



**Exploring the experiences of young women's transition from childhood to adulthood:
Case study of Inanda Township in Durban**

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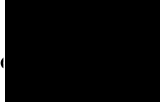
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DECLARATION

I, Senamile Agnes Nene, declare that this has been conducted and presented solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where it states otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.



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Date: 19 February 2023

Durban, South Africa

Place: Durban

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my late mother, B. B. Nene. Dlokovu!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- I thank God and my Ancestors. This piece of work would have not been possible without Your Grace.
- I would like to sincerely thank my supervisor, Dr. M. S. Sithole. I will forever be grateful for your support, guidance and encouragement. I do not see how this work would have been possible without your input.
- I thank my study participants who trusted me with their personal experiences. You were very welcoming and open to me which made the process much easier.
- I am grateful for the support I received from my family and friends.

ABSTRACT

The transition from childhood to adulthood is well known in the human race because it is inevitable that humans grow. This phenomenon is simple yet complex because people transition to adulthood at some stage of human development. Its complexity comes from the fact that, while there may be personal and societal factors determining the process, the experience turns out to be unique for each individual. Social factors, personal choices and experiences have been noted by various scholars as infusing the uniqueness in the experience of the transition of young people to adulthood. The researcher was drawn to explore the experiences of young women's transition to adulthood at Inanda Township. The interest started with the question of what it takes for a girl child to become an adult at Inanda Township. The researcher was intrigued mainly by dynamic nature of factors in this area that make the transition unique and how they shape the young person's experience. Location played a huge role in the study in various ways. The gendered nature of transition to adulthood is worth noting. There is a greater vulnerability in women compared to men. The world still regards women as significantly more vulnerable compared to their male counterparts. The researcher wanted to explore how female children experience their transition to adulthood, specifically in South African townships. While there is much controversy around the age of the transition to adulthood, the study findings revealed that young women of Inanda describe the transitional stage to adulthood as ranging from the age of 16 up to 21. In this period, the main focus of the young person is acquiring an education. Financial challenges were the leading contributory factors of the derailment of young people from achieving their goals. There was also an indication of a lack of support from some parents during this period, the participants regarded as making them vulnerable. As a result, some young women find themselves having to navigate life without proper guidance. Some find themselves engaging in activities that the law and culture regard as privileges for adults such as sex, drugs and alcohol. The state of Inanda Township was mentioned as influencing how young women transition to adulthood. The lack of economic activities and the high unemployment rate in the area makes it less motivating for young women transitioning to adulthood. There are notable cultural influences on young women's transition, which inflicted stricter rules towards women than men.

Keywords: Transition; adulthood, emerging adulthood, young women

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GLOSSARY

<i>Blesser:</i>	An older man who often has multiple younger girlfriends he lavishes with gifts and money.
<i>Ukuhlonipha:</i>	to respect.
<i>Ukungena:</i>	A traditional custom whereby a widowed woman becomes her brother-in-law's wife.
<i>Ukuthwala:</i>	Forced marriage.
<i>Umemulo:</i>	A traditional Zulu coming of age ceremony for women.
<i>Umhlanga:</i>	A Reed Dance ceremony celebrating sexual purity and promoting sexual abstinence among young girls.
<i>Umhloniyane:</i>	A traditional ceremony done by the Zulu people for girls when they reach womanhood.
<i>Yabo?:</i>	you see?

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
NSFAS	National Student Financial Scheme
STDs	Sexually Transmitted Diseases

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

Life course has been the topic of many scholars over the years. Many theories have been introduced, tested, accepted and critiqued and the interpretations of how human development are ever-changing (Arnett, 2000). It is a complex yet exciting phenomenon in that one cannot pinpoint a single route of how humans develop. Life course is multidimensional and multidirectional, and this complexity does not mean that this phenomenon need not be critically analysed. It should be the very complexity that drive scholars to attempt to critically analyse the conceptual and contextual transition from childhood to adulthood.

A better understanding of life course is crucial, especially for a social service professional like the researcher. According to Zapf (2010), social service professionals ought to understand the dynamics in the societies around them. The first step in service delivery is an assessment to understand different dynamics contributing to the present problem. A better understanding of the life course experience, particularly of the people the social service professional serves, is essential knowledge. It makes the professional conscious of critical events shaping clients' livelihoods.

This study focuses the transition of young women from childhood to adulthood in the township of Inanda, Durban. The researcher took an interest in this stage because the process of transitioning of a child into adulthood means many things to different individuals. At some point in our lives, we transition to adulthood. The agonising question is how and when does the child become an adult? What factors impact the transition of young people from childhood to adulthood? Valentine (2003) admits that the transition to adulthood is complex and differs from culture to culture and society to society.

Having learnt that the transition to adulthood is complex, this study turns out to be less general but more specific by exploring direct inquiries about the phenomenon. The target populations are young women because Adalakum-Odewale (2018) states that boys and girls have different transition experiences from one stage to another. Because women are still regarded as a vulnerable group in our society, their experiences merit an exploration to better understand and possibly curb their vulnerability. Focusing on one gender is necessary for this study to

comprehensively understand how young women in South African Townships transition to adulthood.

1.2. The rationale of the study

Transitioning from childhood to adulthood is one of the crucial steps in every individual's life as it pertains to self-discovery in two stages, childhood and adulthood (Arnett, 2000; Salkind, 2004). Most young people tend to look forward to adulthood, which could be attributed to their anticipation of the general assumptions most have about being an adult. Often, the idea exists that one would be able to make decisions and exercise control over one's life. While young people's conception of freedom of choice may look exciting, most of the time, the transition to adulthood does not come without challenges, particularly for young women. The preparation for the future and the decisions taken in shaping their adult life are becoming widely driven by various activities and the context in which the transitions are taking place (Rutenberg, Kehus-Alons, Brown, Macintyre, Dallimore & Kaufman, 2001; Odimegwu, Amoo & De Wet, 2018). It is then essential for someone like the researcher and other social service professionals working with people transitioning from childhood to adulthood to understand how the process impacts on the people we serve.

In this study, the transition to adulthood is viewed and framed around three aspects: the life course, the context and gender disparity. Firstly, studies have shown that each life stage is often associated with specific responsibilities, roles and expectations (Goldhaber, 2000 & Erikson, 1950 cited in Salkind, 2004). In relation to this assertion, often when young people transition to adulthood, life is perceived as providing more than what they initially expected (Graber & Brooks-Gunn, 1996). As they transition to adulthood, young people often need a complete understanding of all aspects of life that comes with adulthood. Adulthood they strive for comes with certain responsibilities, roles and expectations.

Secondly, the context in which transition unfolds is also worth mentioning in this study. As Odimegwu *et al.*, (2018) assert, various obstacles affect and shape the life choices of individuals transitioning to adulthood, some of which are beyond a child's control, such as being born in a particular family or community. According to Manzini (2001) and Adelakun-Odewale (2018), these expectations are sometimes social, economic and cultural. The study is undertaken at Inanda Township. The choice of this area is mainly based on the findings and reports that Inanda is identified as one of the leading townships with regard to various social challenges, namely crime, unemployment, poverty, teenage pregnancy, and gender-based

violence (Statistics SA, 2001; Shangase, 2018; South African History Online, 2019). Remarkable as well is that it is one of the three areas referred to as INK, situated on the outskirts of Durban. This city is regarded as the central economic hub of the KwaZulu-Natal Province and second to Johannesburg at national level. Inanda Township is mainly populated by Zulu-speaking people, whose traditions and cultures are regarded as playing a massive role in the development of young people (Stats SA, 2011 & Mkasi, 2013). The transition to adulthood could also be related to the legal context prescribing certain expectations and behavioral patterns. For instance, there is a prescriptive legal age to buy and consume alcohol. These expectations are not always conformed to because they come from other dependent factors such as personal choices, societal influences, and socioeconomic standing. Societal expectations may be viewed as linked to human development, such as the expected age for the achievement of a specific school level and the expected kind of lifestyle at said age (Graber & Brooks-Gunn, 1996; Manzini, 2001; Swartz, Colvin & Harrison, 2018).

Thirdly, it is essential to conceive the transition to adulthood as a gendered phenomenon, with a girl child viewed as transitioning differently from a boy child. Girls are expected to behave well but that expectation is not emphasized in a boy child (Sennotta & Mojola (2017). Manzini (2001) and De Vries, Eggers, Jinabhai, Meyer-Weitz, Sathiparsad and Myra Taylor (2014) discuss how the transition of girls is threatened by a high degree of vulnerability in the South African context. Girls lack all kinds of support from their homes up to the global level, which continues to increase gender inequalities in our societies (Adelakum-Odewale, 2018; Green-Atchley, 2014). Gender roles that are biased promote the exclusion of girls and women (Odimegwu, 2018).

Studies show that there is no single development path in the transition into adulthood for young people all over the world (Thornton, Orbuch & Axinn, 1995; Sennotta & Mojola, 2017; Ringeisen, Casanueva, Urato & Stambaugh, 2009). Nonetheless, Zapf (2010) suggests that social service professionals are better equipped with broad knowledge of the communities they serve. As a social service professional that serves the people of Inanda Township, the researcher ought to understand the experiences of how young women transition from childhood to adulthood in the area. The study findings are not only to equip and satisfy the researcher's curiosity and desire for better understanding but also to enrich the body of knowledge on human development in the South African context.

1.3. Problem statement

Transitioning from childhood to adulthood is one of the critical stages as many biopsychosocial changes occur during this period. In most cases, there are no instant changes in their biopsychosocial aspect as their age declares them as adult (Valentine, 2003). Changes and growth are a process that begins as early as the infancy stage. There are personal and surrounding factors that influence and shape who we become. Beguy, Kabiru, Zulu and Ezeh (2011:319) explain that "studies conducted in African capital cities...show that greater access to educational opportunities, changes in social values, lack of employment opportunities and increasing uncertainty about the future play a significant role in influencing the transition from childhood to adulthood".

This study weighs in on Arnett's perspective which focuses on emerging adulthood which is described as a "period of the life course that is culturally constructed, not universal and immutable" (Arnett, 2000:470). In this regard, the interest in studying young women's experiences is primarily informed by various assertions. Arnett (2000) and Adelakun-Odewale (2018) assert that girls and boys have different experiences in their transition to adulthood; hence each gender has to be studied exclusively.

In the study, the contribution through other studies is recognised. However, it is an essential remark that most existing literature found thus far appears to put less focus on the transition of young women from childhood to adulthood. Instead, the focus is on the combined sexes (Arnett, 1998; Valentine, 2003). In my view, this kind of approach does not give the full extent of the experiences, specifically of young women. It primarily gives high points of the transition of young people in general. Another perceived gap in the literature is that most of the research around transition to adulthood addresses specific issues such as transition and career decisions, transition and family relationships and transition and depression, among others. As much as being specific helps in exploring the phenomenon through great lenses, it also does not give a holistic understanding of the phenomenon because some areas become neglected or less investigated.

Moreover, despite various policy developments, women are still the leading vulnerable group globally, including South Africa (Rudwick & Shange, 2009). This reality forms the basis for pursuing a study of this nature. As outlined in the location section below, also an aspect to be explored further in the study, Inanda Township has a unique existence as it is described as one of the communities characterised by various social issues that are likely to interfere with the

development of individuals. The community is culturally rooted (Mkasi, 2013), a dimension that is likely to have an impact on the transition of young people to adulthood. While different children are likely to have unique developmental paths, on the other hand, the South African Constitution and the related laws provide uniform prescriptions on the roles, responsibilities and expectations, which also impact on the very transition of young people from childhood to adulthood. Allatt (1997, cited in Valentine, 2003) and Beguy *et al.* (2011) recommend that researchers study the more complex social issues that young people are exposed to in their transition.

1.4. Location of the study

The study was conducted at Vukile Ndimande Foundation, a non-profit organization situated at Inanda Township. Vukile Ndimande Foundation is an organisation established in 2018 to assist the youth of Inanda, focusing on those ranging from 18 to 30 years. Key in their activities is the facilitation of young people's access to tertiary education, including support with applications for the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) and bursaries. They also distribute sanitary pads to young girls from Umtapho High School and hold annual sports tournaments. The participants of this study were beneficiaries of Vukile Ndimande Foundation and residents of Inanda Township. Inanda is one of the renowned Townships of the KwaZulu-Natal province with a population approximated at 158 619 (Stats SA, 2011). It is about 30 km from the city of Durban and situated within the borders of Phoenix, Ntuzuma, and KwaMashu. The Township was previously reserved for Africans during the apartheid era and later accommodated Indians, who again got evicted from the area (Department of Provincial and Local Government, n.d.). Its proximity to the city and the related dynamics are worth noting in the study.

This community is reported to be characterised by many societal challenges, such as inadequate housing, water and sanitation and a high percentage of unemployment that results in a high number of crimes. Kuddus, Tynan and McBryde (2020:1) describe cities as playing multifaceted functions in all societies, considering that they become a catalyst for "technological development and economic growth of many nations, while at the same time serving as a breeding ground for poverty, inequality, environmental hazards, and communicable diseases". Literature suggests that the conditions that impact the state of the community often influence young women's transition experiences from childhood to adulthood

in various ways (Beguy *et al.*, 2011; Odimegwu *et al.*, 2018). It is on this basis that this location was viewed to be suitable for the study.

Inanda Township maybe be easily described as having some infamous social identities such as high poverty levels and crime, among others. However, the Township has some of the richest and most diverse cultures and religions in the country (Shangase, 2018). The uniqueness of the Township was the interest of the study as every societal structure is likely to interfere with the transition of individuals from one stage to another, particularly from childhood to adulthood (Rudwick, 2009; Maluleke, 2012). Sennott and Majola (2017:781) state that:

African youth are confronted with numerous risks and challenges, including the risks of being co-opted into war or experiencing early illness and death in the wake of the HIV pandemic and the challenges of finding employment and living in conditions of extreme poverty.

1.5. Aims and objectives of the study

1.5.1. Aims

The study aims to explore the experiences of young women's transition from childhood to adulthood, with due consideration of their life courses, the context in which the transition to adulthood is taking place and gender disparity.

1.5.2. Objectives

The research objectives for this study are identified as follows:

- (i) To explore how young women describe their experiences of transitioning from childhood to adulthood.
- (ii) To explore the nature and extent of socioeconomic circumstances that influence young women's experiences of transitioning into adulthood.
- (iii) To ascertain the cultural context that influences young women's transition from childhood to adulthood.
- (iv) To determine the influence of gender disparity on young women's transition into adulthood.

1.5.3. Research questions

Walliman (2011:156) states that the research questions “provide a sort of task list for the project, hinting at the type of data that is required and how it should be analyzed to produce conclusions that answer the questions”. The research questions for this study are identified as follows:

- (i) How do young women describe their experiences of transitioning from childhood to adulthood?
- (ii) What is the nature and extent of socioeconomic circumstances that influence young women’s experiences of transitioning to adulthood?
- (iii) How does culture as the context impact on young women’s transition from childhood to adulthood?
- (iv) How do cultural expectations influence the transition of young women from childhood to adulthood?
- (v) What is the influence of gender disparity on young women’s transition from childhood to adulthood?

1.6. Conceptual framework of the study

This study was framed within both Arnett's perspective on Emerging Adulthood and Feminist Theory by Bell Hooks. Arnett's perspective bears relevance in this study because he acknowledges that human development or the transition of young people from childhood to adulthood is shaped by several factors such as the individual's personal experiences, the context in which the person is transitioning and social transformation (Arnett, 1998; 2000). These factors make the transition a unique experience for individuals. Hooks' (2015) theory looks into gender inequalities and beyond by exploring inequalities among women of different races. This theory was relevant to this study because it explored the transition of women who happen to share one race. The relevance of these theories is critically explored in the literature review section.

1.7. Structure of the dissertation

Chapter one: Introduction and rationale of the study

Chapter one introduced the study by providing a general understanding of young women's transition to adulthood. The researcher identified the problem that the study intended to address and therefore provided the importance of the study. The study location, community type, and people were clearly presented. The chapter introduced and discussed the theories around which the study was constructed. The origin of these theories was clearly stated and justification for their relevance to the study. This chapter concluded with a detailed structure of the whole study.

Chapter two: Literature review

This chapter explored the existing literature to examine what is already known about young women's transition from childhood to adulthood. The literature touched on what is known about life course development, the influences of social structures and the role of gender disparity on young women's transition to adulthood.

Chapter three: Methodology

In this chapter, the researcher gave specific details of the research method chosen. The researcher reported on the research design, sampling strategies, data collection instruments and data analysis. The study also addressed the means of conforming to ethical considerations and the worthiness of the study's data.

Chapter four: Findings

This chapter presented the study findings through thematic analysis. Theory and literature were further discussed and incorporated with the research finding.

Chapter five. Conclusions and Recommendations

The last chapter discussed the study findings; literature and theories that were incorporated. Recommendations were provided based on the findings. The researcher reviewed the study's aims and determined its achievement. The study was concluded.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The transition of young people from childhood to adulthood is said to be a unique experience that is characterized by individuals' life courses, their social context and gender disparities (Arnett, 2000; Lally and Valentine-French, 2019). It is then necessary to state at this point that in this study, the literature is presented in accordance with three focus areas, namely the life course development, the context in which the transition to adulthood is taking place and gender disparity. A life course is a personal journey shaped by multiple personal and social factors (Salkind, 2004; Halfon, Forrest, Lerner & Faustman, 2018). Goldhaber (2000) ascertains that personal factors can be identified as different abilities that individuals are born with and individual choices. A person born with a disability, for instance, has unique life course experiences compared to a person born without disabilities. A person may make a personal choice, such as dropping out of school. Diverse personal factors provide unique life course experiences for individuals. External social factors such as social structures, policies and cultural and religious practices shape individuals' life courses (Goldhaber, 2000; Thomas, 2001). As it could be regarded as a life course stage, the transition to adulthood is shaped by individuals' personal and social factors.

The social context has been noted as one element that makes the transition to adulthood experience distinct (Arnett, 2000; Xue, Tinkler, Zaninotto, & McMunn, 2020). Young people from developing and underdeveloped countries have different experiences of transitioning to adulthood from those of developed countries (Beguy *et al.*, 2011; Adedokun-Odeyemi, 2018; Pike, Mojola, & Kabiru, 2018). Valentine (2003) explains that social identities interconnect with the identities of children. The status of the society becomes the status of individuals living in it. Ahmad, Hazra, Aruldas, Singh, and Saggurthi (2021) point out that Indian girls transitioning from childhood to adulthood face psychosocial challenges that need to be addressed to achieve sustainable development. Social challenges, as they may be labelled as just "social," which may be easily distanced from individuals, have a direct impact on the transition of young people from one stage of development to another. According to Manzini (2001) and De Vries *et al.*, (2014), these social identities or challenges affect girls more than boys in South Africa.

Beguy *et al.* (2011) and Sennott and Mojola (2017) state that gender disparity influences the transition experiences of young women and men from childhood to adulthood. Adedokun-Odele (2018) points out that young men have a better transition experience than young women in Sub-Saharan Africa. He further explains that the roles, responsibilities and expectations are not equally divided between genders. The imbalances often derive from cultural beliefs and practices that, in most societies, are patriarchal (Nwauche, 2015; Adedokun-Odele, 2018).

The uniqueness of the transition, as shaped by personal and social factors mentioned above, calls for an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon in a chosen setting, gender and age. Transferring knowledge from one society to another cannot be entirely fitting because of the uniqueness in each of society. Beguy *et al.*, (2011:319) explain that "Evidence drawn from Western societies may not be applicable in developing countries since socio-cultural and economic differences are likely to have significant impacts on the way young people experience the change from adolescence to adulthood."

2.2. Life course development

2.2.1. Developmental stages

Stages of development, the life course, childhood and adulthood, adolescence and transitioning from one stage to another have significantly been debated by many scholars around the world (Arnett, 2000; Goldhaber, 2000; Scabini, 2000; Thomas, 2000; Reinherz, 2003; Salkind, 2004; Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005; Lally & Valentine-French, 2019). Influential theorists such as Eric Erikson are among many who acted on their curiosity about the life course by developing eight stages of development (Thomas, 2000; Salkind, 2004). This dissertation will focus mainly on the experiences of young women's transition from childhood to adulthood in a South African township.

The transition to adulthood is said to happen at the adolescence stage between the ages of 18 and 25, according to (Arnett, 2000). During the transition, young people experience drastic bodily and behavioral changes associated with puberty (Salkind, 2004; Lerner, Brindis, Batanova, & Blum, 2017). Dealing with puberty and experiencing changes, such as moving to a secondary school or tertiary education, is not always a smooth transition for South African youths (Rutenberg *et al.*, 2001). Adolescence, a transition stage, is a personal experience that, according to Thornton *et al.*, (1995) and Scabini (2000), requires support from those in direct and indirect contact with the person transitioning.

Moreover, women have been found to be vulnerable in our society and lack support and guidance through the transitional phase; they sometimes derail and fall into confusion (De Vries *et al.*, 2014). Hallman and Roca (2007:4) reported, "In Ethiopia and South Africa, girls were also less likely to report whether they had sources of support during times of crisis". Young women from disadvantaged communities do not get essential support from their parents and families, primarily because of the stresses of survival (Pillay, 2006). Unlike young people from Italian families studied by Scabini (2008) and from Detroit studies by Thornton, Orbuch & Axinn (1995) who revealed to have experienced significant support from their parents through their transition to adulthood. Young women from poor backgrounds are often left unguarded and at times, their decision-making puts them through social problems such as unplanned pregnancies, substance abuse and lack of self-motivation. Chigona and Chetty (2007) discovered that teenage mothers from the Western Cape lack physical and emotional support, often failing to produce good results in school and subsequently quitting. Finch and Mason (1993), cited in Valentine (2003:38), however, "observe that the range of support (from material and practical to emotional and moral) provided by families throughout our lives, with their ill-defined sense of obligation, is one of the unremarkable characteristics of everyday life".

Furthermore, Schulenberg, Sameroff and Cicchetti (2004) point out that change, good or bad, comes with slight or extreme anxiety. Adolescence, a transition stage, can be mentally challenging for some young women because of the expectations that come with this stage. Ringeisen *et al.*, (2009:1084) report, "As youths develop from adolescents into adults, they face increasing expectations of independence that include school completion, stable employment, and the ability to support a household". A study by Reinherz *et al.*, (2003), Eyre and Thapar (2014) and Hitlin *et al.*, (2015) discovered that most people acquire depression through the transition period to adulthood. Most people are still uninformed about the gravity of mental health in South Africa, especially in disadvantaged areas (Kakuma, Kleintjes, Lund, Drew, Green & Flisher, 2010; Egbe, Brooke-Sumner, Kathree, Selohilwe, Thornicroft & Petersen, 2014). There are myths relating to a certain disease that people who commit suicide are bewitched or cowards. These myths make it hard for those who are suffering to come out and seek help. It makes it almost impossible for others to give support when they do not believe the person has a mental illness (Hugo, 2007, cited in Kapungwe *et al.*, 2010). Young women are at risk of acquiring mental illnesses during this transition phase because of a lack of understanding of the disease, the pressures of conforming to societal expectations and the

minimal support they get from their social system (Kakuma *et al.*, 2010). Ringeisen *et al.* (2009) and Egbe *et al.* (2014) emphasize the importance of the need for mental health services during this period.

Even with the evidence at the root of most mental health problems, studies have focused less on the internal transition to adulthood (Turner *et al.*, 2004). Most studies look at the interaction between the person and external factors such as education, marriage and independence, as noted from the work of Beguy *et al.*, (2011) and Xue *et al.*, (2020). Schulenberg *et al.*, (2004:801), however, state "The transition from adolescence to adulthood includes numerous specific developmental transitions that can be viewed as internal (e.g., biological, physical, cognitive, emotional and identity related)". Ringeisen *et al.*, (2009) and Egbe *et al.*, (2014) emphasize the importance of the need for mental health services during this period.

2.2.2. Childhood, adulthood and transition.

According to the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), the Children's Act (2005), and the United Nations on the Convention on the Right of the Child (1990), a child is a person under the age of 18. Any person who is 18 years and older is regarded as an adult. In the United States, however, different states have different ages of majority, with Mississippi regarding a person younger than 21 as a child (Mississippi Code, 1972). The above definitions are the legal definition of a child and an adult.

Biologically, a child is a newborn up to puberty (Sennott & Mojola, 2017). Once a person has reached this stage, they are not regarded as children but rather teenagers or adolescents. Nwache (2015:423) argues that when a child reaches puberty in the Islamic northern states of Nigeria, "the physical and psychological condition of the child – evident in the requirement of 'puberty' – is the threshold in determining the capacity to marry". Young girls in Bangladesh have two options at this stage: arranged early marriage or participation in a labor market (Amin, Diamond, Naved & Newby, 1998). Valentine (2003:37) argues "What childhood is, and where it begins and ends, and consequently where the sub-disciplinary boundaries of children's geographies lie, are somewhat ill-defined". The transition from childhood to adulthood may have different meanings to different individuals of different locations and cultures.

The societal differences in what is considered childhood and adulthood outline the privileges and restrictions for both children and adults according to laws and cultures that govern individuals (Maluleke, 2012; Goldberg, 2013). Even when children of different countries have reached adulthood at different ages, restrictions and privileges are not similar throughout

societies. In South Africa and most other countries, such as the United Kingdom and Australia, children are not allowed to consume alcohol up to the age of 18 (Liquor Licensing Act, 1997; Liquor Act, 2003; The Licensing Act, 2003). The United States only allows people to drink when they are 21 and older (The Federal Uniform Drinking Age Act, 1984). However, Belgium, Spain and Italy allow 16-year-old children to consume beer and wine (World Population Review, 2021). Even though these children are given some privileges that may be considered to be for adults in other countries, it does not mean that they have transitioned to adulthood. They enjoy some privileges that other countries consider privileges for adults. When the consumption of tobacco and alcohol may be the mark of having been transitioned to adulthood in some countries, there are countries such as Pakistan where Muslims, regardless of their age, are forbidden to consume alcohol (Al-Ansari, Thow, Day & Conigrave, 2016; Rahmah, 2019).

Moreover, South Africa does not allow children under the age of 12 to engage in any sexual activities with any person. In contrast, children over 12, however, with some provisions, are allowed to engage in sexual acts with other children between the ages of 12 and 16 (Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32, 2007; Maluleke, 2012). Those above the age of 16 cannot have sexual activities with children below their age. In some parts of Africa, such as Nigeria, where the age of sexual consent for some states conflicts with the religion and culture of marriage, children as young as 12 years of age can be sexually active so long as they are married (Nwauche, 2015).

Because of these differences, factors for measuring the transition into adulthood would be different in different contexts, cultures and religions. As much as most countries would argue that a child is a person under the age of 18, they mainly differ in terms of restrictions and privileges, which in turn affects how young people transition to adulthood. It is then safe to say that childhood and adulthood are what society says it is, i.e., socially constructed (Valentine, 2003). Studying how young women transition to adulthood at Inanda is necessary to increase knowledge and confirm or deny theories.

2.3. Context in which transition takes place

2.3.1. Socioeconomic impact on the transition to adulthood

Young women in disadvantaged communities are most likely to face challenges in their transition because of a lack of financial means that are advantageous in the process (De Vries *et al.*, 2014). Adalakun-Odewale (2018) argues that financial support for girls is minimal

compared to boys as they are regarded as a liability in Sub-Saharan Africa. Beguy et al., (2011) state that the transition is challenging for those not well-equipped. Green-Atchley (2014) explains the importance of young women's involvement in government and non-government activities as they are still facing multiple barriers.

It has been noted that the prominent twentieth-century universal marker of the transition to adulthood is acquiring education (Amin, Diamond, Naved, & Newby, 1998; Arnett, 2000; Grant & Furstenberg, 2007; Posti-Ahokas & Palojoki, 2014; Adedokun-Odeyemi, 2018). The focus on education has shifted marriage and childbearing, which used to be the transition marker, to early and late adulthood (Arnett, 2000; Goldberg, 2013). Americans and most children from Western countries prepare for adulthood by obtaining an education and participating in the labour market, followed by marriage and childbearing in early adulthood (Arnett, 2000; Settersten, 2003, cited in Sennott & Mojola, 2017). In Sub-Saharan countries and most developing countries, however, girls and women are not getting equally educated as men. This is partly because of socioeconomic challenges and cultural beliefs (Chigona & Chetty, 2007; Green-Atchley, 2014; De Wet *et al.*, 2018). However, it has to be noted that there has been an increase in education, employment and delayed marriage for both men and women in Sub-Saharan countries (Pillay, 2006; Adedokun-Odeyemi, 2018). Rutenberg *et al.*, (2001) point out that along with that increase is the growing number of the transitions through early pregnancies and contracting sexual diseases.

Moreover, Arnett (1998) explains that American youth, with the increased inclusion of girls and women, acquire education and independence when they transition to adulthood. Grant and Furstenberg (2007) argue that this is largely possible because there has been a shift in the western tradition of marriage and childbearing to emphasize education, independence and gender equality. The marker of the transition to adulthood for women and girls was traditionally known as getting married and childbearing after that. In contrast, men and boys would get an education, employment and or marriage and the formation of a family (Valentine, 2003). With the emphasis on independence, girls began to focus more on education, often followed by employment (Xue *et al.*, 2020). The focus on education did not end the culture of childbearing and marriage. However, it shifted as a marker of the transition to adulthood that generally happens during late adolescence and early adulthood. Fussell and Furstenberg (2005), cited in Grant and Furstenberg (2007:417), argue:

In the United States, twentieth-century shifts in the transition to adulthood can be primarily attributed to the expansion of secondary and post-secondary education, a lengthened period of nonfamily living after leaving the parental home but prior to family formation, and delays in the timing of marriage and first parenthood.

Arnett (2000) argued that the shift was largely possible because most western countries have better means for young people to have this kind of transition to adulthood.

Furthermore, Posti-Ahokas and Palojoki (2014) and Pike *et al.*, (2018) have observed a shift in the transition to adulthood in developing countries due to growing economic activities. Like the West, many developing countries, including South Africa, have adopted compulsory education for young people (Pillay, 2004; Posti-Ahokas & Palojoki, 2014). Marriage, which was a prominent marker of the transition to adulthood, has been replaced by education. Statistics South Africa (2015), cited in Pike *et al.*, (2018:2), reports that in South Africa, “where declining marriage rates have been documented since the 1960s, the median age at marriage is now older than 30 years for both men and women”. Many young people transition to adulthood by obtaining an education and participating in the labour market.

With the unstable economy many young people cannot fit into the 20th-century transition (Stats SA, 2021). Beguy *et al.*, (2011) state that the transition is challenging for those who are not financially well. Transition through education is perceived to give young people independence and prolong marriage and childbearing. It offers those participating an opportunity to participate in the job market. For the most disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals and societies, the requirement to only transition through education could be a barrier to living their full potential (Kaufman & Stavrou, 2002; Bozalek & Boughey, 2012). They ought to obtain an education they cannot afford, which hinders them from living to their full potential.

The South African government has intervened in ensuring that even disadvantaged people are included in the education system by offering free education from primary to high school and other assistance such as child- support grants (Pillay, 2006). According to Dieltiens and Meny-Gibert (2009), secondary education is how far most disadvantaged young people can go. The government's National Student Financial Scheme (NSFAS) funds disadvantaged people to obtain a tertiary qualification, putting them in a better position for employment (Badat & Sayed, 2014). Not all students access this fund, as many seek its assistance.

Furthermore, those who can obtain higher education also face issues of job scarcity (Bhorat & Van der Westhuizen, 2009; Dieltiens & Meny-Gibert, 2009). South Africa and many

developing countries have a problem with creating job opportunities. South Africa is in a position to have many educated youths that cannot be absorbed because of job shortages in the country (Bhorat & Van der Westhuizen, 2009). According to Beguy *et al.* (2011), the shortage of employment opportunities is another socioeconomic barrier for young people to have a healthy transition to adulthood.

Multiple barriers that young people face as a result of poor economic standing create a pool of people who are not educated and as a result, are unemployable (Adelakun-Odewale, 2018; Odimegwu *et al.*, 2018). Women have the worst experiences because of job and wage inequalities (Bhorat & Van der Westhuizen, 2009). As a result, youth become unoccupied and consequently find other ways to cope and entertain themselves (Dieltiens & Meny-Gibert, 2009). Many social problems are created at this stage because of some resort to crime, drugs, unplanned pregnancies and disease. Many people are said to acquire depression in the transitional stage because it is a major decisive phase that indicates a possible lifestyle a person will have in the future (Eyre & Thapar, 2014; Erickson & Brown, 2015). Green-Atchley (2014) suggests the involvement of girls in engagement of government and non-government activities as they are still facing multiple barriers.

The success of the universal marker of the transition to adulthood, which is education followed by employment, marriage and childbearing, is highly determined by the socioeconomic standing of the transitioning individual (Beguy *et al.*, 2011; Arnett, 2000). It sets, together with other participating factors such as cultural and religious beliefs, the type of lifestyle, schooling and experiences that young people have in their course of life. The socioeconomic effect is evidenced by the differences in the transition of young people from western countries, which are often financially stable, and developing countries, which are often poor (Grant & Furstenberg, 2007). Transition to adulthood is very much dependent on good economic standing; this system is a barrier for disadvantaged young people, particularly women.

2.3.2. Cultural influences in the transition to adulthood.

Society generally has expectations of how things should be (Maluleke, 2012). It is perhaps how we reduce world activities and maintain order, which may not always be balanced between genders, for better management. Culture is one instrument that creates order amongst those who belong to it (Rudwick & Shange, 2009). Literature reflects that cultural beliefs and norms are one of the strongest influencers on the kind of choices and lifestyles (Arnett, 2000; Mkasi, 2013; Sennott & Mojola, 2017). Some lifestyle choices may seem like personal preferences but

they are likely to be indirectly shaped by certain beliefs and cultures (Valentine, 2003). Arnett (2000) found that cultural norms and values influence the transition to adulthood; hence experiences differ from culture to culture. Maluleke (2012:2):

Every social grouping in the world has specific traditional cultural practices and beliefs, some of which are beneficial to all members, while others have become harmful to a specific group, such as women. These harmful traditional practices include early and forced marriages (*Ukuthwala* as practised currently), virginity testing, widow's rituals, '*ukungena*' (levirate and sororate unions), female genital mutilation (FGM), breast sweeping/ironing, the primogeniture rule, practices such as 'cleansing' after male circumcision, and witch-hunting.

Cultural practices and beliefs impose guidelines on how the journey to adulthood should be carried out. Young people from the Mormons in the United States, for instance, are pressured to marry at a young age because their culture prohibits premarital sex (Arnett, 2000). Beguy *et al.*, (2011) found that in Sub-Saharan Africa, there is a bias where young women are prohibited from engaging in sexual activities at a younger age, whereas young men are encouraged. The transition to adulthood is greatly influenced by culture. As Arnett (2000:478) argues, "Emerging adulthood is best understood as a characteristic of cultures rather than countries". This idea is vital to note because it simply means that one cannot fully understand how the transition occurs if it is viewed based on countries. To better understand how young people transition to adulthood, one must revisit their cultural context as it partakes in rich diversities. Countries have uniform guidelines on what a child is and adults are and their roles, responsibilities and expectations because most of them fall under the umbrella of the United Nations (UNCRC, 1990). Young women from different cultures must be studied individually to obtain data that is true to their experiences. It would be misleading to argue that girls from a particular country experience transition in a particular manner if data is not gathered in their cultural context because every culture shapes the experience of the transition and makes it unique to its individuals.

Moreover, different societies have different expectations of girls who are transitioning to adulthood. Depending on the kind of society a young woman is growing from, she might be expected to get an education, live independently, marry, and have children. Ringeisen *et al.*, (2009:1084) report, "As youths develop from adolescents into adults, they face increasing expectations of independence that include school completion, stable employment, and the

ability to support a household." Seeking independence is most common in western societies. Even though marriage is still regarded as necessary by many, the focus has shifted more toward education and employment (Arnett, 1998). Girls transitioning to adulthood, particularly in the Muslim religion, are expected to marry during this period (Nwauche, 2015). Most marriages are arranged by the families of both parties involved in the marriage. This practice means a young girl could be expected to marry before the age of 18, which is considered by many as the first age of early adulthood.

Many African cultures and religious practices see a woman as a person who should be active in the household, meaning keeping the home clean, raising children and looking after their husband (Green-Atchley, 2014; Sennott & Mojola, 2017). Mkasi (2013:29) explains, "In a patriarchal society every woman is expected to marry and have children". Because of these practices, girls in the transitional stage to adulthood are groomed to be housewives (Adelakun-Odewale, 2018). Their role would be to marry, give their husbands children, especially sons, and physically care for the home. Most of the girls would then not attend school. If they do, they would not further their studies for better job opportunities because that would be considered a waste of money as their role is not to work or provide but to be housewives (Adelakun-Odewale, 2018). These expectations put young girls in a position of dependency and submission. They become dependent on their male counterparts because they are the primary source of survival. The patriarchal system prevents women from enjoying independence and they are likely to experience abuse at the hands of their partners because they lack independence (Rudwick & Shange, 2009). Some cultural practices make it hard for women to recognize abuse, as some abuses are considered appropriate punishment (Sennott & Mojola, 2017; Adelakun-Odewale, 2018).

Most cultural practices are patriarchal, which creates inequalities in the transition of young people from childhood to adulthood (Maluleke, 2012). These inequalities are not only exclusively in South Africa or Africa but have been noted worldwide, including in western countries such as Mexico (Grant & Furstenberg, 2007; Green-Atchley, 2014). Odimegwu *et al.*, (2018) argue that this is mostly a result of the patriarchal governing that most societies formed. There is an interconnecting trail from patriarchy to the current state of most girls and women in our society (Nwauche, 2015; Hallman & Roca, 2007). Because some societies still have some beliefs that a woman's role is mainly marriage, some girls are not getting proper support and are denied an opportunity to get formal education which Valentine (2003)

describes as crucial in self-discovery, especially in this 21st century. Some of these African beliefs are explained by Adedokun-Odeyale (2018:146):

The belief is that the returns to a girl's parents from educating the girl are lower than that of the male child. This idea is based on the fact that a girl child will eventually get married. It is perceived that any investment in a girl child will leak into another household. In contrast, any investment in a boy child is perceived as a security of the lineage, which maximizes household utilities, thus the preference for boy child education as against educating the girl child. There is the perception that investing in boys will bring higher income to the family as the boy child is likely to get a job faster and get higher pay than the girl.

These beliefs interfere with young women's transition from childhood to adulthood through education because they do not get adequate education that has the potential of giving them freedom and independence (Hallman & Roca, 2007). According to Maluleke (2012) and Adedokun-Odeyale (2018), these beliefs result in many social problems that societies face, such as inequalities, gender-based violence, early marriage and teenage pregnancies.

There has been a shift and change concerning the expectations of young women transitioning to adulthood in South Africa with more emphasis on education and independency (Pillay, 2006). Maluleke (2012), however, states that young women, particularly in rural South Africa, still endure harmful cultural practices such as *ukuthwala*.

2.4. Gender disparities in the transition to adulthood

According to Adedokun-Odeyale (2018), girls and boys have different transition experiences to adulthood. Hooks (2015) and Odimegwu *et al.*, (2018) point out that even among women, diverse transition experiences still exist. These differences derive from cultural beliefs and practices rather than legal laws often promoting gender equality (Arnett, 2000). De Vries *et al.*, (2004:107) state that "various gender roles, attitudes, and practices in South Africa create an environment that fosters submission and silence in females and hegemony and coercion in males". Manzini (2001) and Sennott and Mojola (2017) explain how young girls from rural South Africa transitioning to adulthood are expected to behave well, adhering to cultural norms such as humility and respect. These expectations are less emphasized in boys. Green-Atchley (2014) and Adedokun-Odeyale (2018) discuss girls' educational and economic exclusion by their communities, government and private sector.

Gender roles and expectations play a role in young women's transition from childhood to adulthood. Amin *et al.*, (1998) state that women in Bangladesh are often groomed for marriage, which often happens before they turn 18. These young women do not experience the 20th-century lack of structure, which "can allow for greater self-selection of paths and activities" (Schulenberg *et al.*, 2004: 801). Their lives and the transition are experienced in their homes and that of their husbands'. The experience of outside life is limited and one could argue that they do not live to their full potential. It is not their personal choice but social structures that choose this lifestyle for them. Young men, on the other hand, whose primary role is to provide, get exposure to the outside world because they have to be educated and work to support their families (Adelakun-Odewale, 2018).

A new trend in the transition to adulthood has been noted in South Africa. Even though there has been a shift from early marriage to the focus on education as a marker of the transition to adulthood, teenage pregnancies and sexual-related diseases have taken a toll on young women (Rutenberg, 2001; Grand & Hallman, 2006; Odimegwu *et al.*, 2018; Swartz *et al.*, 2018). Sexual desires are expected to be an integral part of puberty. As a country that is developing and has experienced a political shift in less than 30 years, no single category can represent how women transition to adulthood compared to men. Various transitions are inevitable depending on social structures such as the context (Arnett, 2000), race and class (Hooks, 2015). Rutenberg *et al.*, (2001:1) point out that social transformation in South Africa has brought lots of opportunities and "...increased the exposure of adolescents to premarital and unsanctioned sexual activity with all its attendant health and social consequences". Sexual activities and their related health issues at an adolescent stage seem to be prominent as Rodgers (2018) argues that girls as young as 14 are sexually active in America. Beguy *et al.*, (2011) state that in Nairobi, "for males, the sequencing of entry begins with entry into first sex, followed by independent housing. Conversely, for females, the sequencing begins with first sex and then parenthood".

Moreover, compared to young men, young women suffer more consequences from early exposure to sexual activities (Manzini, 2001; Odimegwu *et al.*, 2018; Swartz *et al.*, 2018). Sexual activities are the prominent cause of derailment from the expected social transition to adulthood, which now is acquiring education for young women. Most of them fall pregnant as soon as they become sexually active and they are the ones who carry out the responsibilities of pregnancies. Even when young men are present during the pregnancy, which sometimes is not always the case according to Odiwengu (2018), it does not affect them as young women who sometimes are forced to drop out of school to bear and raise a child. Sexual activities sometimes

expose them to other sexual diseases that are incurable such as Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

Culturally, African girls are often encouraged to save themselves for marriage, while boys are encouraged to engage in sexual activities (Sennott & Mojola, 2017), but that is barely practised in this 21st century, as evidenced in the number of teenage pregnancies before marriage. One might question the logic in the practice of one gender being prohibited and the other encouraged to engage in sexual activities. If young men are encouraged to engage in sexual activities at an early age, with whom are they expected to explore when young women are to save themselves for marriage? Beguy *et al.*, (2011) argue that premarital sex happens among two genders regardless of what is expected; the only difference is that young women underreport the experiences while young men overreport.

Culture has a lot to say, particularly about marriage, sex and children during the transition to adulthood (Rodgers, 2018). At this stage, particularly towards early adulthood, most black families look forward to their daughters showing progress in securing a marriage (Adelakun-Odewale, 2018; Sennott & Mojola, 2017). It is with the belief that a woman cannot remain at her home her entire life. She, preferably in late adolescence or early adulthood, is expected to leave her home and join her husband's family. Most young women look forward to marriage as they would be considered to have achieved their expected social role (Hallman & Roca, 2007).

In most cases, their marriages are not always fruitful as they become subject to harassment by both their families and their in-laws (Hallman & Roca, 2007; Adelakun-Odewale, 2018). One might ask why young women are not moving out of their family homes to live independently if they do not want to get married. It should be noted that culturally, it would be mostly regarded as a norm violation for an African woman to move out of a family home except when she is getting married (Sennott & Mojola, 2017). This cultural expectation often puts young women under much pressure when trying to secure marriage. At times, they would settle for not-so-healthy relationships for the sake of being married.

2.5. Conceptual framework

This study was framed within both, Arnett's perspective on Emerging Adulthood and Feminist Theory and focuses on three aspects, the life course development, the context in which the transition to adulthood occurs, and the gender disparity. On the one hand, emerging adulthood is regarded as a unique developmental stage that acknowledges that people do not follow a

linear developmental path. Arnett (2000:478) acknowledges Erikson's contribution and makes a remark that the emerging adulthood applicable in various industrialized societies poses a unique developmental opportunity for young people as it provides the postponement of their transitions to adulthood. As much as the perspectives of Erikson (1968), Levinson (1978), and Keniston (1971) are viewed as having contributed to human development. Arnett (2000) regards the transition from childhood to adulthood as having changed considerably since the time of these writings were made more than 20 years ago. Emerging Adulthood helped the researcher to reflect on the influences and effects on different social structures in the transition of young women to adulthood. The researcher used the perspective to question the influences of unique cultural practices, social structures and gender disparity in the transition of young women to adulthood.

On the other hand, the Feminist Theory was utilised to understand not only gender inequalities but also fundamental conditions that influence young women's transition to adulthood. The experiential narrative accounts of young women transitioning to adulthood were collected and analysed. Significantly, in Hook's conception of Feminist Theory, which also bears relevance in this study, is her argument that the plight of black women does not only rest with gender disparity but also includes discrimination based on their race and class (Hooks, 2015). The study used this theory not only to understand the effect of gender disparity in the transition of young women to adulthood but also to understand the effects of race and class inequities in the life course.

Moreover, Bell Hooks is classified as an intersectional feminist who points out that women of different classes and races experience different levels of oppression (Hooks, 2015). She looks at multiple factors, such as race, class, and sex, as working together to bring different levels of oppression and discrimination. The plight of young women, particularly of African origin, bears significance in this study. The study reflected on the position and effect of social class and race in the transition of young women at Inanda Township.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

A research study must have a research methodology. A researcher must reflect on how and why the study was conducted. Braun and Clarke (2013:31) simply define methodology as the "theory of how research needs to proceed, to produce valid knowledge about the psychological and social world". It is a clearly defined step-by-step procedure of how the researcher went about answering the research question. This chapter aims to clarify the methodology applied when exploring how young women transition from childhood to adulthood at Inanda Township. This chapter provides specific methods of data collection and analysis. Walliman (2011:1) defines research methods as "the tools and techniques for doing research". The chapter looks at how participants were recruited, processes and procedures of data collection and data analysis.

3.2. Research paradigm

The study was conducted using a qualitative-related paradigm, which is an interpretive paradigm. According to Walliman (2011:22), interpretivism "maintains that the view of the world that we see around us is the creation of the mind". He further explains that this is not to argue that the world is not real but that reality and knowledge are socially constructed (Walliman, 2012). This method was fitting in this study because, the literature reveals that, as opposed to the quantitative study which is positivist in nature, people's experiences cannot be fully understood with standardized formulas and statistics (Moustakas, 1994; Babbie, 2010; Creswell, 2014). Objects do not give meaning to their reality; hence their findings do not need to be interpreted but have to be presented without interference (Creswell, 2014).

People's experiences, conversely, call for in-depth data and interpretation to understand their reality (Moustakas, 1994; Sofaer, 2002; Babbie, 2010; Erickson, 2012). The researcher wanted to understand how young women of Inanda Township transition from childhood to adulthood. The study focused on experiences and to better understand the experience; one has to ask open-ended questions to obtain an in-depth understanding. Walliman (2011:21) states, "The researcher encounters a world already interpreted and his/her job is to reveal this according to the meanings created by humans rather than to discover universal laws".

3.3. Research design

Babbie (2010) mentions two tasks to be addressed in the research design: to specify what the researcher wants to find out and to determine the best way to do it. The study followed a phenomenological design considering that the study aimed to understand the experiences of young women's transition from childhood to adulthood. Moustakas (1994) and Creswell (2002) studied qualitative research methodologies with Moustakas (2002) taking an interest in phenomenological research. They state that a researcher can conduct phenomenological research when wanting to get an in-depth understanding of individuals' feelings and experiences. The researcher wanted to explore the experiences and the meanings of young women who are transitioning from childhood to adulthood at Inanda Township. This specific exploration could not be possible with the other five prominent methodologies of qualitative research as they do not emphasize on individual experiences and feelings.

The study is exploratory in nature. The researcher wanted to explore the experiences of young women's transition to adulthood. Babbie (2010:92) points out that this kind of study can be conducted "(1) to satisfy the researcher's curiosity and desire for better understanding, (2) to test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study, and (3) to develop the methods to be employed in any subsequent study". The exploratory approach was viewed as best fitting in the study over the descriptive and explanatory. Not only because there is little known about the transition of young women to adulthood in South Africa but that there are several characteristics that make the transitioning of young women unique. Descriptive and explanatory studies are the best methods when there are already variables to be described and explained, which this topic lacks (Babbie, 2010).

3.4. Sampling strategies

Creswell (2014:239) states that the "idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites (or documents or visual material) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question". As indicated in the locality section, the participants were sourced from Vukile Ndimande Foundation. This is one of the youth organisations in Inanda Township which is responsible for providing support to young women of ages between 18 and 30. This age group was viewed as including the participants with experiences that range from childhood, the transition and adulthood. This study focused on participants aged between 18 and 25 years, and this was informed by the conceptual understanding of emerging adulthood. Arnett (2000:471) describes emerging adulthood as a

stage that is very difficult to predict based on age alone but asserts that it exists between childhood and adulthood and that it ranges "from ages 18 to 25".

It is worth indicating that the study is characterised by the co-existence and interactive nature of various iterate elements, namely participants' gender, age, as well as the social, economic and cultural factors. On this basis, selecting a sample size that would yield rich data to understand the phenomenon was not so simple. It was on this basis that this study used a purposive sample of twelve that produced data up to the point of saturation. Morse (1995) defines saturation as "data adequacy", which is operationalized as data collection until no new information is obtained. Saturation is further viewed as essential in "building of rich data within the process of inquiry, by attending to scope and replication, hence, in turn, building the theoretical aspects of inquiry" (Morse, 2015:587). Participants were selected based on the inclusion criteria of gender, age and location. Participants had to be young women of ages between 18 and 25 and belonging to the Vukile Ndimande Foundation at Inanda Township.

3.5. Data collection instruments

Babbie (2002) argues that the researcher needs to clarify how the data will be collected. The researcher collected data using semi-structured interviews that were recorded. Walliman (2011:99) simply defines semi-structured interviews as "One that contains structured and unstructured sections with standardized and open- type questions". The flexibility of this kind of interview ensured the in-depth exploration of the phenomenon. It allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions to get clarity and further enrich data. Recording interviews ensured that word-to-word conversations were captured. The majority of people in the area are Zulu speaking and they were most comfortable speaking this language with a small amount of English. The researcher gave the participants the option to participate in English or isiZulu. The goal was to allow the participants the opportunity to express themselves to the best of their ability. The interviews took place at Vukile Ndimande Foundation situated at Inanda Township. Each interview was 2 hours long.

One-on-one interviews were perceived as more suitable for this study than the observation method because past experiences cannot be observed (Erickson, 2012). The study sought data in the form of words from the participants about their experiences of the transition to adulthood. Moreover, the researcher kept handwritten notes highlighting gestures that were impossible to capture in the recordings. For the reason that most of the data collected was recorded in two languages, it had to be translated and transcribed before analysis. The transition of young

people from childhood to adulthood would not be fully understood using other data collection methods because this is an exploratory study and requires in-depth data.

3.6. Data analysis

Miles and Huberman (1994:10) summarise the data analysis process as, "data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification". The thematic analysis method was applied in analysing data. According to Braun and Clarke (2013:339), thematic analysis is "a form of analysis which has the theme as its unit of analysis, and which looks across data from many different sources to identify themes". The researcher identified themes and patterns from the interview transcripts to find similarities and commonalities in their meaning of transition to adulthood. A continuous re-examination of the research objectives while analysing data helped the researcher to allocate similarities in data which were then categorised in codes. Walliman (2011:30) states that the "process of data analysis continues until satisfactory evidence is collected". Coding helped simplify and reduce data for better analysis (Walliman, 2011). Findings were presented through themes. Codes were given brief descriptions supported by participants' quotations. This method helped the researcher make sense of the common experiences of young women's transition to adulthood. Other methods of analysis were not the best fit to analyse this study because, as much as content analysis is almost similar to thematic, none of the methods present themes supported by excerpts in the final study (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This was important for the researcher in ensuring the validity of the study.

3.7. Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Anney (2014) state that for a study to be trustworthy, a naturalistic researcher needs to meet four criteria: credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability.

3.7.1. Credibility

The researcher ensured the credibility of the study by not only reporting the interpreted data but also including the excerpts of the participants. All raw material such as audio recordings, transcripts and analysis, is available. Raw data is kept as evidence of the data interpreted and presented. The researcher spent quality time with the data, rereading and analysing it. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that credibility could be achieved by spending quality time with phenomena or participants. The data obtained from 12 participants made the study credible because the findings were not from a single person but accounts from multiple people. The

likelihood that the findings obtained from this study could be transferable to other people in a similar setting is high.

3.7.2. Transferability

The researcher ensured transferability by giving as many details as possible about the participants and the setting where the study was conducted. Participants were young women of ages 18 to 25. They reside in Inanda Township where the study was conducted. Lincoln and Cuba (1985), cited in Anney (2014), emphasize providing thick descriptive data to allow a clear judgment of the fitness of the study in other settings or groups. Thick descriptive data that was provided in the study will give the audience a clear understanding of the basis of the study and that will assist in the judging of whether it can be applied to other persons of the same age, gender and settings that are similar.

3.7.3. Dependability

The researcher ensured that the study is dependable by rereading the transcript to understand the data so it could be interpreted accordingly and clearly. Data was analysed twice on two separate occasions and there was consistency in data findings. This helped the researcher to fact-check and check for signs of researcher bias. Conducting a study with an open mind ensured that the data was not altered. Lincoln and Cuba (1985) state that the researcher can ensure dependability by doing a code-recode procedure. This reinsures that if another researcher with a different view to that of this researcher were to conduct a similar study, he or she would reach almost identical findings.

3.7.4. Confirmability

The researcher worked carefully with the data to ensure it was presented accurately. The researcher spent quality time with data to ensure conformability. Data was carefully studied repeatedly, which assisted the researcher in staying within the line of objectivity. The researcher kept observing data for what it was and presenting it without taking sides. Anney (2014) emphasises that the researcher's worldview should not interfere with the study.

3.8. Ethical considerations

According to Erickson (2012:1456), "The primary ethical obligation of the researcher, as it is of the physician, is to do no harm". As stated, the researcher took all the necessary steps to

ensure that the study is not harmful to the participants, the organisation they belong to, their community and the university. The following was undertaken to do no harm:

3.8.1. Permission to conduct the study

Before conducting the study, the researcher applied for and received ethical clearance from the UKZN Humanities and Social Science Research Committee. A gatekeeper's permission to conduct the study with the young women of Inanda Township was sourced from Vukile Ndimande Foundation. As stated in the location section, this organisation's main function is to assist the youth of Inanda Township with enrolment into tertiary education. As Creswell (2014) asserts, a letter of this nature must specify aspects like the extent of time, the potential impact, and the research outcomes. The letter had all the necessary details about the nature of the study and how it had to be carried out as mentioned by Creswell (2014) above.

3.8.2. Informed consent

The researcher obtained informed consent from the participants before conducting the study. The main aim of informed consent, according to Babbie (2010:65), is that the "subjects must base their voluntary participation in research projects on a full understanding of the possible risks involved". A detailed consent specified the purpose, benefits and possible risks of conducting and participating in the study, which is mainly to increase the body of knowledge on how young women from the chosen setting transition to adulthood. The rights of the participants to withdraw from the study were clearly stated.

3.8.3. Voluntary participation

Babbie (2010) argues that the participant's involvement in the study should be voluntary. The informed consent clearly stated that participation in this study was voluntary. It was also stated that the participants would not receive incentives for participating in the study and their participation was voluntary.

3.8.4. Confidentiality

Participants' names and their personal details were not disclosed throughout the study. Pseudonyms were assigned to the participants to maintain confidentiality Braun and Clarke (2013:63) recommend the use of "pseudonyms as the best practice for protecting participants' anonymity."

3.9. The delimitations and limitations of the study

- The study exclusively focused on young women's transition to adulthood. It is important to note that others may perceive this as a selective approach that is likely to provide a skewed view. In relation to this view, it is essential to note that this selection is justifiable to provide insight and parameters for understanding the plight of young women's transition to adulthood, particularly in the South African context.
- The participants that were selected are not going to represent the whole population as every case is different but will serve to provide deeper issues facing young women in similar locations.
- As much as a qualitative approach is rich in producing an in-depth exploration of a phenomenon, one of its limitations is that it does not cover the broad range of voices of many participants. In relation to this, it is essential to mention that, by its nature, this study is inherently meant to elicit deeper issues as opposed to scratching the surface of a broad range of voices.

CHAPTER 4

STUDY FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the study findings obtained from the one-on-one interviews conducted at Inanda Township. Before the presentation of findings, the chapter begins by giving a brief summary and the demographics of the participants followed by the themes and sub-themes that were developed through data analysis. The study explored the experiences of young women's transition from childhood to adulthood at Inanda Township. Data was sourced from 12 young women between the ages of 18 and 25; as Arnett (2000) suggests that as much as the transition is complex, it ranges between these ages. Using the thematic analysis thoroughly discussed in Chapter Three above, raw data was analysed, and several themes and sub-themes were developed from the data.

4.2. Summary of the participants' profiles

Participants of this study were young women of Inanda Township. As indicated in the sampling strategies above, young women were purposefully selected because they were believed to be the best participants to understand the problem. The study explored the experiences of young women's transition from childhood to adulthood. Young women that were selected from Inanda Township have experienced and some are still experiencing the transition from childhood to adulthood hence are the best participants for this study. Transition, according to Arnett (2000), happens between the ages of 18 and 25 and that was the motive for the selection of this age group. All participants were black. Other races were not deliberately excluded in the selection process. The Inanda Township is mostly occupied by black people hence there is one race of participants in the study.

Table 1: Summary of participants' demographics

Below is the table of participants presented using their assigned pseudonyms. Their age, gender and race are actual.

Name of participant	Age	Gender	Race
Zama	18	Female	Black
Zakithi	18	Female	Black
Zinzi	19	Female	Black

Slindile	20	Female	Black
Phumelele	21	Female	Black
Noxolo	22	Female	Black
Zandi	23	Female	Black
Sithelo	24	Female	Black
Thoko	24	Female	Black
Nkazimulo	25	Female	Black
Ntombi	25	Female	Black
Thembelihle	25	Female	Black

All participants above are young women from Inanda Township. They are between the ages of 18 and 25. They are all black.

4.3. Themes that emerged from the study

The themes and sub-themes that emerged and developed from the study are presented in the following table:

Table 2: Themes and Sub-themes

Theme	Sub-theme
1. The understanding of the transition in their perspective	1.1 From childhood to adulthood 1.2 Responsibility, role and expectations
2. Marker of the transition to adulthood	2.1 Age 2.2 The onset of menarche 2.3 Obtaining education
3. Experiences of the transition to adulthood	3.1 Personal experiences
4. Culture in the transition of young women to adulthood.	4.1 Culture glorification 4.2 Virginity testing 4.3 Behaving well: The culture of respect
5. Social challenges in the transition to adulthood.	5.1 Poverty 5.2 Crime
6. Gender disparity	6.1 Female-based-transition

	6.2 Gender- specified expectation
7. Perception of the successful and unsuccessful transition	7.1 Obtaining education 7.2 Cultural conformity

4.3.1. Theme 1: The understanding of the transition in their perspective

The transition from childhood to adulthood is said to be a unique experience for young people (Xue *et al.*, 2020). It was important for this study to establish the meaning of the transition from the participants. It did not come as a surprise that participants had different meanings of childhood, the transition and adulthood. This was important to establish to relate their further responses with the meaning they attach to this process.

4.3.1.1. From childhood to adulthood

Participants in this study associated the transition from childhood to adulthood with moving from dependency to independence. It is a process where one transitions from parental guidance and support to self-reliance. When participants were asked about what it means to be a young woman transitioning to adulthood. They responded:

"When children transition to adulthood means that they are moving from a parental guidance like from when your parent do everything for you. When you enter adulthood that is when you see the world. You get to know it beauty, hardships and challenges because you are old you have to be independent. It is time for independency," (Ntombi).

"If you are a child, you listen when you are told. If you think you are old, you take your own decisions. All that you do, you don't ask. You do it your own way. When you are a child, you are told. When you are old, you just think that all that you are told is wrong. You have to do all things yourself. Because we have this bad tendency that just because I am old, I do not ask from a parent. Even when she wants to do things for me, it is embarrassing. You just have to tell yourself that now I am independent. But I am still under the guidance of my parents. That's it," (Nkazimulo).

Participants associated emerging adulthood with the ability to independently take care of oneself and make decisions without parental influences. From their responses, the transition to adulthood is centred around acquiring independence. Childhood is associated with dependency and parental control, whereas adulthood is associated with independence and self-control. Their idea of acquiring independence in the transition to adulthood corresponds with the Western

youth studied by Arnett (2000) and Valentine (2003). However, unlike most Western youth, Inanda women did not mention the importance of moving out of the parental home during or after the transition.

Another participant believes that the transition to adulthood requires a behaviour change, as noted by Petersen, Sarigiani and Kennedy (1991). This is what she said about it:

"I think that it means there are things in life that will have to change about you personally. Hmm, I think...there are things that you'd have to look at when you are in childhood as well when growing and be able to differentiate that I did that in childhood now I am a grown person, or I am growing. So, this has to change, and I think even the way you handle yourself. When you are grown, you can't behave like when you were a child and doing child things. I think it is that," Sithelo

On the other hand, Noxolo believes that the ability to take care of others marks the reaching of adulthood. She stated:

"What can I say, I have two children. So, there are children up here that I usually invite over and give them clothes most of the times. So that makes me happy because sometime when it is raining, they walk barefooted. When you ask her what happened, she is a quiet child, she is always quiet. So, when I call her and when she thanks me, I see myself as a mother [laughs]. I see myself a real mother," Noxolo

4.3.1.2. Responsibility, roles and expectations

Participants spoke about what is expected of them by their families and society as they transition to adulthood. The most prominent expectations, roles and responsibilities included acquiring education, preferably up to the tertiary level and saving oneself until becoming a young woman gets her matric or up to a certain age which differs from family to family. A participant shared her experience:

"As long as you don't come with a child in my house. Finish school, we are good. What you do, I don't mind that. As long as you don't come back with a baby.' That was the rule: don't come with a child. Who will take care of it?" Zandi

Zandi revealed that finishing school without having a child is one of the parents' expectations of young women transitioning to adulthood. This is consistent with what was found by Grant and Furstenberg (2007:424) in their study in Africa and Latin America that the most common

state for young women in their teens is to be childless and focus on "school only". The emphasis is not necessarily on forbidding young people to engage in sexual activities but rather on having a child.

Nkazimulo coincides with Zandi that young women are expected not to have a child but with Nkazimulo, even post completing school was still not a desirable time to have a baby for her and her parents. She disclosed how having a child was a misfortune for her and her family. Sennott and Mojola (2017) quoted the participants in their study who defined having a child at an undesirable time as a mistake. This also reveals that the expectation of not having a child until at least one finishes school is not only a parental expectation but also the expectation of a young woman transitioning. She explains:

"I made my own mistakes to the point that, a parent would say, 'behave yourself well.' I would go out and do the opposite of what my parent told me. I would see things that I wasn't told about. It was not right because I...even though...I can say it was right and it wasn't right because I have a child now that I got when I was 20...I was 22, yeah. I was able to remain disciplined, yeah. I was disciplined till I reach 22. But I was supposed to walk in my parent's footsteps as she was telling me that if you are a woman, this is how you behave. Behave yourself this way. But mistakes in my path lead me to this." Nkazimulo.

Besides the expectation of remaining childless until a young woman finishes school, Nkazimulo reveals that a young woman is also expected to behave well. This expectation is gender-specific. A young woman is expected to behave well. This idea coincides with Sennotta and Mojola (2017) that a young woman transitioning to adulthood is expected to behave well.

One of the responsibilities that come with the transition of a young woman to adulthood is following parental instructions to save oneself. The participant explains:

"Others say the experience is good and others say it is bad. Like myself, you see to me it is bad because...yooo, because I didn't listen to my parents when they said...eish...I did things I wasn't supposed to do because I am still young. I listened to my feelings that told me to do things and I did them. I had a child at a young age. Those who had a good experience listened to their parents. They stayed and grew up to my age while they saved themselves. They remained virgins, they did not listen to their feelings. They saved themselves up until adulthood".

Saving oneself could be identified as a unique African expectation and experience for young women who are transitioning to adulthood. While there is less emphasis on saving oneself through the transition for Western women, there is a great emphasis on young African women.

4.3.2. Theme 2: Markers of the transition to adulthood

Participants were asked to share their understanding of the markers of transition from childhood to adulthood. This question aimed at establishing their understanding of the onset and the exiting of the transition. The themes that developed were age, periods and obtaining education.

4.3.2.1. Age

The transition from childhood to adulthood is said to happen between the ages of 18 to 25, according to Arnett (2000). It was then crucial for the study to establish the age group that is considered a transition period for the young women of Inanda Township. Participants were requested to share their understanding of when childhood ended and the onset of adulthood occurred. Participants shared their knowledge:

"21 years. You are transitioning from being a teenager to start life as a woman. There are lots of things you deal with from 21. I think you are grown enough at 21. Now, what you are going to face at 21 will not be the same as things you were dealing with at 18. The way of doing things will be not be the same again," Noxolo.

"I was able to see lots of things about growing up around 16, 17 and 18. To say oh, things are like this on earth. And if you do 1 and 2, this is what is going to happen. This is what is important in life. So, I would say like, 16 and 17. That is when you are able to differentiate good and bad. So, I would say 16 and 17 is the age," Sithelo.

The responses from the two participants above prove the point of Valentine (2003) that says where adulthood begins and ends is not clear. Noxolo feels that 21 is the onset of adulthood and rejects 18 as the age to mark adulthood. On the other hand, another participant indicated the ages between 16 and 17 as the ages that one can identify themselves as an adult. The age of maturity seems to be less standardised but more self-defined. Another participant shares her opinion:

"Because most of the times when you finish school, you are 18. And with most parents, if you have a matric certificate, there's something you could do. If you don't have, unfortunately, you are going to get those lousy jobs. But at least if you have a matric

certificate, you can, you know, do more. 21 also, for me it is because I wanted *umemulo*," Zandi.

Zandi thinks that one can be identified as an adult at 18 or 21. Eighteen in her case is motivated by the age of high school completion. She also indicated 21 which is motivated by her cultural belief that stipulates that a young woman becomes an adult at the age of 21.

The consumption of alcohol is regarded as a privilege for adults even with some cultures celebrating the onset of adulthood of their young people with it. While some cultures and locations may be strict on the age of consumption of alcohol and its association with adulthood, young women of Inanda Township revealed that alcohol consumption happened before reaching adulthood or the age of 18 which the government of South Africa stipulates as the age where one can consume alcohol (Liquor Act, 2003). Participants shared:

"But with drinking, oh Lord, I would drink even before that. I would go out and my parents were not too strict about it. They didn't want to stop me from doing different things because they feared that when they finally let me, I will have troubles. It happens. So, you go to varsity and when you arrived there, you don't know alcohol," Zandi.

"Is up to you as to what you want because this is your life. So, they are transparent that way, they do not hide things. They do not only tell you to not do things and when you ask why, and they just say, 'just don't do it.' They are like that, they are forward. 'You want to drink alcohol?' 'Yes, you can drink but know that when you drink and you blackout, it is done with you.' So that is why sometimes that they buy it and say let's go behind the house and chill. So that you will see what it's like to be drunk to a certain level. So that is why if you go out to drink, you should be able to know your limit. And be careful of your friends as well. They are just...straightforward," Sithelo

Responses depict that even though the age of alcohol consumption in South Africa is 18, young women do enjoy the privilege that maybe be considered for adults in some areas. Northcote (2006) also noted that young people in Australia are consuming alcohol and attending nightclubs as young as 17, whereas the legal age for drinking is 18. Their parents accept this adult privilege well, with some even encouraging it in South Africa. Participants did not criticise their exposure to alcohol before the legal age required. Instead, it served as an exciting experience in their transition.

4.3.2.2. The onset of menarche

Participants were asked about the meaning of the onset of their menstrual periods. This question came with the understanding that in some areas, once one starts her menstrual period, she is not referred to as a child. What became clear is that with the young women of Inanda Township, the onset of the menstrual periods does not mean that one has reached adulthood. Unlike the participants of Sennotta and Mojola (2018), who define the onset of menarche as a symbol of adulthood. Participants of this study had this to say with regard:

"It did not change anything because my parents never sat me down to tell me that I am grown. They told me that I am a child. If I go on my periods, you wake up at 4 am and take a bath and that you do not have to talk to boys. It did not change me. That is what I was told by my parents, and I lived by it. They never told me that I have reached adulthood," Zama.

"Others say when you start your periods, you are old and you can introduce a boy in your life. To me, they did not say much. I was told that I was growing but not that I could introduce a boy in my life, no. It still stands that I have to reach 21 and above," Zakithi.

The participants revealed that periods are not a notable or crucial marker of the transition. This is based on the idea that there are no significant changes in their lives except bodily change. It does not present a notable shift in a young woman's growth but rather a new development. Arnett (2000) also does not note any major transitions during the onset of menarche except that it is a period that a young woman is sexually mature. One participant admitted that it meant she was growing but noted that it is not associated with adulthood. If anything, it is more relatable to childhood. Another participant shared:

"Periods do not mean you are an adult; it is just part of growing that you are going to enter a certain stage. Our growth has stages. Others say when you reach 30, you enter another stage, 45 is another stage. So, I think that is how it is," Noxolo

Noxolo also emphasises that periods mean growth but have little to do with adulthood.

4.3.2.3. Obtaining education

Education has been mentioned by most participants as one element that they experience during their transition. Its mention was related to the importance and need of accomplishment before

one reached adulthood. Participants were asked about their prevailing development outcome in their transition and they had this to say:

"[laughs] ...education. Education is important. It is what I can say is the prevalent at the moment," Thoko

"Hmm, I would say education, yeah. And the privilege to study in schools that...of which that helps because from grade 1 to grade 4, I was going to black schools. And from grade 5 till matric I had to change. Like, it helps a lot. And a child's brains open up and everything. And you look at things differently. You learn things fast like being able to go to town alone. Like taking a bus and getting off at a certain place and from there to the next stop. And with learning, not everything has to be taught in isiZulu. Even when there are English lessons, the teacher turns them into isiZulu just because...English is English like, you have to understand and know things. Like math is taught in English, whatever. Like, only isiZulu is taught in isiZulu. So, I would say education. Yeah," Sithelo.

Participants mentioned education as the highlight of their transition experience to adulthood. The idea of acquiring education in the transition period coincides with Arnett (2000), Valentine (2003) and Beguy *et al.*, (2011) that young people of the 20th century's transition to adulthood is through education. Participants also emphasised the quality of education which gives them a better transitional experience than the education obtained in their area. When Zandi was asked about her decision to study in a school outside of her Township when her area has many schools, this is what she said:

"Parents wanted me to get a better education. Because at the end of the day, school here are teaching in isiZulu when we all know that English is the way. So, for them, they wanted me to have more options in life. Then, I am not saying there aren't options here but when you get exposed to a different environment, you get more opportunities. People I grew up with, what can I say, we are not the same. There are some that ended up not going to varsity. There are some that are entrepreneurs. So just getting exposed to different types of environments helped me to become more normal than just staying here at Inanda," Zandi.

This response suggests that education is not only essential in the transition experience of young women but the quality of education is paramount. How the quality of education is obtained raises the issues of inequality, social class and still the visible signs of segregation based on

race inherited from the apartheid era in South Africa. Hooks (2015) made certain that we understand that black women's problems stem from multiple sources, namely race, class and gender. Inanda Township is occupied by a majority of blacks/Africans. It is poor compared to other areas that are occupied by the majority of other races. Young people have to manoeuvre from their Township to other areas to seek better opportunities not presented in their area. This structure presents a challenge to young women who happen to be black and are less fortunate. Those who have means can transit from their area to another to seek education that they claim is more relevant to what is needed in the job market. This suggests that less fortunate people have limited experiences, exploration and choices regarding the type of education they can acquire. These intersecting social phenomena influence the experience of the transition for young women.

Phumelele further explains how a lack of means affects the transition of young women through education:

"Other children are not able to achieve their dreams because other parents are not working. They do not have money to buy them what they need so that they can prosper. Like, other places, phones and laptops are needed so they can study well. Now, other parents do not afford. Others are able to afford. Like, other children are able succeed, and others are not able to because of the financial status of the parents. Lots of children end up taking drugs so that, maybe they think that those drugs will make the problems disappear. Like, others have stress and ending up taking drugs thinking that they will help. Others end up doing bad things," Phumelele.

Phumelele observed and noted that financial challenges deny young women opportunities to transition to adulthood through education. This has also been noted by Bozalek and Boughey (2012) that the inequality in South Africa has continued to perpetuate further the division in access to quality education. Because education has risen to become the prominent marker of the transition, it has an affect and power to determine the transition experience. Those who can succeed in it turn out to have a good experience of the transition and those who are unable to succeed or experience challenges in it have a terrible experience of the transition. The location also influences whether one will have a good or a bad educational experience. Those who transition well through education had to leave the Township to seek what they call a "better" education in their nearest city. Those who had rather a bad transition experience through education got their education within the Township.

One participant, however, had rather a good transitional experience through education while she studied at Inanda Township. This is how she expresses her views:

"I see it as a good place on the other hand because there are lots of things that young children, especially girls, are able to get like education. There are lots of schools and there are resources. They also get support. They get to be educated as they enter the stage (adolescence). They also learn about things that they have to be vigilant about as girls. Their behavior. Yeah. It is good. Because there are spiritual leaders also. Even in schools and churches, they teach about how a girl should behave," Thembelihle.

The response above proves that the transition from childhood to adulthood is a unique experience. How one sees the world around them also plays a role in the attitude one gives towards circumstances they face, shaping their transition experience.

4.3.3. Theme 3: Experiences of the transition to adulthood

If there is anything that this study has proven, it is that the transition phase from one stage to another is a unique experience. One might be the same age as another, reside in the same location and share culture and social beliefs but transition experiences proved to be unique for each individual regardless. This is not to say, however, that this study could not shed light on the experiences of young women's transition to adulthood. This study answered the question of how young women of Inanda Township transition to adulthood and those experiences happened to be unique for each individual.

4.3.3.1. Personal experiences

Participants were asked to describe their developmental path at Inanda Township. The study showed that there are young people who have/had good experiences in their development at Inanda Township and there are those who do/did not. This is what they had to say about their experiences:

"It was fine. It was okay. Not that bad. Like I said, I wasn't out there most of the time. But when I do go out, just meeting other people and seeing how they are living their lives, they were very helpful. And you become grateful for what you have because most of them do not have. Like, for instance, Siphwe didn't grow up in a big house. He grew up in a one room house. We are related. So, going out to see houses people live their lives does help. So, it is okay," Zandi

"My growing up in this area...ey, it was good. Having friends, even though I won't mention them that much because I made my own mistakes my own way when friends were not there," Nkazimulo

Sithelo and Zandi had a good experience growing up in Inanda Township. Two common factors seemed to contribute to their good experience; age and means. Those who are at their later stage of transitions, near 25 seem to have enjoyed their transition to adulthood. Zandi is 23 years old and Sithelo is 24. They are not at the onset of the transition but rather approaching adulthood. Good experiences of the transition may be associated with the different eras in which they started their transition. Arnett (2000) brings awareness to the critical element of time in the transition to adulthood, which is the reason for the mixed transitional experience. With time, things change. Young people who had their transition before the spread of the Corona Virus, for instance, would have had a different experience of the transition than those who transitioned during the spread.

This is also articulated by one of the participants who highlighted that her experience was better because she grew up in a different era:

"It is just that times have changed. The time we were growing up it was better. Now, there are lots of things that we didn't have before. There are drugs, children take drugs, and it is easy to get them. They are everywhere," Ntombi

Another common trait that the participants who had a good experience shared were their socioeconomic status. Grant and Furstenberg (2007) argue that transition in developing countries encounters social problems related to their socioeconomic statuses. Participants who found their transition to adulthood to be easier had means which provided their transition with fewer social problems that could have potentially affected their transition experience. They had more options compared to those less fortunate and their good experience is influenced by their ability to experience life outside of the area.

"I also did not attend school here; I went to one of the schools in Durban city... Parents wanted me to get a better education. Because at the end of the day, school here are teaching in isiZulu when we all know that English is the way. So, for them, they wanted me to have more options in life. Then, I am not saying there aren't option here but when you get exposed to different environment, you get more opportunities. People I grew up with, what can I say, we are not the same. There are some that ended up not going to varsity. There are some that are entrepreneurs. So just getting exposed to different

types of environments helped me to become more normal than just staying here at Inanda," Zandi

"I did not have many challenges because it not the same as before. We got to experience going to school with a bus, you understand? Hmm, there were "uncles", and you choose the school you want to go to. Unlike our grandparents whereby if the school started at 7:30am, they should have been on the road by five because you have to walk for an hour. So, I wouldn't say it was hard. Nothing was hard. You only see hardships when you are grown because you now know what is hard and what is easy. But it wasn't as hard, it wasn't as hard," Sithelo.

The study also discovered that there are young women of Inanda Township who did and are not having a good experience in their transition to adulthood. These young women also share common traits. One of them is their age. Most young women who have had bad experiences are at the onset of the transition to adulthood, ages around 18 and 22.

"It is very difficult. As I have said on the first and second question, it was hard. To see people who are around me and older than me and the way they are behaving and the way they are, they are not right shame. I wouldn't want to be like them. First of all, there are lots of childbirth in this area. Young people that you can see that are young. A 22-year-old would have 4 children? Ay shame, I do not ask for this place. Personally, I did not face lots of challenges growing up because I do not follow the footsteps of people around me. I do my own thing. Yeah," Zama.

"It was bad because I did adult things at a young age. Older people in the area were protecting me but older men wanted me. They wanted things from me such as sleeping with them when I didn't want to," Zinzi.

"Ey, it was hard because there are men who would say '*khula sihlahla siyakuchelela!*' (Grow up, we are waiting for you!) to me. That was not right because now I live in fear that when grow up, how things would be," Zakithi.

The young women above are transitioning in a different era than those at the later stage of the transition. This may seem like a small age gap but change happens in a short period of time. Safety and security that are praised by participants at their later stages of the transition are found less with young women at the onset of the transition. These young women argued that

their area is disordered and presents challenges in their transition to adulthood. This coincides with Xue *et al.* (2020) that demographics can foster or limit the transition experience.

Participants also shared another contributor to the bad experience in the transition to adulthood: their socioeconomic status. Their experience of the transition to adulthood has challenges that are associated with a lack of financial means. As a result, many young girls resort to other less favorable means to gain financial support. That contributes to other social problems found in the area. Social problems mentioned included early pregnancy, substance abuse and dating older men for financial support. Participants shared this:

"The economic status of the area is not good. Other children are unable to go to school if they did not get NSFAS," Slindile.

"In this area, we lack job opportunities. Even if you wish to do something, you end up unable to do it because you don't work. You end up looking for a *blessor* who will bless you so that you will achieve what you are wishing for. I see the economy; I do not know what to say but we end up doing things. You would see a child from a neighbor having a tablet, and I do not have. I do not work and maybe no one works at home. I would meet a *blessor* with a car and promise to support me, I would throw myself at him. At the same time, I would get diseases that I wouldn't have gotten if I accepted the situation I am in. Because of bad economy, you end up...I do not see the economy going well. The high rate of unemployment is with women the most. They end up doing wrong things because they want to have things, but they do not have means. You end up dating older men who would support you financially," Nkazimulo.

The poor economic status of a young woman transitioning to adulthood negatively impacts their transition. We discover that economic standing can either enhance or limit the transitional experience depending on whether a person has means. Green-Atchley (2014) and Adelakun-Odewale (2018) identify the low investment in a girl child as the cause of poor transition experience. Economic means determine the level of access and freedom of options in transition. This is what the participants had to say about it:

"It is been great. I enjoyed growing up. My parents gave me opportunities to explore things that are outside of the community like I went to a school in the city. Even though I spend a lot of time indoors, I enjoyed it. It was not because my parents did not want me to go out, I was just that kind of a person. So, it is okay, I do not see any problems whatsoever," Zandi.

Zandi's response suggests that good financial stability positively influences the transition to adulthood as it provides greater opportunities beyond a place of residence. Her response also reveals the societal lack of opportunities as a cause that drives those who are financially stable away from their communities to seek better opportunities and in turn to enhance their experience of the transition to adulthood.

4.3.4. Theme 4: Culture in the transition of women to adulthood.

The participants of this study highly regarded the cultural influence in the transition to adulthood. Some still practise it and others do not, but they all acknowledge its value in young women's transition to adulthood. Some themes that emerged when they were asked about the influence of culture in their transition were culture glorification, virginity testing and behaving well (*ukuhlonipha*).

4.3.4.1. Culture glorification

Participants were asked about the influence of their culture in the transition to adulthood. They glorified the influence of their culture in their life course. Nkazimulo said:

"Culture has a good influence. Like when you are growing up and disciplined, you have to go for the *Umhlanga* ceremony and virginity testing. There are slim chances of getting diseases, there are slim chances of experiencing early pregnancy because you are disciplined and get virginity tested. It happens that others reach older ages, and they are still virgins. And I say if we also attended the *Umhlanga* ceremony, we would not be here. We cannot look into that now, but we can only do better with our kids," Nkazimulo.

"I think it is good because if a girl child knows that I grow up in a home that values culture and she is virginity tested, it is not easy for her to behave anyhow. She gets protected in other things until she is old and able to know the difference between what is good and bad. She takes her own decision when she is grown," Ntombi.

Participants praised the influence of their culture in their transition to adulthood. Cultural conformity results in what is considered a successful transition. Since its focus is on virginity testing and self-respect, it offers young women protection from early pregnancies and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and instills their self-respect amongst other things. Some of the benefits of the culture of virginity testing, as discussed by Rafudeen and Mkasi (2016), is to

protect young girls from early pregnancies and to contract sexual diseases at a younger age. Conforming to the culture of virginity testing and self-respect is important to young people.

4.3.4.2. Virginity testing

One thing that came out from all the participants about the influence of culture in the transition of a young woman to adulthood was virginity testing. Although not all of them practised virginity testing they all knew what it is. Most notably, this practice is greatly embraced and viewed as valuable among women transitioning to adulthood. What is mainly appreciated by the participants about this cultural practice is its ability to protect young women from engaging in family-established age-for-sex. The age is family established because the participants had different ages, they claimed that a person is considered an adult. This is what they had to say about it:

"Aside from virginity testing, I think at home...as most of us are Christians, as much as we do not do ancestral ceremonies, but we still follow traditional norms and standards on raising a girl child. We still do *umemulo* and anybody would be thrilled to do that. That is why that even now maybe next weekend, someone is having *umemulo*. Her parents are thanking her for respecting herself. That is the tradition. A girl can see that no, I behaved myself well. She would be proud of herself that she was able to behave well up to that stage. And from the mistakes I did, I have two children at 24, when I see children at my age who do not have children, I desire that. I would say eish, yabo? Because I couldn't follow the tradition as I was supposed to. So, when I see a 24-year-old on her traditional attire, I don't want to lie, I like it," Noxolo

Noxolo's response suggests that even though some young women are no longer practising some cultural practices such as virginity testing, cultural ideologies still greatly influence the transition of young women to adulthood. This is consistent with the study of Beguy *et al.*, (2011) who name cultural influences as playing a crucial role in the transition to adulthood. They may not be virginity tested or attend the virginity testing ceremonies. However, they still cherish its ideologies of saving oneself till a certain age which differs from family to family.

Participants shared how virginity testing is valuable in the transition of young women to adulthood. Nkazimulo has this to say:

"Culture has a good influence. Like when you are growing up and disciplined, you have to go for the Umhlanga ceremony and virginity testing. There are slim chances of

getting diseases, there are slim chances of experiencing early pregnancy because you are disciplined and get virginity tested. It happens that others reach older ages, and they are still virgins. And I say if we also attended the Umhlanga ceremony, we wouldn't be here. We cannot look into that now, but we can only do better with our kids," Nkazimulo.

Virginity testing is viewed as having the ability to benefit young women to transition to adulthood and fulfilling social expectations, meaning maintaining virginity and being childless. Another participant said this about virginity testing:

"Cultural things we have here is that there are children who go for virginity testing. There are grannies who do the virginity testing. That has a good influence because children that are virginity tested are scared of doing bad things because they know that grannies will see them. Like sleeping with boys. They would not agree in sleeping with boys because they know that that granny will see that they are sleeping with boys and that they are no longer virgins," Phumele.

Phumele's response showed the great value of the virginity testing practice. It is also noted that young women remain virgins not only because it is what they want to do but also out of fear of being found that they have deviated from the cultural norm. This, according to Slindile, causes pressure amongst young women transitioning to adulthood. She states:

"Others are pressured by culture. You see, like those who are virginity tested. You also wish to do it. And if someone is getting an *umhloniyane* ceremony, you also wish to get it. But sometimes the situation does not allow you," Slindile.

As much as virginity testing yields positive results for women transitioning to adulthood, it might also be viewed as challenging to women who do not want to conform to the practice because of various factors. Maluleke (2012:11) also raised this concern that "virginity testing poses a threat of discrimination against girl children who are not virgins (who in many instances may have been raped)".

4.3.4.3. Behaving well: the culture of respect

Participants were asked to share the influence of their culture on the transition to adulthood. Participants mentioned the culture of respect amongst young women transitioning to adulthood. Thembelihle and Sithelo had this to say:

"First of all, our culture as black people, especially Zulu people, we learn a lot about respect. Respect older people. That is the first important thing because if you are respectful or respect older people, it is not easy to do things that are not acceptable because you know what is acceptable and what is not. So, the culture of respect was there," Thembelihle

"Respect also. You see, I grew up with people who regard respect very highly like in everything. Whether it is a child or an older person, respect is everything. So, I think it is in thing that makes me, makes us to be who we are today. Know the other person, do not matter the situation, know the other person," Sithelo.

Thembelihle's response highlights how crucial the culture of respect is in the transition of young women. Respect is viewed as a necessity in helping young women transition to adulthood. It keeps young people within what is socially acceptable. Rudwick and Shange (2009:68), however, argue that "Male *hlonipha* behavior is not nearly as restrictive and disempowering in its execution as it is to their female counterparts." Young women of Inanda Town, however, did not show any feelings of disempowerment or imbalances between genders when it came to the culture of respect.

Zandi shares the same sentiment as Thembelihle about the importance of respect and they put an emphasis on the Zulu tribe. When she was asked about why she had to remain a virgin till 21, this is what she said:

"Just respecting the culture as a Zulu person that when you are 21, you are given a key that you can go and do whatever. So, it was to respect that. But I could have let it go at 18 but for me, it was important for me to reach 21."

The culture of behaving well and respect is attached to the expectation that young women have to be virgins or at least be childless till the age that the family view as appropriate.

4.3.5. Theme 5: Social challenges in the transition to adulthood

Every life stage comes with challenges that one has to fight to transition to another stage successfully. Participants were asked about how their social and economic circumstances influenced their transitional experiences. Some of the prevalent themes were poverty, crime, lack of social support, lack of resources and financial issues.

4.3.5.1. Poverty

Poverty affects people's lives in all sorts of ways. It determines the lifestyle a person can have, limiting choices and opportunities. Participants identified Inanda Township as a place stricken by poverty. They explained how this state of the community affects their transition to adulthood. They were quoted saying:

"The economic status of the area is not good. Other children are unable to go to school if they did not get NSFAS," Slindile.

"The economic status of this area? The economics of Inanda is bad. It is bad in a way that we see good things far away from us. It does not come in the area. What comes is for certain individuals, not everybody, not all the youth. Because there are things like life skills. Things like having facilitators come in to teach children manners and what to do when you grow up. We see all that far away from us. It does not happen here," Thoko

"In this area we lack job opportunities. Even if you wish to do something, you end up unable to do it because you do not work. You end up looking for a blesser who will bless you so that you will achieve what you are wishing for. I see the economy; I do not know what to say but we end up doing things. You would see a child from a neighbor having a tablet, and I do not have. I do not work and maybe no one works at home. I would meet a blesser with a car and promise to support me, I would throw myself at him. At the same time, I would get diseases that I wouldn't have gotten if I accepted my situation I am in. Because of bad economy, you end up...I do not see the economy going well. The high rate of unemployment is with women the most. They end up doing wrong things because they want to have things, but they do not have means. You end up dating older men who would support you financially," Nkazimulo.

We learn from these responses that poor economic standing hinders young women from transitioning to adulthood through education. Education is regarded as a prominent transitional experience for many young people. A lack of education limits possible future ventures for young women. It also creates social problems, such as contributing to unproductive young women and unhealthy relationships that are driven by money and disease. A lack of opportunities amongst young women contribute to social problems as they have to find other ways that may be unfavorable to them to be financially stable. Poverty and poor economic

resources have been identified by Kaufman and Stavrou (2002) as the cause of many social problems, such as unwanted pregnancies and STDs among young people.

A positive outlook with regard to Inanda Township and its contribution to the transition of young women was also noted by some participants. Data analysis showed that these participants share common traits. They are the participants who have a healthy economic standing. Their means have provided them with opportunities to explore outside their immediate surroundings. Lareau and Cox (2011) found a similar trait in the interaction between the transition to adulthood and social class. They discovered that young people with parents in the middle class are presented with better means to transition than those with working-class parents. Depending on which class one falls into, it becomes a determining factor in the experience one will have. Social class paves either a positive or negative transitional experience. Another participant shares her experience:

"I would say, most of the people in this area are financially stable. You know, like even if the person is not financially stable, you wouldn't know because they keep things to themselves, you understand? But I feel that at the same time, at my home, our grandmother would know because she is a giver. She would want to know who is needy so that she would give. So, I feel that I wouldn't say it is balanced but there are many people who are okay than those who are not," Sithelo.

"Economically, it was okay. It was not bad. But for other people, economically, it is bad. Because, for government to give people RDP houses you can tell that economically, we are not okay. We are slowly growing. So that sometimes, does affect a young child cos if you grow up at home and we are hustling and, there are instances where one has to depend on a man. So, as you grow up, you will have that mentality," Zandi.

Zandi and Sithelo's views of their economic status are much influenced by their personal experiences. They had a stable economic upbringing, and they believe that most young women did not face challenges due to the poor economy.

Another participant had what might seem like a neutral response to the effect of the economy in the transition to adulthood:

"The economy of Inanda does not have much influence on young people transitioning to adulthood. There aren't many opportunities, you have to go to the cities if you want

opportunities. That is where you get knowledge and assistance. But there aren't many opportunities and they are not as open to everybody. So that has an effect because if you are coming from a poor family, it is not easy to have money to maybe start a business. Get knowledge. Those kinds of opportunities are available in the cities. So, that does not have a good influence especially to young girls who are growing because the information is not always readily available. You have to go to other places to get knowledge on how to do things," Thembelihle

The response above indicates that sometimes the attitude can determine the experience of the transition one has. Rastogi (2018) argues that a positive outlook on life forms a positive life experience. The participant acknowledged that the economy of the Inanda Township is poor and has the potential of having a bad influence on young women who are transitioning to adulthood but also, it shouldn't be a factor that results in a bad transitional experience as knowledge and opportunities are available in the cities.

4.3.5.2. Crime

Crime in Inanda Township was identified as one of the social issues that affect the transition of young women to adulthood. When participants were asked about social circumstances that influence the transition of young women, some participants had this to say:

"It is not safe. It is not a place to raise a girl child, it is not safe at all. It has crime. Young children as young as 14 become parents," Ntombi.

"It is not a good place. You see, if I had a way, I would have made this place to be for men only because crime is common here. Growing up as a woman in this area...a woman who grow up in this area is not of a great caliber. I wish that it was a place for men only. Yeah," Zama.

"It is poverty. Crime, there is a lot of crime here as I have said that there are lots of shacks. A place with shacks has lots of crime. Poverty also, people go hungry," Thoko

The responses above depicted the feeling of vulnerability of young women who are transitioning to adulthood in an area that is characterised by lots of crime. Crime gives young women undesirable experiences in their transition. Their responses indicated that people that are more vulnerable to crime are the women or young children. One participant emphasised that Inanda is not a good place to raise a girl child and another said that it should have been a place

for men only. Beguy *et al.*, (2011) and Adelakum-Olanike (2018) confirm that the African girl child is more vulnerable to social issues including crime and harmful cultural practices.

Another participant had a different opinion which again proves that the transitional experience is unique to each individual. She views Inanda Township as a safe place to raise a child:

"I think, in my opinion, I see Inanda as a good place. Another thing is that I grew up with boys. So, whenever I step out of the gate, 'where are you going?' they would ask. 'What are you going to do?' And they would ask someone to accompany you and you would go with that person. But even if you were to walk alone, nothing would happen, you understand? It all boils down to how you were raised at home. The way you are raised is how you look the outside world. To say oh, if I do 1 and 2, how things would be at home? But it is a good place, I do not want to lie to you. It is a good place," Zandi.

Zandi's experience is good because she viewed her environment as safe. However, she also points out the importance of a supportive family as it aids a young woman in a safe space to experience what life has to offer. Arnett (2000) found that young people transitioning to adulthood while staying with their parents benefit greatly from their support and comfort. The state of the system that the person is transitioning in influences the experience of their transition.

Sithelo agrees with Zandi's account that their area is a safe environment to raise a girl child. She is quoted saying:

"Okay, most of the townships are suffering from rapes and everything so we have never had, I don't know about other area but at Emachobeni Inanda, we have never had high cases of rape. We grew up walking in panties in front of your uncles. They were able to put you in a tub and bathe you. But in other area, you would find that in other areas, 6 months old or a 6-year-old is abused by their uncles. So, I would say growing up at Inanda has been safe and I never had fear being sent to a certain individual or home," Sithelo.

Again, having sound financial backing contributes enormously to providing a positive experience for young women's transition to adulthood. As indicated above, these participants share a common trait: good financial status. As a result, compared to participants who indicated that they are less fortunate, these participants did not face financial challenges in their transition, resulting in them having more options to experience their transition. Good financial

standing expands the provision of safety for young women. Beguy *et al.*, (2011) indicated that a good economic standing and a high level of education provide young people with more security than less fortunate people. It provides secure shelter and a safer neighborhood, laying out a safe environment for young women to have a good experience in their transition.

4.3.6. Theme 6: Gender disparity

The study focused on the transition of young women instead of combined genders. This came with the understanding of the existing literature that suggests that both genders have different transition experiences. The themes that emerge are female-base-transition and gender-specific expectations.

4.3.6.1. Female-based-transition

Participants were asked to share their transition experiences to adulthood as young women at Inanda Township. This came from the view that gender ideologies shape how men and women experience their transition. The feelings were different for participants. Some participants expressed this with their experience:

"There wasn't much disturbance. But I can say that girls are more likely to facing challenges than boys. People take advantage. But I did not see lots of things. Bad thing would happen to other children but to me personally, nothing bad happened. Opportunities were also there and we were not discriminated based on our gender," Thembelihle.

"You know, I do not know how to describe this place. I think there are not many challenges. It is like any other place. Like, when you go out to the shop, there would be boys at the corner. They are probably going say something. It is up to you whether you entertain them or not. Obviously, you going get...you know it is just like any other place. It is the same. It is up to you how you take things that are said or done to you. Because you go out to the shop and come back to the house. You go to the sport grounds and come back to the house. You go to school, like it is not different from any other area," Sithelo

"As I have said, there are lots of challenges that are here especially of teenage pregnancy. Fortunately, I am not the person who is easily influenced. That is why I am at this age with no child. It was hard but you can survive if you are not easily influenced by others," Zama.

From the responses above, imbalances that are gender-specific were identified. Young women acknowledge that women are likely to face more challenges in their life course than young men. Green-Atchley (2014) and Nwauche (2015) resonate with this statement that girls face multiple barriers and the effects of social challenges compared to boys. These challenges include the issue of safety and harassment. Self-resilience is a critical ability a young woman should possess to survive some of these challenges. Young women indicated that they did not feel discriminated because of their gender regarding access to opportunities. The question of whether young women and men have different experiences of the transition has been found to be true. The notable difference is created by culture more than any other aspect of the social sphere. Most of the issues that they face such as access were not specifically towards females. But culturally, there are explicit norms that are specifically for young women transitioning to adulthood and create a unique transition experience for them.

4.3.6.2. Gender specific expectations

Among other things that participants shared about their transition experience is what could be called gender-specific expectations. For example, Nkazimulo emphasises that women are not supposed to drink and her reasoning is not based on anything other than that a person is a woman. She is quoted saying:

"Taking alcohol as a way of making yourself happy is not right because our parents are not happy about it. A woman is not supposed to drink. She is not supposed to, no matter how happy she is, she is not supposed to drink. It was not right because we ended up doing things that we were not supposed to do," Nkazimulo.

It is depicted above that the transition of young women is associated with gender stereotypes. Participants in this study indicated that they experienced alcohol when they were under 18 which is the minimum required age to consume alcohol. This, however, is not required or expected from women at any age, according to the participant above. Maluleke (2012) has discussed numerous expectations and cultural practices in Southern Africa that, in most cases, uplift men at the expense of women's liberation.

4.3.7. Theme 7: Perception of the successful and unsuccessful transition

A unique transition experience prompted the exploration of what is considered a successful transition from childhood to adulthood by the young women of Inanda Township. The themes that were developed were related to education and conforming to cultural practices.

4.3.7.1. Obtaining education

Participants shared the importance of obtaining education in their transitional experience as this increased their opportunities to become independent when they reached adulthood. Those who obtained education to at least tertiary level counted it as one of the successes in their transition experience. They stated:

"[laughs] education. Education is important. It is what I can say is the prevalent at the moment," Thoko.

"What was a success is that I did my matric and passed. What was not a success is that I wasn't able to...I made mistakes. I got a child. They didn't have means at home to take me back to varsity. But still, I am fighting to go back to varsity and achieve my goals. I cannot be stopped by a child. Even though time has been wasted but I do not want to put that at heart. I have to start over to achieve my goals," Nkazimulo.

"Is that I listen to my parents' advice, that was a success. I also got my matric. I behaved myself well," Zama.

As clearly indicated above, among other things, education is prominent in the transition of young women to adulthood. Arnett (2000) and Rutenberg *et al.*, (2001) go into greater detail to explain how exposure and non-exposure to education impact young people in their transition to adulthood. It is a venture that all are attracted to because it provides young women with independence. One could now provokingly argue that education in the transition to adulthood could easily fit what Erikson in Salkind (2004) calls stages of development that individuals are to partake in successfully, failure results in the sense of inadequacy. Through the transition period, young women are to participate in obtaining education which plays a role in the formation of identity. Failure to achieve this task results in young women feeling uncertain about the future and their role.

Zinzi, for instance, was unable to participate in education successfully and as a result, she feels that her life is ruined. According to her, a young woman needs to obtain an education during her transition to achieve her goals. Those who could not achieve the desired level of education had an unfavourable transition. It has a negative affect on the transition experience. Zinzi explains the events that led to her dreams being shattered:

"Nothing. I wanted to study and have my own home and stay with my children. That ended up not happening. I think achieving that is impossible because I have ruined my life," Zinzi.

The inability to accomplish a desired level of education limits or prevents a young woman from achieving her dreams and enjoying her transition. In essence, the failure to acquire sufficient education makes the transition to adulthood unsuccessful. It contributes to the overall experience of the transition of young women.

4.3.7.2. Cultural conformity

One of the cultural expectations is that young women must remain virgins up to the age that the family or community considers mature enough. More than the expectation of remaining a virgin, there was even more emphasis on remaining childless until one becomes independent. The ability to conform to that culture successfully until a young woman reaches adulthood was important. One participant explains:

"And from the mistakes I did, I have two children at 24, when I see children at my age who do not have children, I desire that. I would say eish, *yabo*? Because I couldn't follow the tradition as I was supposed to. So, when I see a 24-year-old on her traditional attire, I don't want to lie, I like it," Noxolo.

The statement from the above participant emphasises the tradition of remaining childless more than that of virginity. Arnett (2000:477) does mention that "the majority of people aged 18-25 are childless" which could make those who have children before 25 feel as if they have acted outside of social norms and standards. The participant does not mention nor regret anything about losing her virginity as this is less likely to have denied her the opportunity to participate in cultural and traditional ceremonies. But having a child denies her this opportunity and her transition experience was not entirely enjoyable. Having a child while transitioning to adulthood makes the transition unsuccessful and the preference and cultural expectation are that a young woman becomes childless during this period.

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter presented the themes and sub-themes that were developed through data analysis supported by the participants' own excerpts. The chapter provided answers to the research question of how a young woman from Inanda Township transitioned from childhood to adulthood. Their arguments made it clear that several personal and social factors shape the

transition experience. Personal attitudes towards the outside world, the state of the support system, socioeconomic status, social challenges, gender disparity and culture were amongst other factors that have an enormous effect on the transition experience for young women. Despite using the inclusion and exclusion criteria to select the participants for this study, the transition experience turned out to be unique regardless. What was also revealed through findings is that the transition timeframe is not established based on age; rather, different individuals have their own set of markers that determine the onset of the transition and that of adulthood.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This final chapter will discuss the study findings as presented in Chapter Four. The discussion will be presented in accordance with five themes, namely “The understanding of the transition from my perspective; Markers of the transition to adulthood; Experience of the transition to adulthood; Culture in the transition of young women to adulthood; Social challenges; Gender disparity and perception of the successful transition”. The literature was incorporated into the discussion to find the position of the study. The chapter also reflects on the study objectives to check their realisation. The researcher will give recommendations and the chapter will be concluded.

The study aimed to understand the experiences of young women's transition from childhood to adulthood at Inanda Township. The researcher approached the phenomena by framing the study around three aspects: the life stage, the context and gender disparity. The study went in-depth with numerous subtopics to address the life stage, the contextual influences and gender-specific transitions.

The study used Arnett's perspective on Emerging Adulthood and Feminist Theory by Hooks. These two perspectives will still be incorporated in this chapter further to illustrate the standpoint and relevance to this study. Arnett's (2000) main argument is that different social structures pose unique development opportunities for young people and that results in a unique transition experience. This take means that we cannot rely on longstanding data alone to gain an understanding of the 20th-century transition because social structures evolve. Times have changed and so does the way of life. Hooks (2015) goes beyond the issue of gender inequalities and points out that there are inequalities within feminism. She points out that black women face more prejudice than other women, particularly white, because of the colour of their skin.

The study adopted a qualitative approach that sourced data from 12 young women of Inanda Township. Participants were between the ages of 18 and 25, an age group considered to be a transitional stage for young people by Arnett (2000). The participants were selected based on their gender because the study aimed to explore the experiences of young women. Their age was also a part of the selection criteria because the researcher wanted participants of a specific age group. Moreover, the participants had to be from the Inanda Township. This location was

chosen because of its dynamics as personally experienced by the researcher. The discussion of all these complexities unfolds below.

5.2. Discussion of findings

5.2.1. The understanding of the transition in their perspective

The study aimed to explore the experiences of young women's transition from childhood to adulthood. One of the strategic ways of approaching this phenomenon was to establish an understanding of the transition from their perspective. There may have been a general understanding of the transition based on the available literature. However, the study's interest was with women of a specific age and residing in a particular setting.

Upon questioning the meaning of transitioning from childhood to adulthood, the study found that this period is associated with transitioning from dependence to independence. Valentine (2003) and Reinherz *et al.*, (2003) also noted that the idea of transition from childhood to adulthood is associated with the shift from dependence to independence. Young women indicated that childhood is the stage where a young woman is dependent on her family for her daily needs, support, and decision-making. The transition is associated with the process of acquiring independence. It entails acquiring education, which provides employment and financial independence (Arnett, 2000). The primary mission for a young woman who is in the transition period is to gain financial independence as this allows her to take care of her daily needs that were responsibilities of her family in childhood. A sense of failure and lack of direction develops if a young woman reaches adulthood without establishing a source of financial support. Financial independence also comes with the ability to be self-reliant and make decisions.

The study found that when young women transition to adulthood, they start to be observant of the life course, particularly life challenges that may have been overlooked in childhood. As this stage prepares for independent adulthood, young women encounter and become observant of challenges associated with the transition course, (Graber & Brooks-Gunn, 1996). These include socioeconomic challenges, safety concerns and responsibilities and expectations.

The transition from childhood to adulthood requires one to have a behavior change. Sennott and Mojola (2017:9) remarked in their analysis that "good behaviour trumped the achievement of 'modern' markers of adulthood such as finishing school or having a high income". This shows the high importance of behaving well in the transition to adulthood. Transition is the period

where young women have to start depicting behaviors of maturity. They have to develop an understanding that their actions have consequences. One's actions and behavior have to show maturity. They can recognise right from wrong. There is also a switch of roles during the transition where young women have to show capabilities of taking care of others.

Moreover, there is an exceptional requirement in the transition of a young woman where she is expected to be respectful and behave well, expectations less emphasised for young men in the same life course. Even though this expectation was viewed to positively impact the transition course by young women who participated in this study, Rudwick (2009:68) remarks that "male *hlonipha* behaviour is not nearly as restrictive and disempowering in its execution as it is to their female counterparts". Young women are expected and taught to be respectful of themselves and others. There are activities and privileges that they have to refrain from participating in and doing such as drinking even though this expectation is not emphasised for young men.

In shedding light on the meaning of the transition of young women to adulthood, the study found that the course comprises responsibilities (Arnett, 2000), roles (Graber & Brooks-Gunn, 1996) and expectations (Adelakun-Odewale, 2018). A young woman is expected to obtain an education, preferably a tertiary education. This kind of education is regarded as increasing the chances of one getting employment and it comes with some form of social status. A young woman is also expected to save herself until a period when her family feels that she is grown enough. The emphasis is more on remaining childless than being a virgin. There is a grey area of the exact period or age a young woman is accepted to have a child as this differs from family to family.

5.2.2. Markers of the transition to adulthood

In an attempt to get an in-depth understanding of the transition from childhood to adulthood, the study had to find the markers or indicators that show that a young woman is in the transition stage. The study reflected on Arnett's (2000) position that the transition from childhood to adulthood is between the ages of 18 and 25. Through data collection, age was labelled one of the markers of when the transition begins and ends. The question then became the specification of the age when the transition begins and ends. Data was carefully analysed to unpack the age group which could be considered the transition period for the young women of Inanda Township. The analysis quickly exposed that the transition course is truly a unique experience

as Xue *et al.*, (2020) indicated. Participants had different views on the age of the onset of the transition as well as the end.

Moreover, the age group of the transition, which differed from participant to participant, ranged from age 16 to 21. The study found that some participants experienced the transition from the age of 16 and others up to the age of 21. Beguy *et al.*, (2011) found in their study that some young people in Kenya start their transition as early as the age of 15. The transition of young women of Inanda was influenced by several factors such as personal maturity, where a young woman feels that her experiences are not those of a child but are a transition towards adulthood. There is behavioural change at this point and a new observation of the world. The transition that is driven by personal maturity was found to be at the age of 16.

This study found that even though the participants were narrowed down with their inclusion criteria of age, location, and gender, they were still very diverse in terms of their belief systems and that shaped their transition experience. Another influence that was found to determine the transition experience was culture. As Schulenberg *et al.*, (2004) indicated, the transition to adulthood is not without the influences of the cultural context. The traditional ceremony of *umemulo* forms part of the transition period because a young woman is traditionally transitioned from being a child to being an adult through the ceremony. Those who still participate in this cultural practice are greatly influenced by it in terms of the transition's course. In this study the transition driven by the cultural practice of *umemulo* was found to be at the age of 21.

The study found that obtaining an education, particularly a matric is another marker of the transition to adulthood. Most young women who are in a transition course, identified by the participants of this study to be between the ages of 16 and 21, are still either in high school or tertiary education. Finishing school is mainly followed by employment which is accompanied by independence, which is associated with adulthood in this study. In that sequence, education marks the transition that herald adulthood. Just like young girls transitioning to adulthood in Tanzania studied by Posti-Ahokas and Palojoki (2014:1), "girls want to study to develop themselves, to advance in life and to help others". Those who cannot obtain the education that offers vast opportunities for financial independence in adulthood seem to reach some form of dead-end or confusion, as Erikson (1950) would call it, concerning the direction they should take to become fully functioning adults.

The issue of quality of education came into play, opening a can of inequality, social class, and segregation that still exist in society. As Hooks (2015) would argue that besides gender inequalities, black women face even greater inequalities that would not necessarily be experienced by, for instance, white women. Previous racial segregation is still visible at Inanda Township. The Township is characterised by high levels of crime, poverty and is underdeveloped compared to other areas with a majority of other races. Quality of education, according to the participants, is not of the high standard in the area. This has led to some women who have means to travel long distances from their Township in search of education that puts them in a better position to obtain employment. Young women who lack means are bound to obtain education that is considered unsatisfactory by others and that led to adverse transition experiences for some young women in the Township. The study discovered that not only education could determine a successful transition to adulthood but its quality is the most crucial factor of all.

In most countries with alcohol laws, the consumption of alcohol could be considered a marker of having transitioned to adulthood and in some cultures even becoming a symbol of celebration of a person coming of age. This study found that the young women of Inanda Township enjoy the privilege of consuming alcohol even with the approval of their parents even before they reach the age of legal permission. This is one factor that makes the transition of young women in this study unique. Northcote (2006), however, also found that young people of this generation have created their transition passage which constitutes alcohol and clubbing.

The researcher became inquisitive about the effect of the onset of menarche on a young woman's transition from childhood to adulthood. The study found that the onset of menarche is merely associated with the transition of a young woman to adulthood. It is recognised as a stage of development but was denied as a marker of transition to adulthood. Unlike young women studied by Sennott and Mojola (2017), who identified the onset of menarche as the beginning of the transition to adulthood. More prevalent than any other marker, age became prominent as the marker as one participant indicated that some young girls "start their periods at the age of 10 years". Her argument was that 10-year-olds could not be transitioning to adulthood for the reason of menarche because their age classifies them as children. Periods were easily shifted to childhood in this study because it was not regarded as the onset of the transition and certainly not an adulthood marker.

5.2.3. Experience of the transition to adulthood

To understand the experience of the transition to adulthood, a direct question about the participants' experiences was posed. The study found that the transition experience is unique and this is a result of the biopsychosocial differences. This finding has also been noted by Arnett (1998, 2000), Schulenberg *et al.*, (2004) and Beguy *et al.*, (2011). This study found that young women who were at the onset of the transition mostly do not enjoy their transition experience. This was mainly caused by a different era these young women were transitioning in. The rising social challenges in the country such as unemployment, crime and high cost of living make it hard for young women to enjoy their transition experience. As Hallman and Rocha (2007) and Adelakun-Odewale (2018) would argue, young women experience more social challenges in their development path compared to their male counterparts due to existing social structures that tend to favor men.

Moreover, participants who mentioned to be enjoying their transition were those who have good economic standing which affords them a safer living environment, vast living opportunities such as choosing education which is considered good quality and experiences which are found outside of their environment as some of them are afforded opportunities to study in more developed areas. In turn, those who are not enjoying the transition are considered poor, living in an unsafe environment, and having fewer options to choose from because of a lack of financial resources. Lareau and Cox in Carlson and England (2011) also found that social class, depending on the level in which one falls, can either enhance or mar the transition experience for young people. The study also found that those exiting the transition period mostly have had a good transition experience because they have grown up in a different era. The Township was safer and there were many employment opportunities. Social change appears to play a role in the experience of the transition. When the social system is stable, young women enjoy their experience and when it is not, they do not enjoy their transition.

5.2.4. Culture in the transition of young women to adulthood.

Culture is a way of life for most people; as such, the transition experience is very much influenced by it (Goldhaber, 2000; Valentine, 2003; Beguy *et al.*, 2011). The participants of this study were a combination of young women who still practise certain aspects of their culture and those who do not. What was found, however, was that regardless of cultural transformation, all of them are influenced by their culture in their transition from childhood to adulthood. Furthermore, most notably, they appraised their cultural influences in their transition.

One of the cultural practices that were prominent in the study was virginity testing. It is a practice, particularly in the Zulu tradition, where girls are traditionally tested for virginity. Remaining a virgin serves many purposes, including reducing teenage pregnancies and sexual transition diseases among young women (Mkasi & Rafudeen, 2016). This cultural practice was glorified by young women claiming that it helps them focus on what is important in their transition such as obtaining an education and independence. This finding resonates with the study of Vincent (2006), who argues that the participators in virginity practices are protective and celebratory of this cultural practice. Those who had derailed from these practices regretted their decision and wished that they had conformed to the practice of virginity testing. In this study, the cultural practice of virginity testing was found to assist young women in transitioning to adulthood successfully.

Most importantly, the cultural practice of virginity testing was found to help young women reach a family-defined age childless. Age is family-defined because it differed from participant to participant. Remaining childless until a young woman reaches adulthood was identified as more important than maintaining virginity in this study. However, the key to remaining childless, according to young women, is to remain a virgin until one reach adulthood. It is also important to mention that the cultural practice of virginity testing has been criticised. There are those who claim that it is discriminatory to girls who are not virgins and boys are left out of all ceremonies associated with it (Mkasi & Rafudeen, 2016).

It was found in the study that the culture of respect and behaving well as a young woman who is transitioning to adulthood is highly regarded and instilled. Sennotta and Mojola (2017) also found that respect is taught at a very young age to young rural women in South Africa. In this study, the practice is regarded as a necessity for young people to adopt to become good members of society in adulthood. Behaving well and practising a culture of respect, however, were found to be more expected of females than males and this is a result of a patriarchal structure on which the society was formed.

5.2.5. Social challenges in the transition to adulthood.

As in any typical life course, the transition from childhood to adulthood is not without challenges. Participants of this study addressed social challenges that they have faced through their life courses. Poverty was one of the social challenges hindering young women from transiting to adulthood efficiently. This corresponds with Lareau and Cox in the Carlson and England (2011) study that found that working-class parents are not able to assist fully and

transfer financial resources to their children as the middle-class parent would, which serves as a disadvantage in their transition. Poverty was also found to be a leading cause for young women not finishing school or furthering their education as much as they would want to. As a result, young girls get into unhealthy relationships for financial gain. As a preparatory stage for adulthood, young women who lack financial stability find challenges in preparing for adulthood through education.

The study found that crime has adverse effects on the transition experience of young women. This resonates with Beguy *et al.*, (2011), who recommend a thorough investigation of the transition in locations that present unique social challenges such as high crime levels as it is likely to cause a significant impact on the transition experience. Young women also felt that they are more vulnerable to crime than their male counterparts. What was also found to determine the severity of vulnerability to crime was again the person's economic status. Young women who had means could afford to reside in neighborhoods and homes that are considered safe. Their good economic standing also afforded them opportunities to get education and experience their transition in other locations that they considered safer. Those that are less fortunate resided in high crime zone locations. They are exposed to all kinds of crimes and at times, those exposures affect their transition course poorly. Family support contributes to the healthy success of the transition to adulthood. The working class cannot afford the security that the middle class has.

5.2.6. Gender disparity

Participants of this study noted that the transition of young women differs from that of young men. The difference is derived from cultural norms and standards more than anything else. As Hallman and Roca (2007) and Adedokun-Odeyemi (2018) argue, some cultural norms and practices play a role in creating gender inequality in our society. The transition of young women includes a more restrictive requirement of reservedness. While there is little to no emphasis on young men being reserved, respectful and refraining from engaging in activities that are considered out of the norm, young women are encouraged to keep their behavior in check.

The study found that the culture of virginity testing is explicitly aimed at young women while there is no cultural practice to promote virginity among young men. Young women did not reveal any complaints about what could be seen as bias with regard to the culture of virginity testing. One of the reasons young women strive towards maintaining virginity or remaining childless until they reach adulthood is that they were found to bear more responsibilities with

child caring should they fall pregnant. That includes the possibility of the inability to finish school. A young woman's worth is also attached to the status of her virginity and childbirth. If a young woman reaches the stage of marriage as a virgin or childless, her lobola would be more than a young woman with a child or children. A young woman losing her virginity and having a child has more consequences than for a young man in the same situation.

5.2.7. Perceptions of the successful transition

The study was interested to know the meaning of a successful transition from the participants. The study found that getting an education during the transition course is considered a successful transition. Because of this, "the value of school education for defining successful youth transitions has led to increasing proportions of young people in developing countries to pursue post-primary education" (Posti-Ahokas & Palojoki, 2014:2). Education increases the chances of independence in adulthood. It increases the likelihood of employment which keeps most people occupied (Grant & Furstenberg, 2006). It becomes easy to become a victim of social problems if one does not have adequate education. It also provides young women with an identity that is useful when they reach adulthood. Without education, young women lose a sense of direction because there is not much that one can do without education.

Successfully conforming to cultural expectations was regarded as transition success. If a young woman reaches adulthood while still a virgin, as it is a prominent cultural preference, she would be considered to have successfully transitioned to adulthood. If she transitions as a non-virgin but childless, that would also be considered a success. Another cultural expectation is that a young woman learn respect through her life course. If she upholds this requirement, she will be considered to have transitioned successfully. However, what is also important to note is that a successful transition is preferably a combination of all mentioned above.

5.3. Realisation of objectives

5.3.1. To explore how young women describe their experiences of transitioning from childhood to adulthood.

This objective has been realised because young women who participated in this study shared great detail on their experiences of transitioning to adulthood. Some participants had a good experience of the transition and their experiences were highly influenced by their stable or better economic status. Their economic standing afforded them opportunities and experiences to which the less fortunate do not have access. The study also found that young women who

experienced an exciting transition were participants in the later stages of the transition. Social change that comes with time was identified as impacting the transition experience. Participants who had good experiences in their transition stated that it was because they grew up in a different era that allowed them to enjoy their transition.

On the contrary, participants who had terrible experiences pointed out that the cause for their experiences was the societal state that has changed for the worse. These participants were found to be at the onset of their transition. Another contributing factor to their experience was their socioeconomic standing which was found to be poor. It did not allow them vast opportunities to explore and they lacked a sense of security, causing their transition experience to be negative. Other participants found their experience to be good because of the attitude they have towards their surroundings.

5.3.2. To explore the nature and extent of socioeconomic circumstances that influence young women's experiences of transitioning into adulthood.

This objective was realised because participants explained how socioeconomics influenced their transition from childhood to adulthood. Participants who have good economic standing shared that it allowed them opportunities outside their community. The main benefit of their good financial standing was its ability to give them an education needed and suitable for the job market. Participants also talked about their ability to afford security and not being exposed to unsafe situations and the environment because of a lack of means.

Participants who did not have a good socioeconomic standing talked about their inability to finish school or get into tertiary education. Education is a marker of the transition; young women who are not able to successfully participate in it were derailed from the life course they wished to have. They become uncertain about their direction and of its continuity. Participants also shared how their poor economic standing sometimes pushes them to participate and engage in activities such as dating older men and taking drugs to deal with poverty and ease financial distress. That contributes to more social problems such as school dropouts, teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, gender-based violence, and the cycle of poverty.

5.3.3. To ascertain the cultural context that influences young women's transition from childhood to adulthood.

This objective was realised and the dominant cultural practices that influence young women's transition from childhood to adulthood were found to be the culture of virginity testing and

respect or behaving well. Culture as a whole was highly praised by those who still practice it and those who do not. Participants acknowledged the positive influence culture has on their transition course. The culture of virginity testing was regarded as helping young women abstain from sexual activities and focus on their education, which is crucial during this stage. It also helps reduce teenage pregnancies and curbs the spread of STIs. It is a cultural practice celebrated on its own besides its benefits.

The culture of respect also influenced participants. Young women are expected to respect themselves and others, particularly the elders. They are to treat their bodies respectfully, meaning maintaining their virginity and not engaging in activities outside the norm. The culture as a whole is centered on respect even though it is not equal between genders. They are also expected to respect other people, regardless of whether they are relations or not or seem worthy of respect.

5.3.4. To determine the influence of gender disparity on young women's transition into adulthood.

The objective was realised because the study found that there are gender-specific expectations in young women's transition to adulthood. For example, the culture of virginity testing is specifically for women. As much as it is appraised by women and seems beneficial in their life course, there are no valid reasons why young men are not part of it, as it could be beneficial to both genders. One of the reasons, however, could be that young women were found to bear more responsibility for sexual engagement than young men. For instance, young women who had a child or children were solely the caretakers of their children and some could not finish school as a result. Their male counterparts continue with their lives regardless of whether they have a child.

We also discovered that young women are groomed to be more reserved and respectful to their outside world and there is little to no emphasis on young men behaving in this manner. There was a revelation of the feeling of unsafety that comes with the fact that one is a young woman. Young women are aware of this and have to be extra cautious with regard to their surroundings. In terms of access, participants revealed that they were not discriminated against based on their gender. Opportunities are presented to everybody equally.

5.4. Conclusions

The chapter realised each study's objectives as identified under the aims and objectives above. The study aimed to explore how young women describe their experiences of transitioning from childhood to adulthood. It was found that there were different feelings with some describing it as smooth and joyful and others describing it as challenging and unpleasant. The study also attempted to explore the nature and extent of socioeconomic circumstances that influence young women's experiences of transitioning into adulthood. It was found that the participants were from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Those with a stable economic status had a pleasant transition with many opportunities. Those who were somewhat of a low socioeconomic status faced many challenges in their transition, including the inability to acquire education. The study also attempted to ascertain the cultural context influencing young women's transition from childhood to adulthood. The culture of virginity testing and respect was observed as playing a role in the transition of young women to adulthood. The objective that aimed to determine the influence of gender disparity on young women's transition into adulthood was realised in this study.

5.5. Recommendations

This section of the study presents recommendations based on the study's findings. The study explored the experiences of young women's transition from childhood to adulthood and triumphs and challenges were identified in this course. Amongst other contributors to the good transition experience were cultural influences, education, a supportive social system and good economic standing. Bad transition experiences were influenced by a lack of social support, poor economic standing and low levels of educational qualifications. In light of the experiences identified in the findings as mentioned above, the researcher recommends:

5.5.1. Promotion of positive cultural practices

The researcher recommends the promotion of positive cultural practices by the Department of Social Development and the Department of Culture, Sports and Recreation. Young women in this study highly praised their cultural practices that assists them achieve their desired transition. Among other cultural practices mentioned was virginity testing. It is important to note and take into consideration that the views around virginity testing are diverse. Some of its notable identified flaws were that it focuses only on women and that it does not have scientific validity. It is also important to note that different people have different preferences for doing things.

Young women in this study, however, viewed virginity testing as a cultural practice that helps them transition to adulthood successfully. It was not seen as creating gender inequalities or a practice of grooming them for men, as others may view it. Bearing in mind that generally, women tend to bear more responsibilities that come with engaging in sexual activities such as child-rearing (Rutenberg *et al.*, 2001), women of Inanda Township see this cultural practice as helping them to prolong responsibilities associated with early sexual activities until at least they reach adulthood. It is then recommended that its promotion be considered and taking note of its flaws, the Bill of Rights, Children's Act of 2005 and different views around it. For young women in this study, this cultural practice promotes a transition with fewer challenges brought about by engaging in sexual activity.

The researcher recommends the promotion of a culture of respect and behaving well. These cultural practices were noted as helping young women who are transitioning to adulthood to respect themselves and others. Respect and behaving well meant that they would not engage in activities such as drinking alcohol, taking drugs and participating in early sexual activity. It also meant that they would show respect and follow the guidance of their parents. The promotion and practice of a culture of respect and behaving well will reduce the challenges encountered by young women in the transition to adulthood.

5.5.2. Promote and ensure education for all.

Education is a human right in the Republic of South Africa. It is a human right because its effects have become crucial and a human necessity. We have seen how acquiring education in the findings above brings success to the transition experience. The researcher recommends that the basic human right of education is ensured and promoted. Those who are less fortunate should be provided with resources and be empowered to complete schooling. Different stakeholders such as the Department of Education, Department of Social Development and the civil societies are to work together to identify areas for improvement in order to ensure that young women get adequate education. Government departments mentioned above should, together with civil societies, render services to those in need to ensure that young people obtain education in their transition life courses.

5.5.3. Create a supportive social system

One of the issues identified in the transition of young women was the lack of a supportive social system. The researcher recommends that parents be equipped with parenting skills through community engagement and group work. Social service professionals are

recommended to conduct more group work and community awareness to enhance existing and develop parenting skills. They are also recommended to assist in forming network of relations to offer a supportive social system.

5.5.4. Challenge socioeconomic issues

Socioeconomic challenges were identified as a major cause of school dropouts, crime and most social issues. The researcher further recommends that the Department of Education make education accessible for young people as it is the prominent gateway to better economic opportunities.

5.6. Suggestion for further research

This study has shed light on the transition experience of young women from childhood to adulthood in one of the South African townships. However, the phenomenon being studied is unique and that it changes meaning with the slightest change in the biopsychosocial circumstances of individuals. The uniqueness of a biopsychosocial approach is likely to produce a different transition meaning and experience. As diverse as South Africa is, it is expected that the transition experiences will vary accordingly.

It became clear from the onset of the study that the researcher was going to encounter challenges with obtaining enough literature about the transition course in the South African township. The literature is broad and requires more input to attempt to understand fully. The researcher suggests more human development studies addressing multiple cultural influences, such as socioeconomic circumstances, gender and location. This will enable a greater understanding of human development. Data will broaden social science professionals' knowledge and enable them to identify areas that need intervention in human development. Data will also improve general public knowledge about the transition of young people from childhood to adulthood.

5.7. Concluding Remarks

This chapter discussed the findings obtained from young women of Inanda Township. Discussions were presented in themes that shed light on how young women experience their transition from childhood to adulthood. The study found that the transition experience is unique for everyone. Some enjoy their experiences and some do not. The nature of the experience is shaped by personal circumstances, worldview and social factors such as culture, socioeconomic circumstances and social challenges. A successful transition is associated with obtaining

independence through education and work. The markers of the transition were identified as age and schooling. The study observed how gender disparity shapes the transition experience for young women. It was found that most differences in the transition derive from culture more than any other factors. It is the culture that imposes transition expectations and these differ based on gender. The perception of a successful transition was obtaining an education and conforming to cultural expectations.

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List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance



01 March 2022

Senamile Agnes Nene (211546126)
School Of Applied Human Sc
Howard College

Dear SA Nene,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00003648/2021

Project title: Exploring the Experiences of Young Women's Transition from Childhood to Adulthood: Case study of Inanda Township in Durban.

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 22 November 2021 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

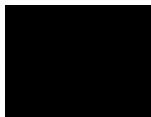
This approval is valid until 01 March 2023.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Appendix 2: Gatekeeper's Letter



Vukile Ndimande Foundation Projects

...Whatever it takes to save our YOUTH...

18/11/2021

Dear Ms. Nene

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A STUDY: GATEKEEPER LETTER

I am pleased to inform you that you are granted permission to conduct a study with young women at Vukile Ndimande foundation.

For any enquiry, contact Mr. Ndimande at: 072 105 3892

Yours Sinc

.....

Mr. V. Ndimande

CEO

Appendix 3: Consent Form

CONSENT FOR A YOUNG WOMAN TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Research title: Exploring the Experiences of Young Girl's Transition from Childhood to Adulthood: Case study of Inanda Township in Durban.

Name: Senamile Agnes Nene

Student Number: 211546126

HSSREC: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za /031 260 3587/4557/8350

Introduction

I asked that you participate in a research study about you experience in the transition from childhood to adulthood. You have been selected because you are a young woman who have an experience of transitioning from childhood to adulthood and you are a resident of Inanda Township. One on one interview with you will last approximately 1 to 2 hours. Before consenting to participates in the study, I ask that you carefully read this form

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to understand the experiences of young women's transition from childhood to adulthood at Inanda Township. This study will also be submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for my Master's degree in Social Work.

Risk/discomfort of being in the study

Participating in the study is voluntary. Should you feel uncomfortable to participate before, during or after the study, you have a right to withdraw from the study.

Benefit of participating in the study

The benefits of participating in the study are that you will be contributing to the body of knowledge about human development, specifically on how young women transition from childhood to adulthood.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality will be ensured by protecting your identity and private information. Data collected will be stored in a protected storage and destroyed after 5 years.

Payments

Participating in the study is purely voluntary and there will be no financial or any other form of rewards for participation.

Consent

By signing below, you are hereby agreeing that you have read and understood the information above. You also agree that you will voluntarily participate in the study. A signed copy of this form will be given to you.

Participant's Full Name.....

Signature: Date:

Permission to audio record

I (Participant):

	Give	Do not give
Audio Recording		

permission for my participation to be recorded.

Isihloko: Exploring the Experiences of Young Women's Transition from Childhood to Adulthood: Case study of Inanda Township in Durban.

Igama: Senamile Agnes Nene

Inamba yomfundi: 211546126

HSSREC: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za /031 260 3587/4557/8350

Isingeniso

Ngicela ukuthi ube yinxenye yocwaningo olumayelana ne-experience yakho ngokusuka ebunganeni eya ebudaleni. Ukhethwe ngoba uwumuntu wesifazane osemncane one-experience nesigabasokusuka ebunganeni uya ebudaleni. Ukhethwe futhi ngoba ungumhlali waseNanda. I-interview, izothatha isikhathi esilinganiselwe ku 1 kuya 2 hours. Ngaphambi kokuba uvume ukuba ibe inxenye yale study, ngicela ukuba ufunde lokhu okulandelayo.

Inhloso yocwaningo

Inhloso yalolucwaningo ukuthola ulwazi nge-experience yabantu besifazane abasebancane ngokusuka ebunganeni beya ebudaleni endaweni yaseNanda. Lolucwaningo luzophinde lu-submit kwiYunivesi yaKwaZulu-Natal njengesidingo sokuthola iziqu ze Masters kwi Social Work.

Ubungozi noma ukungaphatheki kahle kucwaningo

Ukuba kulolucwaningo akuyona impoqo. Uma uzizwa ungaphathekile kahle ngocwaningo noma inini, unelungelo lokuphuma kucwaningo.

Umvuzo ngokuba kulolucwaningo

Umvuzo ngokuba kulolucwaningo ukuthi uzofaka isandla ekwandiseni ulwazi ngokukhula komuntu, kakhulukazi ukuthi abantu besifazane basuka kanjani ebunganeni beya ebudaleni.

Ukuvikeleka

Ukuvikeleka kwakho kuzoqnikiswa ngokuthi igama lakho ngeke lisetshenziswe kuloluphenyo kanti ne-information yakho eyimfihlo ngeke idalulwe. Okuzotholakala kulolucwaningo kuzogcinwa endaweni evikelekile bese kuya-destroy emva kweminyaka emihlanu.

Ukukhokhelwa

Ukuba yinxenye yalolucwaningo akuphoqelekile kanti ayikho imali noma izipho ezizotholakala ngokuba kulolucwaningo.

Imvume

Ngokusayina ngezansi, wena uyavuma ukuthi uyifundile umulayezo engenhla wawuzwa kahle. Uyavuma futhi ukuthi uzoba inxenye yalolucwaningo olungasiyona impoqo. I-copy yaleliphepha ozoli sayina uzonikezwa lona.

Igama Lakho Eliphelele:

Sayina: Usuku:

Imvumo yokuqoshwa kwenkulumo

Mina (Amagama):

	Ngiyavuma	Angivumi
Ukuqoshwa		

ukuthi inkulumo ingaqoqoshwa

Appendix 4: Interview Question

Interview Guide

Pseudonyms:

Age:

Gender:

Race:

1. Can you tell me more about Inanda Township?
Ungangitshela kabanzi ngelokishi laseNanda?
2. How has growing up as a girl been like for you in your Township so far?
Njengengane yentombazane, kunjani ukukhula kulelilokishi laseNanda?
3. What does childhood and adulthood mean to you?
Kusho ukuthini unkuba ingane kanye nokuba umuntu omdala kuwena?
4. Would you say you are transitioning to adulthood? Why?
Ungasho ukuthi usuya esitejini sobudala? Yini usho njalo?
5. What are the challenges that you are facing in your transition to adulthood?
Iziphi izinkinga obhekana nazo njengoba usesitejini esikudlulisela ebudaleni?
6. How does the socio-economic standing of Inanda affect your transition to adulthood?
Isimo somnotho sendawo yaseNanda siuthinta kunjani ukukhula kwakho okuya ebudaleni?
7. What does your culturally expect of you as you are transitioning to adulthood?
Ngokwesiko lakho, iziphi izinto ezililindeleke kuwe njengoba ubheke ebudaleni?
8. Tell me about your expectations of the transition and how they align with your experience?

Ngitshele ukuthi ukuzwa kunjani ukusuka ebunganeni uya ebudaleni nanokuthi kuyilento obuyilindele yini?

9. What would make transition to adulthood a success for a girl child at Inanda Township.

Yini engenza lesisigaba esibheke ebudaleni sibe yimpumelelo kuwe?