvtlo* (1998:455) state that distancing between adolescent and parent and the increased intensity in peer relations is quite normal, this distancing effect should only be temporary. During later adolescence the intimacy and emotional tendency between close friends should start to diminish as the adolescent becomes more aware of his own identity and becomes independent.

However the researcher feels that this would not be the case for the adolescent in an acculturated environment who as a result of inadequate adjustment has a confused identity and is completely dependent on friends for a sense of identity, support and belonging. As Comas-Diaz and Grenier (1998:223) point out, over identification with the peer group can lead to loss of ethnic identity and can lead to linguistic, educational, cultural and adjustment problems.

Sub-theme 3: Friendships are determined for other reasons.

There are three categories in this sub-theme.

In the first category friendships may be forged as a need for one or other parties. As one of the respondents said, "At school and when I go out I am with my black friends, my white friends help me with school work and my coloured friends tell me jokes."

Berk (1997:453) concurs with this and states that benefits from friendships include companionship, acquiring communication skills, acquiring interactional and social skills as well as and most importantly the development of independence and autonomy.

In the second category close friendships are also based on adherence to certain music, ways of dress and philosophies such as the hip hop genre. This facilitates in developing a sense of bonding between the peer group. Berk (1997:595) confirms this by stating that in adolescence peer groups become more tightly knit, exclusive and organized around cliques.

In the third category a very close friend or friends are made as result of both parties or a number of friends feeling misunderstood and rejected. They protect and look out for one another. Thom (1992:426) refers to the development of youth culture where members of a group rely on themselves or their peers for the satisfaction of needs and there is also a psychological attachment which exists between members of the group. The researcher feels that if this is not just a developmental phase which is outgrown it can lead to poor adjustment where the exclusive friendships, excludes other friends as well as family members.

Sub-theme 4: Peer friendships are restricted mainly to school.

Friendships are not encouraged out of school and instead of socializing with friends over weekends or holidays the respondent spends time mainly with family. There is a sense of isolation and loneliness which is compensated by the family by buying material things to keep the individual occupied. The exact reason for this was not made clear but it seems to keep the family "protected" from outside influences. It seems as though the family feel they are acting in the best interests of their foster child The researcher is of the opinion that the case worker needs to be informed about the situation and it should be investigated further to identify any underlying problems. The family needs to be educated with regard to the important benefits for the respondent of socializing and interacting with his peer group. However the researcher is aware that all investigation of this situation needs to be done in a manner whereby the ethical issues as discussed in point 1.11.4 are adhered to.

Sub-theme 5: Preference to heterosexual relationships exists on a continuum.

Respondents' attraction to the opposite sex differs to various degrees. One of the respondents will only date "white guys" and is not at all attracted to males of the same race. A male respondent states that "I am attracted to white girls. Sometimes black-but they (black girls) really make a noise-they are very fussy-they like to be in charge of the relationship." Another respondent although attracted to all races would rather have a girlfriend of his own race. The other respondents were attracted to any race regardless of colour as long as they could get along with them. As one respondent put it: "Just a nice person who likes to laugh and go to parties."

Thus friendships form a very important part of the responds life which fits with the adolescent stage of development (Berk, 1997:590). However it seems that through the acculturation process the respondents have a wider circle of multicultural friends who they are attracted to and who fulfill the important functions of friendship for the developing adolescent and in some cases play such an important part in the life of he individual that they feel they cannot cope without their friendships.

Socializing with friends includes going to the mall, sleep-overs, house parties, clubbing, movies, youth groups, playing sport together and "chilling at each others houses."

4.4 THEME 3

THE SELF-CONCEPT IN RELATION TO SCHOOL, SPORTS, ACTIVITIES AND HOBBIES

The researcher made use of an ecomap to gain information about the respondents' school life and the various activities and hobbies they are involved in.

Sub-theme 1: Feelings of gratitude.

All respondents are currently at school or university and all felt that they were privileged to be getting a good education. There were mixed feelings in relation to school life with respondents feeling the stress of workload and exams but at the same

time acknowledging the benefits in terms of enjoyment of friendships and extra mural activities.

Sub-theme 2: Taking an active part in school activities and extra murals.

All respondents take an active part in school life and are involved in a number of sports and activities at school as well as in their own free time.

These include the following:

Soccer, cricket, rugby, athletics, hockey, basketball, cross country, gym, squash, diving, netball, swimming, different styles of dancing ranging from ballet to hip hop, and cultural activities such as chess, choir, drama, disc jockey, youth groups and reading.

All respondents have a sport or activity which they feel they excel in and from which they gain a sense of fulfillment, acknowledgement and recognition. Some respondents have been made captains of various sports or activities.

The researcher feels that this is important as it makes them aware of responsibility and commitment, is a source of acknowledgement and validation and in this way builds a positive self-esteem and a positive sense of self.

There are two categories in this section.

The first category consists of foster or adoptive parents who are very supportive of their children and encourage their participation in school and activities. Only one of the respondents has support and encouragement from his biological family.

The second category also consists of supportive parents however there is a tendency to encourage over participation in sports and activities and sometimes unlimited buying of material goods. The researcher is of the opinion that this can be a way of trying to over compensate for what the parent feels the child has missed out on.

 Sometimes activities and a constant busyness detracts from the emotional pain or problems prior to being placed or which presently exist in the home which need to be addressed by open and honest communication or therapy. Thus the activity deflects from the problem at hand.

However it seems that living in their present diverse cultural environment provides a better education for all the respondents and makes many more activities and hobbies available to them.

4.5 THEME 4
THE SELF-CONCEPT IN RELATION TO DAILY LIFE

The researcher identified different aspects which are part of the respondent's daily life and asked them how these facets have been influenced since they have been placed in a cultural environment that is different from their own culture.

Sub-theme 1: Dress code
 In the first category some respondents felt that their dress was a manifestation of who they were as individuals and it had not been influenced by living in a different cultural environment. However the environment had provided the freedom for them to express their individuality.

In the second category respondents felt that because of their foster placement they were more conscious of what they wore and were also given the opportunity to dress more fashionably.

Lastly in the third category one respondent felt that he has his own style by incorporating white, township and hip hop fashion. Thus he has consciously chosen certain cultural dress codes and rejected others. The researcher is of the opinion that this shows that the respondent knows and understands two different cultures and is not compromising his sense of cultural identity which concurs with the alternation model of LaFromboise *et al* (1993:399).

Sub-theme 2: Eating Habits
All respondents believed that they have been exposed to a wide variety of foods and have developed a taste for different cultural foods.

There are three categories in this section.

In the first category there are some respondents who only like "English" food or food from other cultures other than there own such as Sushi, Italian and Chinese food. There is a disdain for food from their own cultural origin. When asked the question about what the respondent eats when she goes home with friends who are the same biological culture as herself she said "They make normal food that I have (at the foster home) because they try to make me feel comfortable."

Another respondent said that he only likes white restaurants where it is clean. "If you eat in the township you don't know how clean it is and they can put poison in your food." Thus these two respondents are internalizing negative views of their own culture and want to be associated more with "white" culture. This fits with the assimilation model of LaFromboise *hv*al. (1993:396) of acculturation where the individual will be absorbed into the culture perceived as the most desirable.

In the second category the respondents eat all kinds of food but prefer English food rather than traditional food.

The third category consists of respondents who prefer traditional food although eating all kinds of food.

Sub-theme 3: Music

Music is an important part of all the respondent's daily lives. The type of music enjoyed includes Kwaito, Hip Hop, RNB, House, Rock and Contemporary music.

There are two categories in this section:

In the first category music gives meaning to life, it is a philosophy to live by and influences dress code. Close friends have to be part of the brotherhood of the music genre to be accepted and this provides a sense of commitment, bonding, support and belonging and in this sense replaces family. As one respondent explained the philosophy of hip hop, "It started in the States for the reason that Black kids didn't have a form of expression like the White kids. Black kids didn't have a hero to look up to. Hip hop was started so black kids could express themselves. It was consciousness,

about hard times, about struggle." The respondent could identify and relate his own life and struggle to his music. In this way he could give vent to emotions and process some of his own struggle in a legitimate and socially acceptable way.

The second category is rejection of some of one's own cultural music such as Kwaito and only enjoying Rock and RNB and contemporary music. Once again this can be over identification with white culture and rejection of ethnic culture.

Sub-theme 4: Religious Beliefs

All respondents believed in God but had different ways of expressing and practicing their religion.

In the first category there was rejection of the religion in the foster family and although believing in "a God," not wanting to discuss this topic. Thus anger and disillusionment of life seemed to spill over into religious beliefs.

In the second category a specific religion is a guiding force in life and relying on religious beliefs gives strength and courage in daily life.

In the third category there is rejection of the birth religion with reference to sangomas and ancestral guidance and replacing this with more Christian beliefs.

In the fourth category there is belief in spirituality and a Universal God rather than one specific religion.

Religion is always a debated issue in adolescents where adolescents are continually challenging the norms and belief systems of their families and developing their own values and belief system (Gerdes & van Ede, 1991:493). Therefore although age appropriate the acculturated setting could further influence the respondent's experience of religion by either helping them confirm their beliefs or exposing them to different religious beliefs or exacerbating their feelings of resistance to religion if it is forced upon them.

Sub-theme 5: Traditional/Cultural beliefs

There were four categories in this section.

In the first category there is no understanding or experience of another culture other than the one presently exposed to. Thus in this case the culture of origin is either consciously discarded or the respondents have lost connection with their culture because of being placed at a very early age or the placement has not encouraged on going contact with the culture of origin.

In the second category there is no contact with birth culture other than stories passed down from parents or grandparents prior to placement.

Thus by referring to LaFromboise*et al* (1993:396-399) a process of acculturation can be followed from the first and second categories where assimilation has taken place and the individual has been absorbed into the dominant culture and at the same time relinquishing their culture of origin.

No.1   No.2

The sand tray seen above depicts the respondent's alienation with his own culture. He depicts a very positive view of his foster family in the new South Africa and is very aware of the many things he has to be grateful for. However in the first picture (no.1), he has put the ethnic figures that represent his inherent culture behind the trees. On completion of the sand tray the researcher asked if he would like to change anything about the picture. He decided to put the two ethnic dolls in front of the trees (no. 2). The researcher asked him, "How do you think they feel now? He said, "They are happier, because they are free." The researcher feels that the respondent is repressing his own culture either unconsciously or because of dynamics within the foster family.

In the third category cultural beliefs and traditions are still followed because of superstition and fear of bad luck and to please biological family members.

This is evident in the following conversation with a Xhosa youth.

Respondent: "I have to go into the bush in December to be circumcised-no hospital-the traditional way."

Researcher: "And you have no choice?"

Respondent: "I have to. If I don't, I don't become a man. Here (in Jhb) I'll be a man, when I turn a certain age. But in the Eastern Cape if I go to a party, I won't be allowed to sit among people my own age. I will be a boy. I know its tradition and tradition is dying out and we are becoming more westernized but I don't want to mess around with tradition."

Thus this third category can be compared to the acculturation model of LaFromboise *hv#dol* (1993:397) where there is absorption in the dominant culture but important aspects of culture are retained.

In the fourth category the respondent lives with his foster family during the term and then goes home to the rural area to stay with his biological grandmother for the holidays. He describes his traditional home as his "true home" where he can get away from stress and can feel a sense of freedom. He still feels connected to his late mother when there and he has learnt courage and determination from her.

His foster home is where he feels free as an individual and where he can have his own dreams and Christian beliefs. He also feels he can be more independent in his acculturated environment.

In the fourth category culture and tradition are still an important part of life of the respondent and there is a conscious choice to follow them and believe in them while still partaking in and absorbing the new culture. This could be compared to the authors' alternation model whereby the dominant culture is added to the culture of origin and the individual will have there own cultural-behavioural repertoire. The outcome will be bi-cultural individuals (Lafromboise *hv#lol* 1993:397).

The sand tray depicts the two different cultures that the respondent is experiencing simultaneously. He has separated them with a fence thus showing the stress and tension of living in two different environments and having to make adjustments. However the respondent could pin point benefits of both cultures and name the traditions, beliefs and support structures of both which he follows or chooses to ignore.

Sub-theme 6: Dating

Respondents all felt because of their present placement that they are allowed to date at an earlier age, have more freedom to go out to different places and to choose partners from different races.

Sub-theme 7: Language

All of the respondents can speak English fluently and consider it the language spoken most often. Some are also multilingual, speaking English, Afrikaans, and one or more of the black languages

In the first category English is the main language and the respondent does not want to learn or speak any other language. Planning and thoughts are also in English.

In the second category the individuals are multilingual, speaking different languages in different contexts. One participant speaks Xhosa and Zulu to his sister and cousin, English to his foster mom and converses in English, Afrikaans and Zulu with his friends.

Another respondent can speak Venda, Zulu, Sotho, Tswana as well as English and Afrikaans which he has "picked up" during the course of his life in different environments. Totsi, which is a slang mix of a number of black languages is also used to converse with the township youth of mixed cultural descent. When there is a high degree of emotion there is a return to the language of birth.

When thinking private thoughts, there is also a tendency to think in the language of birth.

From the above factors it is evident that acculturation has effected the daily lives of the respondents on a daily basis. According to Gumbiner (2003:98-99) language is a very good indicator of the process of acculturation. The more English is used and within the different contexts the more acculturated the individuals have become.

It seems as though those respondents who are fully assimilated into white culture only use English in their communication and thought processes.

Others make use of different languages in different contexts and are multilingual.

They also choose aspects of different cultures and include them consciously in their behavioural repertoire. The researcher is of the opinion that these respondents are on the course to becoming bicultural in their mannerisms and behaviour

(Berry, 1997:568 and Lafromboise *hv#lol* 1993:399).

Sub-theme 8: Career Choice

Respondents choice of careers are the following: law, interior decorating, choreography, marketing and advertising, professional soccer player and make up artist.

All respondents felt that their transracial setting had exposed them to a wider variety of career choices and had given them the educational opportunities to aspire to these careers. Thom *hv#dα* (1998:440) also highlights that the democratization of South Africa has also led to many new possibilities for those youth entering the work force.

Thus through the acculturation process respondents feel there is the freedom of being able to choose what they want to do rather than what they are expected to do. A career

can also be chosen with focus on what one likes and enjoys doing rather than on the career that will bring in a more lucrative salary to provide for the family. According to Berk (1997:480) self-concepts in collectivist societies such as rural village societies are more other-directed. Some of the respondents originally came from such farm and rural communities. Thus respondents have been influenced by more westernized individualistic norms which encourages development and growth of the individual rather than being other-directed where the community needs are seen as more important than the individuals needs.

4.6 THEME 5
THE SELF-CONCEPT WITH REFERENCE TO FAMILY

Exploration of family relationships and dynamics was done by using a sand tray.
Sand tray work according to Geldard and Geldard (2000:106) consists of a tray of sand and a number of miniature objects chosen because they are representative of people, nature or objects in real life or have some symbolic meaning.

The sand tray provides an expressive and projective medium involving the unfolding and processing of intra and inter personal issues, through the use of the sand tray material (Hofmeyer and Sweeney, 1998:6).

The researcher provided miniatures representing different races and racial relevant objects of different cultural groups to provide the adolescent with the opportunity to explore and understand the influence of their biological and foster families in their lives. The researcher asked the respondents to choose any symbol to represent their family and a make a picture with it in the sand.

The main sub-themes were the following.
Sub-theme 1: There is no contact with the biological family.
The respondent feels no real sense of cohesion, unity and support in the foster/adopted family and there is a sense of not belonging. There is a strong need to have to leave the family in order to find oneself.

These findings were consistent with research conducted with adopted youth which showed that adopted teenagers expressed a sense of feeling different or not belonging (Gormly, 1997:10).

Sub-theme 2: Friends are seen as family.

The family is rejected and friends are seen as family. Friends are perceived as fulfilling the role of family and are relied on for care, advice and emotional support. There is no contact with the biological family. There seems to be lack of trust especially of adults. This could relate to early psychosocial needs not been met in the biological family and according to Erikson (Meyer *hv#dol*1989:158) this can lead to difficulty in developing a sense of trust in the world and in future relationships.

Sub-theme 3: Support in the foster family.

The foster family is perceived as supportive. There is a feeling of being loved and cared for but there are not very close bonds of attachment between foster family members.

There are two categories here.

In the first category the respondent controls the levels of closeness and bonding. He feels secure enough to be independent when he wants to but knows that his family is flexible and trusts in his decisions and abilities. This is consistent with the adolescent stage of development in the search for independence and identity (Thom *hv#dol#* 1998:426).

In the second category the respondent sometimes experiences support and understanding from the family but it is usually on the condition of being a "good boy" or fulfilling certain expectations.

In the above two categories there is minimal contact with biological family

Sub-theme 4: Better adjustment in the foster family than in family of origin.

There is a sense of being cared for, loved and accepted by the family. There is still contact with the biological family but this usually results in stress and anxiety and the respondent feels happier and has a sense of well being in the adoptive home.

Sub-theme 5: Two distinct family groups.

There are two distinct family groups, foster family and biological family. There are feelings of being accepted, loved, cared for and acknowledged in both. The respondents feel a sense of contentment with both families. However sometimes there is a feeling of discordance and stress as the respondent has to adjust to the different cultures, norms and values of the different family groups.

When the researcher asked the respondents what the first thing they would rescue if their house burnt down three of them said a photo album as they contained photos of biological parents or photos of other members of their biological family.

Responses to the question that if they had one wish and could wish for anything two of the respondents wished they could have contact with their biological parents or siblings.

One of the themes that Gormly (1997:382) highlights is the fact that adopted teenagers are often concerned about lack of information about their biological parents.

Thus the researcher feels that although some of the respondents may not communicate this need openly, there is a strong desire to be connected with the family of origin. This could be on a practical level where they could actually visit with them or it could be in a more indirect way by learning about them and their culture of origin.

It is evident that past relationships with biological family impact on the relationships with the foster family and influence the attachments and bonds that develop between the foster child and their foster families. Berk (1997:410) highlights that children who have not experienced secure attachment with a significant other early in childhood will display emotional and social problems which will impact on future relationships.

The researcher is of the opinion that issues not dealt with before placement could impact negatively on subsequent attachments to new caregivers such as when a child is placed in foster care.

4.7 THEME 6

THE SELF-CONCEPT IN RELATION TO A GUIDING FORCE OR BELIEF SYSTEM

The researcher used the sand tray to explore the respondent's perception of what was a guiding and motivating force in their life. The respondents were asked to use the miniatures to make a picture in the sand of what they felt was a belief system or guiding force for them in their lives.

Sub-theme 1: Self reliance

For some respondents there was a need to be completely self-reliant. There is lack of trust and belief in others including any religious belief. Once again this could relate to Eriksons first stage of psychosocial development where a sense of trust in one's caregivers and in the world is not developed which results in the belief that one must rely on oneself to meet one's needs (Berk, 1997:406).

Sub-theme 2: Fear

Fear of something is a motivating force and motivates the individual to carry on or take up a challenge.

Sub-theme 3: The foster family

The foster or adoptive family offers support, encouragement and motivation.

Sub-theme 4: One's nation

There is pride in one's nation and pride in being a citizen of South Africa. There is also a sense that if one works hard enough one will be given opportunities to succeed and there is belief in one's country that offers democratic rights to everyone.

Sub-theme 5: Cultural beliefs and traditions

One's cultural beliefs and traditions and connection with the biological family are seen as a supportive force and offering guidance and wisdom.

Sub-theme 6: Determining goals and planning

The ability to dream and make short term realistic goals and to be able to plan in advance.

Sub-theme 7: Friendships

Friendships are seen as the only motivating and guiding force.

Sub-theme 8: Religion

God, religious beliefs and faith are a guiding force and help to give direction.

Those respondents who felt that they could only rely on themselves or who only relied on friendships to sustain and guide them were those respondents who have completely assimilated white culture and have rejected their own inherent culture and traditions. These individuals seem to be unwilling or unable to make use of support systems to help them or are stuck in unproductive ways of thinking and behaving.

The respondents that made use of most of the aspects mentioned above were those who could be classified as bicultural. A study of biculturalism and adjustment done by Kazaleh in (LaFromboise *et al* 1993:400) showed that although identity conflict may still be present many of the biculturated adolescents had acquired an array of mechanisms for dealing with the dissonance and were quite capable of alternating between the two cultural orientations with minimal anxiety.

4.8 THEME 7

THE SELF-CONCEPT IN RELATION TO PERSONALITY TRAITS AND CHARACTER AS WELL AS FOCUS ON PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL ASPECTS

The researcher used the following questions to assess the respondents' view of their personality and character traits.

In term s if our personality how would your best friend describe you?

In term s if our personality how would your mother/ dejriend describe you?

The researcher and respondent evaluated the responses in terms of what the respondents felt were accurate or inaccurate statements about themselves. In this way they explored positive attributes and strengths and areas they identified in need of change and growth.

In addition to this at the end of the interview schedule the researcher used clay as a medium of exploration and expression. As clay is a very versatile and adaptable means of expression, it can act as an effective tool with all developmental stages and in this way enhances symbolic expression. This is especially helpful in enhancing cross-cultural understanding. (Compare Oaklander, 1988:67-70; Van der Merwe, 1996:147; Thompson and Rudolph, 2000:175.)

The researcher asked the respondents to make a symbolic image of themselves with the clay. The symbolic expression of the self in the clay helped to qualify, enhance and explore the self-concept on a deeper level. In all cases the clay enabled the respondents to explore their true perception of the self-concept in a manner where they still felt contained, secure and in control of the process. Thus the integration of the questions and clay medium gave an in depth view of the psychological self-concept. The following subthemes emerged.

Sub-theme 1: Integrated view of the self-concept incorporating both positive and negative characteristics:
These respondents showed a sense of self knowledge, self awareness and self acceptance. They also saw themselves as good, understanding and caring individuals who can make and sustain intimate and rewarding relationships. They try to be nonjudgmental, and accepting of all kinds of races.

These respondents could then be further divided into two categories.
In the first category the respondents showed high levels of confidence, determination and self reliance. They enjoy challenges and risk taking behaviour and fear of something is often a driving force for them to overcome their resistance to partake in something new or challenging. One respondent who has a fear of heights has chosen to take up diving. When the researcher explored this with her she said, "I just do it

because I like to do things that seem impossible." Thus it is important for her to conquer her fears. Another respondent said that he thrives on competition and his motto is "Where others fail I will succeed."

However this category can also admit to their weaknesses, acknowledge areas of improvement and motivation to work on them. Sometimes others see them as arrogant or being self opinionated. One has been called "sly like a snake." Another has been told that she can be narrow minded and "cut out certain people". There was a willingness to discuss these negative attributes of themselves which shows an openness to all experiences and a willingness to grow and develop. Thus these respondents are confident, seem to have a sense of direction and motivation and are not being debilitated from past issues. There is a sense of integration and wholeness.

One of the respondents in this sub-theme represented himself symbolically with the clay as a Cheetah. He is a talented athlete and sportsman and he says he is fast off the mark like a Cheetah. However he adds that this animal is also strategic. "It won't go and kill a Buffalo –it is not a big animal. It is going to go after what it knows is in its reach." Thus he is aware of his own strengths, plans carefully and takes calculated risks. He also mentions that like a Cheetah he sometimes needs to be by himself to think and reflect. When the researcher asked about the clay cheetah's very broad tail he said that this was for balance. Just as the cheetah needs balance when he runs, so the respondent too needs to balance his life and there needs to be time for work and relaxation.

He is of the opinion that the diverse cultural environment has been liberating for him. There has been open communication and dialogue which has assisted him to become who he is today. He feels his schooling helped him stay connected to his birth culture and this together with his present environment has helped him take ownership of his birth culture and form an ethnic identity within the acculturated environment he has been exposed to.

According to Phinney *hwda* (1990:68) ethnic identity development is achieved when the individual accepts and internalizes his ethnicity and this results in an achieved

identity. The researcher is of the opinion that the acculturated environment is providing the respondent with the necessary support and openness to explore his ethnicity and culture of birth and in this way facilitating the process of ethnic identity development.

The other respondent in this category represented himself as a dragon. He said that just as a dragon can fly he can see himself flying over others and succeeding. He also has great determination to reach the top and this could make him ruthless and like the dragon he would breathe fire on all those who tried to prevent his future path of success. He acknowledged that like the dragon, he too was cold blooded in his attitude. He was not concerned about the people he would tread on to succeed. However he was aware of this side to himself and felt that it was linked to his past of not having much and resenting those who did. He was very focused on his future path and willing to work hard to get there. He feels that the multicultural environment he has grown up in has enabled him to express himself better in English and has given him confidence to take up challenges. He also feels that he chooses different aspects of white and black culture and incorporates them into a behaviour repertoire of his own.

The researcher believes that this respondent has assimilated the white culture and added it to his own culture of origin. He is very flexible in his way of thinking, acting and communicating and incorporating both cultures in his own cultural- behavioural repetoire.

This is consistent with the alternation model as described by LaFromboise *hv#dol* (1993:399) and this respondent could be said to be bicultural.
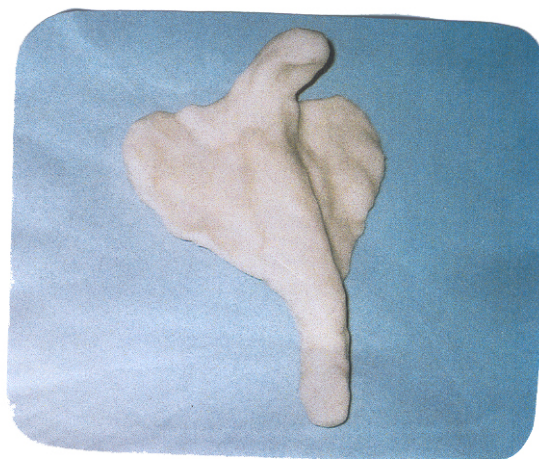
The image of the dragon as seen on the previous page is fully formed and shows a lot of energy, direction and determination. This image was very consistent with the respondent's presentation of himself in the interview, confident, motivated and having a sense of direction in life. The image of the dragon also looks as if it is pointing in a direction ready for flight.

The second category in this sub-theme is the respondents who are still dealing with issues from the past. However they admit to it, openly speak about it and are willing to work on issues. They are not as confident as the first category but their self awareness and acknowledgement of their problems enables them to enjoy life and work towards self improvement in various areas. Once again their environment and the structure it provides are enabling the process of personal growth and change.

The first respondent in this category represented herself as a donut. She says that sometimes she is very sweet especially if others rely on her for help and are willing to listen to her. At other times just as a donut's sweetness is on the surface, there is another side to her that is not so sweet and which she prefers to keep hidden. This side comes to the fore when people go against her or hurt her. The hole in the middle of the donut represents her openness to certain people and experiences. However at times the hole gets smaller because she can also close up and be narrow minded about certain types of people. Thus this respondent is aware of her contradictions and the confusion she sometimes feels in dealing with different people and different cultures. The hole in the middle also represents her emptiness and sadness when she thinks of her biological mom who has passed away.

The second respondent in this category represented himself as a misshapen rock, shown on the following page. One part is whole and the other part has crevices and holes. The holes and crevices are his pain, sadness and losses. The thin connection in the front represents his attachment with his biological mom. Although she has passed away he still feels connected to her. The two thin side pieces that surround the holes represent the two different cultures he is currently immersed in, his ethnic culture and the current new westernized culture. He feels he is currently looks like this but in the future the holes will close and he will become a fully formed rock. Once again the

respondent is aware of his journey on an emotional level and very aware of the acculturation process. He is striving to become a fully integrated whole and is trying to take the steps to get there.

These two respondents are in the middle of adolescence and the struggle for identity and feelings of confusion are normal for this age group (Thom *hv⧧doⅤ⧧*1998:386). However the researcher feels that this is exacerbated by their multicultural environments.

These two respondents are very aware of the different cultures they are immersed in and are also aware of their own losses and pain and are dealing with them appropriately. Although they are absorbing the new culture that they immersed in, they still feel it is important to be involved in their own culture. This is happening through school and in contact with biological family.

At this point in time they seem to be at the stage of ethnic identity search/moratorium as described by Phinney *hv⧧dɑ* (1990:680). The authors point out that when an individual realises that not all cultural values of the other cultural group are beneficial, an exploration of an ethnic identity search is begun. The researcher believes that this exploration must be conflicting and confusing for the individual as was reflected in the clay medium made by the two respondents. They have to find a sense of identity within two very different cultures which forms an integral part of the self-concept.

Sub-theme 2: Only a positive view of the self

One of the respondents has a sense of being eternally grateful for being "rescued" and is now part of a white family. This has led to a deep sense of gratitude and always having "to count my blessings". There has to be a denial of his own needs and feelings or otherwise guilt sets in and therefore he must always remember "those who are less

fortunate" and in turn be a good person. Thus it is only this good, caring person who is validated and acknowledged and acceptance and recognition are conditional to these criteria. Therefore this introject of a "good person" is the only self that has been incorporated into the self-concept.   From a Rogerian perspective (Meyer#*hv#dol#* 1989:378-379) individuals handle experiences in different ways. Experiences can be ignored, avoided or distorted if they do not fit with the individuals self concept. Any wrong doing by the respondent is frowned upon by the family and this reinforces the repression of experiences of his "negative" side.

This kind of repression has led the individual to only view himself as a caring and kind person. There is over identification with the less fortunate and a need to protect and rescue them because "I was rescued." There is no conscious awareness of any negative areas or motivation for improvement.

This respondent made a clay image of a Harley Davidson. He associates the bike with wealth, freedom, indulgence and escape. He wants to be carefree and not feel so worried about the less fortunate. He also wants to be someone extraordinary in life. The whole of this theme was the opposite of his initial portrayal of himself.
The researcher feels that at this present moment his psychological and emotional growth has been stunted. The respondent is so caught up with being good that he is repressing so many other experiences of the self which are necessary for identity development. He has hardly any contact with his culture of origin and seems to be disdainful about his birth culture. He does not have much knowledge of his culture and is immersed in white westernized culture.

An explanation of this is given by LaFromboise *hv#lol* (1993:396) who with reference to their assimilation model state that the psychological state of a person living within two cultures will be more readily absorbed into the culture that is perceived as more desirable.

Sub-theme 3: Defensive and repressed view of self

The respondent describes her best physical attribute as her smile and being able to make others laugh and a "heart full of love" but also "being cross and sad" in the same sentence.

Thus although wanting so much to be loved and accepted and trying to attain this by making others happy, she immediately withdraws if anyone says anything wrong or hurtful. Unprocessed psychological and emotional pain leads to lack of trust and therefore the respondent is very short in responding and says as little as possible. The individual is continually protecting herself from pain and therefore is not engaging fully in any part of life. Thus not all experiences are being processed and this leads to lack of self awareness. The respondent although admitting that she gets "cross and sad" does not think that she needs to improve in area of her life and says she is a hundred percent happy with herself. Thus the respondent is often denying the reality of her experiences and has an emotional style of coping.

This respondent symbolized herself as a flower. Initially all she would say about the flower is that it was a daisy and it was delicate and that she loves being the way she is. Thus there was resistance on her part to allow the researcher to view her in any other way than being happy and in control.

However on exploration she said that the indentations on the stem of the flower represented past hurts. The seeds in the centre contained love and the centre of the flower represented her heart full of strength and hope. The hope is her great need to be loved and accepted which she is hoping to find in her present environment and has therefore also fully immersed herself in the new culture she has been exposed to and has a negative view of her own culture of origin.

The initial view of the flower as being bright and beautiful is consistent with the respondent's initial positive portrayal of herself that "I am happy, fine and have no problems." The pain and loss is kept repressed and hidden from view and only came to the fore during exploration of the flower.

Sub-theme 4: Negative view of self

The researcher has included a respondent from the pilot study as the information was very valuable. The respondent was an eighteen year old female who was abandoned at birth and was adopted by a white family as a baby. Up until the age of twelve she feels she coped well. However from the start of adolescence she felt less well adjusted, confused and unhappy as she became more aware of the differences between herself and her white family.

At this point in time she can see very little positive about herself. She feels she is very quick with hurtful words, "can be cut throat and can bite back." The respondent openly admits to her unhappiness, anger and dissatisfaction with her current life circumstances. She feels misunderstood and feels that she does not belong in her adoptive family. Her main unhappiness stems from the differences between herself and her "white"sisters. She is unhappy with the way she is reacting but seems unable to help herself.

The researcher is of the opinion that the respondent feels white in all aspects of herself accept in her physical looks, namely colour and physical characteristics. She literally feels like a white person trapped in a black skin. She feels a sense of disconnection with herself and her adoptive family and wishes she had never been adopted.

She symbolized herself with the clay as disembodied body. She made a torso with the arms and legs scattered around. This was not only a rejection of her own body but a very accurate symbolism of disconnectedness within herself and with her culture of origin.

It seems that sub-themes two, three and four reflect the stage of ethnic identity diffusion or foreclosure. According to Phinney *hv#dol* (1990:64) in this stage the individual accepts the values and attitudes of the dominant culture and this may include internalizing negative views of their own group and lack of interest with one's ethnicity.

In addition to this there appears to be a threat to the self-concept with regard to ethnic identity conflicts. According to Phinney *hv#dol* (1990:68) that if stereotypes are believed and accepted they can lead to a poor self concept and conflicts may result from differences in norms and values of distinct cultural groups.

The danger of this is that marginalization may occur which according to Berry (1997:568) individuals fail to fit into either mainstream society or their own native culture. This has a great risk of contributing to mental health problems.

Certain respondents are coping well on a psychological and emotional level in their present acculturated setting. Therefore it seems as though the environment is promoting openness, growth and development even if the process is painful.

Others seem to be stuck in the process of their identity development due to a repressed or extreme view of themselves and the cultural diverse environment may or may not be exacerbating the present situation.

The researcher realizes that caution must be taken in linking the acculturated environment to either positive or negative outcomes. Other factors need to be considered such as past issues prior to placement which may still need to be dealt with and the fact that each respondent is also in a different family environment which has its own dynamic and relationship patterns.

However it seems that when the acculturated environment promotes openness and dialogue this is associated with more positive outcomes and less adjustment difficulties among the respondents.

4.9 SUMMARY

The self-concept is made up of many different domains. Each domain effects and is being effected by the other. In addition to this according to Raath and Jacobs (1993:32) the self-concept is never complete or concrete. It is also dynamic and continually changing and moving like a pendulum between positive and negative poles. However psychological health is associated with the self-concept being more often on the positive side.

The cultural diverse environment which the respondents are living in are providing them with new and different experiences, on a daily basis which can effect them in a positive or negative manner. In addition to this the adolescents' personal interpretation of experiences in daily life and self evaluation of their own functioning will determine a positive or negative self perception in different areas of their lives and contribute to a holistic sense and description of the self-concept.

The final chapter will briefly summarize the goals and objectives of the research study, conclusions will be drawn form the empirical information gained and finally recommendations will be made.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The study has shown that the self-concept consists of many different domains which are influenced by the environments which the black adolescent is continually being exposed to in the different cultural settings.

In this study the findings point to both positive and negative effects of acculturation on the self concept of the black adolescent.

The aim of this chapter is to determine whether the goal and objectives of the study were achieved. Therefore a short summary of the proposed goal and objectives will be out lined and thereafter conclusions will be drawn on each aspect of the self-concept which has been measured and from these recommendations will be made.

5.2 GOAL OF THE STUDY

The goal of the study was to explore the influence of acculturation on the self-concept of black adolescents in South Africa.

The abovementioned goal was reached as follows:

The researcher used a qualitative research approach of an applied nature and a phenomenological strategy of enquiry. Non-probability purposive sampling was used to select six adolescent respondents, of mixed gender, in trans-racial care.

A semi-structured interview, with an interview schedule as a guideline was used as well as gestalt play therapy techniques as means of information collection. It was found that those youth who maintain some connection to their culture of origin show better psychological adjustment than those who relinquish their culture to the new culture that they are immersed in.

5.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were the following:

- To compile a theoretical frame of reference regarding acculturation and the self-concept of the adolescent by means of the literature study and in consultation with experts.

- This objective was achieved through a study of the literature of the adolescent developmental stage with specific focus on the self-concept and is set out in chapter two of the research study. A theoretical frame of reference regarding culture and acculturation as phenomena was achieved through a study of the literature on culture and acculturation and in consultation with experts and is set out in chapter three of the research study.

- To explore the adolescent's reality with regard to the influence of acculturation on their self-concept.

- This objective was achieved by using a semi-structured interview, with an interview schedule as a guideline as well as gestalt play therapy techniques as means of gaining information about the adolescent's perception of the influence of acculturation in the various aspects of their lives. The results of which are presented in chapter four.

- To formulate conclusions and recommendations regarding the following:
  - The influence of acculturation on black adolescents in terms of therapy interventions.
  - Guidelines for schools in terms of life-orientation programmes.
  - Guidelines for organizations that are involved in the placement of children in trans-racial alternate care.

The above goal and objectives of the study have been achieved and the findings of the research study served as a platform for further developmental research and indicated some progammes, therapeutic guidelines and frameworks when dealing with

acculturated youth and their families. A summary of the main conclusions and recommendations will now be discussed in this chapter.

5.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

The researcher aimed to explore and describe the phenomenon of acculturation and therefore used the following research question:

What is the influence of acculturation on the self-concept of the black adolescent in South Africa?

The research question was answered by using qualitative data collection methods and analysis and showed that acculturation has had both positive and negative influences on black adolescent youth to varying degrees which will be summarized in the following section.

5.5 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

For clarity of discussion and to highlight those aspects which are most important the researcher will draw conclusions on each facet of the self-concept which has been measured, followed by the recommendations.

5.5.1 Physical characteristics

A finding has been made that when black adolescents are placed in a diverse cultural environment, namely a white westernized culture, the physical differences between themselves and their white peers seem to be highlighted.

In the adolescent stage of development the individual is acutely aware of the physical changes that take place and an important developmental task of adolescence is the acceptance of the changed physical appearance.

Physical changes do not occur in a vacuum and the way the black adolescent deals with it can have significant psychological effects (Thom *et al* 1998:425).

Male and female respondents dealt with increased awareness of their physical changes in a different manner. The male respondents in the group described their physicality

more in terms of their physical strength rather than appearance and were more accepting of themselves on a physical level.

On the other hand the females were much more aware of the differences between "white versus black" looks and physical characteristics and what is thought to be pretty and desirable from a white perspective. In some cases this unhappiness on a physical level impacted on other areas of functioning and led to a general dissatisfaction with the self with a low self esteem and a negative self concept.

Thom *hvttlol* (1998:426) state that the adolescent has to form an integrated and unified image of the self, despite the passing of time and changes they have to deal with, they should still feel that they are the same person.

Thus the process of integrating the physical changes in adolescence seems to be exacerbated by the respondents living in an acculturated environment which interferes with ego-synthesis and ultimately a continuous integrated unified image of the self.

The researcher is of the opinion that the benefit of the link to birth family and culture at adolescence should not be underestimated. It provides the adolescent with an awareness of and a connection to their roots and could facilitate the process of identity formation.

5.5.2 Peer relations

The findings showed that the respondents have an openness and acceptance of all races and a willingness to learn about other ethnic groups, their culture and traditions. The respondent's way of thinking about individuals is not in terms of race but rather in terms of people. Friends form a very important part of daily lives and activities. In the male group friends are seen more as companions whereas in the female group friends are seen as intimate confidantes, to share one's secrets with and to rely on for emotional support.

There is an openness to mixed heterosexual relationships and a willingness to envision the future South African society as a more fused society which is in line with the

melting pot theory where cultures fuse together until they are indistinguishable and form a new culture (LaFromboise *hvttlol/#*1993:401).

 5.5.3 School, sports activities and hobbies

Respondents feel that they have been "rescued" by their white foster parents and are extremely grateful for the life style that they are providing them with and have a firm belief that if they were placed in a nonwhite environment they would not have benefited as much.

There is a deep sense of appreciation for their education and the many sports and activities that they are involved in. There is a sense of pride and achievement in attaining goals on an academic level and in terms of sports and other activities.

Through their schooling and activities they have gained a sense of responsibility and commitment as well as a source of acknowledgement and validation and this has led to building a positive sense of self and a positive self esteem.

5.5.4 Daily life

The study shows that the diverse cultural environment has exposed the respondents to different ways of dressing, different food and eating habits, as well as different music and languages.

There is a willingness and openness to engage in, learn about and enjoy these new things. Thus these new experiences have been incorporated into the self concept and increased awareness of other cultures and diverse environments.

Respondents have developed a multicultural awareness and taste of another cultural way of life and mix these to different degrees with their original culture. Thus respondents lie on a continuum with some at one end who mainly relate and identify with white culture. There are those in the middle who incorporate aspects from both cultures and finally those on the other end of the continuum who although enjoy some aspects of white culture still prefer their own traditional ways. These differing degrees of cultural integration are consistent with the acculturation models (3.4.1, pg 47-50).

Those respondents who are better adjusted have a religious belief and rely on prayer and faith as a guiding force in their life. Those who have no belief or who reject religion are less well adjusted and have difficulty in coping with problems in their life.

There is also increased awareness of being an individual and the importance of addressing one's individual needs and striving for self actualization. In most cases this is encouraged and supported by the foster care placement and was especially evident in terms of career choice. Respondents felt that they had better knowledge about different careers and that they could choose a career based on their interests and abilities rather than choosing a career based on its earning potential to provide for a family. Thus there is a mind shift from striving to address the needs of the community to striving to address one's individual needs and fulfilling one's potential. Therefore the self-concept is more self-directed rather than other-directed (Compare 4.5, sub-theme 8, Pg 79).

5.5.5 Family

Foster families are providing respondents with a sense of care, nurturing and security. There is adjustment within the foster families to varying degrees.

Respondents show better adjustment in those families where there is open, honest communication, problems are dealt with as they arise and there is encouragement for respondents to talk about their own culture of origin.

Respondents are less well adjusted in foster families where there is less open communication in general, as well as in relation to the culture of origin. Problems are ignored by a constant busyness with activities and sometimes there are issues that respondents have not dealt with prior to placement and this also impacts on adjustment in alternate care and in forming attachments in the foster family. The above problems can interfere with identity exploration which can lead to ethnic identity diffusion or foreclosure.

A finding was made that little or no knowledge of the biological family leads to poor adjustment and a sense of isolation and disconnectedness. Once again this seems to

effect identity exploration and individuals accept the attitudes and values of white culture and at the same internalize negative views about their culture of origin, leading to ethnic identity foreclosure.

It is harder for these individuals to form an integrated sense of identity and can lead to ethnic identity diffusion of foreclosure.

5.5.6 Guiding force

Those respondents who use support structures available to them such as their foster family, religion, friends and their inherent traditional culture are better adjusted than those who do not.

Those who are not well adjusted tend to rely on themselves or friends only and there is a sense of distrust of other people. They also tend to have an emotional style of coping with life and problems.

5.5.7 Traditional and cultural beliefs

The findings showed that individuals respond to their culture of origin and are involved with it in varying degrees. It was possible to trace similarities between the respondents and the models of acculturation discussed by LaFromboise *hv# do#* (1993:396-401).

In some instances the birth culture and tradition are discarded for the white westernized culture that the individual is immersed in. Thus assimilation has taken place whereby the individual has been absorbed into the white culture and has relinquished their culture of origin.

In the second case some aspects of birth culture are adhered to and followed while others are discarded. The individual has become acculturated meaning that most but not all of their culture has been given up and replaced with white westernized culture and traditions. Often traditions are only followed to please biological family members or because of superstition.

Thirdly birth culture and tradition are still seen as very important and part of the individual's daily life. It provides them with guidance and wisdom and there is a sense

of sameness, connectedness and integration during the process of forging an ethnic identity. The individual still has the ability to deal with the psychological tasks of adolescents within the diverse cultural environment. Thus this process can be classified into the alternation model of acculturation whereby the dominant culture is added to the culture of origin.

All of above experiences of the self influence the formation of a holistic self-concept that effects the psychological adjustment of the black adolescent in a diverse cultural care placement.

5.5.8 Holistic view of the self-concept

Those individuals who were very unhappy with themselves on a physical level allowed this perception to permeate into other areas of their life. They relied heavily on themselves and secondly on exclusive friendships for support. They were also rejecting of their adoptive/foster family, rejected religion, identified with white culture only and relinquished there own culture of origin. Thus these individuals could be linked to the assimilation model of acculturation. Therefore there seems to be an association with the adolescent stage of development and relinquishing one's own culture, development of a negative self-concept which leads to poor adjustment and negative ways of coping with problems.

Those respondents who were fairly accepting of themselves physically were more positive about themselves in relation to their environment and relationships. They made use of support systems available to them. There were bonds of attachment forged within the foster family. Friends although important did not determine their happiness. There was some connection to the birth culture ranging from a lot of contact such as visits with biological family members to some contact such as through school friends and teachers. Even where contact was minimal discussion within the foster family about the adolescent's biological family and culture provided a sense of connectedness for the adolescent with the birth culture. Therefore this points to an association between the adolescent stage of development, connection to and knowledge about one's biological and cultural roots, development of a positive self-

concept which leads to better adjustment and psychologically healthy ways of coping with life.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Social workers and other mental health professionals need to assist black adolescents through the process of placement in a diverse cultural setting and the following issues need to be addressed.

- On going therapeutic work regarding issues prior to placement and the reason for placement. Placement of a child in a loving foster or adoptive home does not eliminate the necessity of on going therapeutic intervention. Adolescents do not have the capacity to process the many changes and adjustments they have to make by themselves, especially in a diverse cultural setting.

2. The social worker needs to work closely with the foster family to implement the following:

- To assist the adolescents in adjusting to the many physical and psychological changes which are heralded at this stage. The social worker needs to take cognizance of the fact that the psychological tasks of these adolescents in forming a positive and integrated self-concept are exacerbated and made more complicated especially with regard to the physical changes. This implies that even if a child has been placed early in childhood and seems to have adjusted well the social worker needs to give extra assistance and possible counselling during the adolescent stage of development.

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- To help the adolescent to maintain links with the biological family or extended family if at all possible. If this interaction may lead to further psychological and emotional damage for the adolescent then counselling needs to be done to assist the adolescent in dealing with the imposed

rejection from the biological family. However connections should still tried to be made with the adolescent's cultural heritage through an individual of the same ethnic group that the adolescent can identify with and perceive as a caring and nurturing person. This will assist in forging a positive connection with the biological culture and help the adolescent not to view his/her own ethnic group in a negative way as this can lead to relinquishing of their own inherent culture and traditions.

- To create an ongoing dialogue with the adolescent over time with reference to the biological family's culture. This can assist in the exploration, the gaining of knowledge and incorporation of the culture of origin into an integrated identity. This gives the adolescent an opportunity and a legitimate space to make informed choices with regard to the various cultures he/she is exposed to.

- To encourage the adolescent to find sports, hobbies or other activities that bring them acknowledgement, validation and a source of fulfillment and happiness. This will assist the adolescent in defining him/herself not only in terms of appearance but valuing themselves in other ways.

- To organize workshops for the foster parents about the above issues so that they can develop a deeper understanding of the adolescent's issues and assist with the tasks listed above.

- To organize support meetings for foster parents and children from other trans-racial settings. This can assist in helping them to relate to and identify with one another in terms of their acculturated environments and the adaptions they have had to make.

3. Schools
- Schools can assist on an individual and general basis. If schools are aware of the foster care placement they can put the foster family in touch with other

families who are the same biological culture as the child and in this way help in connecting the adolescent to the culture of origin.

- Life orientation programmes at schools can educate all South African children about the different racial and ethnic groups that make up our population. The beliefs and values that underlie the rituals and traditions need to be discussed, understood and respected.

4. National level

- Cultural camps could be organized where children and adolescents can learn about each others and their own culture. This would be especially important for those youth who are in children's homes and have little contact with a real family or their own culture. Further research and dialogue is necessary with the various elders of the different ethnic groups and within the different homelands to explore their understanding and response to the suggested idea.

5. Research

- Further research is indicated to explore the many and varied physical and emotional needs of black adolescents in trans-racial care.
- Research with foster and adoptive parents to explore their understanding of their role and response to their foster/adoptive children of a different culture to their own.

5.7 CLOSING COMMENT

The present statistics predict that South Africa will be faced with an increasing number of black Aids orphans in the future. The reality of the situation is that many of these children are going to be in need of alternate care and presumably trans-racial foster care and adoption will increase. Therefore it is imperative that as social workers we remain abreast of the changes in our country and find ways to address the needs of these children in a manner that not only takes care of their physical needs but one

which also assists them in maintaining their cultural heritage in order to promote optimum mental health and functioning.

The following extract is from a young black woman called Ann who was adopted by a white family at the age of one year. Although they provided a very loving, caring and nurturing home for her it was still not enough to provide her with an integrated sense of self identity. It was necessary for her to go through a struggle and a process of self exploration to emerge feeling more complete, integrated and whole at the end of it. (Adoption, 2004).

> Although I was the middle child of two siblings born to my parents, I was my parents easiest, most well behaved and endearing child. In part I like to think it was just because of the person I am but I admit that in part, this was because I felt I needed to be sure that my parents really loved me as much as it appeared. I felt that my brother and sister were entitled to that love but that if I did not maintain it, it could slip away. This was not because of the messages that my parents sent me, but rather my own insecurities about being different because I was adopted and did not look like the rest of the family. This is something I thought about a lot. I would secretly compare my wild curly black mess of hair to my sister's silky "Barbie" hair and think that I was going to have to work harder to be attractive.

She then talks about her college days and moving away from the sheltered environment of home.

> I went to college at a school that I chose because of its diverse student population. I was shocked when I got there to find that people wanted me to choose sides, "are you with us or with them, are you black or white?" I had grown up knowing that I was half of both and was

shocked to find that there is no such thing. I also learned a lot about myself and my cultural identity when I tried to fit in on either side of the divide. I found it was easier to relate to white students but they kept a certain distance because they were white. It was harder to relate to black students who naturally accepted me but they viewed me as "too white." I wanted to find a place where I could fit in. I quickly learned that I could never blend in on the white side, but if I adapted some of my language, interests and perspectives, I could with the African-American students. As I engaged in this transformation my world grew larger. It was exciting but also frightening, sometimes even painful. One of the frightening aspects was feeling that as I developed as a black person I might lose my connectedness to my family. I became aware that there were things that my family had not given me, prepared me for. I needed other African-Americans to teach me about who I was and perhaps I was incomplete the way my family had raised me. What made this transformation process successful for me was that my family was always my haven from pain. They were open and interested in talking about issues of race and racial tension and they encouraged me to be whomever I would fully develop into.

Today I am proud to announce that I am Irish-African-American and people accept that because of the confidence I have in myself and in the fact that I can easily participate in various cultures and racial groups, without awkwardness. I am glad to be adopted and feel that knowing my lifetime family and family of origin makes me complete.

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Appendix A.

1ST INTERVIEW.
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NAME:

AGE:

GRADE:

CULTURAL GROUP/RACE:

LENGTH OF TIME IN FOSTER CARE and BRIEF HISTORY

Describe your physical appearance to me pretending that I am blind

What do you think is your best physical attribute ?

What do you think is your worst physical attribute?

Is their anything about yourself that you would change if you could?

In terms of your personality how would your best friend describe you to me?

In terms of your personality how would your worst enemy describe you to me?

Tell me about your friends?

What kind of things do you do with your friends?

What activities/ sports and hobbies do you participate in?

Which language do you use most often? When and with whom?
Which language do you think in?

Instruction: Choose any of the symbols to represent the members of your family and
make a picture with them in the sand.

Instruction: Choose any of the symbols that you feel are a guiding
force/foundation/belief system for you and make a picture with them in the sand.
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#
#

2ND INTERVIEW.

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\#

<u>Instruction:</u> Think of yourself in terms of a symbol (fantasy, nature, animal, material object). Make a mould of this symbolic image with the clay.

How have the following areas of your life been influenced since you have been living in   foster care placement that differs from your own culture.

- Your dress code.
- Your eating habits
- Music
- Religious belief
- Type of food. Likes/dislikes
- Traditional/Cultural beliefs
- Dating/Heterosexual relationships and Socializing
- Career choice.

What do you feel the main difference has been for you by being placed in a foster family of another race as opposed to being placed within a foster family of your own race?

\#

Herewith is an explanation with regard to the interview schedule that was used as a guideline by the researcher for the semi-structured interviews.

The self concept is made up of different facets. In order to measure these facets the interview schedule was comprised of different sections.
Through the literature study it became evident that the adolescent stage of self-identity versus identity confusion is the most difficult developmental stage to negotiate successfully. According to Erikson any dramatic changes in the individual's body, abilities or social status has a major affect on the self-concept, which is often why adolescents experience an identity crisis. Thus the formulation of identity in adolescence is directly influenced by the diverse facets of the self-concept. Different authors give different weight to various aspects of the self-concept namely:

- The self in relation to the physical self

- The self in relation to psychological and cognitive aspects

- The self in peer relations

- The self in relation to school activities and career choice

- The self and family relations

- The self in relation to religious and cultural norms and beliefs.

(For more detail and references with regard to the above please refer to pages 1-6 of the research proposal).

The researcher has used the above as a guideline in formulating the interview schedule in order to incorporate as many facets of the self concept as possible with focus on each adolescent's understanding of their holistic self within their particular trans-racial setting.
The introductory questions are purposefully not directly focused on the cultural diversity of the setting in order not to contaminate the adolescent's inherent sense of self.

1. PHYSICAL:

Ghvfuleh#rxu#sk|vlfdo#dsshdudqfh#wr#ph#uhvhqglqj#kdw#L#dp#edqg#
#
Zkdw#gr#rx#wklqn#lv#rxu#ehvw#sk|vlfdo#dwwulexwhB#
#
Zkdw#gr#rx#wklqn#lv#rxu#zruvw#sk|vlfdo#dwwulexhB#
#
Lv#khlu#dq|wklqj#derxw#rxuvhai#kdw#rx#zrxag#fkdqjh#li#rx#frxgB#

2. PSYCHOLOGICAL SELF PERCEPTION:#

Lq#whup v#ri#rxu#shuvrqddw|#krz #rxog#rxu#ehvw#iulhqg#ghvfuleh#rxw#r|p hB#
#
Lq#whup v#ri#rxu#shuvrqddw|#krz #rxog#rxu#z ruvw#hqhp |#ghvfuleh#rxw#r|p hB#
#
Z kdw#dqj xdj h#gr#rx#vh#p rvw#riwhqB#Lq#z klfk#dqj xdj h#gr#rx#klqnB#
(The researcher will explore which language they use at home, with their peers, adults etc)

3. PEER AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS:

Who#p h#lerxw#rxu#ulhqgv?

Z kdw#nlqg#ri#klqj v#gr#rx#gr#z lvk#rxu#ulhqgv?
(The researcher will explore with them if they have one best friend or lots of friends, friends of one or different races, heterosexual friendships as well as the activities and outings they engage in with their friends).

What activities/ sports and hobbies do you participate in?
(An ecomap will be used to assist with the above questions activity).

4. FAMILY:

The sand tray as an assessment technique will be used to explore family relationships.

Sand tray work consists of a tray or container of sand and a number of miniature objects chosen because they are representative of people, nature or objects in real life or have some symbolic meaning. The respondent essentially makes a story in the sand using any objects of their choice.(Geldard & Geldard, 2000:106).

Sand tray work is an expressive and projective medium involving the unfolding and processing of intra and inter personal issues, through the use of the sand tray material. It is a nonverbal medium of communication led by the client and facilitated by the therapist.(Homeyer & Sweeney, 1998:6).

The researcher will provide miniatures representing different races and racial relevant objects of different cultural groups to provide the adolescent the opportunity to explore their understanding of the influence of their biological and foster families in their lives.

Lqvwuxfwlrq =#Fkrrvh#dq|#ri#khv#p erov#w #uhsuhvhqw#khp hp ehuv#ri#rxu#dp lo|#dqg#p dnh#d#slfwxuh#z lvk#khp #q#khvdqg.

In order to explore the finished product the researcher will use Oaklander's working model of opened ended questions to explore the finished sand and clay product. This model starts off with broad open ended questions and narrows them down to specific items or aspects of the product. (Oaklander, 1988:53-56)

5. VALUES, BELIEF SYSTEMS AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS:

Secondly the sand tray, with appropriate miniatures will be used to explore the adolescent's inherent culture, beliefs and value systems as well as the one they are now presently experiencing through their foster placement and the subsequent influence of this on their self concept.#
#
*Instruction: Choose any if the is symbol that you eel are re a guiding
force in your day to day ay life's system or you and make a picture wish them in the sand.*

Once again the researcher will make use of Oaklander's model and questions as described in section 4.

6. HOLISTIC VIEW OF THE SELF CONCEPT:

The clay assessment technique will be used for this.

Clay is a pliable three-dimensional material that can be moulded and constructed in various ways and offers a different creative outlet than the so called graphic or two-dimensional media and can be used as a powerful projective medium in play therapy.

Clay is considered to be one of the most therapeutic tools to express emotions and to help the client deal with deep seated internal issues. The versatility and adaptability of clay as a means of expression make it an effective tool with all developmental stages and can enhance symbolic expression. This could be especially helpful to enhance understanding cross-culturally.(Compare Oaklander, 1988:67-70; Van der Merwe, 1996:147; and Thomas & Rudolph, 2000:175.)

Playing with clay will give the adolescent an opportunity to relax and enable him/her to tell their story. From a gestalt perspective it is also known to penetrate the "armour" of the child and offer a bridge between the senses and feelings and provide a concrete expression of the self.

It is for this reason that the researcher is using clay, as it can facilitate the adolescent's expression of sense of self, namely the self concept. The researcher will use open ended questions to explore the finished product with the respondent.

*Instruction: Think if ourself in terms of if a symbol that any natys nature, anim al my aterial a
object.M ake a mould if this symbol m age with the clay.#*
#

In order to explore the finished product the researcher will use Oaklander's working model of opened ended questions to explore the finished sand and clay product. This model starts off with broad open ended questions and narrows them down to specific items or aspects of the product. (Oaklander, 1988:53-56).

The following questions will deal more directly with the adolescent's personal experience of acculturation.

Krz #kdyh#kh#roz lqj #duhdv#ri#rxu#dih#ehhq#qiroxhqfhg#vlqfh#rx#kdyh#ehhq#dylqj #
lq##rvwhu#fduh#dofhp hqw#kdv#gliihuv#urp #rxu#z q#fxowuhl##
#
  - *\rxu#guhvv#frgh!#*
  - *\rxu#hdwlqj #kdelw!#*
  - *P xvlf #!#*
  - *Uhdj lrxv#ehdhiv#*
  - *W sh#ri#rrg!#Olnhv2glvdnhv#*
  - *Wudglwlrqdo2Fxowxudd#ehdhiv#*
  - *Gdwlqj 2Khvhurvh{xdd#uhdwlrqvklsv#*
  - *#Vrfldd}lqj #*
  - *Fduhhu#frlfh!#*
#
#
Z kdv#gr#rx#hho#kh#p dlq#gliihuhqfh#kdv#ehhq#ru#rx#e|#ehlqj #sdfhg#lq#d#rvwhu#
idp lo|#i#dqrwkhu#udfh#dv#ssrvhg#w#ehlqj #sdfhg#z lvklq#d#rvwhu#idp lo|#ri#rxu#z q#
udfhB#
#

Appendix B

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Reference: Research

Enquiries: Miss M.A. Coetzee/az

Date: 13 April 2004

Marcia Rebelo,
Fax: (011) 453-8104

Dear Marcia,
**RESEARCH PROPOSAL: THE INFLUENCE OF ACCULTURATION ON THE
SELF-CONCEPTS OF BLACK ADOLESCENTS.**

As discussed, we are happy for you to conduct your research with our foster children in cross-cultural foster placements and we look forward to working with you and eagerly await your findings!

Yours faithfully,

M.A. COETZEE (MISS)
MANAGER – FOSTER CARE DEPARTMENT

Please remember to visit our website at www.jhbchildwelfare.org.za

We serve children, their families and their communities and promote and protect their rights, well-being and Dignity.
PATRONS: Mr Tokyo Sexwale and Mrs Judy Sexwale