

**INTIMACY IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS DURING YOUNG  
ADULTHOOD: THE ROLE OF THE MOTHER-DAUGHTER  
RELATIONSHIP**

BY

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## Abstract

This study addressed the role of the mother-daughter relationship on the daughter's development of the capacity for intimacy with a romantic partner. The objective of this study was to examine whether separateness in mother-daughter interactions was related to romantic intimacy (sexual and non-sexual intimacy) in romantic relationships. The following instruments were used: 1) Socio-demographic questionnaire; 2) Competence in Mother-Daughter Relationship Questionnaire (ICQ-M) and 3) Personal Assessment of Intimacy Questionnaire (PAIR). 179 adolescent female university students participated in this study most of who were between the ages of 20 and 24. The results indicated that a positive relationship existed between separateness and sexual intimacy ( $r=.688$ ,  $p<.01$ ) as well as separateness and non-sexual intimacy ( $r=.598$ ,  $p<.01$ ). A positive relationship between connectedness and non-sexual intimacy ( $r=.468$ ,  $p<.01$ ) was also observed, however no correlation was observed between connectedness and sexual intimacy. These findings indicate that separateness in mother-daughter interactions has a definite effect on the different dimensions of romantic intimacy. Therefore, late adolescent women who possess the ability to assert themselves and express differences between themselves and their mothers are not as apprehensive as their peers when it comes to romantic intimacy with a partner.

(Keywords: separateness, connectedness, sexual intimacy, non-sexual intimacy)

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## Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of the Problem	1
1.2 Main Objectives	1
1.3 Rationale and Significance of the Problem	2
1.4 Research Questions	3
1.5 Operational Definitions	3
1.6 Chapter Overview	6
1.7 Conclusion	8
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Female Sexuality and Identity Development	9
2.3 The Adolescent's Development	11
2.4 The Construct of Separateness	13
2.5 Development of Romantic Intimacy	15
2.6 Parent-Child Relationships	20
2.7 Mother-Daughter Relationships	24
2.8 Early Caregiving and Romantic Relationship Quality	25

2.9 Conclusion	29
<b>CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>31</b>
3.1 Introduction	31
3.2 Sample	32
3.3 Instrumentation	36
<i>3.3.1 Personal Assessment of Intimacy Questionnaire</i>	36
<i>3.3.2 Competence in Mother-Daughter Relationships Questionnaire</i>	38
3.4 Hypotheses	41
3.5 Data Collection	41
3.6 Data Analysis	42
3.7 Ethical Considerations	43
3.8 Conclusion	43
<b>CHAPTER 4: RESULTS</b>	<b>44</b>
4.1. Introduction	44
4.2 Descriptive Statistics	44
4.3 Pearson Correlation Coefficient: Separateness and Connectedness	47
4.4 Multiple Regression: Sexual and Non-Sexual Intimacy	48
4.5 Conclusion	49
<b>CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION</b>	<b>51</b>
5.1 Introduction	51

5.2 Goal Attainment and Answering of the Research Questions	51
5.3 Limitations of the Study	55
5.4 Suggestions for Future Research	55
5.5 Conclusion	56
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>68</b>
Appendix A: Questionnaire	68

## List of Figures

Graph 1: Frequencies and percentages of female participants' age groups (N=179).	33
Graph 2. Frequencies and percentages of female figures (mother) who were mainly responsible for raising the participants (N=179).	33
Graph 3. Frequencies and percentages of female participants' ethnic groups (N=179).	34
Graph 4. Frequencies and percentages of female participants' relationship status (N=179).	34
Graph 5. Frequencies and percentages of female participants' puberty status (N=179).	35
Graph 6: Frequencies and percentages of female participants' sexual orientations (N=179).	35
Graph 7: Sexual intimacy scale descriptive statistics.	45
Graph 8: Non-sexual intimacy scale descriptive statistics.	46
Table 1. Mean and standard deviations of the Conflict Management, Negative Assertion, Self-Disclosure and Emotional Support scales.	46
Table 2. Pearson Correlation Coefficients for the four ICQ-M scales (N=179).	46
Table 3. Pearson Correlation Coefficients for Separateness.	48
Table 4. Pearson Correlation Coefficient for Connectedness.	48
Table 5. Multiple Regression: Sexual Intimacy with a Romantic Partner.	49
Table 6. Multiple Regression: Non-Sexual Intimacy with a Romantic Partner.	49

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Problem

The development of the capacity for romantic intimacy is an important marker of late adolescence and young adulthood (Erikson, 1968). Romantic relationships are often seen as an important avenue through which adolescents and young adults define themselves, their identity, and their sexuality (Brown, Feiring & Furman, 1999) and, consequently, it is often a major cause of anxiety or happiness. Furthermore, the importance of romantic relationships as providers of support and as targets of intimacy increases with age, though friends and family members remain important figures (Laursen & Williams, 1997; Shulman & Scharf, 2000). Despite extensive theoretical discussions of the processes concerning the development of this capacity for romantic intimacy (Sullivan, 1953; Erikson, 1968; Bowlby, 1980; Orlofsky, 1993) not a great deal of attention has been directed at the empirical investigation of its antecedents and precursors.

### 1.2 Main Objectives

The main objective of this study was to examine whether separateness in mother-daughter interactions is related to romantic intimacy (sexual and non-sexual intimacy) in romantic relationships. The mother-daughter relationship was examined as a possible precursor to the development of the female adolescent's capacity for romantic intimacy with a romantic partner. In addition, the mediating role of



interpersonal competence in the association of mother-daughter relationships and the capacity for intimacy was explored.

The purpose of this study is two-fold. First, this study will determine whether separateness in mother-daughter relationships/interactions is positively related to sexual and non-sexual intimacy in romantic relationships. Secondly, this study will determine whether mother-daughter interactions significantly explains romantic intimacy in young women while taking into account other individual variables such as current relationship status and the onset of puberty.

### **1.3 Rationale and Significance of the Problem**

The significance and power of the mother-daughter relationship has been the centre of widespread debate (Ruebush, 1994, p. 439). Many researchers are of the opinion that the mother-daughter relationship is the perfect arena to develop and practice relationship building skills that form and shape every other relationship in a woman's life because the mother-daughter bond is such a close one (Allen et al., 1994; Collins & Sroufe, 1999; Lesch & Kruger, 2005; Thériault, 2003). Seemingly, a mother contributes to her daughter's ability to have a romantic intimate (sexual and non-sexual intimacy) relationship with a member of the opposite sex, but not a lot of research has been done in this specific area. According to Brandt and Silverman (as cited in Ruebush, 1994, p. 441) "empirical studies of female adolescent separation-individuation are limited, with no attempt to differentiate between the physical and psychological facets of separateness and identity formation."

This research will determine whether or not the mother-daughter relationship plays a role in the daughter's development of the capacity for intimacy and will also provide local knowledge to assist counsellors who come across problems in the mother-daughter relationship.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

The research questions of this study are as follows:

- Is separateness (negative assertion; conflict management) in the mother-daughter relationship related to the development of the capacity for romantic intimacy (sexual and non-sexual) in the romantic relationships of the daughter?
- Is connectedness (emotional support; self-disclosure) in the mother-daughter relationship related to the development of the capacity for romantic intimacy (sexual and non-sexual) in the romantic relationships of the daughter?

## **1.5 Operational Definitions**

There are many different dimensions to the concept of adolescence. Gouws and Kruger (1994) and Rice (1984) explain that the word adolescence is derived from a Latin verb "adolescere" which implies growth and therefore relates to the adolescent's growth to adulthood (as cited in Olivier et al., 1998, p. 112). Adolescence is often viewed as a process and not a period. It is a process of acquiring beliefs and attitudes for effective participation in society. However, Freud chose to understand adolescence as a response of psychological nature to pubertal changes (Tolan & Cohler, 1993). Mwamwenda (1995, p. 63) recognises that "adolescence is a period characterised by a search for and consolidation of identity. This period ranges from the age of about 12 to approximately 21 years. According to Louw and Louw (2007, p. 278) "adolescence

is the period of transition between childhood and adulthood and it can therefore be seen as a developmental bridge between being a child and becoming an adult.” The characteristics of adolescence are not easily defined, since demarcating adolescence is not easy (Louw & Louw, 2007).

Intimacy refers to relationships characterised by trust, self-disclosure, and emotional support (Sullivan, 1953; Reis & Shaver, 1988; Orlofsky, 1993). “To achieve intimacy, one must first be oriented to value and seek closeness. Second, one must be able to tolerate, and even embrace; the intense emotions that are inextricably part of close relationships and to be able to share emotional experiences freely. Finally, one must be capable of self-disclosure, mutual reciprocity, sensitive to the feelings of the other, and concern for the other’s well-being” (Collins & Sroufe, 1999, p. 127). In addition, it is often emphasised that mature intimacy concurrently involves the capacity for autonomy, individuality, and separateness within the mother-daughter relationship (Grotevant and Cooper, 1986; Allen et al., 1994; Shulman et al., 1997b).

Accordingly, Erikson (1968) is of the opinion that individuals must first develop a coherent sense of identity that will enable them to achieve closeness and sharing with others without fear of losing their unique identity. Mature and “genuine” intimacy was seen as involving a balance between emotional closeness (connectedness) and separateness (Guisinger & Blatt, 1994; Shulman & Knafo, 1997).

The development of intimacy during adolescence is closely linked to the development of attachment during infancy (Morris, 1971). Attachment is defined as “a strong affectional bond that is enduring and persistent” (Steinberg, 1993, p. 325). All infants have attachment relationships with their primary caregivers, although they are not of

the same quality. Psychologists generally claim that there are three types of attachment: secure attachment, anxious-avoidant attachment, and anxious-resistant attachment (Steinberg, 1993). The quality of attachment during infancy is important in determining how adolescents develop intimacy with their parents. When the attachment relationship is secure, or strong, affectionate, and consistent, an adolescent is more likely to establish a healthy intimate relationship with their parents and peers (Steinberg, 1993).

Building on Erikson's theory of life span development, Orlofsky (1993) refers to the capacity for intimacy in terms of two major dimensions, depth of intimacy and degree of commitment. Mature intimacy is seen as a combination of closeness, affection, and self disclosure, coupled with the willingness to commit to a long-term relationship. Orlofsky examined these concepts through a semi-structured interview, which inquired about friendships and romantic relationships (1993).

Subsequently, Orlofsky (1976) added a third dimension regarding the capacity to respect own and other's individuality and maintain some level of separateness within the intimate and close relationship. Two of these major dimensions, namely, separateness (individuality) and connectedness (closeness), were examined in this study to illustrate the capacity for intimacy in romantic relationships in late adolescence. "Separateness" has been defined as the intrapsychic process by which one comes to see oneself as separate and distinct within one's relational context (Anderson & Sabatelli, 1990). Ruebush (1994, p. 440) defines separateness "as the intrapsychic achievement of a reasonably stable representation of the self that is distinct from representations of important others, 'objects.' This self-representation is

continually refined and elaborated across the life cycle, with increased cognitive capacity and the impact of important relationships.” Mahler, Pine and Bergman (as cited in Ruebush, 1994, p. 440) described this process, in which stable representation is achieved, as separation-individuation. This process has most often been explored in the context of family systems theories and theories of individual personality development (Bray & Harvey, 1987).

## **1.6 Chapter Overview**

*Chapter one* introduces the research topic and discusses the motivation for this study. The aims of this study have been made evident and an overview of the role of the mother-daughter relationship in the development of the daughter’s capacity for intimacy in romantic relationships is given.

*Chapter two* introduces the purpose of this study for which relevant literature has been sourced and discussed. Literature with regards to the development of female sexuality and mother-daughter interactions during the separation-individuation process is outlined. The core constructs of this study, such as “Separateness”, “Romantic Intimacy”, “Adolescence” and “Mother-Daughter Relationships” are discussed. Although the author could not find any research conducted in South Africa that focuses specifically on the role of the mother–daughter relationship in female adolescent sexual development, research conducted in other countries have found this relationship to be crucial in the development of adolescent sexuality (e.g., see Furman, Brown & Feiring, 1999; Mazarella & Odom Pecora, 1999; Rider, 2000; Sieving, McNeely & Blum, 2000). Additionally, the lack of literature regarding the Southern African population is a further factor which motivated this study. In this

study the impact of the mother-daughter relationship on adolescent's capacity for sexual development is explored and the following questions are addressed: (1) Will separateness in mother-daughter relationships foster the daughter's development of a greater capacity for sexual and non-sexual intimacy with their romantic partners than their peers? (2) Do mother-daughter interactions significantly explain romantic intimacy (sexual and non-sexual intimacy) in young women while taking into account other variables such as current relationship status and the onset of puberty?

*Chapter three* describes the methodology used in this study and offers a brief outline of the approach used in this study. It contains a description of the research process in terms of the sampling procedures, data collection procedures, data analysis and the interpretation of the data.

*Chapter four* is an analysis and interpretation of the data and serves to indicate the findings of this study in terms of the construction of mother-daughter relationships and romantic intimacy. The results of this study are presented in tabular form.

*Chapter five* discusses the findings of this study and it contains an overview of the results, exploring the implications of the study for theory, research and practice in the area of South African female adolescent sexuality and the role of the mother-daughter relationship. It specifically offers a summary of the main findings of this study and considers the contribution of this research. This chapter also suggests the possible limitations of this study and indicates directions for further research.

## **1.7 Conclusion**

This chapter introduced the research topic and the motivations for this study were discussed. It points out the relevance of the role of the mother-daughter relationship on the development of adolescent sexuality and identity. The aims of this study have been explained and the details as to how this report will progress have been given. The chapters included in this report have been briefly overviewed and the next chapter will discuss the relevant literature.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter introduces the core constructs of this study for which relevant literature has been sourced and discussed. Literature with regards to the development of female sexuality and the role of mother-daughter interactions during the separation-individuation process are outlined. The core constructs of this study, such as “Female Sexuality and Identity Development”, “Separateness”, “Romantic Intimacy”, “Adolescence” and “Mother-Daughter Relationships” are discussed.

#### **2.2 Female Sexuality and Identity Development**

The identity development of a young girl is based more on connection than it is based on independence. For a young girl, it is acceptable to be dependent upon her mother. As a result, a young girl is never actually encouraged to separate from her primary caregiver. This possibly allows a female “to become more invested and more competent at forming intimate relationships” (Steinberg, 1996, p. 321). Many female adolescents obtain their identity through connection or attachment in relationships. This may lead a female to have problems with separation. “Not only are females concerned with their own sense of self, but they are more concerned than males with the impact of their self on significant people in their lives” (Muus, 1996, p. 74). Therefore, identity and intimacy development are often merged for some females.



A theoretical perspective that might shed some light on the role of the mother-daughter relationship in the development of the daughter's capacity for sexual and non-sexual intimacy is the relational theory of self, based on the work of feminist theorists like Miller (1986), Gilligan (1982) and Chodorow (1974, 1978). According to this theory, connectedness and separateness in relationships are important in the development of any young women's sexuality. Jordan (1993, p. 138) states that "this goes beyond saying that women value relationships, we are suggesting that the deepest sense of one's being is continuously formed in connection with others and is inextricably tied to relational movement." The specific implications of this theory for adolescent women and adolescent female sexuality have not yet been specifically explored. Gilligan (1982) argues that many adolescent girls experience a crisis of connection or association. They have difficulty when it comes to resolving the issue of being themselves and being separate while maintaining relationships with significant others, especially with their mothers. Many adolescent girls resolve this issue by not expressing their potentially upsetting thoughts, emotions and behaviours in order to preserve significant relationships. It is important for female adolescents to develop and form separate identities from their mothers (Gilligan, 1982; Lesch & Kruger, 2005).

Lesch & Kruger (2005) contends that the mother-daughter relationship is considered one of the most significant of all intergenerational relationships. According to research by Lesch and Kruger (2005, p. 1079) "the importance of parents and especially mothers in the sexual development of their children has been confirmed." Parent-adolescent communication about sexuality is of vital importance in how teenagers behave sexually as well as in the sexual decisions that they make (Furman

et al., 1999; Mazzarella & Odom Pecora, 1999). Lesch and Kruger (2005) argue that reliable findings have been made which clearly indicate that mothers play a crucial role in the sexual health of their daughters. Accordingly, a daughter constantly invests in her relationship with her mothers and therefore mothers could be powerful resources in the development of their daughter's sexuality (Lesch & Kruger, 2005).

### **2.3 The Adolescent's Development**

Chun and MacDermid (1997) argue that adolescence is the period when individuals are greatly concerned about themselves. Adolescents struggle to separate (individuate) from their families of origin and expand their network of intimate relationships with the outside world. From the point of view of family development, the task of the family during adolescence is to provide an environment that facilitates the separateness process of the adolescent, which, in turn, is positively related to individual psychological adjustment (Chun & MacDermid, 1997).

Research based on family theory argues that adolescent separateness is influenced mainly by interactions in the family, specifically between children and their parents (Chun & MacDermid, 1997). The influence of parents' behaviours on their children has been given less attention than the influence of adolescents on parents (Anderson, & Sabatelli, 1990). The influence of other family relationships (e.g., the impact of the marital relationship on parent-adolescent relationships) has also been underemphasized (Anderson & Sabatelli, 1992). Personality developmental theorists have argued that adolescent separateness is closely related to aspects of psychological well-being such as self-esteem. For example, Flemming and Anderson (as cited in Chun & MacDermid, 1997, p. 452) found that adolescents' perceptions of

connectedness (fusion) with their parents were related to lower self-esteem and poorer health and university adjustment. According to Chun and MacDermid (1997, p. 452) “much of human dysfunction occurs due to a lack of separateness from and unresolved emotional connection to the family of origin.” A positive relationship between adolescent psychosocial wellbeing and parent-adolescent separation has been found and at the same time the belief that separateness and emotional independence have equally positive connotations for adjustment has been questioned (Hoffman, 1983). It has been noted that emotional independence may be positively correlated to adjustment in less supportive familial environments (Fuhrman & Holmbeck, 1995).

During young adulthood, it is expected that the emerging adults will develop their relationship network and furthermore, develop their capacity for mature intimacy with peers (romantic partners) as these relationships become more important in their emotional worlds (Allen & Land, 1999). Indeed, according to Erikson (1968) establishing intimacy in relationships with romantic partners has been described as a fundamental indicator of emerging adulthood. At the same time, adolescents are likely to negotiate their relationships with their parents, altering them to be more mature and independent while preserving closeness and intimacy (Grotevant & Cooper, 1986).

Sullivan (1953) and Erikson (1968) both agree that intimacy is important. However, they have different opinions as to when intimacy is or when it should be experienced. Sullivan (1953) believes that for appropriate development to take place the discovery of one’s identity as a child comes through experiencing friendship with another child. Experiencing intimacy with friends assists adolescents through their journeys of self-discovery and identity development. Therefore, Sullivan believes that it is crucial for

adolescents to experience intimate relationships during childhood and adolescence so they can then find a healthy sense of identity (Sullivan, 1953).

Erikson (1968) on the other hand, believes that adolescents' face a crucial stage of development: identity vs. role confusion. An individual must first find their identity before they can successfully triumph over the next stage of development which is intimacy vs. Isolation (Erikson, 1968). An individual cannot experience a healthy intimate relationship if the individual does not have a sense of self or a healthy sense of their identity first (Erikson, 1983). Identity development and the development of the capacity for romantic intimacy are important psychosocial tasks of the adolescent and the emerging adult. Developmental theorists (Adams & Archer, 1994; Côté, 1996; Erikson, 1968; Kroger, 2003) promote adolescence as a "defining time in life when questions about identity are important and there is substantial progress in the formation of identity." The development of the adolescent's identity also includes identifying occupational interests, identifying vocational pathways, considering sex roles and experiencing interpersonal relationships. Also synonymous with adolescence are romantic interests, the development of more intimate romantic relationships, increasing sexual interests and intense friendships (Furman, Brown, & Feiring, 1999; Zimmer-Gembeck, 2002).

## **2.4 The Construct of Separateness**

To understand separateness as a construct one first needs to examine separateness as a process. Karpel (1976, p. 66) defined separateness as "the process by which a person becomes increasingly differentiated from a past or present relational context. This process constitutes a multitude of different intrapsychic and interpersonal changes that

share a common direction.” In the context of the family, achieving a sense of distinctness and separateness during adolescence and young adulthood involves the following two processes: 1) the demarcation of the self, in which a sense of independence and thus mature separateness is gained; and 2) the renegotiation of relationship structures, which translates ultimately into the attainment of a sense of symmetrical and thus more mature connectedness. In this regard, separateness as a process is not solely concerned with individuation or independence, but rather with the continuation of an individual in a relationship with significant others (Karpel, 1976).

This process of separateness not only involves ongoing efforts on the side of the individual to build a foundation of self-understanding, but also involves the development of background of knowledge about an individual’s identity in relation to all the other individuals with whom he or she interacts over the life course (Gavazzi & Sabatelli, 1990). When looked at in this way, separateness can be seen as a fundamental organising principle of human growth (Gavazzi & Sabatelli, 1990). In this context – the shift from adolescent to young adult – it is important that the individual establishes a degree of independence and identity in order to make the necessary commitments to more adult roles and responsibilities. At the same time, it is appropriate that relationships with parents gradually be reconstituted on a more mutual and adult level so that a continuity of intimacy and a sense of connectedness can be maintained. The age-appropriate degree of independence necessary for adolescent development should be accompanied by a family-stage-appropriate degree of interconnectedness.

## **2.5 Development of Romantic Intimacy**

According to the theory of romantic development put forth by Furman and Wehner (as cited in Seiffge-Krenke, 2003, p. 519) “romantic relationships involve the integration of attachment, affiliative, care-giving, and sexual reproductive behavioural systems.” More mature relationships with romantic partners are unlikely to appear in early adolescence, when relationships are usually very casual and short-lived. Early adolescents’ romantic partners are usually their friends. At a later stage, a partner is sought out in times of distress and is expected to provide support, comfort, and care. When sexual desire begins to emerge, the individual turns to the romantic partner for sexual fulfilment. In meeting these different needs, the romantic partner becomes a major figure in late adolescence and young adulthood. As the relationship develops, the romantic partner gradually assumes a higher position in the adolescent’s social hierarchy, thereby replacing parents and peers (Seiffge-Krenke, 2003).

With respect to the precursors of romantic relationships, Furman and Wehner (as cited in Seiffge-Krenke, 2003, p. 519) have hypothesised that while friends are the major predictors of adolescent love, parental relationships become more important in adolescence. These authors put forth two reasons for the increasing importance of parent-child relationships for adolescent romance. “Firstly, attachment and caretaking processes become more salient features in romantic relationships, and second, relationships with parents became more egalitarian in nature and can thus serve as a model for romantic relationships” (Seiffge-Krenke, 2003, p. 519).

Within the framework of a developmental viewpoint, Brown (as cited in Seiffge-Krenke, 2003, p. 522) proposed that “the development of romantic relationships

throughout adolescence essentially follows a four-phase sequence, whereby each phase is characterised by the specific nature of romantic activity and by key features of the peer context.”

The initiation phase symbolises a turning point in adolescent social activities. During this phase, the early adolescent needs to become reoriented to and reacquainted with the opposite gender. The basic objectives in this first phase are to broaden one’s self-concept and to gain confidence in one’s ability to relate to potential partners in a romantic way. Thus, the focus is on the self, not on the romantic relationship. Romantic dating occurs in the context of and with the assistance of same-sex peers. During the second phase, the status phase, adolescents are confronted with the pressure of having the “right kinds” of romantic relationships. Dating the “wrong” people can seriously damage the adolescents’ standing in the group. Romantic relationships may thus be used to obtain or increase peer acceptance and, as such, may hinder the establishment of a mutually rewarding romantic relationship (Seiffge-Krenke, 2003).

The third phase, the affection phase, is characterised by a shift of focus from the context in which the relationship exists toward the romantic relationship itself (Seiffge-Krenke, 2003). Romance becomes a personal and relational affair; at the same time, the influence of the peer group wanes. Partners in affection-oriented relationships generate deeper feelings of commitment to their relationship, express deeper levels of caring for each other, and typically engage in more extensive sexual activity. The adolescent’s peer network in this phase is reduced from a large crowd of same-sex peers to a smaller circle of mixed-sex friends. The latter may, for example,

offer the adolescent advice on how to start a relationship and provide emotional support after a relationship has ended.

Finally, during the fourth phase of romantic development, the bonding phase, individuals are expected to maintain the depth of relationships typical for the affection phase, yet adopt a more pragmatic perspective. Central issues of this phase concern the possibilities of remaining together with a romantic partner for a lifetime. Typically, while the romantic partners regard themselves to be inseparable as a couple, they are still two separate individuals with distinctive personalities. As such, questions of identity may also rise again. Brown (as cited in Seiffge-Krenke, 2003, p. 519) did not state specific age levels for each phase, and he also maintained that a certain overlap could exist between the different phases. Yet, on the basis of the research he cited, it could be claimed that the initiation phase typically occurs in early adolescence, when adolescents are about 11 to 13 years old. The status phase occurs in mid-adolescence, between the ages of 14 and 16 years, and the affection phase in late adolescence, between the ages of 17 and 20 years. Finally, the bonding phase occurs at the start of the transition to young adulthood at around 21 years of age.

Research on adolescent romantic development is still in its early stages (Seiffge-Krenke, 2003). Some investigators have documented a progression of dating activities and a change in quality of romance with age without specifying a developmental sequence. This may be due to the fact that most studies have been cross-sectional and carried out on populations with broad age spans. These studies have shown that by the end of mid-adolescence, most adolescents have had some dating experiences (Seiffge-Krenke, 2003).



As adolescents grow older, dating relationships lose some of their casual qualities. These more “serious” romantic relationships typically involve just one partner and include sexual activity. An increase in the mean duration of romantic relationships has been reported (Furman et al., 1999; Gordon & Miller, 1984), as well as changes in the quality of relationships. Studies of adolescent romantic relationships during the high school years indicate higher values in positive attributes, including intimacy, companionship, and closeness, with increasing age. Research on college student samples has shown that most individuals in this age group report serious, intimate, and long-term relationships (Seiffge-Krenke, 2003). In addition, positive relationship qualities such as depth, intimacy, and support have been associated with long-lasting relationships.

Taken together, these studies provide evidence that the duration and quality of romantic encounters between individuals in late adolescence and young adulthood differ clearly from romantic experiences at earlier ages. Simply comparing these kinds of age-specific changes, however, does not provide information about true developmental changes.

A common element in the theories on romantic development put forth by Brown, Furman and Wehner (as cited in Seiffge-Krenke, 2003) is the importance of other, earlier relationships. Cross-sectional studies have consistently shown that with increasing adolescent age, the importance of romantic partners as providers of support and targets of intimacy increases. Nevertheless, parents and friends remain extremely important figures for adolescents (Seiffge-Krenke, 2003).

The notion that romantic relationships are shaped by the quality of relationships with parents has been a long-standing issue in attachment research (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Indeed, findings from longitudinal studies suggest that the qualities of parent-adolescent relationships are linked to later romantic outcome. For example, closeness, flexibility and trustworthy alliances experienced by adolescents in their relationships with their parents have been found to be an indicator of an adolescent's experience of happiness, connectedness and attraction in their romantic relationships (Feldman, Gowen & Fisher, 1998; Seiffge-Krenke et al., 2001).

Furthermore, close friendships offer opportunities for the adolescent to practice mutual disclosure and intimacy, qualities that are related to high school and university students' experiences in romantic relationships (Furman & Wehner, 1997). There is evidence of links between the frequency and quality of interactions with parents during adolescence, and intimacy and security experienced with later romantic partners (Collins, Hennighausen, Schmit, & Sroufe, 1997; Seiffge-Krenke, 2000).

From a developmental standpoint, it is realistic to presume that romantic relationships are built on prior relational experiences, which may differ with respect to their relative contributions to different phases of romantic development. An adolescent's identity, such as his or her self-conceptions, is also central in the formation of romantic relationships. Building on Erikson's (1968) belief that only individuals with a separate identity are able to merge with the opposite gender, Brown (as cited in Seiffge-Krenke, 2003), claimed that aspects of the self are particularly important during two stages of romantic development namely, during the initiation phase, where the focus is on the self, and during the bonding phase, when the romantic couple has to

negotiate between individual and relational issues. Studies have shown that the self becomes more differentiated with age and that in late adolescence, the capacity to coordinate and resolve contradictory attributes of the self emerges (Damon & Hart, 1982; Harter, 1990). There is also some evidence of the detrimental effects of a lack of integrative capacity on relationship development (Damon & Hart, 1982; Harter, 1990).

Research covering the period between adolescence and young adulthood suggests that there are qualitatively distinctive kinds and levels of experiences with romantic partners and that the qualities of other close relationships (such as mother-daughter relationships) contribute to the development of romance at different ages (Karney et al., 2007).

## **2.6 Parent-Child Relationships**

Parent-child relationships set the foundation for close relationships later on in life and for the capacity for the development of intimacy with peers and with romantic partners (Bowlby, 1980; Sroufe & Fleeson, 1986; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Collins & Sroufe, 1999). Children often have expectations regarding their parents (which are based on their interactions with their parents) and how their parents will take care of them; later it becomes a habit and they generalise these expectations to others, including friends and romantic partners (Bowlby, 1980; Hazan & Shaver, 1994; Shulman & Collins, 1995; Collins & Sroufe, 1999). Furthermore, it appears as if parents play a major role in the development of their children's social and interpersonal competencies through their interactions and general parenting styles (Parke & O'Neil, 1999; Mize et al., 2000; O'Neil & Parke, 2000). These skills in turn

might later on contribute to the quality of the female adolescent's relationship with a romantic partner. Thus, expectations arising from the relationships with parents as well as skills learned in this context are often expected to contribute to the association between parent-child relationships and romantic intimacy (Shulman & Collins, 1995).

Specifically, children who experience positive parenting (e.g. sensitive care) develop trust in others and in themselves and are confident in their interactions with others. These children feel at ease with disclosure to and reliance on others. They are also better at negotiating differences of opinion. In contrast, children who experience insensitive caregiving (rejection and overcontrol) find it difficult to trust others and themselves. They either cling too much or tend to rely too much on themselves. They do not develop constructive conflict resolution strategies and in general find it difficult to develop balanced intimacy with others in relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1994).

The link between positive parent-child relationships and the capacity for intimacy has mostly been demonstrated with regard to peer relationships (Parke & Ladd, 1992; Kerns et al., 2000). However, a similar transfer is hypothesised for intimacy in romantic relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). In general, separateness or independence was hypothesised to promote the capacity for intimacy in romantic relationships through their effect on internalised expectations and interpersonal competence (Collins & Sroufe, 1999; Gray & Steinberg, 1999). Gray and Steinberg (1999) stress the importance of the development of independence during adolescence as it is believed to be an important precursor of adolescent emotional investment in romantic relationships because it reflects the release of the adolescent from the close

grip of the relationships with parents and allows for emotional autonomy. Thus, separateness (autonomy granting) and not connectedness in mother-daughter relationships were expected to contribute to higher intimacy with romantic partners (Gray & Steinberg, 1999).

In line with these arguments, it was found that adolescents who reportedly experience more independent relationships with their parents also report closer, more intimate, and more secure relationships with their romantic partner (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Furman & Simon, 1999). In one of a small number of longitudinal studies conducted on this aspect, Collins and his colleagues (Collins & Sroufe, 1999) offered a preliminary analysis showing an association between attachment security in infancy and middle-childhood social competence and security with dating at age sixteen.

Scharf and Mayseless (2001) conducted a study which showed that three types of relational contexts namely, parent-adolescent, marital and best-friend, contributed (directly or indirectly) to different facets of the capacity for romantic intimacy. The parent-adolescent relationships were associated indirectly with both the connectedness and the separateness facets of romantic intimacy through their effects on socio-emotional capacities. Specifically, positive parent-adolescent relationships (acceptance and encouragement of independence) contributed to better interpersonal competence, which in turn promoted (directly or indirectly) a higher capacity for intimacy in romantic relationships. These findings accord well with a number of conceptualisations (Parke & Ladd, 1992; Parke & O'Neil, 1999; Kerns et al., 2000) all stressing that the parent-child relationships lay the foundation for later close

relationships through the effect of parents on children's social competence (Shulman & Collins, 1995; Parke & O'Neil, 1999).

Interestingly, in the study of connectedness in romantic relationships, the results of Scharf and Maysel's (2001) research demonstrated that the quality of the relationship with the best friend further assisted with the association between parent-adolescent relationships and the capacity for intimacy. Relationships with parents affected socio-emotional capabilities, which in turn were directly linked to the capacity for closeness and commitment in romantic relationships. Practicing the interpersonal competencies learned in the family arena seemed to contribute to romantic intimacy. Future research may need to explore this issue, to examine the nature of the transfer and the kinds of competencies that are practised and to address the unique contribution of the parent-child arena to romantic intimacy.

The notions regarding romantic intimacy (as those dealing with other close relationships) underscore the importance of two dialectic aspects: connectedness (i.e. closeness) and separateness (individuality and autonomy within the relationship). Most of the research on romantic intimacy has focused on the closeness facet of the relationship. In Scharf and Maysel (2001) sample the capacity for separateness in romantic relationships was associated with the capacity for connectedness, but it was not the same as it. Thus, the significance of the two facets as separate aspects of romantic intimacy was underscored (Scharf & Maysel, 2001).

In line with this notion the results for the separateness construct were somewhat different from those for connectedness. Specifically, for separateness the effects of the

parent-adolescent relationships on romantic intimacy were mediated only through the interpersonal capacities and not through the relationships with the best friend. Given the preliminary nature of the examination of the separateness construct it is not clear how to interpret this finding. It is however consistent with Gray and Steinberg's (1999) contention that underscores the importance of separateness (emotional autonomy) from parents in the development of romantic relationships. The parents' capacity to grant independence, while setting limits and remaining emotionally available, may be central in shaping children's capacity for individuality and separateness.

Youniss and Smollar (1985) found that adolescents, both male and female, usually tend to become more intimate and close with their mothers. Because the nature of the father-child relationship is most often authority-related, adolescents are more likely to disclose personal information to their mothers. There are several explanations for this occurrence. Firstly, mothers tend to have more regular contact with their sons and daughters. Second, the interactions that take place between a mother and her children are not primarily focused on the child's future. The relationship is more focused on the here and now. Third, mothers tend to engage in the adolescent's interests. Finally, they tend to act as advisors rather than disciplinarians (Youniss & Smollar, 1985).

## **2.7 Mother-Daughter Relationships**

Thériault (2003) investigated the impact of connectedness and separateness in the mother-daughter relationship on the daughter's development of the capacity for intimacy with a romantic partner and found a link between mother-daughter relationships and romantic intimacy: For females, separateness from parents was

related to greater romantic commitment and closeness (Thériault, 2003; Cooper & Grotevant, 1987).

Thériault (2003) indicated that the nature of mother-daughter interactions has important effects on the daughter's capacity to be sexually and non-sexually intimate with her romantic partner. More specifically, it was found that separateness in mother-daughter interactions had an effect on different dimensions of romantic intimacy, including sexual intimacy. Late adolescent women who asserted themselves and expressed differences between themselves and their mothers were less fearful of sexual intimacy and non-sexual intimacy with their romantic partner than their peers who were less assertive with their mothers (Thériault, 2003). These findings extend previous research which has shown that, for females, separateness in family interactions is associated with general commitment in dating relationships (Cooper & Grotevant, 1987). The findings also shed new light on existing data exploring the link between family relationships and romantic intimacy.

## **2.8 Early Caregiving Quality and Romantic Relationship Quality**

Attachment formulations propose that outcomes later in life, during adolescence and young adulthood reflect not only early experiences, but also current contexts and events in an individual's life (Bowlby, 1980). It is hypothesised that social or so-called interpersonal competence at various developmental times is a precursor to functioning in later relationships. During adolescence, social networks typically expand to include romantic partners, and researchers now regard the development of these relationships as having their roots in an individual's early caregiving relationship (Collins & Sroufe, 1999). These roots are maintained through interactions



with supportive parents, and are further cultivated in relationships with peers (Sroufe, Egeland & Carlson, 1999).

Kempner (2004) addressed the general prediction that children's early care is a forerunner of their later functioning in intimate relationships. A mediational model was tested where early supportive care and adolescent dating security were used to predict the quality of romantic relationships in young adulthood (Kempner, 2004).

The results of these analyses illustrated that early supportive care is indicator of a young adult's romantic relationship quality. However, the relation between early caregiving and the quality of relationships in young adulthood is mediated by adolescents' security with their dating partner. Consistent with attachment theorists, these results point to the importance of both early caregiving and supportive relationships in adolescence in predicting the development of quality and capacity for romantic relationships in young adulthood (Kempner, 2004).

According to Chodorow (1989), associations between mothers and daughters assist an orientation of connectedness for females; however the need for boys to differentiate from the motherly attachment figure promotes an orientation of separateness for males. This has implications for their relationships with the opposite gender later on in life. Chodorow (1978) provides an outline for studying the mother-daughter relationship that is based on traditional psychoanalytic thought. Chodorow (1974, 1978) believed that women were more likely than men to preserve aspects of their relationship with their mother. Mothers and daughters engage throughout their lives in personal identification, as opposed to positional identification. The reason for this,

according to Chodorow (1978), is that in certain Western cultures the mother is the only early caregiver and primary source of identification for all of the children. However, a young girl's association with her mother carries on throughout life, while a young boy's association with his mother is switched to his father. A young adolescent girl continuously identifies with her mother, thereby preserving the mother-daughter relationship while trying to establish her own identity. A son begins to seek his identity with his absent father, an emotional move that separates him from the intensity of the mother-child relationship. Because of a young girl's association with her mother, she often believes herself to be more "like" her mother than she actually is (Chodorow, 1978).

Eichenbaum and Orbach's (1983) research focus on a mother's identification with her daughter. There are three major processes that shape the mother-daughter relationship. Firstly, the mother identifies with her daughter because they are the same gender. Second, the mother projects feelings she has about herself, possibly failing to differentiate herself from her daughter, onto her daughter. Third, and thought of as an unconscious process, the mother behaves toward her daughter as she internally acts toward the daughter part of herself. Similarly, Hammer (1976) proposes that a mother lives both her own childhood and her own mother's identity, through her own daughter. Through identifying with her daughter, she turns into both her mother and her child. Miller (1986a, 1986b) argues that women's reality is different from men's. According to Miller (1986a, 1986b), a woman's entire sense of identity becomes organised around her valuing of affiliations and mutual relationships. Gilligan (1982) suggests that women, from their identification with their mothers, learn to value the preservation of relationships and to define their self concepts in the context of their

relationships with others. Noddings (1984) also contends that a feminine ethic of care arises from women's primary identification with their caregiving mothers.

Chodorow (1978), however, disagrees that the mother-daughter relationship fails to foster separation and individuation. As Flax (1981) has found, the social pressure on daughters to differentiate from their mothers are much less than that of sons to separate from their fathers. Fischer (1983) proposes that because mothers and daughters associate with each other and because their individual boundaries are not always clear, daughters will struggle all of their lives to separate from their mothers.

Among some of the consequences of the strong, shared identification of mothers and daughters, Boyd (1989) has noted, that there are periods of disagreement and ambivalence over intradyadic separation and individuation. Flax (1981), Greenspan (1983) and Litwin (1986) also suggest that conflicts over independence and nurturance characterise the mother-daughter relationship. Conflict often arises between a daughter's separate sense of an "I" and her awareness of a combined "we" (Lerner, 1985). In a society that associates adulthood with independence, an association with significant others is often seen as a failure to become an adult (Litwin, 1986), although successful mothering cannot take place without it.

The family is clearly important in the developmental context. The relationship between a parent and a child has been linked to the general well-being of the child in terms of (Barnett et al., 1991; Wenck et al., 1994) self-esteem (Barber & Thomas, 1986; Buri, Kirchner, & Walsh, 1987), conflict resolution (Kalter, 1987) and relationship satisfaction. Although LeCroy (1988) found no gender disparities in the

degree of parent-child emotional involvement, Barber and Thomas (1986) found relationships were based more on companionship in the father-son and mother-daughter dyads than in cross-gender dyads. In a study by Wenck, Hardesty, Morgan, and Blair (1994), the emotional involvement of both parents were linked to the well-being of their sons and daughters, but behavioural involvement of both parents was linked to the well-being of sons and behavioural involvement of fathers was more strongly related to daughters' wellbeing than was behavioural involvement of mothers.

Attention has also been directed toward the role of the family environment in late adolescent and young adult intimacy. Family patterns and functioning have been associated with social competence as well as apprehension and interactional traits (Lauer & Lauer, 1991). In addition, family functioning has been studied in relation to self-esteem, conflict resolution, family strengths, and family satisfaction (Olson et al., 1989). Some studies found no gender differences in perceived family environments (Dancy & Handal, 1981) or perceived independence and intimacy in the family of origin (Manley et al., 1993). However, Cooper and Grotevant (1987) found the exploration of friendship and dating identity to be related to family separateness for females and family connectedness for males.

## **2.9 Conclusion**

To effectively address the issue of the development of the South African female adolescent's sexuality, basic explorative and descriptive research on adolescent sexual behaviour and sexuality in different South African communities is needed. Although significant progress has been made in this regard with a number of quantitative (e.g.,

Flischer et al., 1993; loveLife, 2001; Potgieter & Friedman, 1997; Reddy et al., 2003) and qualitative studies (e.g., MacPhail & Campbell, 2001) conducted on South African female adolescent sexuality, there is still a paucity of information about the dynamics of the mother-daughter relationships and cultural variations on female adolescent sexual behaviour. An important area of study that has been neglected by South African sex researchers is the mother-daughter relationship and how this relationship shapes the development of the female adolescent's capacity for intimacy in a romantic relationship.

Researchers and practitioners have often argued that there is a need to generate an in-depth understanding of the complexities of female human sexuality. Female adolescents' experiences of their own sexuality are shaped by various contexts, ranging from the very specific contexts of mother-daughter relationships, to the more intimate relationships with a romantic partner and the broader contexts of gender, ethnicity and social class (Lesch & Kruger, 2005). The next chapter describes the methodology used in this study and offers an outline of the research process in terms of the sampling procedures, data collection procedures, data analysis and the interpretation of the data.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This research will measure the perceived competence of late adolescents and young adults (female, first year psychology students) in separateness and connectedness relationships with their mothers. The constructs of interpersonal competence, social competence and social skills will be used to measure the daughter's ability to deal satisfactorily with interpersonal relationships (Thériault, 1997). The construct of interpersonal competence has been widely used in the investigation of peer relationships, but few researchers have explored the usefulness of this construct with regards to mother-daughter relationships (Thériault, 1997).

Mother-daughter relationships are said to involve the processes of connectedness and separateness. These two processes contribute to family differentiation and have been assessed widely in studies on adolescents, but few researchers have examined both processes at the same time (Thériault, 1998). This research will also assess how individuals view themselves, in general, in intimate interactions with a romantic partner. The rationale for this study is based on the fact that hardly any research leading to an operationalisation of late adolescent and young adult intimacy have been conducted in the Eastern Cape.

The statistical program, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Student Version 11.0 for Windows, was used to process the data collected from the participants (Field, 2003). The sampling method used was convenience sampling. The

data was analysed for all participants in the sample and thereafter comparisons were made between female adolescents who were raised by biological mothers, stepmothers, grandmothers, adoptive mothers, aunts or someone else. The frequencies of the socio-demographic information were determined and the means of the sample were calculated using SPSS.

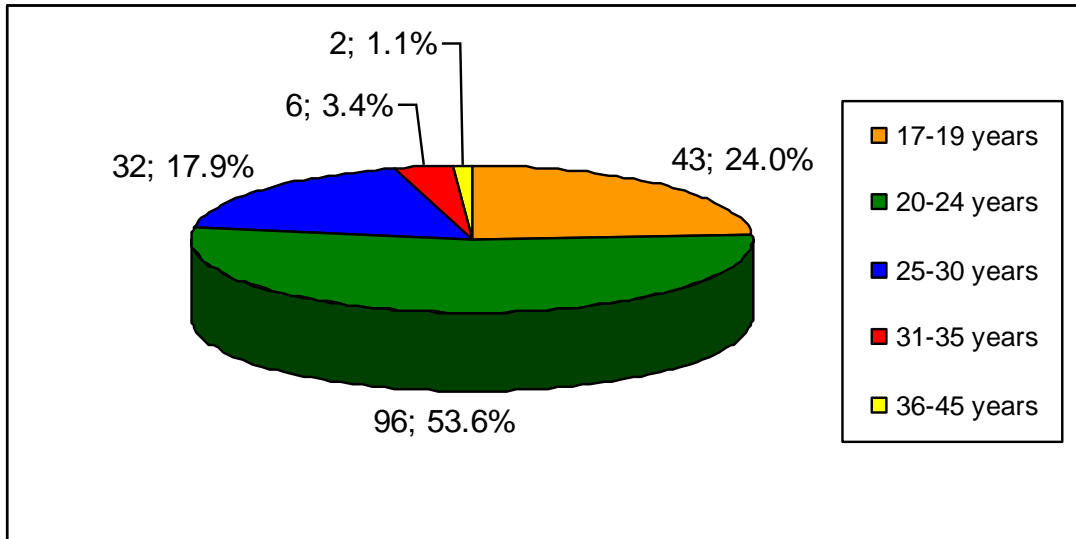
The purpose of this study is to examine whether separateness (negative assertion; conflict management) in mother-daughter relationships was related to the development of the capacity for romantic intimacy (sexual and non-sexual intimacy) in the romantic relationships of the daughter.

The survey method for data collection was chosen because it is an excellent way to determine whether or not a relationship exists between two variables. Two validated, self-report questionnaires were distributed to first year, female psychology students studying at the University of Fort Hare in East London.

### **3.2 Sample**

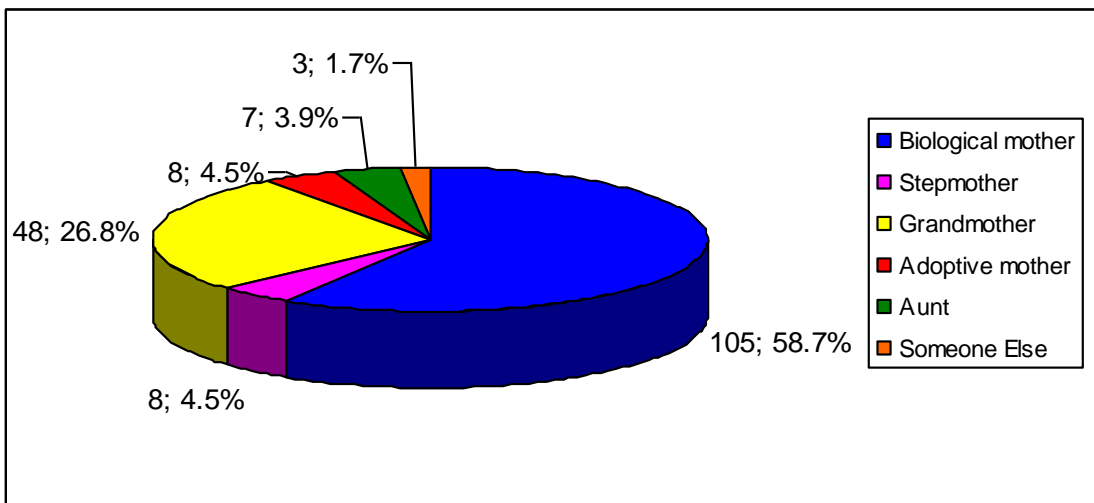
The sample consisted of 179 female undergraduate students studying at the University of Fort Hare in the Eastern Cape. Descriptive statistics indicated that the participants ranged in age from 17 to 45 years, with a mean reported age of 22.39 (SD=4.254).

A large representation of participants were within the age range of 20 and 24 (N=96). 24.0% (N=43) were between the ages of 17 and 19, 17.9% (N=32) were between the ages of 25 and 30, 3.4% (N=6) were between 31 and 35 and 1.1% (N=2) were between the ages of 36 and 45.



**Graph 1. Frequencies and percentages of female participants' age groups (N=179).**

A large representation of participants stated that they were raised by their biological mothers (N=105; 58.7%). 4.5% indicated that they were raised by a stepmother (N=8), 26.8% indicated that their grandmother raised them (N=48), 4.5% were raised by an adoptive mother (N=8), 3.9% were raised by an aunt (N=7) and 1.7% indicated that someone else raised them (N=3).

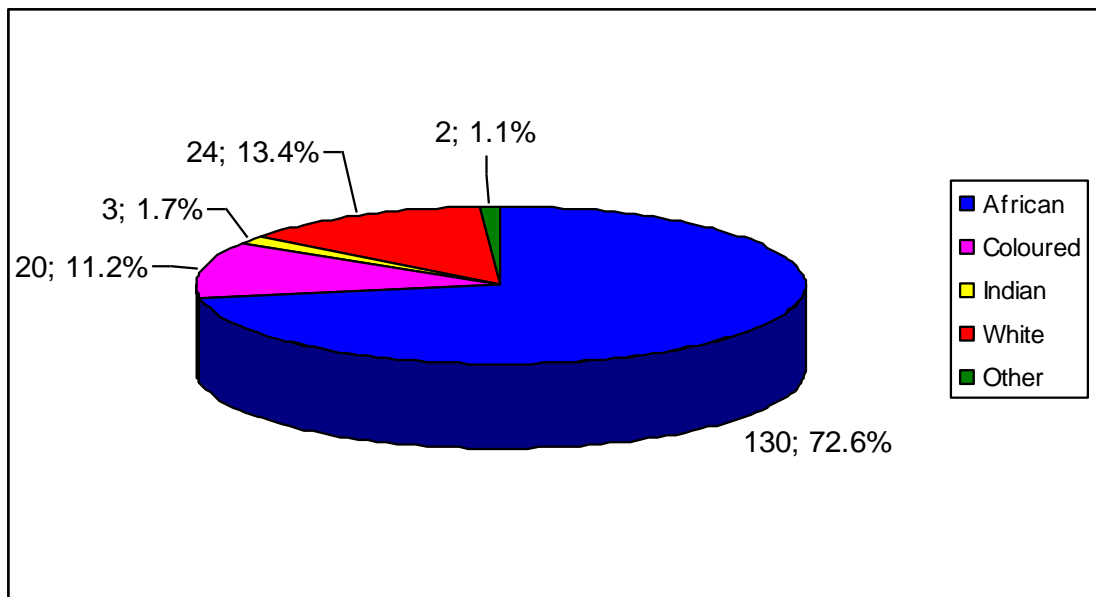


**Graph 2. Frequencies and percentages of female figures (mother) who were mainly responsible for raising the participants (N=179).**

The ethnic distribution of the research population was as follow: 72.6% of participants were black / African (N=130), 11.2% indicated that they were coloured (N=20), 1.7%

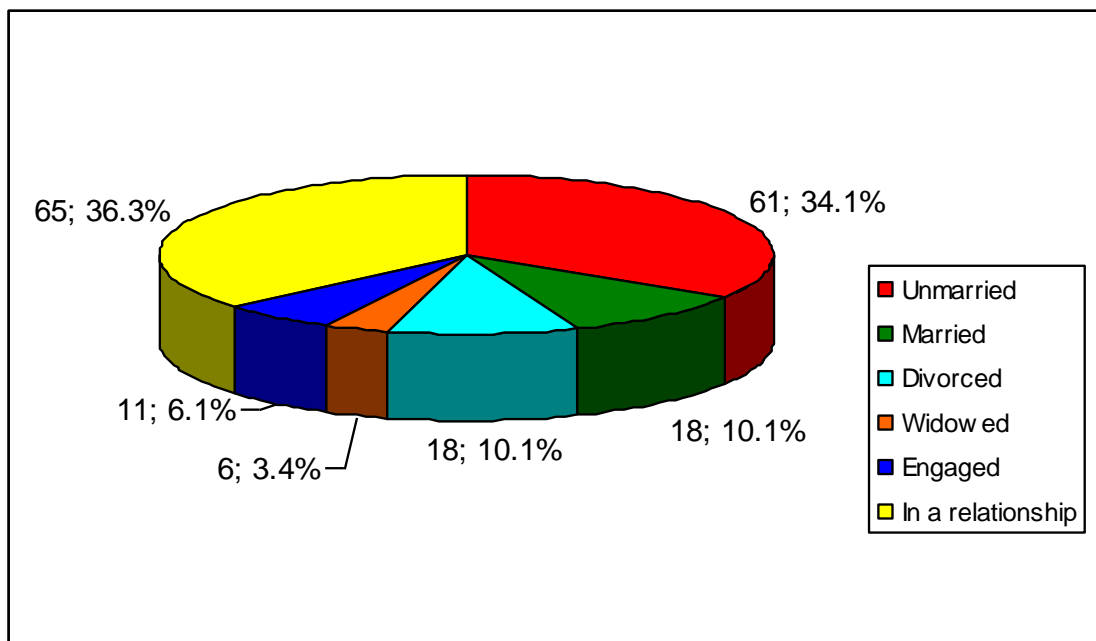


were of Indian origin, 13.4% were white (N=24) and 1.1% indicated other (N=2).



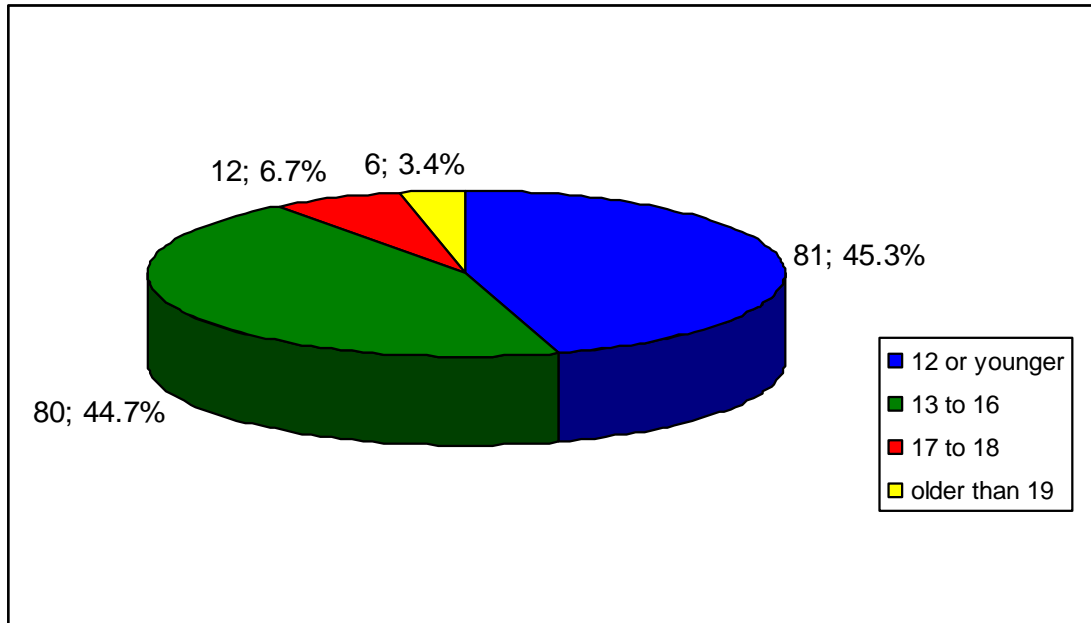
**Graph 3. Frequencies and percentages of female participants' ethnic groups (N=179).**

The relationship status of the participants was as follow: 34.1% was unmarried (N=61), 10.1% was married (N=18), 10.1% was divorced (N=18), 3.4% was widowed (N=6), 6.1% engaged to be married (N=11), and 36.3% indicated that they were in a long-term relationship (N=65).



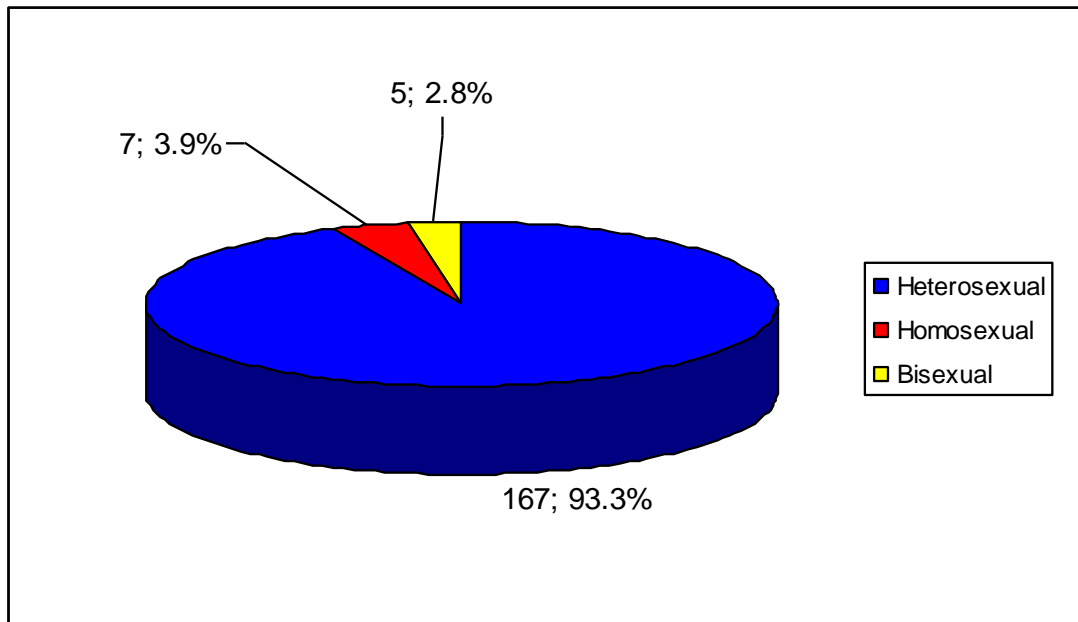
**Graph 4. Frequencies and percentages of female participants' relationship status (N=179).**

A number of participants reached puberty before the age of 12 (45.3%; N=81). 44.7% of participants reached puberty between the ages of 13 to 16 (44.7%), 6.7% between the ages of 17 to 18 and 3.4% reached puberty after the age of 19 (N=6).



**Graph 5. Frequencies and percentages of female participants puberty status (N=179).**

Of the participants 93.3% indicated that they were heterosexual (N=167), 3.9% indicated that they were homosexual (N=7) and 2.8% were bisexual (N=5).



**Graph 6. Frequencies and percentages of female participants' sexual orientations (N=179).**

The participants also had to rate themselves according to whether or not they were happy or satisfied with their overall appearance. More than half of the participants appeared to be satisfied with their body image (58.7%; N=105).

The sample methods used in this study was convenience and criterion based sampling. Convenience sampling is defined as “whoever happens to be in the setting at the time the research is been conducted” (Bernard, 2002, p. 54). The selection process in criterion based sampling involves identifying the population to be studied and sampling and selecting a smaller group from the original population (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). The criteria used to select the participants were:

- Only female participants
- The participants must preferably be late adolescents or adults

Convenience sampling of female, first year students will allow an investigation targeting respondents who will mostly be in the transition of separating from their mothers and enjoying greater freedom from scrutiny in their personal lives.

### **3.3 Instrumentation**

The questionnaire battery consisted of the Personal Assessment of Intimacy questionnaire (PAIR), the Interpersonal Competence questionnaire (ICQ-M) and a socio-demographic questionnaire which assessed variables such as Body image status; Residential status; Age; Gender; Education; Nationality and Sexual orientation.

#### ***3.3.1 Personal Assessment of Intimacy questionnaire (PAIR)***

The Personal Assessment of Intimacy (Thériault, 1998) is a validated, self-report

questionnaire (30 items), which explored how the female adolescent or young adult views herself in intimate interactions with a romantic partner (Thériault, 2003). It evaluates two dimensions of romantic intimacy: Sexual Intimacy and Non-Sexual Intimacy. The participants had to respond by indicating on a Likert-scale (1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither disagree nor agree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree) the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each of the statements in the questionnaire.

In this study sexual intimacy will refer to “the daughter’s sense of competency to self disclose and to be verbally responsive in a romantic relationship. It will also refer to her ability to be non-verbally involved with the romantic partner in private sexual interactions” (Thériault, 2003). The sexual intimacy scale consists of the following six items on the PAIR questionnaire: 3) In general, having sex makes me feel close to my partner; 7) In a romantic relationship, it seems that after a while sex just becomes a routine; 12) In a romantic relationship, I am able to tell my partner when I want sex; 15) In general, sexual closeness in a romantic relationship does not come very naturally to me; 19) In a romantic relationship, expressing my feelings by having sex is important to me; 23) Sex is usually not that important to me in a romantic relationship. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the sexual intimacy scale was 0.72, which is acceptable compared to the guideline of  $\alpha > 0.70$  (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994, p. 65).

Non-sexual intimacy will refer to “the daughter’s sense of competency in private non-sexual interactions” (Thériault, 2003). The non-sexual scale consists of the following five items on the PAIR questionnaire: 1) In a romantic relationship, I listen to my

partner when he/she needs someone to talk to; 4) I help my partner clarify the ideas that he/she communicates to me in the romantic relationship; 5) In a romantic relationship, I find it easy to share my feelings with my partner; 13) In a romantic relationship, I can usually understand my partner's sorrows and joys; and 24) In a romantic relationship, I have an endless number of things to talk to my partner about. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the non-sexual intimacy scale was 0.70, which is acceptable compared to the guideline of  $\alpha > 0.70$  (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994, p. 65).

### ***3.3.2 Competence in Mother-Daughter Relationships Questionnaire (ICQ-M)***

The Competence in Mother-Daughter Relationships Questionnaire (Thériault, 1997) is a validated, self-report questionnaire which is suitable for use in the adolescent and young adult population. It assesses four areas of the daughter's interpersonal competence in the mother-daughter relationship: Conflict Management, Negative Assertion, Self-Disclosure and Emotional Support. The participants had to respond to each statement on the questionnaire by means of a Likert-scale (1= Poor at this; 2=Fair at this; 3=O.K. at this; 4=Good at this; 5=EXREMELY good at this).

The Conflict Management scale consists of the following eight items on the ICQ-M questionnaire: 4) I am good at resolving disagreements between my mother and myself in ways that make things better instead of worse; 6) In the middle of an argument with my mother, I am able to keep from saying things which could lead to an even bigger argument; 8) I am good at dealing with disagreements between my mother and myself in ways that make both us both happy in the long run; 16) I am able to listen and to appreciate my mother's views even though I do not agree with

her; 20) I am good at dealing with disagreements in ways that do not lead to big arguments with my mother; 24) After an argument with my mother, I am able to put aside my resentful feelings rather quickly; 28) I am good at remaining calm and controlling my temper when I have conflict with my mother; 32) I am able to back down in a disagreement with my mother once it becomes clear that I am wrong.

The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the Conflict Management scale was 0.80, which is acceptable compared to the guideline of  $\alpha > 0.70$  (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994, p. 65).

The Negative Assertion scale consists of the following eight items on the ICQ-M questionnaire: 2) I am able to stand up for myself in argument with my mother; 10) I am good at sticking up for myself and saying “no” in situations with my mother; 14) I am good at sticking to my point of view even if my mother’s viewpoint differs; 18) I am able to tell my mother that I do not accept her views or opinions regarding a particular matter; 21) I am able to tell my mother when I disagree with something she has done or said; 26) I am able to voice my desires and opinions to my mother. 30) I am good at confronting my mother when she does not keep a promise; 31) I can say “no” when my mother asks me to do something which I do not want to do.

The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the Negative Assertion scale was 0.81, which is acceptable compared to the guideline of  $\alpha > 0.70$  (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994, p. 65).

The Self-Disclosure scale consists of the following eight items on the ICQ-M questionnaire: 3) I am good at revealing private things about myself to my mother; 7) I am good at letting my mother see my more sensitive side; 11) I am good at telling my mother embarrassing things about myself; 12) I am able to share my fears, worries and doubts with my mother; 15) I am good at opening up and letting my mother get to know everything about the “real” me; 19) I am good at sharing my personal thoughts and feelings with my mother; 25) I am able to tell my mother when she has made me angry; 29) I am good at telling my mother what I think about important issues.

The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the Self-Disclosure scale was 0.84, which is acceptable compared to the guideline of  $\alpha > 0.70$  (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994, p. 65).

The Emotional Support scale consists of the following eight items on the ICQ-M questionnaire: 1) I am good at making my mother feel better when she is unhappy or sad; 5) I am good at making my mother feel like her problems are understood; 9) I am good at helping my mother work through her thoughts and feelings about important decisions; 13) I am good at helping my mother handle pressure or upsetting events; 17) I am good at listening to my mother and at showing her that I really care when she talks about her problems; 22) I am able to work together with my mother to help her face family problems; 23) I find it easy to point out to my mother when she is being inattentive or neglecting of my needs; 27) I am good at telling my mother my true feelings about other people if I do not like them.

The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the Emotional Support scale was 0.85, which is acceptable compared to the guideline of  $\alpha > 0.70$  (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994, p. 65).

The first two ICQ-M subscales were combined to create a general score of separateness from the mother (Conflict Management + Negative Assertion). The last two are combined to create a general score of connectedness with the mother (Self-Disclosure + Emotional Support).

### **3.4 Hypotheses**

The hypotheses of this study are as follows:

- Separateness (negative assertion; conflict management) in the mother-daughter relationship is related to the development of the capacity for romantic intimacy (sexual and non-sexual) in the romantic relationships of the daughter.
- Connectedness (emotional support; self-disclosure) in the mother-daughter relationship is not related to the development of the capacity for romantic intimacy (sexual and non-sexual) in the romantic relationships of the daughter.

### **3.5 Data Collection**

Permission for the research was obtained from the Department of Psychology at the University of Fort Hare. The questionnaires were distributed by the researcher and research assistants. A covering letter explained the purpose of the study and requested careful reading of the contents and instructions. Participants were given verbal instructions regarding completion of the questionnaires. All the participants who participated in this study were assured of confidentiality and anonymity (Terre



Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). The participants received a clear explanation of the tasks expected of them so that they could make an informed decision to participate voluntarily in the research (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

None of the participants were coerced into participating in this study and this research design does not involve any deception. After consent was received, the two self-report measures were handed to the participants. The PAIR and ICQ-M was distributed to the first year psychology students during their tutorial session over a period of five weeks.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Once collected, the data was organised, summarised, and described. The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science Students (SPSS) Student Version 11.0 for Windows (Field, 2003).

SPSS was used to analyse the following

- 1) Descriptive statistics were used to obtain means, standard deviation, frequencies and percentages of the independent and the dependent variables.
- 2) The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to specify the relationships between the variables.
- 3) A stepwise multiple regression was conducted on both the Sexual Intimacy and Non-Sexual Intimacy scales on the PAIR as well as the four scales on the ICQ-M.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

Guideline agreements about what comprises proper and improper scientific research were followed (Babbie, 2004, p. 470). The researcher's obligation during this study was to ensure that the rights, values, needs and desires of the respondents were respected (Creswell, 2003). Participants gave informed consent before they engaged in the research. This implied that they acknowledged their rights as participants and that these rights were protected during the data collection process. Participants had the right to withdraw from the research at any time. The purpose of the study was explained to participants and the procedure of the study was explained to the participants. This was done in order for participants to be able to reasonably expect what to anticipate in the research. The right to ask questions, obtain a copy of the results and to have their privacy respected was acknowledged (Creswell, 2003).

### **3.8 Conclusion**

Because convenience sampling was used, no generalisations across other settings or populations could be made (Bernard, 2002). Chapter 4 presents the results of this research.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

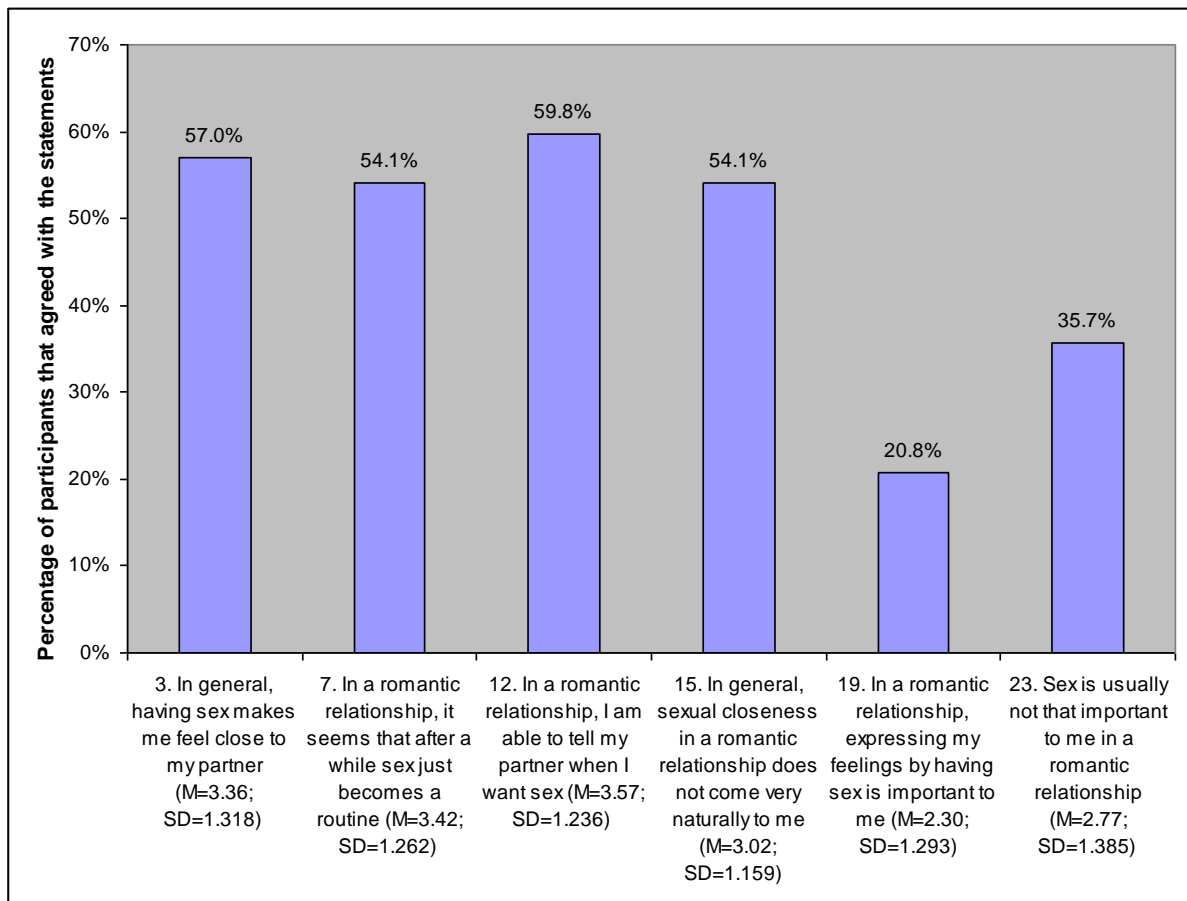
#### 4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of the mother-daughter relationship in the daughter's development of the capacity for romantic intimacy with a romantic partner. In this chapter the results of this study are outlined.

#### 4.2 Descriptive Statistics of the Sample

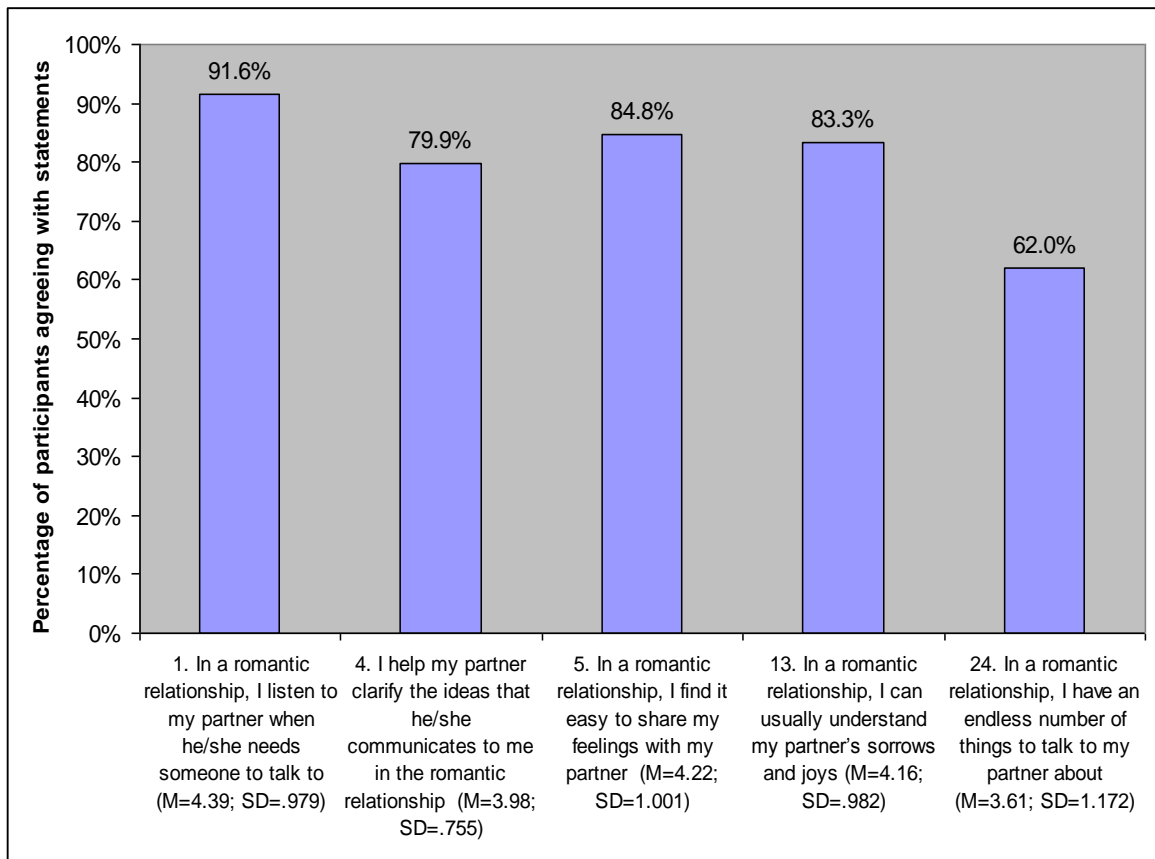
The descriptive statistics and frequencies of the Sexual Intimacy and Non-Sexual Intimacy scales of the PAIR questionnaire were determined using SPSS.

The sexual intimacy scale consisted of statements 3, 7, 12, 15, 19 and 23. Of the participants **57%** (N=102) agreed with the statement (3) In general, having sex makes me feel close to my partner; **54.1%** (N=97) agreed with the statement (7) In a romantic relationship, it seems that after a while sex just becomes a routine; **59.8%** (N=107) agreed with the statement (12) In a romantic relationship, I am able to tell my partner when I want sex; **54.1%** (N=97) agreed with the statement (15) In general, sexual closeness in a romantic relationship does not come very naturally to me; **20.8%** (N=39) agreed with the following statement (19) In a romantic relationship, expressing my feelings by having sex is important to me and **35.7%** (N=64) agreed with the following statement (23) Sex is usually not that important to me in a romantic relationship.



**Graph 7. Sexual intimacy scale descriptive statistics.**

The non-sexual intimacy scale consisted of statements 1, 4, 5, 13 and 24. Of the participants **91.6%** (N=164) agreed with the following statement (1) In a romantic relationship, I listen to my partner when he/she needs someone to talk to; **79.9%** (N=143) agreed with the following statement (4) I help my partner clarify the ideas that he/she communicates to me in the romantic relationship; **84.8%** (N=152) agreed with the following statement (5) In a romantic relationship, I find it easy to share my feelings with my partner; **83.3%** (N=149) agreed with the following statement (13) In a romantic relationship, I can usually understand my partner's sorrows and joys and **62.0%** (N=111) agreed with the following statement (24) In a romantic relationship, I have an endless number of things to talk to my partner about.



**Graph 8. Non-sexual intimacy scale descriptive statistics.**

The descriptive statistics of the Conflict Management, Negative Assertion, Self-Disclosure and Emotional support scales were determined using SPSS. In table 1 the mean and standard deviations of the Conflict Management (M=26.3; SD=5.656), Negative Assertion (M=27.3; SD=6.489), Self-Disclosure (M=23.2; SD=6.360) and Emotional Support (M=27.2; SD=6.302) scales are shown.

**Table 1. Mean and standard deviations of the Conflict Management, Negative Assertion, Self-Disclosure and Emotional Support scales.**

ICQ-M Scales	Mean	Std. Deviation
Conflict Management	26.3	5.656
Negative Assertion	27.3	6.489
Self-Disclosure	23.2	6.360
Emotional Support	27.2	6.302

### 4.3 Pearson Correlation Coefficient: Separateness and Connectedness

The Pearson correlation coefficients of the four Interpersonal Competence scales (Conflict Management; Negative Assertion; Self-Disclosure; Emotional Support) with the two Personal Assessment of Intimacy scales (Sexual and Non-Sexual Intimacy) were determined using SPSS. There is a significantly, positive relationship between Conflict Management and Sexual Intimacy ( $r=.322$ ,  $p<.01$ ) as well as Non-Sexual Intimacy ( $r=.201$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Significant, positive correlations were obtained between Negative Assertion and Sexual Intimacy ( $r=.706$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and Non-Sexual Intimacy ( $r=.201$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Self-Disclosure ( $r=.487$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and Emotional Support ( $r=.366$ ,  $p<.01$ ) correlates significantly with Non-Sexual Intimacy, but no correlation was observed between Self-Disclosure and Sexual Intimacy as well as Emotional Support and Sexual Intimacy.

Any statistically, significant correlation above 0.50 is viewed as very strong, a value between 0.30 and 0.50 is a moderately, good correlation and anything below 0.30 is seen as a significantly, poor correlation (Field, 2003; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

**Table 2. Pearson Correlation Coefficients of the four ICQ-M scales (N=179).**

ICQ-M Scales	Sexual Intimacy	Non-Sexual Intimacy
Conflict Management	.332*	.201*
Negative Assertion	.706*	.671*
Self-Disclosure	.041	.487*
Emotional Support	.003	.366*

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

There is a strong, significant positive relationship between separateness and sexual intimacy ( $r=.688$ ,  $p<.01$ ) as well as separateness and non-sexual intimacy ( $r=.598$ ,  $p<.01$ ).

**Table 3. Pearson Correlation Coefficients for Separateness.**

	Sexual Intimacy	Non-Sexual Intimacy
Separateness	.688*	.598*

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is a significant positive relationship between connectedness and non-sexual intimacy ( $r=.468$ ,  $p<.01$ ), but no correlation was observed between connectedness and sexual intimacy.

**Table 4. Pearson Correlation Coefficients for Connectedness.**

	Sexual Intimacy	Non-Sexual Intimacy
Connectedness	-.019	.468*

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

#### **4.4 Multiple Regression: Sexual and Non-Sexual Intimacy**

A stepwise multiple regression for each of the PAIR-M factors (Sexual and Non-Sexual Intimacy as dependent variables) and the 15 variables extracted from the socio-demographic questionnaire (including the 4 factors of the ICQ-M questionnaire) was conducted. Separateness in mother-daughter relationships (ICQM-Negative Assertion) is directly correlated to Sexual Intimacy ( $p. <.05$ ) (see table 5).

**Table 5. Multiple Regression: Sexual Intimacy with a Romantic Partner (N=179).**

Variables	Unstandardised Coefficients (B)	Standardised Coefficients (SE B)	Beta ( $\beta$ )
ICQM-Negative Assertion	-.17	0.06	-.020**

$R^2 = 0.06$  ; Adj  $R^2 = 0.05$ ,  $R = 0.58^*$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$

In addition, separateness in mother-daughter relationships (ICQM-Negative Assertion) increases significantly the variance accounted for Non-Sexual Intimacy ( $p < .05$ ) when the pubertal status (PUBSTAT), the relational status (RELSTAT) and the sexual orientation variables (ORIENTATION) are controlled (see table 6).

**Table 6. Multiple Regression: Non-Sexual Intimacy with a Romantic Partner (N=179).**

Variables	Unstandardised Coefficients (B)	Standardised Coefficients (SE B)	Beta ( $\beta$ )
RELSTAT	6.67	1.74	.58**
PUBSTAT	-2.04	0.53	-.17**
ORIENTATION	-4.53	1.18	-0.35*
ICQM-Negative Assertion	-.12	0.04	-.017**

Note.  $R^2 = 0.30$  ; Adj  $R^2 = 0.27$ ,  $R = 0.54^{**}$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$

#### 4.5 Conclusion

These findings indicate that the nature of the mother-daughter relationship has an important effect on the daughter's capacity to be sexually and non-sexually intimate with a romantic partner. The results indicate that separateness in mother-daughter relationships is related to the development of the capacity for sexual and non-sexual intimacy in the daughter's romantic relationships. The multiple regression shows that young adolescent females who are able to handle conflict, assert themselves in their relationship with their mother and adolescent females who are able to differentiate



themselves from their mothers (ICQ-M Conflict Resolution and Negative Assertion) are better at sexual and non-sexual intimacy with their romantic partner than their peers who are less assertive and who are not able to form a distinct identity from their mother. These findings extend previous research which has shown that, for females, separateness in family interactions is associated with a healthier development of the capacity for romantic intimacy and commitment in romantic relationships (Cooper & Grotevant, 1987; Feldman et al., 1998). In the next chapter the results will be discussed.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

The main aim of this study was to gain information regarding late adolescence in females and how the role of the mother-daughter relationship facilitates the development of the capacity for romantic intimacy. In this study the impact of the mother-daughter relationship on female adolescent's capacity for sexual development was explored and the following questions were posed: (1) Will separateness in mother-daughter relationships foster the daughter's development of a greater capacity for sexual and non-sexual intimacy with their romantic partners than their peers? (2) Do mother-daughter interactions significantly explain romantic intimacy (sexual and non-sexual intimacy) in young women while taking into account other variables such as current relationship status and the onset of puberty? These questions will be answered in the discussion to follow.

#### **5.2 Goal Attainment and Answering of the Research Questions**

According to the first research question whether separateness (negative assertion; conflict management) in the mother-daughter relationship is related to the development of the capacity for romantic intimacy (sexual and non-sexual) in the romantic relationships of the daughter, results indicated that separateness in mother-daughter interactions correlated to both sexual and non-sexual intimacy in romantic relationships.

This result differs from the results of a study done by Thériault (2003). Thériault (2003) found a correlation between separateness and sexual intimacy, but found no correlation between separateness and non-sexual intimacy in her sample of high school and college students.

According to research by Lesch and Kruger (2005, p. 1079) “the importance of parents and especially mothers in the sexual development of their children has been confirmed.” The findings of this study support previous research that proposes mothers play a central part in the sexual health and well-being of their daughters. Accordingly, a daughter continuously invests in the relationship she has with her mother and therefore mothers can be very influential resources when it comes to the development of their daughter’s sexuality (Lesch & Kruger, 2005; Furman et al., 1999; Mazzarella & Odom Pecora, 1999). Fox (1980) depicts the mother-daughter relationship as a sexual socialisation structure. The mother-daughter relationship as a source for the transmission of sexual socialisation is underutilised by mothers and daughters and overlooked by many counsellors (Fox, 1980).

According to Schaefer (as cited in Ruebush, 1994, p. 440), “the developing capacity to differentiate our representations of self and other is central to the separation process.” The separation process in adolescence concentrates on two stadiums: the present relationship the adolescent has with a parent and the intrapsychic restructuring of the self. The adolescent separation process appears to be different for adolescent males than for females because of the intricate ties between a mother and a daughter. Ruebush (1994, p. 441) contends that “the daughter remains an extension of the

mother's self and not only must the daughter separate her representation of the self from that of the mother, but the mother must accomplish the same separation.”

Research suggests that separateness in mother-daughter relationships leads to healthier romantic relationships for the daughter later on in life (Miller, 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Chodorow, 1978). In this study true separateness from the mother lead to a link between sexual and non-sexual intimacy in the daughter's romantic relationships. In adolescence and young adulthood it is important that women are able to experience separateness from their mothers in order to make the necessary commitments to their romantic partner.

In line with these arguments, it was found that adolescents who reportedly experience more independent relationships with their parents also report closer, more intimate and more secure relationships with their romantic partner (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Furman & Simon, 1999).

Similarly, the second research question whether connectedness (emotional support; self-disclosure) in the mother-daughter relationship is related to the development of the capacity for romantic intimacy (sexual and non-sexual) in the romantic relationships of the daughter, the results indicated that connectedness in mother-daughter interactions correlated to non-sexual intimacy in romantic relationships, but not to sexual intimacy. This result differs from the study done by Thériault (2003). Thériault (2003) found a correlation between connectedness and sexual intimacy, but found no correlation between connectedness and non-sexual intimacy in her sample of high school and college students.

In one of a small number of studies conducted on this aspect, Collins and his colleagues (Collins & Sroufe, 1999) offered an analysis showing an association between attachment security in infancy and middle-childhood social competence and security with dating at age sixteen.

Kempner (2004) addressed the general prediction that children's early care is an indicator of their later functioning in intimate, romantic relationships. Specifically, an intervention model was assessed where adolescent dating security and early supportive care were used to make predictions regarding the quality of and capacity for romantic relationships in adolescence and young adulthood. The results of these analyses illustrated that early supportive care is predictive of a young adult's romantic relationship capacity and quality. Consistent with the attachment theorists, these findings indicate the significance of early caregiving and close, supportive relationships in adolescence in predicting the development of the capacity and quality of romantic relationships in adolescence (Kempner, 2004). The parent-child relationship has been linked with general well-being of the child, self-esteem, conflict resolution and later relationship satisfaction (Wenck et al., 1994).

Stepwise analyses also showed that separateness in mother-daughter relationships contributed to both Sexual and Non-Sexual Intimacy with the romantic partner when the current relationship status, pubertal status and sexual orientation variables are controlled. These findings contribute to existing research exploring the link between mother-daughter relationships and romantic intimacy and also broaden previously held views about gender and intimacy.

### **5.3 Limitations of the Study**

The literature available concerning the impact the mother-daughter relationship has on the development of the capacity for romantic intimacy was limited. Most of the research done in this area was conducted a few years ago and therefore relevant literature regarding this issue was not easily obtainable.

### **5.4 Suggestions for Future Research**

The inclusion of mother-daughter dyads from a wider range of cultural, socioeconomic and educational levels would permit more broadly based summaries and conclusions concerning the role of the mother-daughter relationship in the daughter's development of the capacity for intimacy with a romantic partner. This would also account for the developmental aspects of psychological separateness.

To successfully address issues regarding South African females' sexuality, more explorative and empirical research on adolescent sexual behaviour in the various South African communities is necessary. Even though, noteworthy progress has been made with a number of quantitative (Flischer et al., 1993; loveLife, 2001; Potgieter & Friedman, 1997; Reddy et al., 2003) and qualitative studies (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001) done on female sexuality, there still exists only a small amount of research concerning the impact of the mother-daughter relationships on female adolescent sexuality. Cultural variations of the mother-daughter relationship have not been thoroughly researched. An important area of study that has been neglected by South African sex researchers is the mother-daughter relationship and how this relationship shapes the development of the female adolescent's capacity for intimacy in a romantic relationship.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

The results of this study revealed that the mother-daughter relational context contributes (directly or indirectly) to different facets of the capacity for romantic intimacy. In general, the quality of the mother-daughter relationship was associated with the capability for romantic intimacy. These findings lend empirical support to theoretical conceptualisations that describe the processes and precursors involved in the development of the capacity for romantic intimacy and highlight the importance of the mother-daughter relational context (Collins & Sroufe, 1999; Gray & Steinberg, 1999).

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Questionnaire

UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE  
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Dear Respondent,

I am inviting you to participate in a research project that deals with **relationships**. This study forms part of my Masters Thesis research. Along with this letter is a short questionnaire that asks a variety of questions relating to this topic and it should take you about 20 minutes to complete.

The study is **anonymous**. Please do not write your name on the questionnaire.

The questionnaire consists of three parts. In the first and second part you are asked to answer a list of questions/statements. The third part consists of a few socio-demographic questions. For each part, clear instructions are given. Please **respond to every question/statement** even if you find it difficult.

It is important to note, that I am interested in your opinion. I would like to know what you personally think. I am interested in your honest opinion. **There are no right or wrong answers!** Try not to think too long about each statement. Usually your first response is the one you come back to in the end.

I guarantee that your responses will not be identified with you personally and will be completely confidential.

In case you need help, please do not hesitate to ask your tutorial leader.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about being in this study, you may contact me. This project has been approved by the University of Fort Hare in East London.

Kind Regards

Liezl Coetzer  
Counselling Psychology Masters Student

## PART ONE

**Instructions:** This questionnaire relates to your attitudes and experiences of romantic relationships. Think about your current or previous romantic relationship and how you generally act in relationships. Below you will find a series of statements regarding romantic relationships with which you may either agree or disagree. Circle the number which best describes you. See below for what each number means.

- 1 = **Strongly disagree**
- 2 = **Disagree**
- 3 = **Neither disagree nor agree**
- 4 = **Agree**
- 5 = **Strongly Agree**

**EXAMPLE:** If the statement reads **“In a relationship, I can talk to my partner about anything”** and you *strongly agree* with this statement then you should circle the 5. If however, you *somewhat agree* with this statement, then you should circle the 4.

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither disagree nor agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
1					
In a romantic relationship, I listen to my partner when he/she needs someone to talk to.	1	2	3	4	5
2					
In a romantic relationship, I prefer that we spend time with other couples rather than only with one another.	1	2	3	4	5
3					
In general, having sex makes me feel close to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5
4					
I help my partner clarify the ideas that he/she communicates to me in the romantic relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
5					
In a romantic relationship, I find it easy to share my feelings with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5
6					
In a romantic relationship, I generally have few friends in common with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5
7					
In a romantic relationship, it seems that after a while sex just becomes a routine.	1	2	3	4	5

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither disagree nor agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
8					
In a romantic relationship, serious discussions make me realise how few ideas I have in common with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5
9					
In a romantic relationship, I try to keep an emotional distance from my partner.	1	2	3	4	5
10					
In a romantic relationship, I cannot share my ideas and opinions, because I feel inferior to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5
11					
In general in romantic relationships, I prefer doing things only with my partner without other people joining us.	1	2	3	4	5
12					
In a romantic relationship, I am able to tell my partner when I want sex.	1	2	3	4	5
13					
In a romantic relationship, I can usually understand my partner's sorrows and joys.	1	2	3	4	5
14					
In a romantic relationship, the activities I enjoy are those that we do as a couple with other people.	1	2	3	4	5
15					
In general, sexual closeness in a romantic relationship does not come very naturally to me.	1	2	3	4	5
16					
To have discussions about various subjects with my partner is not important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
17					
In a romantic relationship, I have a tendency to neglect the needs of my partner.	1	2	3	4	5
18					
In a romantic relationship, many of my partner's closest friends are also my closest friends.	1	2	3	4	5

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither disagree nor agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
<sup>19</sup>					
In a romantic relationship, expressing my feelings by having sex is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
<sup>20</sup>					
In a romantic relationship, I try to change my partner's ideas to agree more with my own ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
<sup>21</sup>					
In a romantic relationship, I probably remain more a stranger rather than someone my partner knows well.	1	2	3	4	5
<sup>22</sup>					
In a romantic relationship, I tend to disapprove of some of my partner's friends.	1	2	3	4	5
<sup>23</sup>					
Sex is usually not that important to me in a romantic relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
<sup>24</sup>					
In a romantic relationship, I have an endless number of things to talk to my partner about.	1	2	3	4	5

## PART TWO

**Instructions:** This questionnaire relates to your relationship with your mother. “Mother” refers to the woman who raised you, that is to say your biological mother, your stepmother, your adoptive mother, your aunt, your grandmother or any other woman who was responsible for and played a key role in your upbringing (sister, etc). Think about your relationship with your mother. Below you will find a series of questions which you may either feel you are *good at* or *poor at*. Circle the number which best describes your relationship with your *mother*. See here below for what each number means.

- 1 = **Poor at this;** would be so uncomfortable and unable to handle this situation that it would be avoided at possible.
- 2 = **Fair at this;** would feel uncomfortable and would have some difficulty handling this situation.
- 3 = **O.K. at this;** would feel somewhat uncomfortable and have a little difficulty handling this situation.
- 4 = **Good at this;** would feel very comfortable and could handle this situation very well.
- 5 = **EXREMELY good at this;** would feel very comfortable and could handle this situation very well.

**EXAMPLE:** If the question reads “I am good at talking to my mother about things that bother me.” If you feel you would be able to *handle this situation extremely well*, then you should circle the 5. If you feel that you would be uncomfortable and *unable to handle this situation*, then you should circle the 1.

	Poor at this	Fair at this	O.K. at this	Good at this	EXTREMELY good at this
1 I am good at making my mother feel better when she is unhappy or sad.	1	2	3	4	5
2 I am able to stand up for myself in argument with my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
3 I am good at revealing private things about myself to my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
4 I am good at resolving disagreements between my mother and myself in ways that make things better instead of worse.	1	2	3	4	5
5 I am good at making my mother feel like her problems are understood.	1	2	3	4	5

	Poor at this	Fair at this	O.K. at this	Good at this	EXTREMELY good at this
6					
In the middle of an argument with my mother, I am able to keep from saying things which could lead to an even bigger argument.	1	2	3	4	5
7					
I am good at letting my mother see my more sensitive side.	1	2	3	4	5
8					
I am good at dealing with disagreements between my mother and myself in ways that make both us both happy in the long run.	1	2	3	4	5
9					
I am good at helping my mother work through her thoughts and feelings about important decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
10					
I am good at sticking up for myself and saying “no” in situations with my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
11					
I am good at telling my mother embarrassing things about myself.	1	2	3	4	5
12					
I am able to share my fears, worries and doubts with my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
13					
I am good at helping my mother handle pressure or upsetting events.	1	2	3	4	5
14					
I am good at sticking to my point of view even if my mother’s viewpoint differs.	1	2	3	4	5
15					
I am good at opening up and letting my mother get to know everything about the “real” me.	1	2	3	4	5
16					
I am able to listen and to appreciate my mother’s views even though I do not agree with her.	1	2	3	4	5



	Poor at this	Fair at this	O.K. at this	Good at this	EXTREMELY good at this
<sup>17</sup> I am good at listening to my mother and at showing her that I really care when she talks about her problems.	1	2	3	4	5
<sup>18</sup> I am able to tell my mother that I do not accept her views or opinions regarding a particular matter.	1	2	3	4	5
<sup>19</sup> I am good at sharing my personal thoughts and feelings with my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
<sup>20</sup> I am good at dealing with disagreements in ways that do not lead to big arguments with my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
<sup>21</sup> I am able to tell my mother when I disagree with something she has done or said.	1	2	3	4	5
<sup>22</sup> I am able to work together with my mother to help her face family problems.	1	2	3	4	5
<sup>23</sup> I find it easy to point out to my mother when she is being inattentive or neglecting of my needs.	1	2	3	4	5
<sup>24</sup> After an argument with my mother, I am able to put aside my resentful feelings rather quickly.	1	2	3	4	5
<sup>25</sup> I am able to tell my mother when she has made me angry.	1	2	3	4	5
<sup>26</sup> I am able to voice my desires and opinions to my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
<sup>27</sup> I am good at telling my mother my true feelings about other people if I do not like them.	1	2	3	4	5

	<b>Poor at this</b>	<b>Fair at this</b>	<b>O.K. at this</b>	<b>Good at this</b>	<b>EXTREMELY good at this</b>
<sup>28</sup>					
I am good at remaining calm and controlling my temper when I have conflict with my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
<sup>53</sup>					
I am good at listening to my mother while she “lets off steam” about problems she is going through.	1	2	3	4	5
<sup>29</sup>					
I am good at telling my mother what I think about important issues.	1	2	3	4	5
<sup>30</sup>					
I am good at confronting my mother when she does not keep a promise.	1	2	3	4	5
<sup>31</sup>					
I can say “no” when my mother asks me to do something which I do not want to do.	1	2	3	4	5
<sup>32</sup>					
I am able to back down in a disagreement with my mother once it becomes clear that I am wrong.	1	2	3	4	5

### PART THREE

**Instructions:** Finally, I would like to ask you some socio-demographic questions. Please circle or mark with an X the appropriate answers.

1. **AGE:** How old are you?

17-19	1
20-24	2
25-30	3
31-35	4
36-45	5

2. **GENDER:** Are you male or female?

Female	1
Male	2

3. **ETHNIC GROUP:** How would you see yourself in terms of colour/race?

Black	1
Coloured	2
Indian	3
White	4
Other	5

4. **YEAR OF STUDY:** In what year of study are you?

First year	1
Second year	2
Third year	3
Fourth year	4
Longer	5

5. **TYPE OF DEGREE:** What degree are you studying for?

B.Soc.Sci	1
B.Cur	2
B.Ed	3
B.Com	4
Longer	5

6. **PUBERTY:** How old were you when you reached puberty?

12 or younger	1
13 to 16	2
17 to 18	3
Older than 19	4

7. **RELATIONSHIP STATUS:** Which one of the following best describes your current relationship with your partner?

Single / unmarried	1
Married	2
Divorced	3
Widowed	4
Engaged	5
In a relationship	6
Other	7

8. **SEXUAL ORIENTATION:** What is your sexual orientation?

Heterosexual (like/date members of the opposite sex)	1
Homosexual (like/date members of the same sex)	2
Bisexual (like/date members of the same and opposite sex)	3
Bisexual	4
Other	5

9. **BODY STATUS:** Are you happy / satisfied with your appearance?

Happy	1
Somewhat Happy	2
Neutral	3
Somewhat Unhappy	4
Unhappy	5

10. **PARENTS:** Are your parents still alive?

Father deceased	1
Mother deceased	2
Both alive	3
Both deceased	4
Other	5

11. **UPBRINGING:** Who raised you or is mainly responsible for your upbringing?

Biological mother	1
Stepmother	2
Grandmother	3
Adoptive mother	4
Aunt	5
Someone Else	6
Biological mother	7