The psychological significance of shaving hair as a ritual during mourning within the

Ndebele culture

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that **THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SHAVING HAIR AS A RITUAL DURING MOURNING WITHIN THE NDEBELE CULTURE** is my own work and all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

....

Signature   **Date**

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late beautiful mother, Thokozile Elizabeth Tshoba. The pain from the loss paved the way.

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I am thankful to God. I am deeply humbled for his favour upon my life and the strength to bring this dissertation to completion. I will carry this opportunity and experience with gratitude and humility.

A dissertation is rarely an effort of one person and the current is no exception. I am deeply indebted to all the people whose names appear below who have supported, guided and influenced me during the difficult time of producing this work.

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ABSTRACT

The study examined and explored the psychological significance of shaving hair as a ritual during mourning within the Ndebele culture in Mamelodi, Pretoria. The focus was on *rituals* performed or conducted during the mourning process that will be useful in an attempt to reach a state of healing and restoration. The study explored what meaning the participants attach to the rituals. Through this exploration; a deeper understanding of the value of rituals was developed. The qualitative research method, particularly Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used. Snowball sampling was used to identify participants who had lost their loved and who had gone through mourning for more than six months. In total, ten participants were interviewed for this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in the mother tongue of the participants in order to allow them to express themselves in the most ultimate way they know and understand. Thematic content analysis was used to extract themes that were dominant across participants.   The study was useful as it could be incorporated into the study of psychology specifically from the African epistemological standpoint. Even though the rituals might be practiced amongst the black African community, there is not much literature that focuses mainly on the specific rituals and their significance. This study could also be useful in terms of exposing this knowledge to persons who might not be exposed to this specific ritual of shaving hair due to cultural differences.

KEY TERMS: African, bereavement, black, community, culture, death, grief, hair, healing, loss, mourning, Ndebele, psychological, religion, rituals, shaving, significance, social learning, spirituality, Ubuntu

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CHAPTER 1

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

1.1. My mourning soul regrets Benitez, C (2010)

Like a lighted candle

You illuminated and radiated

Melted, light extinguished

My soul perished

Like an ill- fated crow

My dress is black as the night

My eyes are filled with grief

My soul mourns in sorrow

You left a gibberish heart

A lot of unspoken words

Too many undone deeds

My mourning soul regrets

As you lay awake in heaven each night

I know you also bereave

Your melancholy resonates as you weep

Your tears, the morning dew
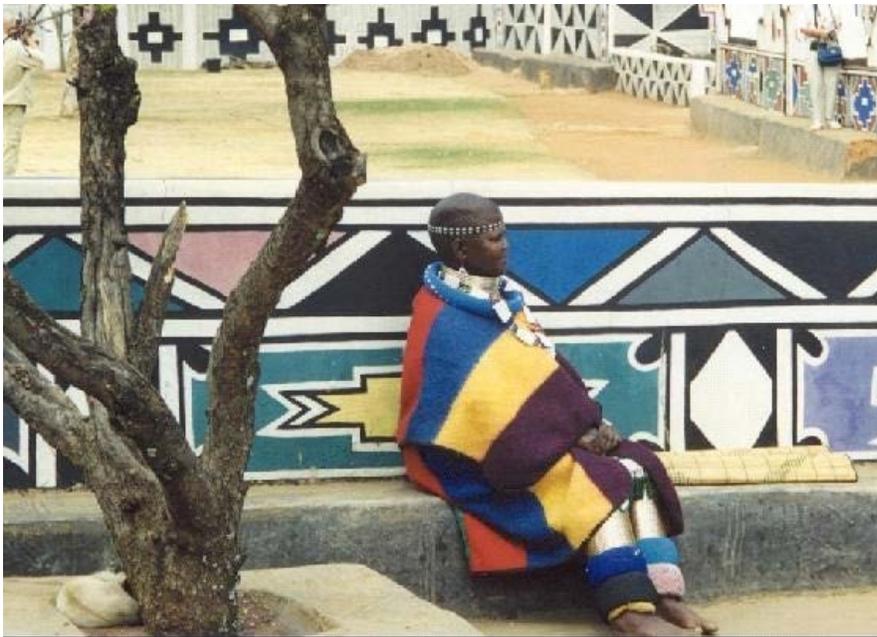
Figure 1: A shaven Ndebele woman. (Source: The Africa Image Library)

1.2.   Introduction

This chapter will cover the discussion of the inspiration behind the study and for research purposes. The theoretical background to the study will be discussed whereby there will be a differentiation of the different categories of African culture as they apply to the study. This introductory chapter will be concluded by a brief layout to provide an outline of the chapters in

this dissertation. Shaving hair as part of the mourning ritual has been practised by different African cultures for millennia. Tonsuring, which is broadly defined as shaving of one's hair has also been practised across cultures worldwide (Karthikeyan, 2009). Celts, in northern Britain shaved their hair before meeting the Roman Empire. Hindu's still practise tonsuring and Chinese Buddhists are required to keep their heads cleanly shaven (Karthikeyan, 2009). It is interesting to note that tonsuring or shaving one's head is used by different cultures, nations, religions for different purposes. This study will look at shaving one's head among Ndebele's as part of a mourning ritual.

1.3.   Inspiration to the study

The ritual of shaving hair during mourning is practiced within the researchers' culture (i.e. Ndebele culture). It should be noted that this ritual is not only practised by the Ndebeles, other ethnic groups such as AmaZulu, Basotho and AmaXhosa also shave their hair after the burial of a loved one. However, the researcher grew up not understanding why family members were required to shave their hair (in the head) after the loss of a loved one. That generated interest within the researcher to explore the significance of the ritual of hair shaving during mourning. Due to the researchers' mother's request for her children not to be shaven after her passing, the researcher and her siblings were exempt from shaving their hair. From that experience the researcher began to learn that people mourn the passing of their loved ones in different ways. This further inspired the researcher to do the research in an in-depth manner and collecting narratives from different individuals who had been struck by a same tragedy. Another motivating factor for conducting the study was that the shaving hair ritual is also practiced within the researchers' broader community which is the Black African community. The researcher observed that when a loved one died, the family was expected to shave their hair. However, for

the purposes of this research, the focus will be on the shaving ritual within the Ndebele culture. The shaving hair ritual was done as an indication of mourning. The dearth in literature on African rituals, particularly those associated with death and mourning further motivated the researcher to conduct this research. African philosophy disciplines explain some rituals that people perform after the loss of the loved one. However, psychological research and literature on grieving rituals is lacking. It is hoped that with this study, more interest will be evoked on research and understanding of how black Africans cope with death, dying and loss.

1.4.   Research purposes

1.4.1. Research aims

The aim of this study was to explore the psychological significance of rituals particularly the hair shaving ritual during the mourning process within the Ndebele culture. The focus was on the *rituals* that are performed or conducted during the mourning process that will be useful in an attempt to reach a state of healing and restoration. By ritual/s, there is a reference specifically to the shaving of hair but this also includes a process or series of activities related or included during the shaving of hair. Through this exploration, a deeper understanding of the value of the shaving hair ritual was developed.

1.4.2. Research objectives

The objective of this study was to understand how Ndebele people understand the meaning of shaving, as part of a mourning ritual. From the psychological standpoint, it was necessary to understand and unpack the psychology of rituals, how people cope with the loss of their loved ones. Another objective was to understand how culture or rituals are transferred from generation to generation.

1.4.3. Research rationale

The study was useful as the knowledge acquired from it could be incorporated into the study of psychology specifically from the African epistemological standpoint. Different rituals are widely practiced amongst the black African community. However, there is not much literature that focuses mainly on the specific rituals and their significance. The study further explored what meaning, if any, the participants attach to the rituals. Most of the rituals prescribed within the black African context are followed by people without really understanding the cultural value or psychological significance of the rituals. In some cases, adherence to the ritual seems to be a function of fear rather than having an understanding of the significance of the ritual. This study was also useful because it unpacked a specific ritual (hair shaving) that is practised by specific group of people (Ndebeles). Due to cultural differences other ethnic groups who are unfamiliar with hair shaving as part of mourning could get a clearer understanding of how and why this practise is still common. The intended audience for this study is not restricted. It is also intended for the general public. This includes everyone who is interested in learning about the Ndebele culture, those in the academic context, those in the field of psychology as well as therapists that could assist people during the grieving process.

1.5. Epistemological background

From birth, many Africans are socialized to be part of a family and community, with rituals, songs, proverbs, fables and religious ceremonies playing a key role and is passed on to next generations through a predominantly oral history (Africa guide, n.d.). The traditional Ndebele culture still adheres to this practice. There are different categories of Africans, for the purposes

of this study; the focus will be on black Africans within the South African context, specifically the Ndebele culture. It is significant to recognize that there is no universal definition of an African or African culture or African practices. The continent of Africa is so rich and varied in its culture whilst not only varying from one country to another but within an individual country many different cultures can be found (Africa guide, n.d.). For the purpose of this study there will be constant references to the concepts of the traditional African culture, modernized/westernized African culture, mixed African culture and religious African culture as defined below.

1.5.1. Differentiation of the different African Cultures

It is important to acknowledge that in Africa and in African societies, as much as there are similarities within cultures, similarities pertaining to cultural customs and common African theoretical background, there are also differences. Hence differences also exist within the Ndebele culture. However, shaving hair after the burial of ones' loved one as part of mourning is one of the commonly practised customs.

1.5.2. Traditional African Culture

The word 'Traditional African Culture' is used when describing anything that is in contrast to the Western belief system (Van Dyk, 2001). Within the traditional African culture the community is considered to be important in the life of traditional Africans (Van Dyk, 2001). The traditional African's identity is influenced by ones existence with others. The individual and the group that one belongs to, have a reciprocal relationship as they influence and impact on one another (Van Dyk, 2001).

In this study, the traditional African is somebody who adheres to traditional African religion and customs within the Ndebele culture (Radzilani, 2010). The traditional African is an individual

who supports and believes in the notion of life after death but also believes in the existence of ancestors who communicate with the living (Radzilani, 2010).

South Africa is a country that embraces different cultures. In South Africa, the black population forms the majority. However, it is also important to take into consideration the aspect of physical location (Wikipedia, 2014a). A significant number of black South Africans still reside in rural areas. Hence it is important to acknowledge that the Ndebele people in the city may not be practicing the traditional customs with the same intensity as practiced by those in the rural areas (Wikipedia, 2014b). It is also important to note that as much as some of the cultural traditions may be declining in the city, people in the rural areas are more likely the ones who seem to promote and strive for the survival of traditional culture and practices as originally practiced by their forefathers (Wikipedia, 2014c).

In traditional Black African cultures, funeral and bereavement rituals are believed to assist in the cleansing of the mourners who are thought to be contaminated from having interacted with the deceased (Setsiba, 2012). Community members engage in rituals that are believed to be important in the purification of the contaminated spirit and enable the mourners to go back into society (Setsiba, 2012). Adding to the basic rituals, some traditional African cultures also participate in pre-burial rituals and post-burial cleansing rituals (Setsiba, 2012). This is done because it is believed that death lingers over them until they go through the purification rituals (Setsiba, 2012). If these rituals are not done, as per expectation by tradition, it is believed that the family and people who we closely connected with the deceased will experience misfortunes. Hence, rituals are practiced as they are believed to bring about comfort and relief (Setsiba, 2012).

1.5.3. Modernised/Westernized African Culture

As mentioned above, as the years' progress and with influences of Westernisation and urbanisation, some Black people and their practice of traditional culture lessened and they have adopted and embraced new ways of practising culture. In some instances, it is collaborated with some of the traditional customs (Wikipedia, 2014d). Modern African Culture "is a culture that has used concepts from the white world to expand on inherent cultural characteristics" (Biko, 1978, p.45).

Much of Africa's cultural activity focuses on the family and the ethnic group (Africa guide, n.d.). Art, music and oral literature help to highlight existing religions and social patterns. The westernized minority, inspired by European culture and Christianity, first discarded African traditional culture but with the emergence of African nationalism, a cultural revival followed (Africa guide, n.d.). The governments of most African nations, like that of South Africa, promote national dance and music groups; museums and to a smaller degree, artists and writers (Africa guide, n.d.).

According to Diakanyo (2011), the so-called Westernized Africans discard African culture in support of Western values and religion. South Africa has been named the rainbow nation because it has so many cultural practices (Habib, 1997). Cultural customs are how individuals talk and act, the manner in which they pray, the special things they do when they have festivals, births and deaths. In South Africa there are groups with different languages, religions, race, customs and traditions, for example, Zulu, Ndebele, Tswana, Khoisan, Hindi, Muslim and Afrikaner people. All of these people are unified by being South African and all of their ways of life form part of the country's identity and culture (Habib, 1997). This relates to the aim of the

study because even though the focus will be on the shaving hair ritual practiced within the Ndebele culture, acknowledging and researching on its existence and significance will hopefully highlight its value and create a sense of appreciation and respect of this practice within other communities which are not part of the Ndebele community. This will hopefully highlight similarities and differences of the hair shaving ritual amongst other cultures that also practice the ritual which will hopefully promote an all-inclusive communal culture which respects the differences of the different people and how they choose to practice their culture within the South African community.

Radzilani (2010) states that: social, economic and political revolution has changed the understanding and application of death rituals in modern industrialised societies. Due to this change, some rituals are no longer performed in modern African cultures. There are currently unique ways of doing things at funerals and during the mourning process and how mourning is expressed (Setsiba, 2012). For example, the debated type of mourning observed in some of the South African townships called 'wie sien ons' (meaning 'who sees us'). This trend of the 'after tears' party in South Africa is understood differently by different people (Setsiba, 2012). However, as much as this form of mourning may be considered controversial by some, it is a reflection that people express the mourning of the deceased in a variety of ways (Setsiba, 2012).

The 'after tears' practice is a party that is conducted immediately after the funeral of the deceased. This practice is widely practiced in South African townships like Mamelodi, Atteridgeville, Soweto, Umlazi, KwaMashu, Lamontville and so forth (Setsiba, 2012).

The 'after tears' party is understood to be a celebration. One of the main reasons why this practice was started was to comfort and provide support to the family of the deceased and to help

them deal with the effect of losing a loved one (Setsiba, 2012). However, this practice is also perceived as being disrespectful to the family of the deceased because it is considered to be inconsiderate to have a party while the family is still in mourning (Setsiba, 2012). It is believed that this party may further cause pain to the bereaved and prolong their process of mourning and healing (Setsiba, 2012). However, contrary to the above belief, is that if this party is carried out in a more appropriate manner accepted by the family it could serve to be an effective coping strategy (Setsiba, 2012).

The information of the 'after tears' celebration is relevant to this study as it highlights the new ways of practicing culture, mourning and mourning rituals that are constantly changing over time, hence, it enlightens one to acknowledge that even though the hair shaving ritual is still practiced within the Ndebele culture it has evolved in terms of how it has been practiced over the years.

1.6. Religious African Culture

Under the category of Religious African culture there will be a discussion of traditional African religion and Christian African religion; firstly however, there will be a general discussion on African religion.

1.6.1. African Religion

Africans do not have a specific term that can be equated to the term 'religion' (Baum, 1999). In African languages there are different terms that may be used in order to better understand the word 'religion' and activities, practices and systems of thought connected to it as defined in Western terms (Baum, 1999). African religion needs to be understood within the concept of ethnic identity, language and culture. African religions maintain particular behaviours and ideas

(Baum, 1999). These are communicated by means of oral and written customs passed down from generation to generation via the implementation of rituals, including dance and music (Baum, 1999).

The supernatural (God) and the spirit world are significant in the religious African cultures. These influence the beliefs and customs of African religions (Exploring Africa, n.d.). These religious beliefs affect how people approach and live their lives on a daily basis (this includes the treatment of the deceased) (Exploring Africa, n.d.). Within religious African culture the expression of religious beliefs and customs is not limited or confined to one sacred day in a week; rather this expression is experienced in everyday customs as well as in distinct ritual ceremonies (Exploring Africa, n.d.).

Within the religious African culture, rituals are also significant; rituals in this context are cultural or religious rites that honour specific customs that have deep religious relevance (Exploring Africa, n.d.). Rituals are used to uphold significant religious beliefs through specific customs that may help in achieving wellbeing or happiness hence promoting togetherness of the followers of the religious tradition. Similar to traditional African cultural beliefs and practices, rituals are mostly linked to significant human life phases and events like births, deaths, marriages, planting and harvesting (Exploring Africa, n.d.).

The supernatural and spiritual realm is important to the religious African culture. There is a belief in the existence of spirits between God and the people, these spirits are believed to act as mediators between God and people here on earth (Exploring Africa, n.d.). In order to secure the helpfulness of these spirits, African religions carry out rituals that pay tribute to these spirits (Exploring Africa).

1.6.2. Traditional African Religion

Traditional African religion is a religion that embraces African religious-cultural customs (Radzilani, 2010). In traditional religious contexts, God is understood to be a higher being or creator who has distanced himself from humans and is considered to be detached and inaccessible by people (Van Dyk, 2001). Hence, the presence of ancestors is valued in the lives of African people than God, who is thought to have isolated himself from people to take care of themselves (Van Dyk, 2001).

This is consistent with Radzilani's (2010) ideas that in the majority of traditional African religions, individuals have a belief that the deceased have an important role in the lives and actions of the living.

Within traditional African religion, ancestors are believed to be spirits who uphold the traditions of a community and they serve as a protection of their people from misfortunes (Van Dyk, 2001). However, there is a belief that ancestors can revoke their protection or chastise their people by bringing bad luck into their lives if certain cultural rituals are not adhered to, not properly practiced and when people do not pay attention to their advice (Van Dyk, 2001).

1.6.3. Christian African Religion

African Christians are those individuals that practice Christianity but are still part of the African culture of the Ndebele speaking community (Radzilani, 2010). While modernized Christian Africans have faith that God has a huge impact on their lives and actions. They also believe that the deceased have no role and influence in their day to day living (Radzilani, 2010). Hence the belief that communication with the dead is not possible in this life. There is a belief in the existence of life after one passes away; that after life is believed to exist in heaven with Jesus

Christ (Radzilani, 2010). The modernized Christians only believe in worshiping God and do not partake in any of the African traditional rituals as they are thought to be in contrast with church teachings (Radzilani, 2010).

1.6.4. Mixed African Culture

In Africa, where a constant process of westernisation is taking place, many Africans will have a mix of traditional African beliefs and Western beliefs (Van Dyk, 2001). For example, in South Africa, there are African Christians who are part of a church but continue to take part in African religious practices (Radzilani, 2010). There are some churches like the African Independent Churches (AIC) that permit the churchgoers to incorporate and respect both Christian rituals and traditional African rituals (Radzilani, 2010).

1.7. Chapter Layout of the Thesis

This study consists of six chapters which are briefly outlined below:

Chapter 1: Presents the motivation for conducting this study. It discusses research purposes (the research purposes included research aims and rational); there is a discussion of the theoretical background of the study to further support the significance of the study which included a discussion on the different categories of African culture.

Chapter 2: Presents the literature reviewed on mourning rituals and practices. It discusses the themes focused mainly on the process of bereavement and mourning within the Ndebele culture and the significance of rituals that are adopted and practiced during that process (specifically the shaving of hair ritual).

Chapter3: Presents the theoretical framework chosen for the study. Albert Bandura's Social learning theory was chosen as a theoretical foundation to further understand and explain the ritual of hair shaving during mourning within the Ndebele culture. The concept of observational learning within social learning theory is relevant for this study because most of the participants in the study participated in the ritual of hair shaving during mourning because they have observed this behaviour from their elders. This includes parents, grandparents, extended family members and siblings with whom the participants respect, closely interact and hence identify with.

Chapter 4: This chapter focuses on the research design that was used during the progression of the research and the research methodology. The type of research method used in this study is the qualitative method of research because it was important for the researcher to allow the participants to narrate their own stories in a manner and context whereby there were no constraints to time so that they had adequate opportunity to provide in-depth narration of their experiences. In this chapter there is also a discussion of procedures for collecting data, this includes procedures used in selecting participants and data gathering. The ethical implications of the study are also explained in this chapter. There is also a discussion on the trustworthiness of qualitative research as well at the advantages of the research approach chosen for this study.

Chapter 5: Presents the findings of the current study. This chapter contains a summary of the findings that were gathered from the data collected in the ten in-depth interviews that were done. The interviews were transcribed and data was analyzed in terms of identifying and elaborating on themes from the information and experiences shared by the participants.

Chapter 6: Represents the summary, limitations, recommendations and conclusions drawn from the current study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter will cover the discussion of the different types of Ndebele people and their background. Relevant concepts such as bereavement, grief and mourning will be critically discussed. There will also be a general discussion on hair and the historical background of hair shaving as well as the status and progress made in the knowledge production and training of African scholars and counsellors. Other relevant concepts such as culture, rituals, ritual practices, the rites of passage, the mourning and functions of death rituals as well as the healing aspects of rituals will be critically discussed. The concept of 'Ubuntu' and community and how it relates to rituals will also be visited. The chapter will be concluded by a summary of the above items.

2.2. Types of Ndebele people/Background

The literature about the types of Ndebele people will be given as it is relevant to highlight that there is no universal definition of Ndebele people as there exists different groups amongst them. Even though the roots of the South African Ndebele are covered in mystery, they are classified as one of the Nguni tribes (Deacon & Deacon, 1999 and Hamilton, 1995). The Nguni tribes form part of nearly two thirds of South Africa's Black population and can be differentiated into four different groups; the Central Nguni (the Zulu-speaking people), the Southern Nguni (the Xhosa-speaking people), the Swazi people from Swaziland and neighbouring areas; and the

Ndebele people of the northern part of Mpumalanga (Deacon & Deacon, 1999 and Hamilton, 1995).

The Ndebele groups mentioned above were not only divided geographically but also by contrasts in their languages and cultures. The Ndebele of the Limpopo Province comprised mostly of the BagaLanga and the BagaSeleka tribes who largely embraced the language and culture of their Sotho neighbours (Deacon & Deacon, 1999 and Hamilton, 1995).

  The North Ndebele persons lived in an area extending from the town of Warmbaths (now Bela-Bela) in the south, to the Limpopo River in the north and from Botswana border in the west to the Mozambique border in the east; yet they were predominantly focused in the regions of Pietersburg (now Polokwane), Bakenberg and Potgietersrus (now Mokopane) (Deacon & Deacon, 1999 and Hamilton, 1995).

Mpumalanga Province, much of which comprises of the area known as Lowveld, extends from the town of Piet Retief in the south to Lydenburg/Pilgrim's Rest in the north and from the towns of Witbank and Groblersdal in the west to the Mozambique border in the east (Deacon & Deacon, 1999 and Hamilton, 1995).The Springbok Flats divided the North Ndebele and those in the east from each other (Deacon & Deacon, 1999 and Hamilton, 1995).

Ndebele people have always been able to preserve their cultural practices. In recent times, women in Ndzundza society have come to be understood as the upholders of '*isikhethu'* which translate to mean that which is ours. It comprises the relationships, beliefs and customs on which the very core of the Ndebele identity is focused (South African History Online, n.d.).

'Abezimu' who are the spirits of the dead are respected. A person is separated into *'umzimba'* (the body), *ithunzi'* (the shadow), and *'umoya'* (the spirit) (Kuper, 1978). After death, the spirit ascends to *'Zimu'* (God). The *'ithunzi'* (shadow) remains lingering alongside the grave and seems to be that component of man (sic) which is amongst the material and the spiritual state. The traditional society does not differentiate clearly between the two and often confuses them (Kuper, 1978).
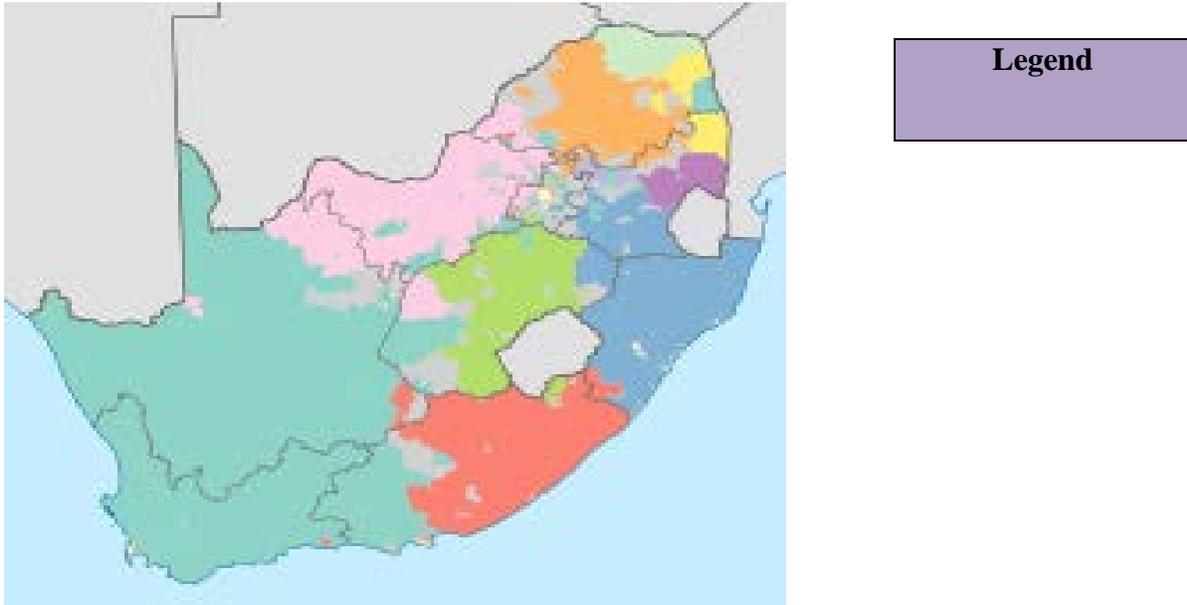
Figure 2: Map showing where the Ndebele language is mostly dominant (Source: Wikipedia).

2.3. Definition of culture

As this study is focusing specifically on the Ndebele culture, it is crucial that the concept of culture be defined as well. The word culture is difficult to define as it is used and applied interchangeably with words like race and ethnicity (Matsumoto, 2000). In some instances, the word culture is used to explain individuals from different nationalities (Matsumoto, 2000). It is important to note the differences amongst the above mentioned terms however it is also important to acknowledge the similarities amongst these words.

According to Matsumoto (2000) culture may be defined as *"a dynamic system of rules, explicit and implicit, established by groups in order to ensure their survival, involving attitudes, values, beliefs, norms and behaviours, shared by a group but harboured differently by each specific unit*

within the group, communicated across generations, relatively stable but with the potential to change across time" (Matsumoto, 2000, p.24).

Culture is *dynamic,* this refers to the fact that culture is always changing, however, the behaviours of a specific culture cannot be generalised to all the individuals who form part of that culture, hence there will always be some level of difference amongst individuals within the same culture (Matsumoto, 2000).

Culture does not represent a specific behaviour, rule, attitude or value; however it is a *system of rules* which is made up of the above components (Matsumoto, 2000). Culture occurs within *groups and units* (within individuals in groups and within groups in a larger group)*, to ensure their survival* (Matsumoto, 2000)*. These rules help the group to live in harmony with one another and to provide a structure for social order so as to avoid disorder (Matsumoto, 2000). Culture includes *attitudes, values, beliefs, norms and behaviours* that are shared amongst individuals who live in that culture (Matsumoto, 2000)*. The behaviours can be normally witnessed in rituals shared by individuals within that culture. Culture has the *potential to change across time* because culture is not fixed, culture will change if it does not correctly reflect the majority attitudes, values, beliefs, norms and behaviours of the group (Matsumoto, 2000).

As discussed above, culture is a complex term to clearly define. In this study, when culture is discussed, concepts of different African cultures will be discussed. For the purposes of this study, reference will be made to Traditional African culture, Modernised/Westernised African culture and Religious African culture.

2.4. Bereavement

The words bereavement, grief and mourning are often used when there are discussions of death or loss of someone or something. In most literature, these words are used interchangeably. However, that will not be the case in this present study, hence, it is important to provide definitions of these words for clarity and to avoid any uncertainty. The term grief may be used to explain other losses, however, in this study it will be used to explain loss due to death. The concept 'mourning' will be used when referring to the journey that an individual may go through in adjusting to the death of a person (Worden, 2009). 'Bereavement' may be used when explaining the loss to which an individual is attempting to adapt (Worden, 2009).

Bereavement can be understood as the state of being denied of something of significance and of importance, for example, the passing of a loved one by death (Keene & Reder, 2006 and Nieuwmeyer, 2006). The emotion is usually shared amongst family members and it can also be a communal experience. Salters-Pedneault (2014), described bereavement as a combination of responses to a major loss. In most discussions, bereavement is normally used to describe the loss of a significant person. However, the term bereavement may be used to describe the loss of work, a physical ability, belongings or other happenings (Salters-Pedneault, 2014).

Bereavement is understood to be natural and may be linked to different emotional responses, behavioural responses and feelings (Salters-Pedneault, 2014). For example, one who is in the process of bereavement may go through feelings of unhappiness, anger or even a sense of release (Salters-Pedneault, 2014). One may also feel the need to isolate oneself from social interactions or reach out to others for encouragement (Salters-Pedneault, 2014). Bereavement may be

explained as 'complicated bereavement' when it extends beyond the expected time period; when it is devastating and damaging to one's functioning (Salters-Pedneault, 2014).

It is crucial to acknowledge that an individual's bereavement process may be different to the next person's bereavement process. The bereavement process is temporary in many cases, not prolonged to an extent that it leads to a condition that may need psychotherapeutic intervention (Worden, 2002). However, the emotion of losing someone can be so deep that one is vulnerable to acquiring a range of psychological and somatic complaints which may necessitate a need for psychotherapy (Worden, 2002).

2.4.1. Bereavement and Cultural diversity

All human beings go through the process of bereavement at some period in their lives. The passing of a loved one is a significant and continual shift in an individual's life (Yawa, 2010). Bereavement includes a process of going through changes that are more likely to be experienced by the bereaved and those that are surrounding them (Yawa, 2010). In the South African context, there exist diverse cultural categories including Western, Eastern and African cultures. These cultures handle the process of bereavement in a different manner from one another and cultural ways of doing things play an important role in approaching bereavement (Yawa, 2010).

Within the Western culture, bereavement appears to be internally directed, whereas in the Black African culture (within the traditional African black culture and mixed African black culture), it seems to be directed outwardly (Yawa, 2010). A traditional Black person also goes through the inner process of bereavement like denial and avoidance. However, there is also an added expectation that he must go through specific rituals related to bereavement in accordance with his (sic) culture and ethnic group (Yawa, 2010). Similar to Western communities, in most black

communities, seeking counselling is an individual's initiative. However, in some of the black communities the presence of a religious figure like a pastor is considered to be significant. A pastor may help the bereaved to understand the process of death and also may provide emotional and spiritual (Yawa, 2010).

In the British and Irish cultures, the bereaved and the surrounding community would hold a night vigil before the burial. Sometimes there would be drinking and feasting during the vigil (Yawa, 2010). This is one of the practices that are similar to the Ndebele culture even though it seems this practice has since disappeared in the west. Within the Ndebele culture this practice is called "*Umlindelo*".

2.4.2. Bereavement process within the different South African ethnic groups

In the Western culture, the bereaved are encouraged to cut off the connection with the dead in order to start a process of healing; as shall be seen from the discussion to follow, the Xhosa, Zulu and Tswana cultures encourage the bereaved to preserve the connection between the deceased and the living (Yawa, 2010).

It is also important to consider that within the black African culture, there are different ethnic groups, which are Venda, Xhosa, Tswana, Ndebele, Zulu, Swati, Pedi, Sotho and Tsonga whereby the bereavement process is handled differently (Yawa, 2010).

Since the focus of this study is on the Ndebele culture, there will be a brief discussion indicating the differences and similarities within the ethnic groups of the Xhosa's, Zulu's as they form part of the Nguni ethnic group and the Tswana ethnic group.

2.4.2.1. Xhosa Culture

The Xhosa group are part of the Nguni ethnic group and they are mostly located within the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. Within the first twelve months of mourning the Xhosa bereaved individuals are required to go through certain cultural customs arranged for bereavement. According to Van Heeden (2005, as cited in Yawa, 2010), one of those customs is that the bereaved individuals are expected to shave off their heads to indicate their mourning of their loved one. One of the rituals that are performed is that of '*umkhapho'* (to accompany). This ritual is done in order to escort (*ukukhapha)* the departed to the place of their forefathers (Yawa, 2010). This is done in order to assist in making a smooth transition to the place of the forefathers but also to allow for a smooth transition when the deceased comes back later (Yawa, 2010). In most cases, it is the male group who conduct this procedure. The aim of the '*umkhapho'* is to maintain the connection between the departed and the living so that the departed are able to come back later (Yawa, 2010).

At some stage, an animal may be slaughtered for example, a goat may be slaughtered. The mourning period may go on until the '*umbuyiso'* ritual is done (Yawa, 2010). '*Umbuyiso'* can be defined as returning the spirit of the deceased back home. This process may take place a year after the deceased has passed on (Yawa, 2010). When considering the rituals of the '*umkhapho'* and '*umbuyiso'*, the Traditional Xhosa are able to keep the connection with the deceased and they are also able to move on with their lives (Yawa, 2010). This is different from the Western culture, where individuals are expected to cut off the attachment they have with the deceased in order to facilitate a process of healing (Yawa, 2010).

2.4.2.2. Zulu Culture

The Zulu people mainly reside in the Kwa-Zulu Natal Province, South Africa. However, some are distributed in other provinces of South Africa. According to Richter (2005), the '*amaZulu*' tend to focus on the rituals that form part of the burial process in order to deal with the death of a loved one hence the focus is less on dealing with the emotional aspects. The reason why '*amaZulu*' tend to focus on the ritual aspects is to avoid being consumed emotionally (Yawa, 2010). By being involved in a variety of rituals, there is more of a chance to move the attention away from difficulties associated in dealing with the death of a loved one (Yawa, 2010). When the people come back from the graveside they are expected to wash their hands so as to avoid transferring the pollution of death around (Yawa, 2010). After that process, a meal is offered for the bereaved and those present to support the bereaved. In some cases, a goat may be slaughtered; this is done in honour of the deceased's life (Yawa, 2010).

After the burial of their loved one, the '*amaZulu*' are expected to shave their heads, if not entirely, a small section of their hair is cut off (Yawa, 2010). After the hair cutting ritual, it is burnt along with clothing items that belonged to the deceased. This is practiced in order to purify the mourners from the contamination of death (Yawa, 2010). According to Manyedi (2003, as cited in Yawa, 2010), during the period of bereavement, the widow is not allowed to travel outside her home for a specified period in accordance with the family's requirements. The reason why the widow is restricted to stay in her house is so as to avoid spreading misfortunes associated with death (Yawa, 2010).

After a few months of mourning (as set out by the family) an elder uncle facilitates the process of cleansing (Yawa, 2010). This ritual is done so as to purify the bereaved and the possessions of the deceased. This is also when the widow is given cleansing herbs in order to purify herself (Yawa, 2010).

2.4.2.3. Tswana Culture

The Tswana's are the Western group of the Sotho people of South Africa and Botswana. About 3 million of the Tswana people reside in the North West province, South Africa. According to Setiloane (1976, as cited in Yawa, 2010), during bereavement, on the day of the funeral, the traditional Tswana people slaughter an ox named '*mogage*' at sunrise. The meat of the ox is consumed without any salt. This is to indicate that there is no pleasure in consuming the meat as the family is in mourning (Yawa, 2010).

During mourning, the mourners are required to adorn themselves with a grass necklace and shave their heads (Yawa, 2010). The length of the mourning phase does not exceed a year. After this period has passed, the uncle '*malome*' facilitates the cleansing ceremony (Yawa, 2010). Cleansing herbs are applied on the mourners. The uncle is also in charge of giving the mourners new clothing items, food and drink (Yawa, 2010).

2.4.3. Commonalities in the bereavement practices and processes of the Xhosa, Zulu and Tswana ethnic groups

All three ethnic groups share in the belief of the existence of life after death, hence they all believe in the connection between the living and the deceased (Yawa, 2010). Before the burial, the Xhosa and the Zulus partake in the ritual of slaughtering a cow and a goat. This is contrary to the Tswana people who partake in the ritual of slaughtering a sheep as it is considered to be a

symbol of tranquillity (Yawa, 2010). A few days after the burial in all three ethnic groups, members of the community who could not attend the funeral are urged to visit the bereaved and offer words of encouragement (Yawa, 2010).

In general the three ethnic groups seem not to differ much in their bereavement processes. All the cultural groups seem to view the bereavement process in a similar way; consisting mainly of rituals which have to be conducted during this period. Also, what seems to be central in their bereavement process is the involvement of family members and community members (Yawa, 2010, p.78).

In all three ethnic groups, the mourning period ends after a year whereby the family members of the deceased all partake in the ritual of burning clothes of the deceased (Yawa, 2010) whilst for children, that period is three months. In all three ethnic groups there is limited freedom of movement whereby the bereaved are not allowed to go to certain areas during certain times, for example, they are not allowed to party or visit friends (Yawa, 2010). In all three ethnic groups, there is an expectation for the bereaved to wear mourning attire which is black in most contexts.

2.5. Grieving

The term 'grief' may be used to understand the encounter of an individual who is or has experienced loss of a loved one due to death (Worden, 2009).

According to Keene and Reder (2006), grieving can be understood as the individual's reaction to losing a loved one or anything. It has different components and includes emotional, physical, cognitive, spiritual, and social reactions to loss. In addition, Frankel (1997) states that in communities whereby the last funeral rituals continue for months or years after the original funeral; this may succeed in avoiding endless and severe grieving.

It is crucial to have a good understanding of 'normal grief before one can fully grasp the notion of 'abnormal' or 'complicated' grief (Marks, 2004). In the following section there is a discussion of 'normal' grief as it is understood culturally and from the Western perspective versus 'abnormal' grief as it is understood culturally and from the Western perspective.

2.5.1. Normal grief (culturally)

Within the African culture, grieving is considered to be a process. Hence, death is understood to be a process that is not limited by time (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013). During this process, rituals are performed; these rituals need to have significance and relevance to the living dead and the living. Normal grieving is one that is not restrained to specific events over a set period of time (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha 2013).

2.5.2. Normal grief (western perspective)

Normal grief from the Western perspective will be discussed using Elisabeth Kubler-Ross's five stages of grief (Kubler-Ross, 1969). Kubler-Ross's five stages of grief were originally constructed as a guideline to help dying patients deal with death and bereavement and also to assist individuals deal with personal trauma and the adjustment needed to cope with that trauma (Kubler-Ross, 1969). The five stages are denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance (Kubler-Ross, 1969). Even though the five stages are used as a model, individuals go through their own distinct journey. Some individuals may not go through all the stages; even the sequence of these stages may be different (Kubler-Ross, 1969).

The first stage is that of *denial* whereby the grieving person experiences difficulty in accepting the loss (Kubler-Ross, 1969). Denial may be accompanied by feelings of shock. Once the person accepts the loss they may develop feelings of *anger* as they realise that they do not have

power over the loss (Kubler-Ross, 1969). Feelings of rejection may also arise when the bereaved person realises that they do not have power over the loss. Hence, they start to *bargain* for the restoration of their loved one back into life (Kubler-Ross, 1969). For example, in this stage, the grieving person may vow to be a better person leading a better life should their loved one be returned to them (Kubler-Ross, 1969). When the grieving person recognises that bargaining does not work, the person may likely enter into the next stage of *depression* and hopelessness (Kubler-Ross, 1969).

In this stage, the person acknowledges and accepts that they have no power to bring back the deceased or reverse the loss. Hence, they may experience feelings of hopelessness and helplessness (Kubler-Ross, 1969). During this stage, the person may isolate themselves from other people or any social interaction; cry more often and may go through sleep fluctuations (Kubler-Ross, 1969). The last stage is that of *acceptance*, this is a phase whereby the person acknowledges and admits to the loss. This is also the stage whereby the individual hopefully starts to make plans for the future (Kubler-Ross, 1969). It must be noted that even Kubler-Ross admitted that these stages are not linear and not cast in stone.

2.5.3. Abnormal grief (culturally)

Within the black African culture, if there is a family culture that prevents the public expression of sadness, this may lead to an individual's difficulty in experiencing possible emotional and spiritual healing (Marks, 2004). If there are restrictions in the expression of deeper and emotional grief, individuals may experience feelings of shame about their own inability to acknowledge and express their grief (Marks, 2004). Shame may be an aspect that may stop an individual from experiencing and expressing their grief (Marks, 2004). One needs to

acknowledge that the same effect may happen if this restricted expression of grief happens within the modern/western context.

2.5.4. Abnormal grief (western perspective)

Explaining and diagnosing complicated grief is challenging because there are different terms applied to categorise complicated grief. The variety of words and labels used for complicated grief make it difficult to reach an agreement in terms of explaining and diagnosing complicated grief (Marks, 2004). Examples of such terms and labels are those of inhibited grief, unresolved grief, chronic grief, delayed and distorted grief; exaggerated grief, destructive grief and blocked grief (Marks, 2004). For purposes of this study, the term complicated grief will be used as it has the clear and concise proposed diagnostic criteria in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders Fourth Edition, Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR).(National Cancer Institute, 2014). Its criterion assists in differentiating complicated grief from normal grief. The criterions are also useful in identifying symptoms and their seriousness (National Cancer Institute, 2014). Whilst *"empirical reviews have not found evidence for inhibited, absent or delayed grief…chronic grief is thought to occur in about 15 % of bereaved persons; it may look like major depression, generalized anxiety and possibly post-traumatic stress"* (National Cancer Institute, 2014, p. 3).

Grieving is understood to be complicated when the expression of grief becomes so extreme that a person is unable to function well over a period of time (Marks, 2004). He may not feel adequately equipped to cope with the loss, may feel weak, neglected and overpowered to a point where the individual is unable to move forward in order to reach a state of resolution of the loss (Marks, 2004).

According to Tomita & Kitamura (2002, as cited in Marks, 2004: p.98), complicated grief is considered a *'maladaptive reaction(s) to loss assumed to manifest as psychological and physical impairments'*. This may include denial, repression or evasion of the loss and its pain by not letting go of the lost object/person.

2.5.5. Complicating factors in the grieving process

The dominant factor leading to difficulties in the grieving process is the build-up of a number of losses, for example, if there is previous traumatic loss in childhood, it may intensify a person's vulnerability to some aspect of complicated grief (Mark, 2004). Human beings are social beings hence, during grief, it is important for one to have social support (Marks, 2004). Social circumstances are linked to complicated grief reactions as the absence of social support at the time of loss may lead to the development of symptoms related to complicated grief (Mark, 2004). Relationships that are characterised by dependency, uncertainty and unspoken hostility may also prompt an individual to a path of complicated grief, for example, a divorce activating the mourning of an older un mourned loss (Mark, 2004).

2.5.6. Anger and guilt reactions

Another characteristic of complicated grief is when an individual is unable to communicate openly their feelings of anger or need to cry which is also a part of grieving (Marks, 2004). When an individual is unable to express the feelings which are part of the grieving process, this may be due to an attempt by the individual not to fall apart during the time of loss however another challenge is that it might be experienced as unfitting to do so later (Mark, 2004).

2.6. Mourning

As grieving is the inner reaction to a loss, mourning is therefore the outward response to a loss (Keene & Reder 2006). It is the outer things that one performs, for example, the shaving of a head, the illumination of a candle. Mourning is shaped by the grieving person's cultural expectations, traditions and gender (Keene & Reder 2006). Considering the understandings of bereavement, grieving and mourning, it can be said that these views are interconnected. Bereavement is an individual's reaction to the passing of a loved one, which may reveal itself during grief (intrapersonal experience) and mourning (outward experience and the cultural presentations of grief) (Yawa, 2010). The focus of this present study will mainly be on mourning.

For some individuals, mourning is change. The mourning individuals are separated physically and socially from the living (Cohen, 2002). They are detached from the deceased and from their friends and neighbours. Ordinary social life is put on hold for them for a proposed period of mourning, their comings and goings surrounded by restrictions (Cohen, 2002).

Traditionally, mourning has been understood as the cultural or public expression of grief through one's behaviours which may be indicative of the likelihood that it mainly occurs in the company of others and not in isolation (Marks, 2004). While Fulton & Metress (1995, p. 358) asserts that *"mourning is the culturally patterned process by which grief is managed and resolved"*, this further implies that this process may also be an individual process, which can be private, whereby individuals are able to find and adopt different ways and means to manage their personal grief. According to Marks (2004), mourning may be understood as the manner of undergoing the psychological, emotional, behavioural, social and physical reactions to the

experience of loss. It is more challenging for an individual to acknowledge the reality of the loss

if they are left out from the funeral rituals and prohibited from acknowledging the loss (Marks,

2004).

In order to acknowledge and understand the loss (on an emotional and intellectual level) of the

lost object and to accept that the individual will not come back, it is crucial for an individual to

make meaning of the loss instead of trying to minimise it (Marks, 2004). This process may be

assisted with the use of rituals. For example, the writing of and about the loss experience is

recommended in order to help with the expression and possibly with the alleviation of pain in the

early stages of loss (Marks, 2004). For some individuals this may enhance physical health and

boost feelings of comfort (Marks, 2004).

According to Mbiti (1969, as cited in Setsiba, 2012), when an individual passes on, there are a

number of activities that are done before the actual burial. This also involves a time frame of

about one week of mourning. These activities include eating together (family members of the

deceased serve food to friends and neighbours) and meetings of the bereaved family as well as

with the community members (that is mostly when the family members talk about the deceased

and talk about the reason for death. According to the family's belief system, prayers may also be

conducted in the evenings (Setsiba, 2012).

During mourning, most of the rituals that are performed are done repeatedly and there are

specific rules and regulations as to how the rituals need to be performed (Setsiba, 2012). This

provides a sense of structure and has the potential of alleviating anxiety in the family that is

mourning (Setsiba, 2012). This is in contrast to Radzilani's (2010) findings that even though

some individuals acknowledge the relevance of performing mourning rituals, they can also be a

source of frustration as most individuals are not given a choice whether they would like to participate in these rituals or not. . According to Setsiba (2010), amongst the community members that are involved, the rituals endorse ethnic or religious identity. During mourning, rituals offer a chance for the family and community members to publicly show their grief (Setsiba, 2012). Hence, the rituals have a therapeutic role as to assist in bringing back the mourning individuals to their wholesome condition. They also help the family members to express their emotions (Setsiba, 2012).

2.7. The status and progress made in the knowledge production and training of African scholars and counsellors

There is limited literature available concerning the process of bereavement within the traditional African Black culture. This limited availability of information and understanding usually results in confusion between a psychologist or counsellor and a patient (Yawa, 2010). The challenge and the roots of this problem is that most African people's cultural practices are understood and explained from a theoretical perspective using external ways of knowing and doing (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013). It is crucial to point out that in order to understand fully the African people's conception of death and culture; it would be significant to take into consideration the context of the African people, in this study, South African people (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013). Hence, in this study, it is important to consider the Ndebele people's subjective experiences and their culture. For this reason, psychology will become applicable and tolerant of other cultural understandings (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013). *"Africans should and, must be able to determine, define and present their cultural practices and concepts as part of valid human knowledge experience in the broader psychology landscape and cross-cultural interactions"* (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013, p. 4).

The misunderstanding might be brought about by the Western anticipation of 'moving on' that may not necessarily be applicable to the traditional African black patient because of the rituals and traditions that are exercised during the bereavement process (Yawa, 2010). This however does not imply that there is no period of grieving or mourning within the western culture. According to the Euro-American approaches, life is understood according to different life stages, the beginning is when one is conceived and ending with death (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013). Unlike the African perspectives, within the Euro-American approaches, death means the end of life (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013).

Within the traditional African culture, when death occurs it is accompanied by the practice of rituals and rites of passage which can take place throughout the mourning phase (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013). This in turn can take as long as the living dead are considered to be playing a present and influential role in the lives of the living. Hence the mourning and grieving process cannot be restricted to a time frame (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013).

South Africa is a country with many different cultures and cultural practices. Hence, it is important for psychologists and counsellors to be culturally insightful when handling issues of bereavement across diverse cultures (Yawa, 2010). It would be relevant to challenge the dominant idea in mainstream psychology that behaviour (in this study, death and the bereavement methods) can be applied and represented universally. The study of psychology in Africa is still mainly influenced by Euro-American methodologies (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013). Hence, one cannot ignore the reality that even the experiences relating to death and bereavement are studied in accordance with traditional Euro-American concepts (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013).

Motoane (2012, as cited in Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013: p.3), argues that *"A lot of psychological theories from the West are regarded as universal. Subsequently, theories of death in mainstream psychology mirror this dominant thinking which is based on certain assumptions and realities about a person and the social world in which they exist."*

In Western/European-centred psychology, there is no significant reference and understanding of an African as being part of a specific ethnic group (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013). Some of African's subjective experiences are boxed into Western ideas, hence this has a potential to lead to alienation of the experiences of Africans in relation to death, its interpretation, representation and meaning attached to it (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013). For instance, if the experiences of death within the Ndebele culture are to be understood within the context of the Western approaches, then those experiences of the Ndebele culture cannot be perceived as genuine (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013).

Most people that reside in South Africa are of African black descend. According to the Census 2011 data from Statistics South Africa, the country's population was 51 770 560. Africans are the majority at just over 41 million, making up 79.2% of the total population (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Hence, it is important for psychologists and counsellors to be culturally knowledgeable and capable of handling issues surrounding the process of bereavement in all South African cultures because they might find themselves faced with such issues at some point in their careers whereby they have to deal with a patient from a traditional African black culture (Yawa, 2010).

The majority of psychologists and counsellors in South Africa are qualified and exposed to the Western process of bereavement. The function and significance of African rituals and traditional

practices in the bereavement process is predominantly neglected by the Western-trained psychologists, counsellors and educators (Yawa, 2010). Others may be mindful to some extent of the bereavement process in the African black culture; however they may lack the skill, experience and information on how to deal with the counselling process (Yawa, 2010).

This may lead to an expectation throughout counselling that the grieving traditionally African black patients adopt a traditional Western way of bereavement even though they belong to a different cultural group (Yawa, 2010). Simultaneously, a Western trained psychologist and counsellor may be placed in a situation whereby he is unable to say and do what is appropriate for the patient. Bopape (1996) argues that there is proof that when a practitioner and a patient have uncommon cultures there is a strong possibility for misinterpretation and inadequate communication by all participants (Yawa, 2010).

It is important to acknowledge that black psychologists, counsellors and educators might not have adequate information concerning the process of bereavement in the black culture merely because they are black (Yawa, 2010). There are other factors that might inform one's level of knowledge about the process of bereavement in a particular black culture, for example being part of a different religion and a distinct ethnical group may play a role (Yawa, 2010). For example, even though they are from the same Nguni clan, people from the Swati culture might not be aware, be knowledgeable and experienced about the Ndebele processes of bereavement and vice versa during counselling (Yawa, 2010).

According to Lobar (2006), it is important to note that there is no universal definition of a cultural identity or a universal definition of an ethnic identity (which is inclusive of cultural practices). This awareness will help to prevent making generalizations with the notion that

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persons in the same culture think, act and share the same beliefs and principles. According to Safonte-Strumolo & Dunn (2000), what creates limitations to successful grieving is the hypothesis made by clinicians that since the same family members have experienced the passing of the same individual their grieving process will also be the same. In actual fact, different encounters seem to be common in the families, let alone in the same cultural groups.

Mndende (1993, as cited in Van Durren 2002) states that in the South African context, the individuals of the black cultural community are obliged to grieve in the Western way by therapists who have been schooled in the Western Christian manner. Both sides are likely to experience feelings of discontent and defeat should it occur that the one party fails to meet the others' expectations. Mndende (1993, as cited in Van Durren 2002) further argues that the therapist might get stuck as he does not have the knowledge and understanding of the course of bereavement in the culture of his patient. The patient on the other hand may think that he is resentful during therapy because his expectations have not been met. Safonte-Strumolo & Dunn (2000) argues that it is recognized that culturally set traditions for handling death may signify the bases of strength and support for families or may become stumbling blocks to effective resolution of grief. It is recommended that therapists assist families to recognize resources relevant to their cultural backgrounds, resources that will be able to improve the process of grief resolution while being able to fulfil the specific needs of the family and reinforce continuous family development (Yawa, 2010).

2.8. Historical background of hair (shaving)

Hair has been meaningful to human beings at all periods of time and in all cultures. It has been seen as a representation of strength, sexuality and magic; and considered as an important part of the body, requiring different forms of decoration and style (Rabinowitz, 1984). Loss of hair by means of haircutting or other procedures has also been of significance. For example, Samson's pomposity, inspired by his legendary strength, disappeared when his hair was cut (Rabinowitz, 1984). Possibly depicting some fantasies linked to cutting one's hair is Samson's expressions in the book of Judges, *"If I am shaved then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man"* (Judges, 16 verse 17). Certainly, the biblical story explains his downfall after he tells his secret to Delilah, who cut off his seven locks of hair, therefore removing from him his magical strength (Rabinowitz, 1984).

Menninger (as cited in Rabinowitz, 1984) states many practices and rituals related to haircutting. Examples of practices and rituals related to haircutting includes birth and naming ceremonies, puberty rites of passage, initiation; circumcision, women given over to marriage practices and rites of passage into adulthood. He mentions that some of the ancient importance of haircutting makes it obvious what this apparent casual process has been. Hair is a significant symbol in mythology, the Bible, rituals and in fantasy life (Rabinowitz, 1984). Even though hair cannot feel pain and it will grow again if cut off; it is a component of the body with an element of importance and significance attributed to it (Rabinowitz, 1984).

Figure 3: Hair (Source: Afritude: coloured ray of grey)

Historical phases in life have been represented by head-shaving, for example, when men reach their phase of full purpose and when women are given over to marriage, their heads were shaven (Davis, 2011). Different types of clinical and ritual operations termed "circumcision" have been practiced on human sex organs worldwide. Circumcision is one of the practices that have been performed for many years in Africa (Davis, 2011). For example, the Ndebele culture has also adopted the practice of circumcision. In the Ndebele culture, this practice is termed "*ingoma"* and when boys reach a stage of transition from boyhood to manhood, they are sent to "*engomeni"* (initiation/circumcision school).

It is apparent that the shaving of hair in one situation would have a different meaning in another situation. The figurative act of shaving was perceived in different ways in accordance to the time and place of the interpreter (www.surreal_killa.tripod.com). In some instances, the shaving of the head was done as an indication of mourning as with Job in the bible (www.surreal_killa.tripod.com).

In other instances, shaving of the head was done as an illustration of a prophecy (Ezekiel 5:1-4). In the book of Acts in the bible, Paul shaved his head to carry out a vow and to ceremonially cleanse himself. Early Christians of both genders ceremoniously shaved their heads for abstinent

reasons, as a means of abandoning the materialism of the world so as to accept the purity of the heavens above. This practice was later embraced by monks and nuns shaving their heads (Karthikeyan, 2009). However, most shaving rituals in general originated from travelling Pagan priests and priestesses who were bald-headed as well (Karthikeyan, 2009). Another example is the one of surrendering oneself to a divine being through the expression of shaving one's head (Karthikeyan, 2009. Sanctified prostitutes at Byblos, Tyre, Sidon and other harbour towns shaved off their hair for purity purposes. However they also shaved their heads to proclaim to the world that they have been fully handed over to Aphrodite/ Astarte (Karthikeyan, 2009).

The liberal lady with a shaved head may come into town and may be praised for her spirituality, while another lady could be hiding herself in the ditch close by with her shaven head, however, for her, the shaven head could be an indication that her husband rejected her (Karthikeyan, 2009). These two women have shaved heads but because of their different cultural contexts, the similar exterior is perceived in totally different ways by the onlookers. Hence, interpreting the shaved head has two aspects, positive and negative (Karthikeyan, 2009).

The manner in which the shaving of the head ritual is presented is also important. It is also significant to consider the aspects that accompany the hair shaving ritual, for instance the music, candles, the correct ritual tools, distinct razors and lotions (Davis, 2011). The meaning attributed to the shaving of hair is changeable because the descriptions that are embraced are socially shared concepts. Within the different cultures, the shaved head is perceived to be a sign of beauty or a rite of passage into adulthood (Davis, 2011).

Within the Masai culture for example, there is a "*Eunoto*" ceremony that is practiced. The duration is about one week; it is the custom that signifies the change from boyhood to manhood

for the males (Davis, 2011). This also signifies the end of childhood and an introduction to responsibilities that come along with adulthood. After this ceremony is completed, the man's hair is cut off to symbolise the transition into manhood (Davis, 2011).

The Xhosa culture also performs rituals to signify the transition into adulthood. The '*ulwaluk'* ritual is done to assist boys to enter into manhood and the '*intonjane'* ritual is done in order to assist girls to enter into womanhood (Davis, 2011). Within the Western culture, there is a variety of significances attached to the shaved head over a span of several thousand years (Karthikeyan, 2009).

2.9. Rituals

2.9.1. Rituals: A Definition

It is important to discuss mourning rituals because they have been practiced since time immemorial. Mourning rituals will provide a better understanding as to how the Ndebele culture conduct these rituals based on the meaning attributed to death. Most of these rituals are founded in the cultures' traditional and religious principles (Setsiba, 2012). Hence, exploration of these rituals will help in the understanding of the above in relation to the Ndebele culture.

According to Wallace (1966), ritual is performed and is a religion in practice. It is a conduct that is subjective and private; however, it is also communal. For example, an ill individual praying for perseverance to bear the pain and the soldier praying for safety during an attack demonstrate solitary ritual. Ritual may include sanctified and irreligious symbols. According to Lessa (1971), ritual generally involves a sanctified environment; however the foundation of rituals should be sentiments, values and convictions. Individuals' conduct or actions could be considered ritualistic if they are regular, socially approved and symbolic. While Gluckman

(1966) acknowledges that one of the characteristics of rituals is that they are communal and there is an important emphasis on the support from the supernatural so as to put into effect conformity. Ritualization indicates the carrying out of recommended actions with the hope that the actions will express and improve social connections and assist in obtaining blessing, purification, protection and prosperity (Cohen, 2002).

2.9.2. Ritual Practices

A death ritual commences once an individual stops breathing, or is declared deceased (Cohen, 2002). How the body is handled, the removal of remains and how close kin and others are to conduct themselves during the set period of mourning is dictated by society (Cohen, 2002).

Once death is proclaimed, family, friends and neighbours come together. People convey their sorrow through weeping, wailing, screaming, singing, tearing out of hair. The closest kin also adopts a different mode of dressing (Cohen, 2002). Some reinforce this new way of dressing by wearing different and distinct colours, for example, white, black or red. Others paint their bodies; tear their clothing; while others conceal their bodies with ashes or dirt, others shave their hair. All of this is done so as to change their usual appearance (Cohen, 2002).

2.9.3. The Rites of Passage

According to Van Gennep (as cited in Cohen, 2002), rituals done at death are similar to those carried out at other important phases in the life of an individual, for example, at birth, puberty and marriage. An individual's life is a journey and a constantly changing process. In the journey the individual is faced with different challenges which he must be able to overcome so as to be able to move to the next stage of life. In order to assist an individual to handle these

challenges, society has created ceremonial reactions which Van Gennep termed as the "rites of passage."

All rites of passage need to adhere to a certain pattern. A rite of separation is adhered to by a rite of change and ends with a rite of integration (Cohen, 2002). The central ideas of separation, change and integration are part of every life cycle ritual. However, each is distinctly focused on according to the group and the occasion (Cohen, 2002). Rites of separation are significant in death, phases in death, pregnancy, an engagement and initiation and integration in marriage (Cohen, 2002). Separation refers to the letting go of a previous social identity, a necessity for progressing into a new social status in the social structure (Cohen, 2002). To be born requires a transition from the world of the unborn to the community of the living. To die is to leave the world of the living and pass into the home of foregoers. To mourn is to disconnect as a wife or husband, to become a widow or widower (Cohen, 2002).

Van Gennep (as cited in Cohen, 2002), describes an individuals' life as a sequence of separations, changes and integrations. Death and rebirth follow up on one another, a progression that repeats as with the seasons of the year. He wrote "For groups, as well as for individuals, life itself means to separate and to be reunited, to change form and condition, to die and to be reborn. It is to act, to cease, to wait and rest, and then to begin acting again, but in a different way. There are always new thresholds to cross; the thresholds of summer and winter, of a season or a year, of a month or a night; the thresholds of birth, adolescence, maturity and old age; the threshold of death and that of the afterlife for those who believe in it" Van Gennep (1966, p.180-190, as cited in Cohen, 2002),

For the traditional African, death, even though it is an unpleasant event, is understood as the start of a person's meaningful relationship with all of creation, the finalization of life and the start of the connection between the visible and invisible worlds (Ngobese, 2003). Life does not stop with death but goes on in another realm. The notions of 'life' and 'death' for the traditional African are not separate concepts and there are no clear boundaries between them (Ngobese, 2003).

Death does not change or put a stop to the life or the personality of an individual, but only brings forth transformation in its circumstances (Anderson, 2003). This is communicated within the belief of 'ancestors' that are individuals who have passed on but who carry on 'living' in society and communicate with their families (Anderson, 2003).

The healer, academic and cultural consultant Nokuzola Mndende states that the practice of rituals (*amasiko)* is part of the traditional African religious beliefs. These rituals involve life occurrences like marriage and burial but are also individually governed, for thanksgiving or when a dream reveals that something is wrong (Mndende, as cited in Berg, 2012). There is no pre-existing calendar of events and festivals as to when the rituals will be performed. When an individual or family sees the need for a certain ritual to be performed that is when the ritual will be performed (Mndende, as cited in Berg, 2012). There are also no specific areas or buildings where these rituals are performed (for example, the church, synagogue or mosque). The rituals take place in the home or homestead where the family reside and where the ancestors dwell (Mndende, as cited in Berg, 2012). There are two forms of rituals: those that are richly rooted and central to the cultural psyche, and that probably will not be transformed, are called '*isiko'*. There are those rituals that are centred on traditions and are likely to be transformed over time

and are called '*isithethe*' (Mndende, 2006, as cited in Berg, 2012). The Ndebele hair shaving

rituals fall under the '*isithethe*' form.

Most of the traditional rituals are not documented; their existence is transferred from generation

through participation (Berg, 2012). Each individual thinks and perceives these experiences

subjectively and attach their own meaning to it (Berg, 2012). Words are not a necessity. There

is wisdom and complexity of thinking that is difficult to perceive, that stays unarticulated, unless

one has an opportunity of interacting intimately with an individual of that tradition (Berg, 2012).

John Mbiti (as cited in Yawa, 2012) argues that in accordance with a traditional African, *"life*

continues more or less the same in the hereafter as it did in this world. Funeral rites are aimed

at marking a separation of the departed from the living, even though it is believed that the dead

continue to live in the hereafter" (Mbiti, 1975, p. 124 as cited in Yawa, 2012).

According to Selepe and Edwards (2008) prior to the availability of technology and professional

funeral services, grief was more communicated about and disclosed to others while rituals will

be exercised in the process of bereavement. In the British and Irish customs for example, the

mourners and the members of society would have a night vigil on the eve of the burial (Selepe

and Edwards, 2008). This would at times include drinking and eating. Even though these

customs or similar customs have disappeared in the West they are still an integral part of the

traditional African cultures (Selepe and Edwards, 2008).

In most cases in the African culture, rituals are practiced so as to heal or strengthen the

connection between individuals and spiritual powers, for example, peace-making with the angry

ancestors; welcoming a child into the community, bidding farewell to the dead, in the hopes that

they will be embraced by the living dead (Ngobese, 2003). Rituals that are practiced involve and engage the traditional African in each ceremony (Yawa, 2010).

Socialisation clearly distinguishes individuals based on gender. This is applicable during any funeral   (Hockings, 2010). It further implies that there are separate rules and processes applied in the treatment of the male and female corpse.   There also exist distinct responsibilities for male and female individuals involved in the rituals (Hockings, 2010).

To help a person move effectively through the different stages of life, life affirming rites of passage are maintained that centre primarily on life-cycle stages such as birth, puberty and initiation, marriage and death (Ross, 2012). Death is not seen as the end of life but rather as a way of moving on to join the company of the deceased in a state of collective immortality (Ross, 2012). Funeral rites include bringing the deceased person to the family home for the time before the funeral and explaining to the deceased where they will go (Ross, 2012). According to Bozongwana (1983), this is done for several reasons. The deceased is brought home so that it will allow his family and relatives to spend time with him for the last time and mourn for him. Within the Ndebele culture, men of the neighbourhood make fire outside the deceased's home and spend the night before the day of burial watching for intruders (for example, witches) wanting to steal the corpse (Bozongwana, 1983). The explanation to the deceased where he/she will go is done because it is believed that as much as an individual is dead physically, they are spiritually alive, in the form of an ancestral spirit; hence, it is important to communicate spiritually with the deceased (Bozongwana, 1983).

In some of the religions of Africa life does not end with death but continues in another realm. Literature on traditional African religion is at times challenging to access as no written records

had been made of it until the Europeans came to the continent (Munemo, 1994). Traditional African religion was transferred down the generations through oral history. This means that there could have been some misrepresentation in its documentation as this in many cases was eventually done from a non-African perspective, usually by missionaries (Munemo, 1994). In African traditional religion there was a firm belief in many gods. These took life structure of the '*vadzimu*' (plural), the 'living-dead' in English. The living-dead were the spirits of those who had moved beyond the physical state of existence and had progressed to a spiritual state (Munemo, 1994). The living-dead were trusted by the black Africans to be their connection with the supreme God, '*mwari*' in Shona, '*uNkulunkulu*' in Ndebele. The living-dead had a very significant role in traditional religion, it was them the people were in close contact with and they were consulted in times of difficulty (Munemo, 1994).

According to Bozongwana (1983), the traditional Ndebele believes in the interaction of/between the living and the dead. The concepts of 'life' and 'death' are not mutually exclusive concepts and there are no obvious dividing lines between them (Bozongwana, 1983). Human existence is an active progression involving the increase or decrease of 'power' or 'life force' of 'living' and 'dying' and there are diverse levels of life and death. Death does not change or end the life or the character of an individual, but only causes a change in its conditions (Anderson, 2003). This is expressed in the concept of 'ancestors', people who have died but who continue to 'live' in society and stay in contact with their families (Anderson, 2003).

Death, although a dreaded occasion, is perceived as the beginning of a person's deeper connection with all of creation, the complementing of life and the beginning of the interaction between the visible and invisible worlds (Anderson, 2003). The goal of life is to become an ancestor after death. This is why every person who dies must be given a 'proper' funeral,

supported by a number of religious ceremonies (Anderson, 2003). If this is not done, the dead person may become a wandering spirit, incapable of living properly after death and thus a danger to those who remain living (Anderson, 2003). It might be argued that 'appropriate' death rites are more an assurance of protection for the living than to secure a safe passage for the dying (Anderson, 2003).

Death in African religions is one of the last middle stages of life requiring passage rites, and this too takes a long time to complete. The deceased must be 'separated' from the living and make as smooth a transition to the next life as possible (Anderson, 2003) because the passage to the world of the dead has many interruptions, if the right funeral rites are not observed, the deceased may come back to trouble the living relatives (Anderson, 2003). Usually an animal is slaughtered in ritual, although this also serves the functional purpose of providing food for the many guests. Some of personal belongings are often buried with the deceased to help in the journey (Anderson, 2003). Different other rituals follow the funeral itself. Some kill an ox at the burial to escort the deceased. Others kill another animal sometime after the funeral, usually between three months to two years and even longer in the period observed (Anderson, 2003).

The Nguni in Southern Africa call the slaughtering of the ox 'the returning ox' since the animal accompanies the deceased back home to his or her family and allows the deceased to act as a protecting ancestor (Anderson, 2003). The 'home bringing' rite is an ordinary African ceremony. Only when a deceased person's existing relatives have gone and there is no one left to remember him or her can the person be said to have really 'died'. At that point the deceased passes into the 'graveyard' of time, losing independence and becoming one of the unknown crowd of immortals (Anderson, 2003).

According to the Tanzanian theologian, Laurenti Magesa, funeral rites simultaneously grieve for the dead and commemorate life in all its abundance. Funerals are a time for the community to be in harmony and to reclaim its identity (Anderson, 2003). In some communities, this may include dancing and cheerfulness for all but the immediate family thus limiting or even denying the negative powers of death and providing the deceased with 'light feet' for the journey to the other world (Anderson, 2003).

In some contexts in Southern Africa, the period of severe mourning usually continues for at least a week after the funeral. Throughout this time, the bereaved stay at home and do not go out (Anderson, 2003). Some wear black clothes or black cloths fastened to their clothes, and shave their hair (as well as facial hair) from the day after the funeral. Since life is concentrated in hair, shaving the hair symbolizes death, and its growing once more is a sign of the strengthening of life (Anderson, 2003). Hence, another aspect that was explored in the study was whether the people who are involved in this ritual understand this meaning. The majority of modern and younger people refuse to follow this ritual. Another aspect that was explored in the study was the effect in cases where people do not adhere to the ritual.

Death separates the deceased from their position of living parent, spouse or co-worker (Davies, 2003). The period of getting the dead ready for burial or cremation moves them into a transitional phase when they are neither what they have been nor yet what they will turn out to be (Davies, 2003). Such moments of transition frequently involve uncertainty and possible danger. The ritual impurity of the dead body originates from its inability to respond to others, yet is still 'present' in their everyday routines (Davies, 2003). Accordingly, people pay their respects to the dead, marking their previous identity with them, express grief for the bereaved and by so doing, reaffirm their continuing connection with them (Davies, 2003).

Physical death has also been generally employed as an expression to describe the disappearance of an old status and the entry into a new one (Davies, 2003). For there to be a new self, the old self must ritually die. Hence, shaving off hair signifies an expression of removing an old identity (Davies, 2003). In most cases, there are ritual experts to attend to this duty. Sometimes extra rites are done to assist the departed, often referred to as soul or life forces, to adjust in their new world. The main goal of death rites is to make sure that the individual who has died leaves the realm of the living for the realm of the after-life (Davies, 2003).

During the period of mourning, individuals are at times removed from their communities, for example, a widow is expected to remain indoors for a specified period of time, for example, not going to work or even leaving the place of residence. The mourner gets integrated into society only after this period of isolation is concluded (Davies, 2003). However, they do so with their new status and identity, involving a new name or title, ways of dressing or style of language and new patterns of behaviour with suitable duties and responsibilities (Davies, 2003). Many changes of identity are linked with funeral rites, affecting the status of the deceased, surviving relatives and members of the broader community (Davies, 2003).

Funeral rites involve a process in which the perishing of the deceased indicates the path of grief in the bereaved (Davies, 2003). Bereavement includes both the social change of status of people, from say, being a wife to being a widow, from being a child to being an orphan, or from being a junior adult to becoming the head of the family (Davies, 2003). It also involves psychological changes of identity related with such shifts. A psychological identity relays information concerning self-image, self-esteem and individuality (Davies, 2003). The psychological changes may include the way we define and have to re-define ourselves for example, as a husband, wife, parent or offspring (Davies, 2003). Human beings become reliant upon each other and in a

sense, each identity is made up of elements of other people's effect. People grow to be 'part of' each other and when one dies a part of one's self dies as well (Davies, 2003). Hence, shaving of hair is significant as it signifies the portion of one's self that dies as well. Some theories of grief argue this in terms of attachment and understand bereavement as the loss that follows when attachments are removed (Davies, 2003).

Take for example Freud's theory of the process of grief and mourning. Freud suggested that people whose loved ones had passed on needed to work through the loss, with the ultimate outcome being to detach and disengage emotionally from the deceased and give up hope for the future relationship (Rothaupt & Becker, 2007).

While Maurice Bloch (1992), puts an importance upon the psychological field of experience as important to human beings, hence the awareness that the anthropology of ritual is, ultimately about people with feelings. Through this ritual form of shaving hair, the living people in a symbolic sense 'die' and are 're-born' as new types of individuals, detaching old, used-up selves so new ones can take their place (Davies, 2003). Not only are they given a new position but they will also have gone through inner changes to their sense of identity (Davies, 2003).

Other African cultures also perform the ritual of shaving hair during mourning. Some of Mozambican customs include conducting an '*M'meto*' ceremony (Englund, 1998). The name of the ceremony originates from the verb '*kumeta*' ('to shave'), whereby the hair of the bereaved women is shaved in full, while only sideburns are shaved amongst men. '*M'meto*' is said to release (*kumasula*) the bereaved (Englund, 1998).

The washing basin which was used to bathe the corpse has been reserved unused until this event and it appears again when the hair of the bereaved is washed before the shaving (Englund, 1998).

After '*m'meto'*, the washing basin is smashed at a crossroads. This is said to 'finish everything' (*kutha zonse*) about the funeral (Englund, 1998).

It is significant that the same phrase of 'shaving' ('*kumeta'*) exists in the girl's initiation ceremony '*chinamwali'*, in boys' initiation into the '*gule wamkulu'* private society and in the name-giving of an infant (Englund, 1998). The bereaved in '*m'meto'*, no less than learners in their initiation, enter a new chapter in the life phase (Englund, 1998). This is predominantly practiced amongst the Chewa cultural practices in Malawi.
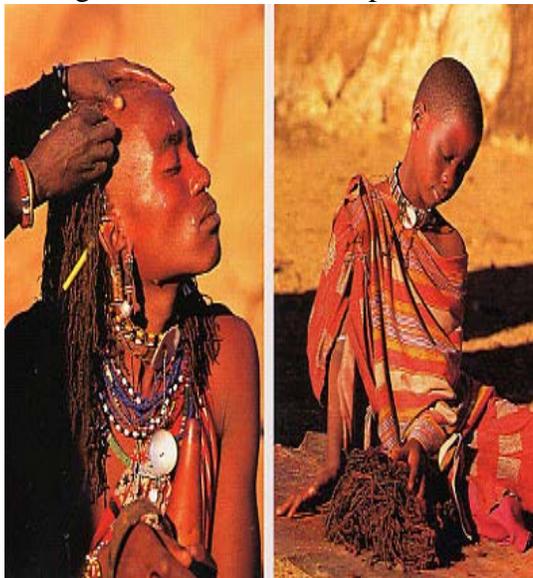
Figure 4: Hair shaving (Source: African male shaved head)

According to Baloyi (2008), the coming out ceremony for example is believed by most Africans, to be a healing ritual that leads to new meaning and guidance to the societal communication of the family and community (Baloyi, 2008). Gatherings such as '*ku pahla swikwembu'* have healing effects and are therapeutic and meaningful to most Africans (Baloyi, 2008: 121). '*Ku pahla swikwembu'* means to appease the ancestors.

According to Baloyi (2008), from an African perspective, healing symbolizes our spiritual connectedness to our environment in a complex way and cannot therefore be seen or carried out as an isolated activity. Healing is a ritual which involves inclusiveness and togetherness that joins African's unbreakable bonds of their shared humanity (Baloyi, 2008).

2.9.4. The meaning of death rituals

In all communities, when an individual passes on, the family, friends and neighbours react in an ordered and patterned manner to the death (Cohen, 2002). The cultural standards are used to decide on the manner that the body will be treated and buried and recommend a time of grieving for close relatives (Cohen, 2002). The death ritual, similar to most human conduct, is an articulation of an original cultural practice that has existed from the older generation (Cohen, 2002). Death rituals are articulations of a way of thinking, a way of behaving and principles; transferred from generation to generation, which an individual acquires as a member of the community (Cohen, 2002).

Ritual is a presentation of significant roles and structural boundaries, a vivid observation on life (Hockings, 2010). Therefore there are basic principles that must always be taken into account, the 'pure' and the 'impure', to be clearly differentiated to enable the impure to be removed and the pure to come to light (Hockings, 2010).

2.9.5. Functions of death ritual

According to Radcliffe-Brown (1968) the practice of rituals includes the social and psychological roles of behaviour. The social role includes the impact of the rituals on the social construction of society, the integration of social relationships linking individuals together in an

arranged manner. The quickest and closest impact on persons participating in the rituals is referred to as psychological roles (Radcliffe-Brown, 1968).

According to Howells (1962, as cited in Cohen 2002) there is a similarity between funeral rituals and periodic vows of commitment to the flag. Both are useful in uniting the community, to serve as a reminder of a shared commitment. In Radcliffe-Brown's (1968) perspective, death rituals are the communal communication of emotion congruent to the situation. In this shared expression of emotion, individuals indicate their loyalty to one another and to the community at large. One of the roles of rituals is to sustain social relationships.

For Malinowski (1958), death rituals are useful to alleviate anxiety. Since death is a traumatic experience, it can cause a 'commotion of emotion' which may lead to mental conflict and a possibility of a breakdown.

2.9.6. Rituals (shaving)

Within the Zulu culture, during the phase of bereavement (after the burial), individuals are expected to shave their heads or at least a portion of their hair is cut off. According to Ritcher (2005), the hair is burnt along with the late person's clothing. The purpose of this act is to cleanse the grievers from the contamination of death. When mourners come back from the graveside, they have to wash their hands. This is also practiced within the Xhosa culture (Richter, 2005). This act is done in order to wash away death and prevent mourners from carrying it around. After the burial, a meal is cooked and served to the mourners, in some cases a goat is slaughtered, this is done as a means to commemorate the deceased's life (Richter, 2005).

2.9.7. Rituals (healing)

There are two major worldviews or social interpretations of healing; namely the traditional approach, which is founded on indigenous belief systems, and the so-called modern method that is placed within a Western or allopathic medical model (Ross, 2012). Within the traditional approach, mind, body and spirit are seen as one and no difference is made among physical and psychosocial problems (Ross, 2012). Traditional healing seeks to bring back harmony, stability and equilibrium, not only by easing physical symptoms, but also by re-integrating the person with his or her community, the earth and the spiritual world (Ross, 2012).

African funerals are community interactions in which the whole community experiences the grief of the bereaved and shares in it (Anderson, 2003). The aims of the activities before the funeral is to comfort, support, and heal those who are hurting (Anderson, 2003).

One of the rituals performed by most Africans is the 'coming out' ceremony. This ritual is understood to have healing effects which give rise to renewed significance and focus to the collective dialogue of the family and community (Baloyi, 2008). Meetings like the '*ku pahla swikwembu'* are believed to have healing outcomes and are therapeutic and significant to most Africans (Baloyi, 2008).

Van Dyk (2001) claims that in the black culture, there is no emotional help or therapy that is provided to adults or children. After all the burial ceremonies are held, the grieving phase is considered to be finalised. However, Selepe and Edwards (2008), argue that the majority of African societies particularly in the rural areas, the grieving individuals depend on the priesthood to help them conceptualise the occurrence of death. This suggests that the priests provide both emotional and spiritual encouragement.

2.10. Ubuntu

"If you have two cows and the milk of the first cow is

Enough for your own consumption, Ubuntu expects

You to donate the milk of the second cow to your

Underprivileged brother and sister"

-Walter Sisulu, 1993

In Southern Africa, the phrase '*Ubuntu'* indicates the way in which individual qualities are acknowledged and embraced according to the community that the individual is part of (Baloyi, 2008). Knowledge is not perceived as an intellectualized and inaccessible activity. However, it is understood as a practical experience that is indicative of cultural connected arrangements like politics, economics and cultural beliefs. Life experiences like giving birth are observed by means of family and community rituals (Baloyi, 2008).

Within the traditional Zulu culture, the notions of '*Ubuntu'* and *'Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu'* are part of the phase of bereavement. These beliefs indicate the communal characteristic of the Zulu communities (Yawa, 2010). The notions of '*Ubuntu'* which can be defined as humanness, ethical quality or decent nature informs the daily living of the Zulu communities throughout bereavement (Yawa, 2010). This stems from the belief that a human being is the greatest of all groups (Yawa, 2010). There are many sayings recorded about '*Ubuntu'*. These sayings are in connection with the behaviour of people, positive and negative behaviour, arrogance, ungratefulness, poor manners, immorality, unkindness, stubbornness, deception, helping others to mention but a few (Yawa, 2010).

The '*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*' (a person is a person through others people) notion is a familiar Zulu proverb which believes that a person's connection with others is the core principle amongst the Zulu people. As Ngubane (2004) articulates it, isolation and individualism are considered to be abnormalities within the Zulu traditions. This means that the self for the Zulu person is understood in terms of the relationship that an individual has with others contrasted from the western culture whereby the self is distinctive (Ngubane, 2004). An individual is expected to be actively involved in the cultural rituals willingly or unwillingly.

Richter claims that '*amaZulu*' do not deal with death by immersing themselves in their emotions but rather they participate in the funeral rituals that form part of the actual burial (Richter, 2005). Rituals are a significant element within the Zulu culture as they involve coping with the uncertainty that comes with changes within the family unit (Nel, 2007). The aim of focusing on the performance of rituals is to prevent individuals from being engrossed in their emotions. The focus is being moved from the present difficulty by involving the bereaved in the intricacy of rituals (Richter, 2005).

2.11. Community

It is important to discuss community in this study because all communities have their own traditions and understandings surrounding death and loss. Hence, it would be important to learn how the Ndebele culture perceives and handles death and loss. Even though the approach and understanding to death may differ in most societies, there are however certain principles that are connected to their understandings, spiritual beliefs, rituals, expectations (Setsiba, 2012).

Rituals are cultural ideas and means of articulation and relationships conducted by individuals, groups of people or societies with the ancestors and the Higher Being (Baloyi, 2008). The

community is at the core of all ritual performances (Baloyi, 2008). The rituals are indicative of the belief that in the traditional African philosophy, the focus is not on healing the individual but rather healing and restoring the relationships between people (Baloyi, 2008).

To gain a full comprehension and develop an appreciation for the progression of healing in traditional African beliefs, it is important to understand how personhood and community are comprehended in the epistemological paradigm (Baloyi, 2008). Relationships and interactions are important in defining personhood in terms of community (Baloyi, 2008). These relationships also involve individual's participation with the community of the ancestors or '*uMvelingqangi*'. A person gains a sense of purpose in life by being actively involved in a community (Baloyi, 2008).

A human being is understood within the context of the relationships that he has with others. The African conceptualization of relationships include being in contact with the unborn, the living and the living dead (Baloyi, 2008). Ramose (1999), postulates that African traditional thinking understands personhood according to completeness. The African notion of a person as completeness does not disregard an individual's individuality but rather he is understood and defined within the community that the individual identifies himself (sic) with as well as the world around him.

Bereavement occurs within the context of families and society at large and this is evident in their interaction (Waliggo 2006). Particular bereavement rituals are different in accordance with the cultural diversity of an individual (Waliggo, 2006). After the death of an individual, if some cultural rituals are not adhered to, there can be a negative effect on the family of the deceased

and the consequences may arise from unresolved bereavement and lack of closure (Waliggo, 2006).

Manyedi (2003, as cited in Yawa, 2010) believes that the evident communal characteristic of the black community may at times have a negative impact on the grieving persons as the society puts many expectations on the grieving person as they are expected to perform certain rituals when grieving. This may cause emotional distress for the grieving person as they may feel compelled to perform certain rituals even if they do not believe in those rituals (Manyedi 2003, as cited in Yawa, 2010). This may put an individual in a space whereby they have no choice because they want to be part of the community. Hence, he argues that *"mourning is more externalized than internalized in the African culture particularly in the Batswana culture"* (Manyedi, 2003, as cited in Yawa, 2010, p. 32).

Somhlaba and Wait (2008) argue that the rituals and the support provided by the community might be done with good intentions of helping and alleviating the pain experienced during grieving, however, members of the community may unintentionally overwhelm the grieving family with heavy expectations and unwelcomed involvement into private family matters. This may have a negative effect on the grieving person's psychological wellbeing.

2.12. Conclusion

Even though life may end physically, death symbolises the start of communication amongst the visible and the invisible worlds (Yawa, 2010). Hence, the significance of practicing rituals is important in reinforcing the above belief. The mourning and grieving rituals help the traditional African to hold on to the belief that life cannot be stopped even by death. Those who have passed on are understood to have transitioned into another world (Yawa, 2010).

"Psychologically, it would seem that in the Xhosa, Zulu, Ndebele and Tswana cultures, the occurrence of death is something that affects the whole community not the individual or individuals concerned. It is not only one person who is bereaved but the whole community" (Yawa, 2010, p.33).

During the phases of bereavement the traditional black person is required to perform certain bereavement rituals like shaving of hair that are exercised in his or her ethnic group because when there is death in the family, it does not only affect the individual family members but affects the community as well and the community is considered to be grieving with the family (Yawa, 2010).

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to outline and explain the theoretical framework that was chosen for the current study. As explained in chapter 1, social learning theory was chosen as a theoretical framework for this current study to further understand and explain the ritual of hair shaving during mourning within the Ndebele culture. Social learning theory was founded by psychologist Albert Bandura (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). Part of his theory will be used to explain the social context of the ritual of hair shaving during mourning. In this section there is a detailed discussion on social learning theory, its concepts and their relevance to the current study that seeks to investigate the significance of shaving hair during mourning within the Ndebele culture.

The concept of observational learning within social learning theory is relevant for this study because most of the participants in the study participated in the ritual of hair shaving during mourning because they have observed this behaviour from their elders and other people they are related to or interact with.. This is also influenced by the fact that mourning within the Ndebele culture is communal, hence the individual and his or her participation in the shaving ritual is also shaped by his or her interaction with his or her environment (Setsiba, 2012). The participants, who aligned themselves with the ritual and identified with the values and principles of the ritual, adopted the ritual and continue to use it currently (Setsiba, 2012).

3.2. Social Learning Theory: Brief background

Bandura is well known for his Social Learning Theory which he later termed as Cognitive Theory (Moore, 1999). During his career Bandura had done a substantial amount of work that focused on the social learning theory. Bandura is also considered to be a cognitive psychologist due to his inclusion of motivational factors and self-regulatory mechanism and their effect on a person's behaviour, hence he did not only focus on environmental factors (Moore, 1999).

The shift from using the term Social Learning Theory to using the term Social Cognitive Theory indicated a move from an absolute behaviourist paradigm to one that also considers motivational factors and self-regulatory mechanisms and its effects on human behaviour (Driggers, n.d.). Due to this shift Bandura has been considered as the father of the cognitive movement (Driggers, n.d.).

3.3. A Theoretical Review and Concepts used in Social Learning Theory

Learning has a significant function in human behaviour; this is inclusive of intentional and unintentional motor activities, thoughts and feelings (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). *"Learning is defined as a change in behaviour resulting from repeated practice and both the environment and the behaviour interact to produce the learned change"* (Sadock & Sadock, 2007, p.141).

There are three kinds of learning. These are classical conditioning, where learning occurs due to environmental events being in continuous contact, operant conditioning, where learning comes about as a result of an individual's actions and social learning (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). Social learning theory includes both classic and operant models of learning; it also takes into

consideration the mutual relations between the person and the environment (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). Cognitive processes are considered to be significant in controlling an individual's reactions to environmental occurrences (Sadock & Sadock, 2007).

Bandura understood learning as the continuous communication between an individual and his or her environment. Hence human behaviour and actions can be understood as the relationship between cognitive, behavioural and environmental factors (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). According to Bandura, individuals acquire their behaviour by *observing* others through *modelling*. An individual has the ability to learn by copying the behaviour of another individual (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). This is termed by Bandura as imitation. Modelling is one way of transferring morals, attitudes, mind-sets and ways of being from one generation to the next (Sadock & Sadock, 2007).

This section will be used to discuss the concepts employed by Social Learning theory. The key terms that will be discussed are as follows:

- Observation

- Modelling

- Reciprocal determinism

- Positive and Negative Reinforcements

- Perceived Consequences

- Self-Efficacy

- Social Norms and Values

- Self-Regulatory Processes

- Vicarious Learning

- Incentives

Individuals are capable of learning new ways of behaviour either by experience or by observing other people's behaviour (*observational learning)* (Bandura, 1971). Human behaviour is complemented by actions and those actions are accompanied by *consequences,* whether good or bad (Bandura, 1971). Reinforcing consequences are important in directing one to gain good results or to avoid bad consequences. Previous experience has a role as a director in helping individuals foresee the outcomes of certain behaviours and actions (Bandura, 1971).

As mentioned by Berg (2012), most of the traditional rituals are not documented; their existence is transferred from generation to generation through participation. Hence, when a Ndebele individual participates in the hair shaving ritual during mourning, they get an opportunity to observe the ritual as it is performed and further learn from that experience. Each individual thinks and perceives these experiences subjectively and attach their own meaning to it. The element of observation is significant because words are not a necessity (Berg, 2012). In this, there is wisdom and complexity of thinking that is difficult to perceive, that stays unarticulated, unless one has an opportunity of interacting intimately with an individual of that tradition (Berg, 2012).

The act of performing mourning rituals is believed to be accompanied by consequences, whether good or bad. According to Anderson (2003), some of the bad consequences for not providing the deceased with a 'proper' funeral and not performing proper rituals are that the dead person may become a wandering spirit, incapable of living properly after death and thus a danger to those

who remain alive (Anderson, 2003). It might be argued that 'appropriate' death rites are more an assurance of protection for the living than to secure a safe passage for the dying. The passage to the world of the dead has many interruptions, if the right funeral rites are not observed, the deceased may come back to trouble the living relatives (Anderson, 2003). Setsiba (2012) further mentioned that if mourning rituals are not done as per expectation by the tradition, it is believed that the family and people who were closely connected with the deceased will experience misfortunes.

The act of performing mourning rituals is also believed to be accompanied by good consequences as well, for instance, ritualization indicates the carrying out of recommended actions with the hope that the actions will express and improve social connections and assist in obtaining 'blessing, purification, protection and prosperity' (Cohen, 2002). Hence, rituals are practiced as they are believed to bring about comfort and relief (Setsiba, 2012).

According to Bandura, behaviour is the product of the interaction between cognitive and environmental influences (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). This idea is termed, *reciprocal determinism* (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). People have the capability to learn through observing others, it can be deliberately or by coincidence; this method is termed *modelling* (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). Individuals have the ability to choose their own models. This choice is motivated by issues of age, gender, significance and connections (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). If that model portrays characteristics that are healthy and acceptable, the individual will acquire *self-efficacy* (the ability to adjust to both safe everyday activities as well as frightening experiences (Sadock & Sadock, 2007).

Modelling is crucial as individuals have the ability to learn from their models. They can learn how certain rituals need to be performed by their models demonstrations on how and when certain rituals are performed (Bandura, 1971). In most cases, as is the case during most performances of the shaving ritual with the Ndebele culture, there are ritual experts to attend to this duty (Davies, 2003). These demonstrations are continually emphasized because during mourning most of the rituals that are performed are done repeatedly and there are specific rules and regulations as to how the rituals need to be performed (Setsiba, 2012).

Even though individuals have the ability to imitate the behaviour of their models, they need motivation to do so (Bandura, 1971). Hence, that is why individuals need to be shown an example of the expected behaviour. After this process is done their imitative behaviour needs to be strengthened, supported and encouraged (*positively reinforced*) (Bandura, 1971).

The modelling process includes several steps (Bandura, 1971; Moore, 1999):

1. Attention: An individual needs to focus on the characteristics of the modelled behaviour in order to learn from/about that modelled behaviour. This focus and level of attention may be influenced by certain elements like the attributes of both the spectator and the person being observed and competing stimuli (Bandura, 1971; Moore, 1999).

2. Retention: the issue of memory is important because if an individual is to perform a certain behaviour in future he needs to remember that particular behaviour and activity and how it was modelled to him in a previous context. Human beings are able to copy behaviours and incorporate them into their own behaviours at a later stage because

human beings save the behaviours they see in a type of mental images or verbal descriptions (Bandura, 1971; Moore, 1999).

3. Reproduction: this process of reproduction includes changing figurative representations into suitable actions. An individual's capability to imitate behaviour gets better with repetition over time (Bandura, 1971; Moore, 1999).

4. Motivation: in order for an individual to imitate behaviour, they need some motivation. This can be in the form of *incentives* that an individual expects. These expected incentives may play a role of reinforcers. Negative reinforcers serve to oppose the furtherance of the modelled activity (Bandura, 1971; Moore, 1999).

For example, some individuals may participate in the hair shaving ritual during mourning with an expectation of receiving support, encouragement and healing during mourning. This is supported by Anderson's (2003) views that the aims of the activities performed after the death of a loved one is to comfort, support, and heal those who are hurting (Anderson, 2003). In most cases in the African culture, rituals are practiced so as to heal or strengthen the connection between individuals and spiritual powers, for example, peace-making with the angry ancestors; welcoming a child into the community, bidding farewell to the dead, in the hopes that they will be embraced by the living dead (Ngobese, 2003).

Within the theory of modelling, Bandura includes both the behavioural and cognitive attitudes (Moore, 1999). He describes human nature as collaboration between the environment and an

individual's psychological activities. He states that individuals are able to manage their behaviour by means of what he termed *self-regulation* (Moore, 1999). This process consists of three stages:

1. Self-observation: Human beings observe themselves, how they behave and they keep record of their actions (Moore, 1999).

2. Judgment: Human beings further weigh these observations against certain values. These values may range from those that the individual laid down for themselves to systems decided upon by society (Moore, 1999).

The concept of judgment may be linked to that of vicarious learning, social norms and social values.

Vicarious learning takes place when people act out certain behaviours because they have been exposed to those behaviours (Bandura, 1971). They have seen other people being reinforced favourably for those specific behaviours. Most of social learning is based on the idea that people need to see others performing and showing certain behaviours and observing the consequences thereof (Bandura, 1971). Hence, there is an assumption that learning is inclusive of judgmental values and norms; and rules governing behaviour (Bandura, 1971).

Operant conditioning and social learning theory share a similar assumption that peoples' choice as to whether they will imitate a behaviour that they have previously seen will be highly influenced by the consequences attached to such observed behaviour (Bandura, 1971). What is different in terms of social learning theory is that as much as behaviour is influenced by consequences that one has gone through, it is significant to acknowledge the role of vicarious reinforcement (Bandura, 1971).

Human functioning would be exceedingly inefficient, not to mention dangerous, if behaviour were controlled only by directly experienced consequences. Fortunately, people can profit greatly from the experiences of others. In everyday situations reinforcement typically occurs within a social context. That is people repeatedly observe the actions of others and the occasions on which they are rewarded, ignored or punished. Despite the fact that observed rewards and punishments play an influential role in regulating behaviour, vicarious reinforcement has until recent years, been essentially ignored in traditional theories of learning…Vicarious reinforcement is defined as a change in the behaviour of observers resulting from seeing the response consequences of others (Bandura, 1971, p.24).

Social norms may be considered as the rules that govern behaviour that is deemed to be appropriate within a certain culture. For example, shaving hair after the burial of a loved one is acceptable within the Ndebele culture. Values may be described as the "*moral or professional standards of behaviour; principles: cultural/family/social values*" (Hornby, 1995, p.1319). This is supported by Cohen's (2002) ideas that death rituals are articulations of a way of thinking, a way of behaving and principles; transferred from generation to generation, which an individual acquires as a member of the community (Cohen, 2002). The act of shaving hair during mourning as a sign and reflection of respect and reverence for the ritual illustrates the concept of a *social value.*

Culture includes *attitudes, values, beliefs, norms and behaviours* that are shared amongst individuals who live in that culture. The behaviours can be normally witnessed in rituals shared by individuals within that culture (Matsumoto, 2000). This may indicate the possibility that some individuals may partake in the shaving hair ritual for the need of approval and acceptance from other individuals within that culture.

3. Self-response: there are two processes that are involved after the person judges himself in relation to the set values (Moore, 1999). Should it be that the person is in par with the set values, the person will gain a rewarding self-response. Should the person not be in par with the set values, the person will grant himself a punishing self-response (Moore, 1999).

This process of self-regulation is mostly influenced by the society and the culture that an individual is part of. For example, as mentioned in Chapter 1 and 2, after the death of a loved one, there are certain rituals that need to be performed. Mourners are expected to observe a mourning period and within that period they are expected to behave in a certain way. This includes regulations around dress code and restrictions in terms of places that one can go to during mourning. Individuals are also expected to behave in a certain way amongst their community members during mourning. Failing to adhere to stipulated practices and behaviours; and not participating in mourning rituals may be considered to be improper.

3.4. Relevance of Social Learning Theory to the current study

As defined in chapter 2, grieving is the inner reaction to a loss, mourning is therefore the outward response to a loss. It is the outer things that one performs, for example, the shaving of a head and the illumination of a candle. Mourning is shaped by the grieving person's cultural expectations, traditions and gender (Keene & Reder 2006). Considering the understandings of bereavement, grieving and mourning, it can be said that these views are interconnected. Bereavement is an individuals' reaction to passing of a loved one, which may reveal itself during grief (intrapersonal experience) and mourning (outward experience and the cultural presentations of grief) (Yawa, 2010).

As mentioned above, people learn by observing the actions of others. Through observational learning, the values, feelings, performance and way of thinking in relation to the shaving hair ritual may be transmitted from one generation to the next.

During the observation of the performances of the shaving hair ritual, an individual is able to learn and be aware of the reinforcements at play during and after the performance of the ritual. For example, if a person realises that shaving hair during mourning has positive reinforcements, they are more likely to imitate the ritual. However, if the reinforcements are not favourable, the individual is likely to change or reject the ritual.

3.5. Conclusion

The current chapter discussed Social Learning theory, its' concepts and their relevance to the current study. The next chapter presents the research design employed in this study.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1. Introduction

This chapter will focus on the research design that was used during the progression of the research, the research methodology, the ethical implications thereof, as well as steps taken in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the study.

Research design deals with the arrangement of the scientific investigation, designing a plan for discovering something (Babbie, Mouton, Vorster & Prozesky, 2001). There are two main elements of research design. The first aspect is that the researcher must precisely state what it is that they want to investigate, in as much detail as possible. The second aspect is that the researcher needs to find the most effective approach to do it (Babbie et al., 2001).

The scientific investigation includes being observant and then making sense of what one has observed. However, prior to making the observations and the analysis, one needs to have a plan (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). It is important to differentiate between research design and research methodology, as these terms tend to be confused by some researchers. Research methodology refers to the manner in which the researcher will practically investigate what he thinks can be discovered (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

Research design entails devising a plan as to what needs to observed and analysed, the manner and reasons as to how these observations will be made. Therefore, a research design is a plan of how one sets out to do the research (Babbie et al., 2001).

Table 1: Schematic representation of the research design in this study
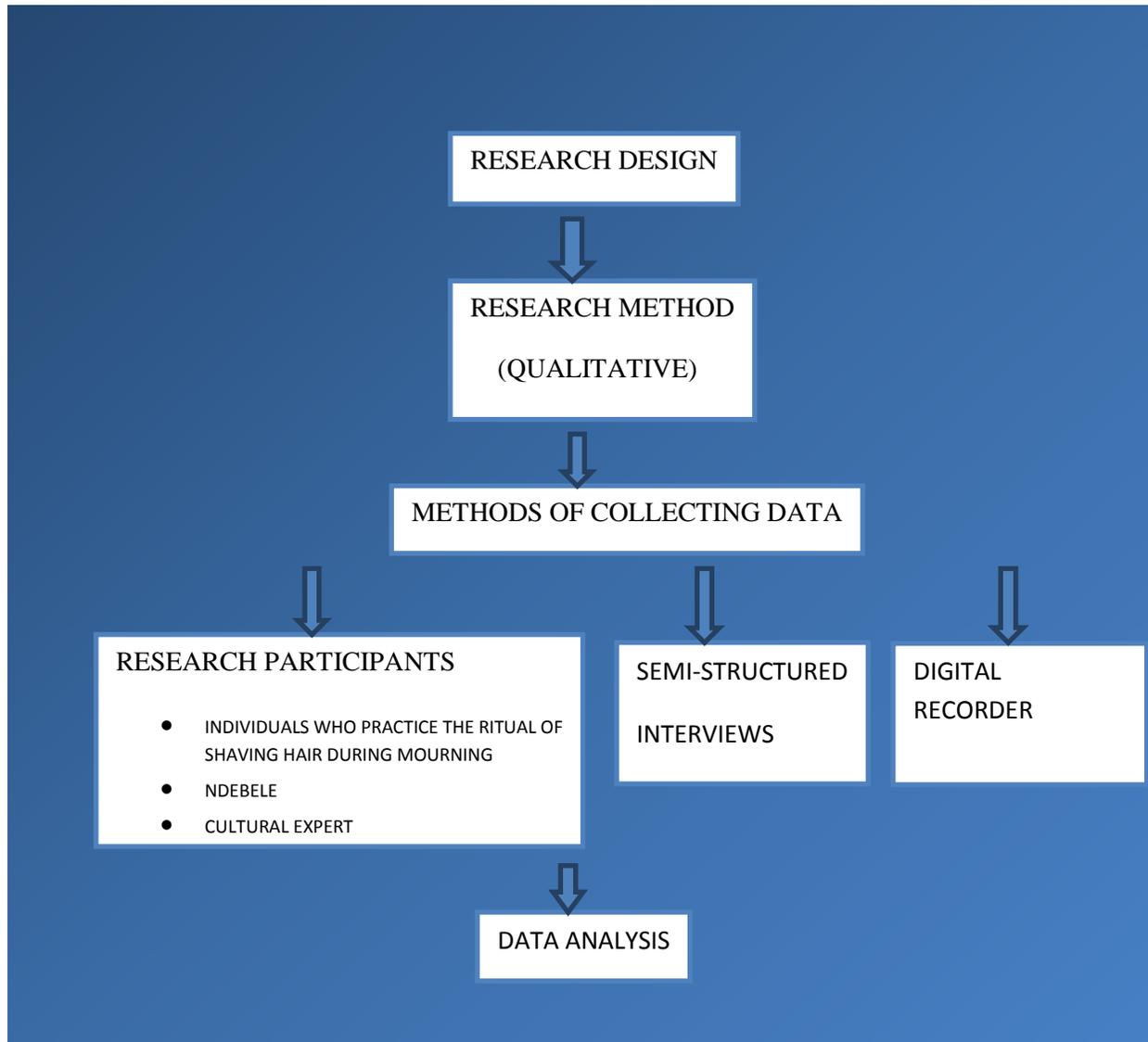
4.2. Research Problem

What is the psychological significance of shaving hair as a ritual during mourning, within the Ndebele culture? The above question has relevance especially in the mainstream psychology field whereby there is not enough literature available about the mourning processes and rituals employed within the Ndebele culture during mourning. This poses a problem because individuals run the risk of being expected to mourn in a manner that is not congruent to their

experience. Hence, dealing with this problem will mean that there will be a heightened awareness of the mourning process and mourning rituals within the Ndebele culture. This awareness will hopefully lead to more integrated intervention strategies that accommodate individuals who incorporate mourning rituals (specifically the shaving hair ritual) as part of the mourning process.

4.3. Research Assumption

The research assumption based on the anticipated findings is that no matter how small the rituals may seem; they might have long term and significant effects in helping individuals and family members to move from one stage to the next during the process of restoration. The above anticipation is based on the researcher's observation that these rituals are considered to be important. As much as the importance attached to the shaving ritual has been observed, it would be interesting to find out what meaning the participants attach to the ritual.

4.4. Research Method

Qualitative research method was used for purposes of this study. Qualitative researchers gather information by means of oral or written language or by means of observations that are documented in language and the information analyzed by finding and labelling themes (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). In this study, information was gathered by means of interviewing participants and information was further analyzed by finding and labelling themes. Qualitative methods enable the researcher to investigate chosen topics with intensity, openness and thoroughly, as they find and try to understand the kinds of information that arise from the information (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

Below are Terre Blanche et al., 2006 illustration of qualitative research inquiry.

Table 2: Themes of Qualitative Inquiry

1.Naturalistic	Studies real-world situations as they unfold naturally; non-manipulative, unobtrusive and non-controlling; openness to whatever emerges-avoids predetermines constraints on outcomes.
2.Holistic	The whole phenomenon under study is understood as a complex system that is more than the sum of its parts; focuses on more complex interdependencies, not meaningfully reduced to a few discreet variables and linear, cause-effect relationships.
3.Inductive	Immersion in the details and specifics of the data to discover important categories, dimensions and interrelationships; begins by exploring genuinely open questions rather than testing theoretically derived (deductive) hypotheses.

Adapted from Terre Blanche et al, (2006, p. 43)

The researcher therefore applied the qualitative method of research because qualitative research enables information to be gathered from the participants using their own words, language, knowledge and understanding (Terre Blanche et al., 2006) Information about the psychological significance of the hair shaving ritual during mourning within the Ndebele culture was gathered from the participants by interviewing them in their own homes, they shared and expressed in their own words and preferred language their experience and meaning attached to the hair shaving ritual during mourning.

Qualitative research is multi method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials-case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts-that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals'' lives *(*Creswell, 1998, p.15). For the purposes of this study, semi structured interviews were used to collect data.

4.4.1. Reasons for conducting qualitative research

In the section to follow there is a provision of some of the main reasons that the researcher chose the qualitative method. The researchers' research question is concerned with exploring the '*what' and* the *how* aspects of the shaving of hair ritual when in mourning (Creswell, 1998). Hence, its significance can be explored. It needs to be noted that both qualitative and quantitative methods could be used in cases where there is limited studies and literature on a phenomena like the hair shaving, however, for the purposes of this study, the qualitative method was chosen to gain an in-depth and thorough understanding of rituals practiced within the Ndebele culture, hence gain a better understanding of the behaviour of participants during those practices (Creswell, 1998). This in-depth approach will help in the further understanding of how the participants construct and perceive their reality of the hair shaving ritual.

It was also important for the researcher to establish rapport with the participants and to make sure that the participants were comfortable, the qualitative method allows for participants to be accessed in their natural environments (Creswell, 1998).

It was important for the researcher to allow the participants to narrate their own stories in a manner and context whereby there were no constraints to time so that they had adequate opportunity to provide in-depth narration of their experiences (Creswell, 1998). Even though the researcher is also part of the Ndebele ethnic group, the researcher has limited knowledge concerning the topic under discussion, hence, she has approached the research as an individual who needs to learn and gain insight into the hair shaving ritual during mourning; in that way, the researcher may be able to narrate what the participants shared from their perspective as 'experts' on the topic under discussion.

In exploring the significance of the hair shaving ritual in healing and restoring the bereaved person, it was important to find out from individuals themselves how they experience this ritual and meanings attached as well as other personal views they shared on this topic. It was important for the participants' voice to be heard instead of making generalized assumptions based on cultural history.

4.4.2. Epistomelogical stance

The research was approached from an Interpretivist Paradigm (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). In exploring the significance of the hair ritual in healing and restoration of the bereaved person, it was important to find out from individuals themselves how they experience this ritual and meanings attached as well as other personal views they might share on this topic. It was important for the participants' voice to be heard instead of making generalized assumptions based on cultural history (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

In general, interpretivitists share the following thinking about the nature of knowing and reality:

Relativist ontology assumes that reality as we know it, is built inter subjectively via the meanings and understandings developed socially and experientially (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

Transactional or subjectivist epistemology assumes that we cannot disconnect ourselves from what we know. The investigator and the object of investigation are connected such that, who we are and how we understand the world is a significant part of how we understand ourselves, others and the world (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). By positing a reality that cannot be separate from our knowledge of it (no separation of subject and object), the Interpretivist model posits that researchers' values are inbuilt in all phases of the research process. Truth is negotiated through conversation (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

Findings or knowledge claims are shaped as an investigation continues. That is, findings surface through conversations in which conflicting interpretations are negotiated among members of a community (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

Practical and moral concerns are important considerations when evaluating interpretive science. Developing a dialogue between researchers and respondents is important (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). It is through this dialectical process that a more informed and sophisticated understanding of the social world can be created (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

All interpretations are found in a particular moment (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). That is, they are situated in a particular context or situation and time. They are open to re-interpretation and negotiation through conversation (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Hence interviews were used by the researcher. These methods guarantee a sufficient discussion between the researchers and those whom they interact with, in order to collaboratively construct a meaningful reality. Generally, meanings are surfacing from the research process (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

Interpretivist positions are based on the theoretical belief that reality is socially created and flexible (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Thus, what we know is always negotiated within cultures, social settings, and relationship with other people (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). From this perspective, legitimacy or truth cannot be grounded in an objective reality. What is taken to be valid or true is negotiated and there can be numerous suitable claims to knowledge (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

The approach that was used for the investigations in this study is that of an interactive inquiry. According to McMillan & Schumacher (2001), interactive inquiry focuses on doing a thorough investigation by means of face-to-face methods used to get information from participants in their usual locations. The researcher understands experiences according to the meaning that people attach to those experiences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001).

4.5. Selection of research participants

4.5.1. Sample characteristics

The sample consisted of 10 Ndebele individuals: three males and seven females, between the ages of 28-97 who have had the experience of their hair shaven during their period of mourning or who have participated in that ritual. There was a big age range to avoid age bias (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). It was important that individuals from different age groups have a fair opportunity of participating in the study irrespective of their age. It was also done to avoid rejecting some individuals because they 'are too young' or 'too old', since the individuals have experienced the shaving hair during different generations and time periods, it will be useful to learn how the shaving of hair ritual has been practiced over time and find out if the meaning attached to the ritual has changed over a period of time or not.

One individual who is knowledgeable or who was considered as an expert on the topic was also considered and interviewed. An expert in this instance would be someone who is knowledgeable about the Ndebele culture, customs, traditions and practices; someone who is familiar with the Ndebele mourning rituals, its language and people. Mourning is an emotionally sensitive phase, hence, individuals who have experienced death in their family within six months when sampling was done were not considered. Recent developments in the understanding of grief and bereavement indicate that for most people, grief intensity is relatively low after a period of about six months (Hall, 2001). This does not suggest that grief is concluded or resolved but rather that it has become better integrated and no longer interferes in the process on-going life (Hall, 2001).

4.5.2. How was the final sample size determined?

The idea of theoretical saturation, taken from Grounded Theory was helpful here and marked the point when the researcher stopped gathering new material (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Saturation happens when new information no longer challenges or adds to the emerging interpretative account; when no significant new information emerges; when category development is dense and rich and when there is a sense that the theoretical account is nearing a complete and sufficient form (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). This is sometimes termed 'sampling to redundancy', because further information becomes increasingly unnecessary, to the extent that it becomes repetitive (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

4.5.3. Sampling method

Snowball sampling (also referred to as chain sampling) was used. Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique whereby a first contact is selected and interviewed and then asked to suggest other interviewees and so on (Babbie et al., 2001). Snowballing was used as it

relies heavily on referrals and by word of mouth. As the sample built up, enough data was collected to be useful for research (Babbie et al., 2001).

In this study, the first participant was selected and then asked to suggest other potential interviewees. This process was applied by collecting data on a few individuals that the researcher could locate and then asked those individuals to provide the information needed to locate other members of the Ndebele culture (who practice the ritual of shaving hair) that they happen to know. Snowball refers to the process of accumulation as each located subject recommend other subjects (Babbie et al., 2001). Hence, participants were obtained from the previous participant's recommendations and referrals. Snowball sampling was useful for constructing networks and increasing the number of participants (Babbie et al., 2001). The more people that could be contacted, the more there was likelihood to also meet experts in this ritual of shaving hair; hence, increasing the effectiveness of the study. It was important that all suggested interviewees were followed up in order to prevent bias, for example, excluding individuals based on gender or location (Babbie et al., 2001).

4.5.4. Why was this method of sampling appropriate to the study?

Snowball sampling was appropriate because it made it easier to find individuals who practice the hair shaving ritual because it might have been difficult to locate them without any referral source. The researcher was referred to other possible participants who share characteristics like similar exposure and experience that made them appropriate for inclusion in the study. Hence this method was useful for identifying individuals within communities that practice the ritual of shaving hair during mourning.

In most black African communities, information and knowledge is passed on from one generation to the next by means of an oral discourse. The elderly are usually the ones who pass down information through teachings and storytelling. However, some of this knowledge comes from experience, whereby individuals learn about their cultural customs and rituals by participating in those rituals. The challenge for this study is that there is limited literature available on the topic under discussion. Hence, there is limited written material available. Using snowball sampling, the researcher was referred to the elders. This was helpful as the researcher was able to also consult with the elderly as they possess in depth knowledge and years of experience as participants in the hair shaving ritual during mourning.

4.6. Procedure

The location of the sample was highly depended on the participants' referrals provided that the referral areas were within the South African borders.

Since the snowballing method was used, before the researcher went to the participants' homes, the referring participant was asked to introduce the researcher to the potential participants. Some of the willing participants were directly approached by the researcher.

Interaction with participants took place in the comfort of their homes so as to appreciate their world 'from the inside out' (Terre Blanche et al., (2006). A context was created whereby there was a good interactive relationship with the participants, so that they felt free to share their stories, knowledge and their subjective experiences pertaining to the shaving hair ritual during mourning. The interaction was with one individual per interview.

4.7. Data collection

Face-to-face interviews were used to collect data. The respondents were interviewed in their homes; questions were asked in search for information. The advantage with using personal interviews is that in-depth information was obtained from semi-structured interviews and probing (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Participants could ask for explanation if they did not understand any of the questions that emerged during the interviews. The shortcoming of using personal interviews was the cost for covering travel expenses (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

Interviewing was used as it is considered to be more natural than giving participants a questionnaire to fill out or giving them a test to do (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Interviews allow for the researcher to communicate with the participant thoroughly and to get a chance to get to know the participants personally (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Since the focus was on the participant's experiences, the interviews were semi-structured.

A semi - structured interview consists of asking respondents to comment on widely defined issues; those interviewed are free to expand on the topic as they see fit, to focus on particular aspects, to relate to their own experiences – the interviewer will only intervene to ask for clarification or further explanation but not to give directives or confront the interviewees with probing questions (Blaxter 2006, p.172, as cited in Yawa, 2010).

The researcher chose to use interviews so as to gain deep insight into the participants' feelings, thoughts, ways of thinking and their experiences. The researcher had an idea of what she wanted to investigate, hence the interviews allowed for the above to be explored in depth (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. For the purposes of this study, information was captured by using a digital voice recorder throughout interviews. The interview was started by using an open-ended question, which was effective as the participants could share about their experiences without any initial leading questions from the researcher (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

According to Blaxter (2006, as cited in Yawa, 2010), the use of a digital recorder enables the researcher to focus on the course of the interview and to be capable of giving and maintaining proper eye contact with the participant.

The advantage of using a recorder is that the researcher was able to capture the complete details of the entire interview without getting side-tracked by the task of taking down notes (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). However, the disadvantage of using a recorder is that the connection between the researcher and the participant may be lost as they both might be distracted by the need to say all the right things in a rehearsed manner instead of having a conversation with each other (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). However, the skills of the researcher as a Clinical Psychologist were helpful in creating rapport with the participants.

Field notes in research are used to keep record of subtler facts of what happened, descriptions of what participants did and expressed (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Minimal field notes were used in this study because the researcher experienced it to be destructive writing notes while interviewing the participants and hence felt she could not give full attention to what the participants were sharing. However, immediately at the end of every interview session, the researcher made more detailed notes in order to record subtler facts of what happened during the interview and description of what participants did.

4.8. Data analysis

After collecting data, one is likely to be faced with a large amount of material that is disjointed and incoherent, hence, according to Blaxter (2006, as cited in Yawa, 2010), data analysis needs to be done in order to arrange structure and consolidate all the information received from the participants. The results will be presented in a form of a table; analysing data in this layout may assist the researcher to find confirmation and rejection of the findings (Yawa, 2010).

The kind of qualitative method of analysis that was used is the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method. It is concerned with trying to understand lived experiences and with how participants themselves make meaning of their experiences (Smith, 2011). Therefore it is centrally interested with the meanings which those experiences hold for the participants. It desires to investigate an individual's personal perception or account of an event or state as opposed to trying to create an objective record of the event or state itself (Smith, 2011). At the same time, while trying to get close to the participant's personal world, IPA considers that one cannot do this directly or completely (Smith, 2011). Access to the participant's personal world is reliant on the researcher's own thoughts which are essential to make sense of that other personal world through a process of interpretative activity (Smith, 2011). A second important theoretical current for IPA is, therefore, hermeneutics- the theory of interpretation (Smith, 2011).

Interpretive analysis uses qualitative methodology (Smith, 2011). Most interpretive analysis work has been conducted using in-depth interviews which allows the participant to provide a full, rich account and allow the researcher substantial flexibility in questioning interesting areas which transpire (Smith, 2011). Interviews are audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim and subjected to detailed qualitative analysis - attempting to obtain the key experiential themes in the

participant's talk. Interpretive analysis is an inductive approach (it is 'bottom up' rather than 'top down') (Reid, Flowers & Larkin, 2005). It does not investigate hypotheses, and former assumptions are avoided. It aims to describe and explore the meanings that participants attach to their experiences (Reid et al., 2005). Participants are knowledgeable on their own experiences and can offer researchers an understanding of their thoughts, commitments and feelings through telling their own stories, in their own words, and in as much detail as possible (Reid et al, 2005).

Terre Blanche et al., (2006) provide some analytic steps as guidelines in interpretive analysis. The steps include familiarization and immersion, inducing themes, coding, elaboration and interpretation and checking.

4.8.1. Familiarization and immersion

In this stage, the researcher went through her material as much as possible. The researcher needed to know her material thoroughly. This was achieved by reading through the collected material repeatedly. At this stage, the researcher already needs to have a basic understanding and meaning of her material (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

4.8.2. Inducing themes

In this stage, the researcher was able to generate some of the themes that emerge in the data that was collected. It is advisable to avoid merely provide a synopsis of the data (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

4.8.3. Coding

Coding *"entails marking different sections of the data as being instances of, or relevant to, one or more of your themes. You might code a phrase, a line, a sentence, a paragraph, identifying*

these textual 'bits' by virtue of their containing material that pertains to the themes under consideration. The content of the text might refer to a discreet idea, explanation or event, and any textual 'bit' might be labelled with more than one code if it refers to more than one theme" (Terre Blanche et al., 2006, p. 143).

4.8.4. Elaboration

This stage involves a thorough scrutiny of the researchers' data (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The researcher compared the information as it was viewed when collected data versus when one immersed oneself in the data (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). In this stage, the researcher may realize that information that was grouped together as similar might actually be different or that within certain themes, there exist sub-themes (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Hence the researcher arranged and re-arranged the data until she had a good conceptualization of what is happening in the data.

4.8.5. Interpretation and checking

This is the final step, where there needs to be an integration of the researcher's interpretations (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). In this study, data was analyzed in terms of identifying and elaborating on themes from the information and experiences shared by the respondents, recording similarities and differences.

The themes were guided by the participant's verbatim responses: words/expressions and some of the consulted literature. The themes were further divided into subthemes based on an inclusion criterion as per main theme.

Table 3: Illustration of the analysis of data

PARTICIPANTS	DATA ANALYSIS 1	DATA ANALYSIS 2
*Ndebele *Practice the hair shaving ritual during mourning *Male and female *Participants in the ritual *Knowledgeable/ cultural expert	Data received from participants was analyzed individually by means of identifying and elaborating on themes.	Data received from all participants will be compared and contrasted based on the themes that emerged.

4.9. Ethical considerations

Ethical validity is the recognition that the choices we make through the research process have political and ethical importance (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). There is a need to always reflect careful attention to the ethical issues personified in the research project. Ethical research planning is important so as to protect the wellbeing and the rights of the research participants (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Three ethical principles were considered: autonomy, non-malfeasance and beneficence (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The following ethical issues were considered: informed consent, protection from harm, anonymity and confidentiality; freedom to withdraw and deception of subjects.

Autonomy: there needs to be a respect of the independence of all persons taking part in the research work, hence the issue of *consent* and *confidentiality* needs to be dealt with (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).   There should not be fabrication of data in the publications and the limitations of findings were pointed out (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).   Participants' questions were answered even after the research work had started. Debriefing after the conclusion of the study is also an important recognition of the autonomy and dignity of participants.

Non-malfeasance: there was no harm to research participants; potential risks that the research may cause were taken into account whether it was physical, emotional or psychological. In planning research, the issue of *competence* is also important as the researcher should only perform procedures that she is competent to perform. There was no additional procedures performed by the researcher in the study, however if help was needed, suitable professional resources would have been identified and consulted. Resources may include books on relevant literature, relevant and current recent research guidelines; ethics board guidelines of South Africa, for example, Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), qualified researchers and qualified psychologists.

Beneficence: what is hoped for is that the research will be of assistance to the research participants or more broadly to other researchers, psychologists and society at large.

4.9.1. Informed consent

There needs to be a respect of the independence of all persons taking part in the research work, hence the issue of *consent* needs to be addressed (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The participants signed a consent form; consent was voluntary and informed (the responsibilities expected of the

participants were clearly explained so that they were able to make an informed decision to take part voluntarily in the research).

In most cases, social research implies that there will be a disturbance in people's lives (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This is so because when a researcher asks a participant to be part of their research and the participant agrees, there is a strong likelihood that the research will take a lot of time and energy from the participant, this may also include a re-arrangement of the participant's daily schedule (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

In social research, participant's may be expected to share private information, information that may not be known even to the participants close family and friends (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Hence it is crucial to emphasize to the participants that taking part in the research is voluntary and no individual should be coerced into taking part in a research (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Hence the individual needs to be informed beforehand about the type of research and any dangers thereof, so that the individual may make an informed decision whether they would like to participate in the research or not (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The individual should also be informed that participation does not mean that the participant will receive any form of payments (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

In this study, the researcher notified the participants concerning the rationale of the study. The research participants were informed that they were not forced to take part in the study and they were also not forced to continue should they wish to withdraw at any stage. The fact that participants have the choice to pull out at any time from the research was respected. The participants were also informed that should the need arise; their answers may be quoted verbatim

in the study. The researcher in this study attained informed consent of her participants by means of a consent form; signed by both the researcher and participants.

4.9.2. Protection from harm

There should be no harm to research participants or to any other person or group of persons, potential risks that the research may cause need to be taken into account, physical, emotional, or other forms of harm on any person or creature engaged in the study (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). In this study, the researcher gave assurance to the participants that every effort will be made to minimize these risks. The participants were also informed that should they possibly feel some emotional and psychological discomfort and the need for counselling arises, they will be referred to the relevant sources.

Mourning is an emotionally sensitive phase, hence, individuals who have experienced death in their family within six months when sampling was done were not considered. Since the topic explores the mourning rituals and connected to that were issues of loss and bereavement, the researcher was considerate and delicate in the manner in which the interviews were conducted given the sensitive nature of the research topic and being thoughtful that it might place some participants in a vulnerable position, for example, re-telling their stories while they were in mourning may be difficult.

The researcher was also aware of the cultural contexts of the study, hence when referring to older participants, she would not address them using their first name; rather she used the word 'sisi', when referring to older woman, 'bhuti' when referring to older men, 'gogo' when addressing the elderly woman and 'mkhulu' when addressing the elderly men.

4.9.3. Anonymity and confidentiality

The participants were assured of the limits of confidentiality of the information supplied by them (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Any limits of confidentiality were specified, for example, the intentional format of publication of the research results were specified (video, audio, text, academic or popular), and the participants were informed that the research results will be used for academic publication in a form of a printed thesis. *Results* of studies should be published with careful consideration to the rights of participants. The identities of individuals were protected as secrecy was guaranteed in the consent contract. Debriefing after the conclusion of the study is also an important recognition of the autonomy and dignity of participants (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). No participant expressed the need for debriefing and counselling, however, should they express that need in future; they will be referred for counselling. The information such as contact information where therapy services are available was provided to the participants.

In this study, in order to protect the participants' identity, they were given pseudonyms in the order of their participation. For example the first participant was named P1 (participant 1) and the last participant was named P10 (participant 10). However, the cultural expert gave oral consent so that their name may be mentioned in the study.

It is also recommended that once the research is completed, the researcher may remove any identifying information from their records when they will no longer need it (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Hence once the study is completed and the researcher won't need those identifying details for future reference, she will delete that information.

4.9.4. Freedom to withdraw

The fact that participants have the choice to pull out at any time form the research needs to be respected (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).   Johnson & Christensen (2004) warns that in some instances, the participants may still feel compelled to continue with the study even after knowing that they have the ability to withdraw. The researcher emphasized to the participants that withdrawing from the research will not have negative consequences for them.

In this study, the researcher informed the participants that it is within their right should they wish to stop participating in the study. In the event that participants were experiencing feelings of discomfort, they still can choose to withdraw from the study.

4.9.5. Deception of subjects

Deception of subjects includes the concealment of information and providing wrong information to the participants (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This also includes lying about the reasons why the research is done (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

In this study, the researcher provided the participants with accurate and truthful information and gave information regarding the research including why research is done and for whom. The participants were advised to ask questions should they need explanation or were confused about questions posed to them. Participants' questions were answered even after the research work had started.

4.10. Trustworthiness of the study

The researcher took the responsibility in an attempt to make sure that the study was trustworthy. In order to ascertain the trustworthiness of the study, the following four criteria were taken into account: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Shenton, 2004).

4.10.1. Credibility

One of the main issues that need to be addressed is that of internal validity, whereby one needs to make sure that the study evaluates what is was meant to evaluate to begin with (Shenton, 2004). In this study, the focus was on evaluating the psychological significance of shaving hair as a ritual during mourning, within the Ndebele culture. The following conditions were adhered to by the researcher in order to ensure the credibility of the study:

a) The research design and methods that were used in the study are well known and recognised in qualitative research (Shenton, 2004).

b) Before the initial interviews were done, the researcher met with most of the participants beforehand to enhance her awareness and understanding of the participants' contexts (Shenton, 2004).

c) From the onset, in order to guarantee an optimum level of honesty from the participants, the participants were given an opportunity by the researcher to decline partaking in the study, they were also given an option to withdraw in the process should they no longer want to be part of the study (Shenton, 2004). In this manner, the participants participated willingly, without any expectations or rewards and were more likely to be honest. The participants were therefore able to share about their experiences openly and freely (Shenton, 2004).

d) The researcher involved her peers in the process of the research project in order for them to study and analyse the research and give her feedback (Shenton, 2004). This was useful as some of the questions raised by her peers challenged her to consider other different approaches where necessary. The researcher was made aware of her shortfalls due to her closeness in relation to the research topic; hence by involving her peers, the researcher was able to improve on some of the aspects of the study (Shenton, 2004).

e) For the purposes of this study, the researcher also made time to constantly consult with her supervisor. This is consistent with Reason & Rowan's (1981) ideas of the usefulness and relevance of having a co-researcher and supervisor. The supervisor's inputs and feedback were useful in exploring the different ways and angles in which the study was approached. The supervisor particularly interrogated the researchers' analysis and interpretation of data and ensured that methods and processes of the research were applicable and relevant to the research purpose.

4.10.2. Transferability

Even though the study was done using 10 participants, it might have been difficult to ensure that the results of the study will be applicable to a larger population (Shenton, 2004). In an attempt to ensure the applicability of the study to other communities and environments, the researcher used participants that were from different contexts, from different age groups and different experiences in terms of how they practice the hair shaving ritual during mourning. In this manner, the researcher hopes that the study will be transferable and applicable to the wider Ndebele community. With that said, when hoping for transferrable results, the researcher should always consider the role of context in the qualitative study (Shenton, 2004).

4.10.3. Dependability

In order to deal with the issue of dependability, the researcher described the journey of the research thoroughly; in the hope that should there be a researcher who wants to undertake a same project in future, they will have a clear guideline (Shenton, 2004). There were different sections within different chapters dedicated to specific topics. For example, there were sections discussing specifically the research design and its application, thorough information on the process of data collection was provided as well as the advantages of qualitative enquiry undertaken in the study (Shenton, 2004).

4.10.4. Confirmability

"Here steps must be taken to help ensure as far as possible that the work's findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher" (Shenton, 2004, p.72). Hence, detailed information about how the study was done and advanced was explained in this current chapter; including the reasons and motivation for choosing certain preferred research methods and approaches for the study by highlighting the strengths and the weaknesses of some of the procedures used in the study (Shenton, 2004).

The provisions that may be made by a qualitative researcher in a quest for trustworthiness are summarised in the table below.

Table 4: Summary of the measures to ensure trustworthiness: adapted from (Shenton, 2004, p. 73).

Quality Criterion	Possible provision made by researcher
Credibility	Adoption of appropriate, well recognised research methods
	Development of early familiarity with culture of participating organisations
	Random sampling of individuals serving as informants
	Triangulation via use of different methods, different types of informants and different sites
	Tactics to help ensure honesty in informants
	Iterative questioning in data collection dialogues
	Negative case analysis
	Debriefing sessions between researcher and superiors
	Peer scrutiny of project
	Use of 'reflective commentary'
	Description of background, qualifications and experience of the researcher

	Member checks of data collected and interpretations/theories formed
	Thick description of phenomenon under scrutiny
	Examination of previous research to frame findings
Transferability	Provision of background data to establish context of study and detailed description of phenomenon in question to allow comparisons to be made
Dependability	Employment of "overlapping methods" In-depth methodological description to allow study to be repeated
Confirmability	Triangulation to reduce effect of investigator bias Admission of researcher's beliefs and assumptions Recognition of shortcomings in study's methods and their potential effects In-depth methodological description to allow integrity of research results to be scrutinised Use of diagrams to demonstrate "audit trail"

4.11. Conclusion

For the purposes of this study, qualitative research was used. There was a use of semi-structured interviews as a means of collecting data from the participants. A digital voice recorder was used in order to assist the researcher to have a record of the exact information that was shared by the participants.

Furthermore, the information that was gathered from the participants was analysed by identifying themes, recording similarities and differences. The information was further compared and contrasted based on the themes that arose.

Finally, the following ethical issues were considered in the study: informed consent, protection from harm, anonymity and confidentiality; freedom to withdraw and none deception of subjects. As well as the four criteria (credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability) that may be considered by qualitative researchers in an attempt to guarantee a trustworthy study.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction

This chapter contains a summary of the findings that were gathered from the data collected in the ten in-depth interviews that were done. As mentioned previously that the qualitative method of research was used, hence thick descriptive information will be used to support the findings. Hence, the participants' responses will be quoted verbatim. Findings based on the data collected will be presented by inducing and elaborating on the themes that emerged within the different interviews. It is important to note that in some of the interviews, the themes overlapped. Data received from all participants will be compared and contrasted based on the themes that emerged.

At this stage, it would be crucial to reconsider the aim of the study. The aim of this study was to explore the psychological significance of rituals (specifically hair shaving ritual) during the mourning process within the Ndebele culture. The focus was on the *rituals* that are performed or conducted during the mourning process that will be useful in an attempt to reach a state of healing and restoration. By ritual/s, there is a reference specifically to the shaving of hair but this also includes a process or series of activities related or included during the shaving of hair. This will include other related rituals before, during and after the shaving of hair. Through this exploration, a deeper understanding of the value of rituals was developed.

A brief background for each of the research participants is provided. Pseudo names were used to protect the identity of each research participant. The cultural experts' real name (i.e. John Skosana who is participant 3) will be used as verbal consent was obtained from him. This is done so as to add to the reliability of the study. He is considered to be a cultural expert within his community as well as knowledgeable about the Ndebele culture; he both went through the experience of shaving hair during mourning as well as participated in facilitating the process of hair shaving during mourning in his community. All the interviews were conducted in isiNdebele language as the participants were comfortable in conversing in their own language. The researcher was also able to translate the interviews into English as she is Ndebele as well.

To conclude this chapter, a summary of the above findings will be provided.

5.2. Brief background for each research participant

Participant 1 is a 63 year old male who is a pensioner, married with children. Participant 2 is a 54 year old female who is employed, married with children. Participant 3 (as mentioned above) is John Skosana, a 59 year old male. He is employed at the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) as a Sports Organizer. Participant 4 is a 28 year old male who is unemployed and residing with his parents. Participant 5 is a 97 years old female who is a pensioner and resides with one of her grandchildren.

Participant 6 is an 86 year old female who is a pensioner. Participant 7 is an 80 year old female who is a pensioner. Participant 8 is a 72 year old female, she is also a pensioner. Participant 9 is a 48 year old female, married with four children; she is also a traditional healer. Participant 10 is a 77 year old female, she is a pensioner, and she is also the aunt of the deceased South African struggle hero Solomon Mahlangu.

5.3. Themes and sub-themes extrapolated from the interviews

Table 5: Main themes and sub-themes emerging from the transcripts

THEMES AND SUBTHEMES	ELABORATION ON THEMES
Striving for Wholeness Healing New beginnings Acceptance Strength to accept Removal of tears and pain Letting go Renewal Alleviates pain	Striving for wholeness The theme derived from participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10) is that of Striving for wholeness. Research findings by Shaktivirya (2014) supports the theme of striving for wholeness as: "*Being in a state of wholeness means completely free of wound or injury with nothing missing and everything complete, perfect, unbroken and uncut; perfectly healthy and free of any defect, deformity, mistake or impairment*" (Shaktivirya, 2014: p.1). The subthemes were derived from the participants' verbatim responses. Any word, expression, statement or description by the participants referring to healing, new beginnings, acceptance, strength to accept, removal of tears and pain; letting go, renewal and alleviation of pain was included in this criterion. Healing

	The participants (1, 2, 5 and 7) reported that they believe that the ritual of shaving hair during mourning is meaningful because it helps to bring about healing. They expressed the need to accept the passing of a loved one, hence shaving hair reinforces on that acceptance and helps one to let go of the old hair (that represents the past) and embrace the new hair when it grows anew (the future). The participants reported that they believe that the ritual of shaving hair during mourning is meaningful as it helps to bring about newness and freshness.
	The subtheme of healing is perceived to be symbolic in a sense that even though the participants may not be certain that they will heal and even though they are not guaranteed that the shaved hair will grow again; they have hope and a belief that the ritual will at some stage result in the anticipated healing.
	Participant 1 reported that: *"Yes it helps because when you have shaved your hair, you do it mainly to heal emotionally and spiritually..."*

	Participant 2 reported that: *"But for the person who has accepted the ritual and understands why it has to be done and willingly cuts the hair, that individual will find healing."*
	Participant 5 reported that: *"Yes it helps with healing because the old hair has been removed, so it does help"*
	Participant 7 reported that: *"Yes, the hair is removed and burnt with combined with herbs, they call you then you all cover yourselves under one blanket, then you inhale the smoke, then your hearts will heal and you will be soothed and you will accept that your loved one is gone"*
	<u>New beginnings</u>
	The participants (1, 2, 3 and 4) expressed the importance of shaving hair during mourning as it helps in entering a new stage in one's life, a new situation that is better.
	Participant 1 reported that: *"But when I shave hair and thereafter go back to work, only then I can forget because I*

	have a sign that I was bereaved but the funeral has passed and we can move on now".
	Participant 2 reported that: *"Hence by cutting, the hair would grow anew... When it is cut, you allow for the hair to grow afresh/anew."*
	Mr Skosana reported that: *"Shaving has to do with the fact that we are crying and we have sent off the deceased, now let us enter into a new situation that is better, one that focuses on wiping off our tears because we have sent off the deceased and they are gone".*
	Participant 4 reported that: *"The reasoning behind shaving for me is to remove something that has passed and to enter into something anew. So that that someone won't dwell on the past"*
	This is consistent with Davis's (2008), assertion that for there to be a new self, the old self must ritually die. Hence,

shaving off hair signifies an expression of removing an old identity. People grow to be 'part of' each other and hence when one dies a part of one's self perishes as well. Hence, shaving of hair is significant as it signifies the portion of one's self that dies as well.

According to Davies's (2003) research findings, through this ritual form of shaving hair, the living people in a symbolic sense 'die' and are 're-born' as new types of individuals, detaching old, used-up selves so new ones can take their place. Not only are they given a new position but they will also have gone through inner changes to their sense of identity (Davies, 2003).

Acceptance

The subtheme of acceptance was shared by participants 1 and 7. The participants mainly reported on the acceptance of the death of a loved one and living a life without them.

Participant 1 reported that: *"You know that after cutting hair, you acknowledge and accept that your loved one is dead. You can accept and move on with life and not think and dwell on the past"*.

	Participant 7 reported that: *"It will help you to accept; hence you will agree to have your hair shaven off"*
	This is consistent with Marks's (2004), ideas on acceptance; that in order to acknowledge and understand the loss (on an emotional and intellectual level) of the lost object and to accept that the individual will not come back, it is crucial for an individual to make meaning of the loss instead of trying to minimise it. This process may be assisted with the use of rituals.
	Strength to accept
	Participant 7 expressed that the hair shaving ritual during mourning has healing effects to the individual and the family as a whole. It helps one to accept the death and loss of the loved one and participating in the ritual further helps one to have strength to overcome the difficult phase of mourning and have the strength to accept and move on with one's life.

	Participant 7 reported that: *"Then you will have the strength to accept that this person is gone."* As mentioned by Setsiba (2012) in his research finding, the rituals have a therapeutic role as to assist in bringing back the mourning individuals to their wholesome condition. They also help the family members to express their emotions. Anderson's (2003) assertion that since life is concentrated in the hair, shaving the hair symbolizes death, and its growing once more is a sign of the strengthening of life. Life may be strengthened through acceptance, it helps one to accept the death and loss of the loved one and participating in the ritual further helps one to have strength to accept in order to overcome and better cope with the difficult phase of mourning and have the strength to move on with one's life. Removal of tears and pain Participant 8 expressed that the shaving hair ritual is significant as the removal of hair served as a representation

	of the removal of tears and pain experienced after the death of a loved one.
	"According to my understanding, shaving hair was done as a removal of tears and pain... even though you can never end the tears but it helps to a certain extent".

According to Marks's (2004) research findings: in order to acknowledge and understand the loss (on an emotional and intellectual level) of the lost object and to accept that the individual will not come back, it is crucial for an individual to make meaning of the loss instead of trying to minimise it. This process may be assisted with the use of rituals. For example, the writing of and about the loss experience is recommended in order to help with the expression and possibly with the alleviation of pain in the early stages of loss. For some individuals this may enhance physical health and boost feelings of comfort.

Letting go

Participant 9 revealed that in performing the ritual of shaving hair, there lays the ability to have the strength to let go of the deceased and accept that the loved one is no more. |

	"You remove the hair so that you may forget…because if you don't do that you will find that you remember the person and it may be difficult to move forward with your life because you are still holding on to them" This is consistent with Davis's (2008) assertion that for there to be a new self, the old self must ritually die. Hence, shaving off hair signifies an expression of removing an old identity. People grow to be 'part of' each other and hence when one dies a part of one's self perishes as well. Hence, shaving of hair is significant as it signifies the portion of one's self that dies as well. Renewal Participant 9 expressed the importance of shaving hair during mourning as it will provide a sense of renewal, especially the renewal in spirit after the experience of dampened spirits due to loss of a loved one. *"Then afterwards…new hair will grow…the person will be cleansed and they will be renewed".*

	According to Davies's (2003) research findings, through this ritual form of shaving hair, the living people in a symbolic sense 'die' and are 're-born' as new types of individuals, detaching old, used-up selves so new ones can take their place. Not only are they given a new position but they will also have gone through inner changes to their sense of identity.
	Alleviates pain
	Participant 10 expressed that after shaving the hair during mourning, there is a sense that some of the pain has been reduced and lifted off.
	"It helps with the pain"
	Even though the participant could not elaborate on how the pain will be alleviated, it appears that the ritual is performed in the hopes that there will be some relief of the emotional pain and sorrow that one is going through.
	According to Marks (2004), in order to acknowledge and

	understand the loss (on an emotional and intellectual level) of the lost object and to accept that the individual will not come back, it is crucial for an individual to make meaning of the loss instead of trying to minimise it. This process may be assisted with the use of rituals. For example, the writing of and about the loss experience is recommended in order to help with the expression and possibly with the alleviation of pain in the early stages of loss. For some individuals this may enhance physical health and boost feelings of comfort (Marks, 2004).
	The main similarity amongst the participants was that the shaving hair ritual is meaningful as it helps in facilitating a process to reach an anticipated state of healing and wholeness. The similarity lies in the belief that when one accepts the passing of a loved one, they will also be able to let go of them and hence move on with their lives; hence being able to embrace the concept of new beginnings, renewal and starting afresh with one's life.

Both participant 8 and participant 10 put emphasis on the belief that shaving hair during mourning alleviates pain |

	experienced due to the loss of a loved one.
	However in the case of participant 4, even though he expressed feelings of uncertainty surrounding the connection between the hair shaving ritual and its healing significance, he did express that the ritual is significant in helping those in mourning to let go of the past and move on with one's life after the experience of death. What was significant was in the case of participant 7 whereby she put more emphasis on the communal nature of the shaving ritual and its significant contribution to help achieve a state of anticipated healing. She expressed that the hair shaving ritual during mourning has healing effects to the individual and the family as a whole.
Outward expression of mourning Sign of Loss	Outward expression of mourning Outward expression of mourning refers to the external expression of feelings or thoughts of mourning. For example, this may include crying and talking about the deceased. The subthemes were derived from the participants' (1, 2, 3, 4,5,6,7 and 10) verbatim responses. Any word, expression, statement or description by the participants referring to the outward expression of

Loss of freedom of movement	mourning, loss, sign of loss, and loss of freedom of movement was included in this criterion.
	The participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 7 and 10) expressed the importance of informing other people and those around them when in mourning. Hence, shaving hair is important as it will be a sign to others that one is in mourning and hence, there won't be a need for one to explain their condition, the state of being in mourning. The participants expressed the need to shave hair as a sign of mourning.
	Participant 1 reported that : *It is done so that people may see that at home someone has passed away"*
	Participant 2 reported that: **"*When someone is in mourning, she shaves the hair as an indication that someone has passed away in the family"*.
	Mr. Skosana reported that : *Then there comes a time when someone is in mourning, whether a man or a woman, there comes a time when they shave their hair…to indicate that*

	they are in mourning"
	Participant 4 reported that : "*….Firstly, we shave our hair when in mourning"*
	Participant 7 reported that: **"***You remove the hair to show that you are in mourning***"**
	Participant 10 reported that *"A young person, maybe who is not yet married, when they get buried today for example, the following day we all shave our heads…why? To show that someone has passed away"*
	This is consistent with Mark's (2004) research findings and views that traditionally; mourning has been understood as the cultural or public expression of grief through one's behaviours which may be indicative of the likelihood that it mainly occurs in the company of others and not in isolation. As well as Setsiba's (2012) statement that during mourning rituals offer a chance for the family and community members to publicly show their grief.

	<u>Sign of Loss</u>
	Participant 7 reported that: *"They shaved our hair as an indication of loss, for example as a loss for your husband"*.
	Davies (2003) mentioned that people grow to be 'part of' each other and hence when one dies a part of one's self perishes as well. Hence, shaving of hair is significant as it signifies the portion of one's self that dies as well. Some theories of grief argue this in terms of attachment and understand bereavement as the loss that follows when attachments are removed.
	According to Cohen's (2002) research findings, all rites of passage need to adhere to a certain pattern. A rite of separation is adhered to by a rite of change and ends with a rite of integration. The central ideas of separation, change and integration are part of every life cycle ritual; however each is distinctly focused on according the group and the occasion. Rites of separation are significant in death, phases in death, pregnancy, an engagement and initiation and integration in marriage. Separation refers to the letting go of a previously social identity, a necessity for

progressing into a new social status in the social structure. To be born requires a transition from the world of the unborn to the community of the living. To die is to leave the world of the living and pass into the home of foregoers. To mourn is to disconnect as a wife or husband, to become a widow or widower.

Loss of Freedom of Movement

Participating in the shaving hair ritual is another way of denying oneself of being involved and partaking in common day to day activities. Some of the participants in this study (particularly women) experienced restrictions in terms of the attire that one is required to wear. This may also include being denied interacting with certain people and not going to certain places; this involves a process of restrictions.

Even though the researcher acknowledges the value and motive behind some restrictions, it would be of value to consider the fact that people mourn in different ways and hence people need to be given that space to mourn in a manner that resonates with them without any restrictions

	and boundaries.
	Participant 5 reported that: *"In addition to shaving your hair, as a woman you also have to wear clothes assigned to you to be worn during mourning as an indication that you are in mourning"*
	Participant 6 reported that: *"When in mourning…others shave their hair, as it means and shows that someone close to you has passed away…You need to spend one year staying at home in the yard. After that period of mourning has passed, then only then can you out to meet with other people, not while you are still in mourning"*.
	This is consistent with Davies' (2003) idea that during the period of mourning, individuals are at times removed from their communities, for example, a widow is expected to remain indoors for a specified period of time (e.g. not going to work or even leaving the place of residence). The mourner gets integrated into society only after this period of isolation is concluded.
	One common expression by the participants was that the

	shaving hair ritual during mourning is significant because it is an indication to others that one is in mourning and hence, there won't be a need for one to explain their condition, the state of being in mourning. It is an outward expression of mourning. In addition to the above, participant 7 not only considered the hair shaving ritual during mourning as an expression of mourning but also as a sign of loss.
Participation and involvement Community involvement Children involvement Allocation of different roles and responsibilities	Participation and involvement Participation and involvement refers to the taking part in the mourning rituals and sharing in the activities that are involved within the hair shaving ritual. The subthemes were derived from the participants' verbatim responses. Any word, expression, statement or description by the participants referring to community involvement, children involvement, allocation of different roles and responsibilities was included in this criterion. The participants (1, 2, 3, 4 and 7) expressed the importance of involving others, including children in mourning. There

is a belief that the pain of losing a loved one should be shared with others, especially the community around you because it is believed that a loss to an individual is a loss to the rest of the community.

According to research findings by Berg (2012), most of the traditional rituals are not documented; their existence is transferred from generation through participation. Each individual thinks and perceives these experiences subjectively and attach their own meaning to it (Berg, 2012).

Community Involvement

Participant 1 reported that: *"By doing that the neighbours will also know that in the family there is a funeral"*.

Participant 2 reported that: *"Yes people will support you and encourage you in their different ways. That will also lead to healing…"*

Gluckman (1966) acknowledges that one of the characteristics of rituals is that they are communal and there is an important emphasis on the support from the

	supernatural so as to put into effect conformity.
	<u>Children involvement</u>
	The participants (1, 2, 3, 4 and 7) mentioned that as much as children may not grasp fully the importance of shaving hair, it is of importance to involve children in the process of rituals, so that they will know about the rituals as it is part of their culture. However, Parachin (2014) differs in that he argues that it is crucial to firstly consult with the children and to ask them if they would like to participate or not and should be given an opportunity to make that decision for themselves. Should they agree to participate, they need to be given a full explanation as to what the ritual entails before the actual performance of that ritual.
	The researcher supports the involvement of children in the cultural practices and rituals; however, it would be more valuable to educate the children about the culture and rituals, their value and significance. In that manner, the children will be able to make informed decisions as they grow up whether they would like to partake in the rituals or

	not.
	Participant 1 reported that: *"All children should be shaved"*
	Participant 2 reported that: *"…When you are a family member…the children of the deceased have to be shaved."*
	Mr Skosana reported that: *"Traditionally, when there is a funeral, children were sent to the neighbours until after the funeral, then they can be allowed to come back home. When they come back home that is when their heads were shaved"*
	Participant 4 reported that: *"So I can say that even if the child has not gone to the cemetery, they still have to shave of their hair because there is death within their family".*
	Participant 7 reported that: *"Children are not aware of anything; they just call them so that they can be included in the process".*

	Allocation of different roles and responsibilities
	The participants (1, 2, and 3) expressed the importance of knowing your role during mourning and during the performance rituals; everyone is allocated their specific roles and duties that need to be adhered to.
	Participant 1 reported that: *"The procedure is this…at home, if for example a father has passed away, the first person who should be cut hair is the mother. She should be cut by a widower or widow. She can't be cut just by anyone. Children can be cut by anyone. Anyone who can cut hair can cut the children. If the wife has passed away, the first person to be cut is the husband. Same applies to the husband; he has to be shaved by another widower…a male"*
	Participant 2 reported that: **"…***But the wife of husband who passed away cannot just be cut by anyone…An elder is responsible for that task. Grown up people do that. Like a 'gogo' whose husband has passed away. Whether a male or female…as long as the person who does the cutting is*

	also a widow or a widower"
	Mr Skosana reported that: *"Yes, when everyone is shaving at home; amongst women, there is a woman allocated, amongst men, there is a man allocated to do that task".*
	According to Hockings' (2010) research findings, within socialisation, there exists a distinction between individuals because of their gender. Even during any funeral, there is a clear distinction between the genders. This further implies that there are separate rules and processes applied in the treatments of the male and female corpse. Hence, there exist distinct responsibilities for male and female individuals involved in the rituals.
	The common trend that exists among all participants is that mourning is shared with others, whether it is family members or the community. The difference is present in the issues surrounding involvement and allocation of roles as well as the involvement of children during the practice of mourning rituals.

	What is important to note is that participant 4 described the importance of involving children in the hair shaving ritual during mourning not only for the sake of involvement but also so that this ritual may be passed on to the next generations, in that way this practice can be upheld for generations to come.
Need for Disconnection Avoidance of misfortunes Removal of the shadow of the dead person Cleansing (removal of dirt associated with death) and purification	Need for Disconnection In this study, the need for disconnection refers to the need to separate, detach and break any link associated with death or the darkness associated with death. The subthemes were derived from the participants' (1, 2,3,4,5,7,8,9 and 10) verbatim responses. Any word, expression, statement or description by the participants referring to the avoidance of misfortunes, removal of the shadow of the dead person, cleansing, purification, removal of the deceased's spirit; removal of darkness associated with death, removal of fear and removal of feelings of irritability and agitation was included in this criterion.

Removal of deceased's Spirit and darkness associated with death Removal of fear Removal of feelings of irritability and agitation	<u>Avoidance of misfortunes</u> The participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10) believe that it is important to adhere to the cultural rituals and practices; hence, it is important to practice the ritual of shaving hair during mourning. There is a belief that if this is not adhered to, it might lead to misfortunes and things going wrong in one's life. There is a belief that there are negative consequences when cultural practices and rituals are not adhered to. The participants expressed that there is a belief that the mourning rituals are done as a sign of respect to the ancestors and failure to do so may result in misfortunes. Bereavement occurs within the context of families and society at large and this is evident in their interaction. Particular bereavement rituals are different in accordance to the cultural diversity of an individual. After the death of an individual, if some cultural rituals are not adhered to, there can be a negative effect on the family of the deceased and the consequences may be unresolved bereavement and lack of closure (Waliggo 2006).

	Participant 1 reported that: **"*When you shave your hair….how can I put it…. it is so that you don't have bad luck sometime.*"**
	Participant 2 reported that: "*Dealing with the consequences will be more difficult and painful, better do as we are told and taught and not wait to be punished or have regrets, by then it will be too late.*"
	Mr Skosana reported that: "*There is a belief that if you don't shave your hair and there is a funeral in the family, there is something missing that was not done and things might not go well for you because you are still carrying the darkness of the deceased person.*"
	Participant 4 reported that: "*Ehh, significance… you know I don't know how to put this because it is a must this thing and it has to be done you see because a person let's say we do something and other things are not done, there will be a problem because everything from start to finish has to be completed because it is a process; if not there will be a*

	problem.”
	Participant 5 reported that: *“Yes there will be bad luck. Nowadays when there is a funeral people refuse for their hair to be shaved off, people only cut a portion of their hair (demonstrates using hand gestures) and leave the rest of the hair. Others wake up with their hair gone. Whom will you ask where your hair has gone? It's because the ancestors are watching…they will remove it.”*
	Participant 7 reported that: *“All I know is that bad luck will befall on you.”*
	Participant 8 reported that: **“***Sometimes you are being told that if you don't do such things like shave hair during mourning, things will not go well for you.”*
	Participant 9 reported that: *“You find that if you do not fulfil the rituals, things will not go your way.”*
	Participant 10 reported that: *“It removes all the bad luck*

	wherever you may go and it prevents any harm against you."
	This is consistent with Setsiba's (2012) research findings that adding to the basic rituals, some traditional African cultures also participate in pre-burial rituals and post-burial cleansing rituals. This is done because it is believed that death lingers over them until they go through the purification rituals. If these rituals are not done as per expectation by the tradition, it is believed that the family and people who were closely connected with the deceased will experience misfortunes.
	Amongst all the participants (except for participant 6), there exists a belief that it is important to adhere to the cultural rituals and practices; hence, it is important to practice the ritual of shaving hair during mourning.
	With the participants above, even though they could not fully describe the exact nature of the misfortunes that may befall an individual who refuses to partake in the hair shaving ritual during mourning; they expressed a belief that there are consequences like the experiences of bad luck. Contrary to participant 5, she was able to give an example of the negative consequence as a result of not partaking in

	the hair shaving ritual during mourning.
	Removal of the shadow of the dead person
	Participant 7 expressed the belief that when one does not shave during mourning, they will carry around with them the shadow of the deceased person.
	Participant 7 reported that: *"….So shaving the hair removes something like that. So that you won't have bad luck and you won't have the shadow of that deceased person."*
	According to Davies (2003), the main goal of death rites is to make sure that the individual who has died leaves the realm of the living for the realm of the afterlife.
	Cleansing and Purification
	Participant 4 reported that: *"It is to purify sort of"*

Participant 9 reported that: *"It is another way of cleansing because hair is something important and holds a lot of things especially our breath, which is why the mourners shave their hair and also need to be cleansed with traditional herbs…inside out."*

According to Setsiba (2010), adding to the basic rituals, some traditional African cultures also participate in pre-burial rituals and post-burial cleansing rituals. This is done because it is believed that death lingers over them until they go through the purification rituals.

As mentioned by Yawa's (2010) research findings, after a few months of mourning (as set out by the family) an elder uncle facilitates the process of cleansing. This ritual is done so as to purify the bereaved and the possessions of the deceased. This is also when the widow is given herbs in order to purify herself.

<u>Removal of Deceased's Spirit and darkness associated with death</u>

Participants (1, 2, 9 and 10) reported that death is considered to be a painful event; however there is a belief

	that with death, there is a certain element of darkness associated with it. Attached with that darkness are negative spirits and negative occurrences. Hence it is crucial to shave ones hair during mourning so as to detach and cleanse oneself from the darkness that is attached and connected to death.
	Hence, the participants (2 and 10) expressed the need to cleanse oneself from such darkness and one way of doing that is to shave the hair and have it burnt.
	Participant 1 reported that: *"…Then we can be cleansed so as to remove the darkness of death."*
	Participant 2 reported that: *"Hence by cutting, the hair would grow anew and since there is a death in the family, the hair is considered to be dirty because the person you once lived closely with is now dead. When it is cut, you allow for the hair to grow afresh/anew."*
	and
	"Hence by cutting, the hair would grow anew and since

	there is a death in the family, the hair is considered to be dirty because the person you once lived closely with is now dead. When it is cut, you allow for the hair to grow afresh/anew."
	Participant 9 reported that: *"Hair is something that holds spirits. While you are still alive and you live with someone, while you live with other people at home, the hair holds spirits. So…when we live with someone, we share the same breath, so when we lose that someone that is why we have to shave our hair.… when someone has passed away in the home, we remove his spirit because the hair is still holding his breath. That is why there exists the ritual of shaving hair during mourning."*
	Participant 10 reported that: *"You remove darkness associated with death."*
	According to Ritcher's (2005) research findings, the hair is burnt along with the late person's clothing. The purpose of this act is to cleanse the grievers from the contamination of

	death. As mentioned by Setsiba (2012), in traditional
	African cultures, funeral and bereavement rituals are
	believed to assist in the cleansing of the mourners who are
	thought to be contaminated from being in interaction with
	the dead. Community members engage in rituals that are
	believed to be important in the purification of the
	contaminated spirit and enable the mourners to go back into
	society.
	Removal of Fear
	Some individuals may experience pain, confusion and
	feelings of being scared after experiencing the loss of a
	loved one through death. Participant 7 expressed that one of
	the significance of shaving hair during mourning is to assist
	one to be at ease and comforted; it helps to alleviate
	feelings of fear, being scared and feelings of anxiety during
	mourning.
	Participant 7 reported that: *" Sometimes the hair is burnt*
	together with herbs so that you won't have fear or be
	scared… traditional herbs…Yes it is done to remove the

	fear and being scared that the deceased might walk in through the door again." Participant 7 expressed that one of the significance of shaving hair during mourning is to assist one to be at ease and comforted; it helps to alleviate feelings of fear, being scared and feelings of anxiety during mourning. However, with participant 10, the difference was that she believed that removing the hair helps removes feelings of being easily irritable and agitated. Removal of feelings of irritability and agitation Participant 10 reported that *"Removing the hair helps removes feelings of being easily irritable and agitated; it removes all the bad luck wherever you may go and it prevents any harm against you."* For Malinowski (1958), death rituals are useful to alleviate anxiety. Since death is a traumatic experience, it can cause a 'commotion of emotion' which may lead to mental conflict and a possibility of a breakdown.

	This is in contrast to Radzilani's (2010) research finding that for some individuals, participating in mourning rituals was a cause of distress as it hinders them from focusing on their own grief as most of their attention has to be given to the performance of rituals. The dead body is considered to be impure and connected to impure spirits which may also be interpreted as evil spirits. By gaining an understanding of this fear of darkness attached to death and the deceased spirit considered as impure, the researcher also gained an understanding behind the need to disconnect.
Respect Respect for the culture Belief in the culture Respect for the deceased Respect from others	Respect Respect is a broad term, with multiple definitions; however, in this study respect refers to "*paying attention to another's beliefs, to acknowledge its existence. To behave as other people feel you should behave*" (Pavlina, 2014: p.1). The subthemes were derived from the participants' (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 10) verbatim responses. Any word, expression, statement or description by the participants referring to respect for the culture, belief in the culture, respect for the deceased and respect from others was included in this criterion.

	Respect for the culture
	The participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 10) seem to have an understanding of their cultural practices and through their understanding of the shaving of the hair ritual during mourning; it extends beyond their knowledge, it is about the respect for their culture as a whole that they are able to perform this ritual. Hence, shaving the hair during mourning also signifies the respect that they have for their culture.
	Participant 1 reported that: "*...Like there are things that are respected in our black culture.*"
	Participant 2 reported that: "When death comes, I respect our culture and I just cut my hair because hair grows again. This will pass."
	Even though Mr Skosana could not provide some explanations as to why certain things are done during mourning, he did express the importance of respecting culture irrespective of not having a full understanding to

	some practices and the reasoning behind them.
	Mr Skosana reported that: *"Then there is the shaving of hair according to culture, black people, especially in South Africa, it is their culture to cut hair and it is done in different ways."*
	Participant 4 reported that: *"…It is our customs…I know traditional customs."*
	Participant 5 reported that: *"We shave our hair during mourning because it's part of our old laws of our culture of our great grandparents. It's our culture."*
	Participant 7 reported that: *"It is our culture. When someone has passed away, it is required that you shave off your hair."*
	Even though participant 8 did not have a full understanding of the shaving ritual during mourning, she partook in a

	quest to honour and respect for her culture.
	"This ritual is part of mourning in our culture...wherever you may be; you need to go through this process."
	Participant 10 reported that: *"It is our culture. When an older person passes away, we will shave again after five weeks. We shave our head to show that one of us has passed away and that we are in mourning."*
	Belief in the culture
	Even if some participants (1, 2 and 4) did not have a full understanding of some of the activities related to the hair shaving ritual, they believed and had faith that whatever was done during mourning (shaving hair included) was true and beneficial because of the belief they have on their forefathers and an even stronger belief in their cultural belief systems.
	Participant 1 reported that: **"*As I shared….It's a belief that there won't be bad luck if you shave hair."***

	Participant 2 reported that: *"So personally I will continue following my elder's rules, I have stepped on where they have stepped on. I will live a good life with no problems."*
	Participant 4 reported that: *"Yes, I would encourage people to continue with this ritual because it is something that works, it is not something that should be considered as useless and meaningless. In our culture, it is like that…yes."*
	This is consistent with Matsumoto's (2000) ideas that culture includes *attitudes, values, beliefs, norms and behaviours* that are shared amongst individuals who live in that culture. The behaviours can be normally witnessed in rituals shared by individuals within that culture.
	All the participants participated in the mourning rituals, specifically the shaving of the hair during mourning. However, it was participant 1, 2 and 4 who performed the rituals because they had belief in the culture. It was also that belief that reinforced the significance of shaving hair during mourning.

	<u>Respect for the deceased</u> Participant 2 reported that: *"I would like to tell them that they still need to cut off the hair as an indication that someone has passed away in the family and there is a loss in the family. In that way you show them respect after you have lost them."* Participant 7 reported that: *"You remove the hair to show that you are in mourning…you are in mourning (emphasis on the words mourning). It is a form of fasting…it's a form of fasting in respect for your husband."* Participant 10 reported that: *"The person who has passed away, let's say he is my sibling or parent or whoever it may be in the family, we are of one blood. I need to respect the deceased …then you'll be alright."* Accordingly, people pay their respects to the dead, marking their previous identity with them, express grief for the bereaved and by so doing, reaffirm their continuing

	connection with them (Davies, 2003).
	Respect from others
	Participant 7 reported that: *"If you don't shave your hair you won't be respected. But as a woman (if you have lost your husband) if you shave your hair and wear the black clothes assigned for you during mourning; you will be respected and men will also keep their distance because they will know that you are in mourning."*
	This is consistent with Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha's (2013) research findings that the rituals performed during mourning need to have significance and relevance to the living dead and the living.
	Participant 6 has different views in relation to the theme of respect. From the conversation with participant 6, the central theme is that it is important for individuals to respect themselves during mourning instead of putting emphasis on mourning rituals. The participant reported that she no longer has faith in the mourning rituals (in this case the hair shaving ritual during mourning) because she

believes that it is not done properly nowadays: *"What matters is the person themselves and their heart. The person must have respect themselves. In the olden days, that used to exist and it was done properly. Nowadays people don't do things properly."*

With all the participants, there seems to be a strong element of respect, respect that was expressed in different dimensions (respect means different things for different individuals). The participants expressed the importance of respecting their Ndebele culture, hence that means also respecting the rituals that form part of that culture, including the mourning rituals.

However, with participant 7, there was a different element brought to the issue relating to respect. Participant 7 believed that not only is it important to have and show respect for ones' culture; however, having respect for one's culture also means that one will also gain respect from others as well (social acceptance). In this instance, the researcher is in agreement with the reciprocal nature of respect as it is both given and received.

Emotional Support and Encouragement Familial and communal	<u>Emotional Support and Encouragement</u> Emotional support includes "*the provision of care, empathy, love and trust, while others have emphasized expressions of encouragement, active listening, reflection and reassurance. Moreover, some researchers have characterized emotional support as reciprocal interactions of 'mutual obligation' while others have characterized it as solely a subjective perception of feeling accepted, loved and respected*" (Kowitt, 2013: p.1). The subthemes were derived from the participants' verbatim responses. Any word, expression, statement or description by the participants referring to any form of emotional support, empathy and encouragement, whether it is familial or communal was included in this criterion. <u>Familial and communal</u> The participants (1,2,3 and 5) believe that when one is in mourning, he should not mourn in isolation, hence with the shaved head, people will know that one is in mourning and that will also serve as an invitation for other people to come and support that individual in their time of mourning.

	The participants reported that it is important to be together and support one another during the time of mourning and performing rituals like shaving hair, enhance that support system. Participant 1 reported that: *"Because when there is death people must be informed and support one another and go to the bereaved family's home…"* Participant 2 reported that: *"It helps to encourage the one in mourning."* Mr Skosana reported that: *"It's wonderful that when things are done at home, that they be done together with everyone accordingly."* Participant 5 reported that: *"Yes you get encouraged when people come to see you, people come in and out; your heart will be comforted as people talk to you. You will also get someone who gets to be your teacher during this period."*

	This is consistent with Mark's (2004) views that human beings are social beings hence, during grief, it is important for one to have social support.
	Empathy refers to the understanding of the next person, from that person's viewpoint and expressing that understanding in such a way that the next person feels understood as well (Vorster, 2011).
	Participant 2 reported that she noticed that when other people knew that she had shaved her hair because she was in mourning, they were more likely to be empathetic, sensitive and considerate towards her during mourning. Mr Skosana shared participant 2's sentiment as he considered it to be of importance to be empathetic towards the mourning individual; this also includes how their shaving process is handled. Participant 2 reported that: *"…Even the teachers spoke politely towards you, and they made sure so as not to hurt*

	you...because it was obvious that you were in mourning.”
	Mr Skosana reported that: *“The bereaved is considered to be in sorrow and in hardships; whatever he is going through is difficult. He is faced with difficulties. He is in a different stage of pain. His stage is not the same as others, so hence he is treated and handled separately. What has befallen that person is painful. Like we say when someone is in mourning, we consider that person to be troubled and in sorrow; whether they have lost a husband or a wife. For someone who is bereaved, the hair shaving ritual is done separately at specific times and specific place. There is someone special who walks this path with them during mourning...it’s like their teacher, he/she guides the bereaved throughout this process.”*
	It was only participant 2 and Mr Skosana who expressed the subtheme of empathy as one of the significance of shaving hair during mourning. None of the other participants expressed this significance.

	The difference with the rest of the participants (4,6,7,8,9 and 10 is that even though there is a strong belief that mourning is communal, the sentiments of support and encouragement were not mentioned.
Compliance with culturally prescribed rituals Compliance Fear Obligation Guilt/Blame Expectations	<u>Compliance with culturally prescribed rituals</u> Compliance with culturally prescribed rituals refers to conforming to the standards set out within the Ndebele culture concerning the shaving hair ritual. The subthemes were derived from the participants' (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 10) verbatim responses. Any word, expression or description by the participants referring to compliance, expectations, participating in the ritual out of fear; a sense of obligation and blame and guilt feelings was included in this criterion. <u>Compliance</u> Participant 2 reported that: *"We found things like this; hence we need to hold on to it and continue practicing it"*. Mr Skosana reported that: *"Black people, especially in*

	South Africa, it is their culture to cut hair during mourning."
	Participant 4 reported that: *"No, I didn't know the reason; they just told us that it had to be done because there is a funeral."*
	Participant 7 reported that: *"Even when my father passed away, they called us and shaved our hair, however they did not explain to us as to why they were shaving our hair. We were all shaven."*
	Participant 8 revealed that even though she does not have a clear understanding and reasoning behind the hair shaving ritual during mourning; she has participated in the ritual partly due to her respect of her elders, which was considered to be an honourable act by the family.
	"When we grew up, we found things being done like that from the olden days. When old people were in mourning

	that is how they did things."
	Participant 10 reported that: *"we just knew that things are like that. We grew up knowing that it's like that."*
	This is consistent with Keene & Reder's (2006) research findings that mourning is shaped by the grieving person's cultural expectations, traditions and gender.
	<u>Fear</u>
	Participant 1 reported that: *"If you find that when death befalls the family and others don't do it…you know, sometimes when something is trusted or you believe in something and if you don't do it correctly and accordingly, this will haunt you and when things go wrong you will think it's because you did not shave hair."*
	Participant 2 reported that: *"If you don't cut hair when in mourning… as time goes on the hair won't grow properly and they will get eaten away and fall off gradually."*

	Obligation
	Participant 2 reported that: *"Even in the olden days when one was in mourning, it was a must for the hair to be shaved."*
	Mr Skosana reported that: *"In the olden days everyone in the family was required to shave off their hair. You had to shave all the hair off until your head shines. Everyone (emphasis on the word) at home as soon as you come back from the cemetery…"*
	Participant 4 reported that: *"We don't have a choice because everyone who is part of the family had to be shaved."*
	Participant 5 reported that: *"If there is a funeral, hair needs to be shaved, whether you want to shave your hair or not."*
	Participant 7 reported that: *"When someone has passed*

	away, it is required that you shave off your hair."
	Participant 8 reported that: *"But whatever is done by elders…you also need to do it to follow in their footsteps."*
	There seems to be contradictions that participant 6 experienced within the ritual, like the unrealistic expectations set out during mourning. It appears that her experience of mourning rituals in general was an experience that was burdensome. Even though she is old and knowledgeable about certain aspects of her culture, the fact that she doesn't know and understand the exact reasoning behind the mourning rituals has left her with a lot of unanswered questions. Even when she shares about the topic, she shares by distancing herself from the issue at hand by using phrases like "it is said" or "we are told": *"It is better that it's not done. It doesn't work, what does it" work?...nothing."*
	According to Berg' (2012) research findings, most of the traditional rituals are not documented; their existence is transferred from generation to generation through

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	participation. Hence, some participants felt compelled to participate in the ritual.
	This is also consistent with Manyedi's (2003, as cited in Yawa, 2012) belief that the evident communal characteristic of the black community may at times have a negative impact on the grieving persons as the society puts many expectations on the grieving person as they are expected to perform certain rituals when grieving. This may cause emotional distress for the grieving person as they may feel compelled to perform certain rituals even if they do not believe in those rituals. This may put an individual in a space whereby they have no choice because they want to be part of the community.
	Guilt, Blame and expectations
	The participants (1, 2 and 3) described how important it is to follow the ritual of shaving hair during mourning to eliminate any form of doubt, feelings of blame, regret and guilt in one's heart should they be faced with negative circumstances during and after the period of mourning.
	This is contrary to Kubler-Ross's (1968) research findings

	that feelings of blame, guilt and anger are part of mourning and not necessarily entities that one needs to strive to avoid.
	Participant 1 reported that: *"It helps not to think negatively when wrong things happen, for example blaming yourself for bad things that are happening to you."*
	Participant 2 reported that: *"Because if something for example happens to my child and they do not practice this ritual, they might think that bad things are happening in their lives because they have not been following these rituals."*
	Mr Skosana revealed that *"It would be rather difficult to look ahead and continue with life while knowing that there are certain rituals and practices that were not adhered to while in mourning."*
	Participant 6 shares the similar views expressed by the above participants, it appears that when participant 6 was growing up, she was expected to partake in familial rituals

without choice. It was an expectation from her family to shave hair during mourning, hence she puts emphasis on the fact that individuals need to be given a choice as to whether they would like to partake in rituals or not. She has since converted to Christianity. As the years progress and with influences of Westernisation and urbanisation, some black people and their practice of traditional culture has lessened and some have adopted and embraced new ways of practising culture, in some instances, it is collaborated with some of the traditional customs. In her research findings, Radzilani (2010) mentions that social, economic and political revolution has changed the understanding and application of death rituals in modern industrialised societies. Due to this change, some rituals are no longer performed in modern African cultures. This is the case with participant 6 who has since stopped partaking in traditional mourning rituals completely and has opted to embrace Christianity.

Hence she believes that the Lord carries her burdens, hence finds no significance in practicing mourning rituals anymore. She believes that healing comes from the heart and that love should be the main driving force behind

	performing the rituals.
	Participant 6 reported that: *"When you love something, you love it. In the modern days I have a choice to partake in rituals or not. In the olden days, when you refused to do certain things during mourning, you were frowned upon and it was not accepted."*
	Somhlaba and Wait (2008) also argue that the rituals and the support provided by the community might be done with good intentions of helping and alleviating the pain experienced during grieving, however, members of the community may unintentionally overwhelm the grieving family with heavy expectations and unwelcomed involvement into the private family matters. This may have a negative effect on the grieving person's psychological wellbeing.
Structure	<u>Structure</u> Structure refers to how things are arranged according to set

out rules during the mourning process in relation to the shaving hair ritual. The subthemes were derived from the participants' verbatim responses. Any word, expression or description by the participants referring to structure, do's and don'ts related to the shaving hair ritual was included in this criterion.

The participants (1, 2, 3 and 5) appeared to agree with shaving hair during mourning because they saw its practical relevance as well. For example, the rituals that were performed (specifically, hair shaving in this instance), provided a structure on what needs to be done, when and how during mourning. There needs to be awareness that there are variations into the how and/or when the rituals are performed. However, it is important to note that even though there may not be a set clarity as to how and when shaving is done, there is some guideline and basic structure on what needs to be done and what is expected to be done at specific times during mourning. Participants expressed the importance of knowing what to do and when to do it appropriately in accordance to the cultural expectations.

Participant 1 reported that : *"Because when there is death*

	people must be informed and support one another and go to the bereaved family's home...when we get there, we will know that we must do 1 2 3."
	Participant 2 reported that: *"We bury the dead first on a Saturday and after that we wake up on a Sunday in the morning to have our hair shaven."*
	Mr Skosana reported that: *"Commonly, the hair is shaved the following day in the morning after the burial. When we bury today, tomorrow morning that is when the hair shaving ritual will be done."*
	Participant 5 reported that: *"What will happen is that the rush mat will be put outside; another widow will shave her outside. This is done so as to make allowance so that others can be shaved the following day, for tomorrow's shift on Sunday. Come sunrise, the rush mats will be put outside and everyone (emphasis on the word everyone) must go outside. You will drink tea outside, others will be busy washing clothes and blankets while others are busy being shaved. Then it is finished."*

	This is consistent with Setsiba's (2012) research findings that during mourning there are specific rules and regulations as to how the rituals need to be performed. This provides a sense of structure and has the potential of alleviating anxiety in the family that is mourning. Even though all the participants, (except for participant 6), adhered to the rules, structure and order in the way that the mourning rituals were performed; only participant 1,2,3 and 5 saw its significance in providing a guideline in terms of performing the rituals in an appropriate manner, at an appropriate time.
Unity/Togetherness 	<u>Unity or Togetherness</u> According to the Oxford dictionary, togetherness refers to "*the state of being close to another person or other people*" (Hornby, 1995, p.1257) while unity refers to "*the state of being united or joined as a whole*" (Hornby, 1995, p.1304). Any word, expression, statement or description by the participants referring to unity, togetherness, collectiveness, 'us', 'we' and similarities was included in this criterion. The hair shaving ritual during mourning is done as a

| | collective. Participating in this ritual enhances the unity of those involved in a way that they are doing the same thing together in agreement and in harmony, with the same purpose in mind. Participants 1, 2, 3 and 10 share the above sentiments.

Participant 1 reported that: *"…When death happens, the whole family can and must come together in partaking in the ritual. It shows unity and togetherness amongst the family members. No one goes to different directions. It helps with uniting the family members."*

Participant 2 reported that: *"However, if you all shave your heads, there will be a unit for healing…you will be one thing and you will get along."*

Mr Skosana reported that *"…Especially when there is a funeral everyone must do everything together at one place... If that is not done, you will find that people will be divided."* |
|---|---|

| | Participant 10 reported that: *"From when we were young, we knew that when someone has passed away, we come together and we need to shave our hair."*

This is consistent with Cohen (2002), as he mentioned that once the death is proclaimed, family, friends and neighbours come together. In Radcliffe-Brown's (1968) perspective, death rituals are the communal communication of emotion congruent to the situation. In this shared expression of emotion, individuals indicate their loyalty to one another and to the community at large. One of the roles of rituals is to sustain the social relationships.

Even though the community might be involved in some cases during the shaving hair ritual, it is possible for individuals to shave off their hair alone or in the company of their family only during mourning. Performing the shaving hair ritual alone does not make it any less significant. The ritual can be performed and experienced on different levels: communal, familial and on an individual level. |
|---|---|

	In all the participants, there seems to be a strong belief in the communal nature of mourning and mourning rituals. However, it was participant 1, 2, 3 and 10 that put emphasis on this theme.
Traditional Law	From the interview with participant 5 and 9, the central theme that came up was that of the traditional law. Traditional law refers to the series of rules that are implemented to guide people in all areas of their lives. Both Participant 5 and 9 expressed that the main reason as to why the shaving hair ritual is practiced during mourning is to follow the old traditional laws and ways of doing things. While growing up, they both expressed that they did not ask questions concerning the mourning rituals, they also expressed that their elders also did not explain to them and to others as to why these rituals were conducted. They also believe that it is because they also followed their elders' rules without any questions asked as a sign of respect for them and their culture. Participant 5 reported that: *"It helps, as I said it is part of the laws within our culture, we found things done this way. Because it is part of our traditional laws, that is how it helps."*

	Participant 9 reported that: *"My grandmother told me that is how it was from the beginning of time. When she grew up, even her great grandparents practiced that ritual. It was part of the traditional laws."*
	This is consistent with Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha's (2013) research findings that within the traditional African culture, when death occurs, it is accompanied by the practice of rituals and rites of passage which can take place throughout the mourning phase.
	Even though all the participants, expressed their respect for their tradition, it was participant 5 and 9 who expressed that the main reason as to why the shaving hair ritual is practiced during mourning is to follow the old traditional laws and ways of doing things.
Signifies partly the completion of the mourning process	According to the participants (3,5 and 10), every rituals that is performed during mourning is part of a process and every ritual needs to be done in conjunction with other rituals, hence it is crucial to finish each and every ritual that has been started, so as to complete the whole process. Shaving the hair after the day of the funeral is not the final ritual to

be performed; however it forms a part of the processes of rituals that needs to be performed. Shaving the hair signifies partly the process towards the completion of the mourning period. However, shaving for the second time signifies the completion of the mourning period. The time frame for shaving the second time varies across different families. Some families shave their hair again after a month, others after two months and others can do it even after a year from the date of the funeral.

Mr Skosana reported that: *"She must shave hair to bring about the whole process into completion that is how it works."*

Participant 5 reported that: *"Then everything is complete now after the second shaving is done."*

Participant 10 reported that: *"Shaving for the second time is done to complete the whole process to its finality so that nothing remains that needs to be done from our side."*

	The research findings by Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha (2013) state that within the African culture, grieving is considered to be a process. During this process, rituals are performed.
	Even though all the participants, except for participant 6 reported the importance of participating in and during the performances of mourning rituals, it was only participant 3, 5 and 10 who put emphasis on the significance of completion, that since each ritual is interconnected to the next; it is important to complete every ritual that is begun.
Transition from one phase to the next	Mr Skosana and participant 4 revealed that the main reason as to why the hair shaving ritual is done during mourning is to allow a smooth transition from one phase to the next, to move from one stage to the next, for example to move from a period of crying brought about the state of being in mourning to a period of rejoicing. Mr Skosana reported that: *"They must shave their hair, to show that the person has passed from that stage of mourning and crying. Now he is entering the stage of*

rejoicing."

Even though Mr Skosana reports that after shaving one enters a stage of rejoicing, it needs to be acknowledged that this anticipated stage of rejoicing cannot be reached immediately after the hair shaving ritual. The researcher is in agreement with him when he reports that it is a transition from one phase to the next; however is not in agreement with the move to a stage of rejoicing immediately after the ritual of shaving because it is unlikely and rather unrealistic for one to move from crying about a love one's death and immediately thereafter move to a phase of rejoicing.

Participant 4 reported that: *"The reasoning behind shaving for me is to remove something that has passed and to enter into something anew. So that that someone won't dwell on the past."*

According to Van Gennep (1966, as cited in Cohen, 2002), rituals done at death are similar to those carried out at other important phases in the life of an individual, for example, at birth, puberty, marriage. An individual's life is a journey

	and constantly changing process. In the journey, the individual is faced with different challenges which he must be able to overcome so as to be able to move to the next stages of life. In order to assist an individual to handle these challenges, society has created ceremonial reactions which Van Gennep termed as the 'rites of passage'.
	Physical death has also been generally employed as an expression to describe the disappearance of an old status and the entry into a new one (Davies, 2003).
	Amongst all the participants, it was only Mr. Skosana and participant 4 who revealed that the main reason as to why the hair shaving ritual is done during mourning is to allow a smooth transition from one phase to the next, to move from one stage to the next.
Freedom Relief Freedom of movement	<u>Freedom</u> According to Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, freedom refers to *"the right and capacity of people to determine their own actions, in a community which is able to provide for the full development of human potentiality"* (Blunden,

2008, p.1). The subthemes were derived from the participants' (1, 3, 5, 7 and 10) verbatim responses. Any word, expression, statement or description by the participants referring to relief, freedom of movement was included in this criterion.

Relief

The participants (1 and 10) expressed a sense of freedom and the feeling of relief after shaving hair. It is the freedom that comes from knowing that the ritual of shaving hair has been done after the funeral has passed; what remains is continuing with one's life. Letting go of what has been also brings about freedom hence shaving the hair serves as a reminder for that.

Participant 1 reported that: *"…and then shave heads again to represent cleansing and freedom from such things."*

Participant 10 reported that: *"We shave so that we remove all the hair since one of us has passed away. We free ourselves."*

and

"The following day, you need to shave the hair to remove the burden that you carried with you that lies in the hair... Yes something falls off...like a burden is off. After the burial and after shaving off hair it's like there is a weight off your shoulders."

This is consistent with Setsiba's (2012) research findings that rituals are practiced as they are believed to bring about comfort and relief.

<u>Freedom of Movement</u>

Mr Skosana, participant 5 and 7 expressed feelings of adhering to certain rules during mourning; one of those includes being restricted in what you can do, wear or where you may go while in mourning. However, once this period has passed, it signifies a sense of freedom of movement to those who were in mourning.

"The woman needs to be in mourning for twelve months (emphasis on the word twelve); after a year, uyahlubula (stop wearing attire assigned for mourning and all

previously set restrictions cease)."

Participant 5 reported that: *Isibuyiso is done after a year has passed. On the third month, children stop wearing clothes assigned to be worn during mourning. After three months (demonstrates using hand gestures), children take off those clothes. The women will stop wearing their clothing assigned for them for mourning after a year".*

Isibuyiso is a ceremony held to officially signify the end of the mourning period.

Participant 7 reported that: "*Then after three months, the family of the deceased husband will come to your house and pray for you. Then you will be given more traditional herbs. Then they will set you free and you will be allowed to go as you please.*"

As mentioned by Cohen (2002) in his research findings, ordinary social life is put on hold for those in mourning for a proposed period of mourning, their comings and goings

	surrounded by restrictions. Hence once the rituals are done and completed, it can symbolise freedom for those who were in mourning as they will be able to get back to their previous daily activities.

5.4. Conclusion

From the results of the research above, it is evident that the shaving hair ritual during mourning is significant within the Ndebele culture. It is significant in both similar and different ways amongst different individuals which form part of the same culture. Hence it is evident that even though individuals may be part of a similar culture, their experiences may be different. The above results reveal that different individuals attach different meanings to the experience of shaving hair during mourning within the Ndebele culture.

As much as the participant's experiences may have been subjective, it was interesting to find out that there are connections or interconnectedness of their cultural descriptions (as noted from the similarities in the themes that emerged from the different participants). The main similarity amongst the participants that were interviewed is that the shaving hair ritual during mourning has meaning to each of them, except for participant 6 whose experience is different as she considers mourning rituals to have no significance.

The psychological significance of shaving hair during mourning may be derived and understood according to the themes that emerged from the research results. The themes that emerged from

the research results are those of striving for wholeness, the ability to outwardly express mourning; the sense of support and encouragement that one receives during mourning from the community and family members involved. This in turn brings about a sense of unity and togetherness; which may help in alleviating feelings of loneliness and isolation during mourning.

It is evident from the above results that even though some of the participants participated in the hair shaving ritual during mourning without a full understanding of its cultural and psychological value; the significance was founded in their respect for their culture, respect for traditional law and belief in the culture. For some, failure to adhere to these rituals meant that misfortunes will befall them.

Even though the performance of these rituals may be burdensome for other participants, the rituals were believed to be important as some received empathy from outsiders. The rituals were also believed to be important as a source of provision of freedom after the mourning period. Once completed, they are a provision of freedom and clear conscience/relief after the mourning period.

Once the rituals are performed to their completion, they are significant as they may represent a transition from one phase to the next: a transition from crying to a phase of anticipated laughing; a phase moving from pain to a hope for healing and a phase from mourning to a phase of anticipated rejoicing in the future

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

This Chapter will focus on the main conclusions drawn from the study; this will include a comparison between literature findings and findings from this research. This chapter will also be used to give a summary of what this study has achieved and to integrate the findings of the research with the theoretical model. There will also be a discussion on the contributions of this study as well as the limitations of the study. To conclude this chapter, recommendations are made for psychologists, elders/parents, educators/employers and researchers within and outside the Ndebele culture.

6.2. Main conclusions drawn

Even though some participants participated in the shaving hair rituals willingly, culturally prescribed expectations had an influence in participants' decisions whether they partook in the ritual or not. Culture played a major role in the participants' understanding and motivation behind the shaving hair rituals. This was evident from most participants who expressed that shaving hair during mourning is part of their culture. Hence, it was difficult for some participants to explain their subjective experiences of the significance of hair shaving without mentioning the issue of culture. Due to the fact that culture was given such significance, most participants felt obliged to participate. Failure to comply to partake in the ritual would result in

guilt feelings. Social learning theory explains this by the concept of reinforcing consequences as they play a role in directing one to gain good results or to avoid bad consequences.

Hence one of the values that were attached to the shaving hair ritual was that of cleansing in order for one to be purified from the spirits and darkness associated with death as well as the removal of bad luck and fear. According to social learning theory, the concept of judgment explains the participation of individuals in the hair shaving ritual as influenced by values (like those of cleansing) decided upon within a society

Some participants also feared that they would be blamed should they not adhere to the ritual. This might lead to isolation from some of the family and community members. Hence some participants did not want to risk being perceived as disrespectful to the elders because they needed and valued their support, encouragement and involvement during the mourning process. According to social learning theory, peoples' choice as to whether they will imitate a behaviour that they have previously seen will be highly influenced by the consequences attached to such observed behaviour. Hence participants may participate in the rituals to avoid consequences of being blamed, isolated and labelled as being disrespectful.

Since part of the focus was on restoration, some participants believed that by participating in the rituals, they will reach a state of wholeness whereby they will be able to move on with life and be able to function within their families and within the broader community after the period of mourning has passed. Social learning theory explains this phenomena by the concept of motivation, as some of the participants participated in the hair shaving ritual with the motivation that they expect to receive support and encouragement from their family members as well as reaching an anticipated state of wholeness.

There was a consensus amongst all the participants that shaving hair was an outward expression of mourning, some participants also expressed it as a way of honouring and showing respect to the loved ones who have since passed away. There is a belief that by performing mourning rituals (hair shaving included); the deceased will be able to transition from this world into the afterlife peacefully, hence will be able to protect the living family.

One of the conflicting perspectives that arose from the research is that even though some participants reported that they performed mourning rituals as they are believed to have potential healing effects, they also performed the rituals out of a sense of obligation and expectation as something that should be done. This is in line with the concept of the process of self-regulation within social learning theory as it asserts that failing to adhere to stipulated practices and behaviours; and not participating in mourning rituals may be considered to be improper.

6.3. Comparison of literature findings and empirical research

The comparison in the following section will be done between literature findings of the literature reviewed in this study (Chapter 2) and findings of the current study (empirical research), based on the main themes and subthemes that emerged from the study. The comparison will be done based on the following dominant themes/subthemes: healing, outward expression of mourning, avoidance of misfortunes, respect and cleansing.

6.3.1. Healing

According to both the literature findings (Anderson, 2003; Baloyi, 2008 and Setsiba, 2012) and empirical research, rituals (in this case, the hair shaving ritual) performed during mourning are significant, especially when they are performed communally. They are significant as they are believed to bring about a state of anticipated healing through a process of acceptance and

strengthening of life which will help in bringing back the individuals to their wholesome condition.

6.3.2. Outward expression of mourning

It has been revealed by both literature findings (Marks, 2004 and Setsiba, 2012) and empirical research that mourning has been understood as the cultural or public expression of grief through one's behaviours and mourning rituals offer a chance for the family and community members to publicly show their grief.

6.3.3. Avoidance of misfortunes

Both the literature findings (Waliggo, 2006 and Setsiba, 2012) and the empirical research mention that that it is advantageous to follow and participate during mourning rituals to avoid misfortunes in one's life. However, in the literature there is no mention of the specific misfortunes that can happen; while the empirical research does provide some practical examples of the misfortunes.

6.3.4. Respect

There seems to be a consensus between the literature findings (Matsumoto, 2000; Davies, 2003 and Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothata, 2013) and the empirical research that the mourning rituals are performed as a sign of respect for culture, cultural practices and as a sign of respect for elders' ways of doing things.

6.3.5. Cleansing

There seems to be a similarity between the literature findings (Yawa, 2010 and Setsiba, 2012) and empirical research in terms of cleansing. Both the literature and research reveal the

importance of cleansing through the performance of mourning rituals. Hence it is crucial to shave ones hair during mourning so as to detach and cleanse oneself from the darkness that is attached and connected to death.

6.4. Contributions of this study

Even though mourning rituals might be widely practiced amongst the black African communities, there is not much literature that focuses mainly on the specific rituals and their significance. Hence, the study was useful as it could be incorporated into the study of psychology specifically from the African epistemological standpoint. What could be incorporated is the construction of mourning and mourning rituals within black African communities from different ethnic groups.

This study could be useful in an attempt to understand what informs the cultural value placed on the shaving hair ritual during mourning within the Ndebele culture to persons who might not be exposed to this information due to cultural differences etc.

There is limited literature available concerning the process of mourning within the African black Ndebele culture. This limited availability of information and understanding usually results in confusion between a psychologist or counsellor and a patient (Yawa, 2010). Hence, in this study, it was important to consider the Ndebele people's subjective experiences and their culture. Hence, psychology will become more applicable and tolerant of other cultural understandings. *"Africans should and, must be able to determine, define and present their cultural practices and concepts as part of valid human knowledge experience in the broader psychology landscape and cross-cultural interactions"* (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013, p. 4).

South Africa is a country with many different cultures and cultural practices. Hence, it is of importance that the psychologist and counsellors must be culturally insightful when handling issues of bereavement and mourning across diverse cultures (Yawa, 2010). This study could be useful in terms of adding new knowledge that may previously have not been available to psychologists and counsellors in relation to mourning and mourning rituals, especially within the Ndebele culture.

Within Western/European-centred psychology, the discussion and understanding of an African as belonging to a particular ethnic group is limited (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013). Some of African's realities and individual experiences are perceived, understood and analysed according to Western ideas (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013). This might lead to a disconnection between the subjective experiences of African and the meaning that is attached to those experiences (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013). This study serves to expose the importance of studying and understanding certain ethnic groups within their specific context, subjective experiences and how they make meaning of their own experiences.

This study was important as it could contribute in helping psychologists and counsellors to be culturally knowledgeable and capable to handle issues surrounding the process of bereavement and mourning in all South African cultures because they might find themselves faced with such issues at some point in their careers whereby they have to deal with a patient from an African black culture (Yawa, 2010).

The majority of psychologists and counsellors in South Africa are qualified and exposed to the Western process of bereavement (Yawa, 2010). The function and significance of African rituals and traditional practices in the bereavement process is predominantly neglected by the Western-

trained psychologists, counsellors and educators (Yawa, 2010). Others may be mindful to some extent of the bereavement process in the African black culture; however they may lack the skill, experience and information on how to deal with the counselling process (Yawa, 2010). This study will contribute by exposing certain elements that are part of the black African's process of mourning; specifically related to the significance of mourning rituals (in this case the shaving hair ritual within the Ndebele culture).

This study will make a contribution in promoting dialogue about the relevance of culture and its application in different South African contexts (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013). This will help integrate the available knowledge from Euro-American paradigms with knowledge from African paradigms (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013). The study will promote a culture whereby African people's cultural experience, especially relating to mourning will be contextualised and help develop a theoretical framework for such experiences. In this way, a genuine and consistent understanding of mourning rituals amongst black Africans will be developed. Hence, psychology will be applicable and all-encompassing of different cultural experiences (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013).

The results from the study could be useful to the Department of Education in South Africa. It can form part of the curriculum of life sciences, whereby learners will be educated on cultural diversity and practices related to the topic of death and mourning (Yawa, 2010). As it was discovered in the study that there are differences in how individuals within the same culture experience, practice and attach different meanings to the same mourning rituals (specifically the hair shaving ritual within the Ndebele culture in this study). It was also highlighted that within different ethnic groups there exists commonalities and differences in how bereavement and mourning is handled.

This study will also make a significant contribution to research:

There is minimal literature and research findings available on mourning rituals within black African communities, hence, it is anticipated that the findings of this study will make a contribution by increasing on the existing literature and research findings on mourning rituals within the Ndebele culture.

As mentioned in Chapter four, the study is qualitative and the focus was on providing the participants a platform to tell their stories according to their experiences and the meaning thereof, this will further contribute to the indigenous knowledge systems. Whereby research can be done for and by African people in a relevant and ethical manner that respects people's contexts, narratives and experiences.

6.5. Limitations of the study

It was challenging to conduct a thorough literature review on this topic because of the dearth in research and literature pertaining to the significance of shaving hair during mourning.

Another limitation was that grief is a sensitive topic and it required that the participants re-visit the painful experience of death and their loss. Hence, gaining trust from some individuals was challenging because those particular participants might have found it challenging to open about their experiences.

Even though the participants were all Ndebele, there still existed differences in terms of the practice of the ritual of hair shaving during mourning. In some instances things are done slightly differently. What is significant to one participant is not significant to the next. Therefore the

researcher could not fully generalize all themes and sub-themes to apply to all participants. The meaning attached is also different.

The researcher was interested to interview more participants which fell under the youth age range so that she could be able to compare the significance of the shaving hair ritual and the meaning attached thereof across generations. However, as she was using the method of snowballing sampling, she had to interview the participants that she was referred to, which were mainly the elderly.

The other limitation is that some of the participants were old and even though they were able to mention the actual rituals performed, some struggled to share specific details in relation to the significance of certain rituals.

6.6. Recommendations for further study

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are suggested for psychologists, elders/parents, educators/employers and researchers within and outside the Ndebele culture.

6.6.1. Psychologists

According to Bopape (1996) there is proof that when a practitioner and a patient have uncommon cultures, there is a strong possibility for misinterpretation and inadequate communication by all participants (Yawa, 2010). Hence it is recommended for psychologists, especially Western trained psychologists to familiarise themselves with different cultural groups and different ways of grieving and mourning within different cultures, in order to better

understand patients' different mourning processes. This will further help psychologists to develop an intervention plan that is appropriate and congruent to their patients.

It is important to acknowledge that black psychologists, counsellors and educators might not have adequate information concerning the process of bereavement in the black culture merely because they are black (Yawa, 2010). There are other factors that might inform one's level of knowledge about the process of bereavement in a particular black culture, for example being part of a different religion and a distinct ethnical group may play a role (Yawa, 2010). For example, even though they are from the same Nguni clan, people from the Swati culture might not be aware, be knowledgeable and experienced about the Ndebele processes of bereavement and vice versa during counselling (Yawa, 2010).

It is also recommended for psychologists to continually create an awareness surrounding issues of cultural identity; to emphasise on the idea that there is no universal definition of culture or ethnic identity (Yawa, 2010). This awareness will assist in preventing psychologists from assuming that people in the same culture share the same thoughts, actions and have the same viewpoints and values. Hence, even the experience of death, grieving and mourning will not be limited to the hypothesis that people in the same culture may grieve in the same way, let alone individuals within the same family.

Mndende (1993, as cited in Van Durren, 2002) states that in the South African context, the individuals of the black cultural community are obliged to grieve in the Western way by the therapists who have been schooled in the Western Christian manner. Both sides are likely to experience feelings of discontent and defeat should it occur that the one party fails to meet the others' expectations (Mndende, 1993, as cited in Van Durren, 2002). The therapist might get

stuck as he does not have the knowledge and the understanding of the course of bereavement in the culture of his patient. The patient on the other hand may think that he is resentful during therapy because his expectations have not been met. Saone, Strumolo & Dunn (2000) argue that it is recognized that culturally set traditions for handling death may signify the bases of strength and support for families or may become stumbling blocks to effective resolution to grief. It is recommended that therapists assist families recognize resources relevant to their cultural backgrounds, resources that will be able to improve the process of grief resolution while being able fulfil the specific needs of the family and reinforcing continuous family development (Yawa, 2010).

The current study focused only on participants within the Ndebele culture and the psychological significance attached to the shaving hair ritual during mourning. Hence, the findings are limited to the experiences of individuals within the Ndebele culture. It is recommended that further studies be done on the psychologist's experiences, their perception and understanding of the psychological impact of mourning rituals on their patients. In addition to that, there could be an additional study done that focuses on the therapeutic relationship between patient and therapist from different backgrounds (in terms of religion and culture) in therapy dealing with grief, bereavement and mourning.

6.6.2. Elders/Parents

The findings from this study indicated that children were expected to participate in the hair shaving ritual during mourning without a prior explanation or understanding of the ritual or the significance thereof. Even though the experience of participating in rituals is crucial, it would be of relevance for the elders and parents to teach the younger generation as well the children about

the significance of rituals but also allow them to exercise their right whether to participate in rituals or not.

Since the study was conducted with adults, it would be recommended that a future study be done that mainly focuses on children's subjective experiences of death and mourning rituals within the Ndebele culture.

The findings from this study indicated that the hair shaving ritual was not documented by the participants or any of their family members. The performance of the hair shaving ritual during mourning was informed by observations made from their elders. Therefore, most of the participants struggled to articulate the specific psychological significance of the hair shaving ritual during mourning. Hence, it is important to acknowledge the importance and impact of oral discourse and one should not dismiss its significance, however it is recommended for the elders to write more of their own stories about their own experiences narrated by themselves about their own culture and cultural practices. As some knowledge is lost and forgotten and at risk of being misinterpreted as it is passed down from generation to generation.

6.6.3. Educators/Employers

The results from the study indicated that during mourning, in addition to shaving hair during mourning, some of the participants were restricted in their freedom of movement as they were required to stay at home for a certain period of time. In some cases this meant that participants were expected to take time off from work or school. Hence, it is recommended for educators and employers to be aware of cultural differences in the academic and work environment. This will promote a spirit of tolerance within the school settings and work context (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013). This will also help in the understanding of scholars' and employers'

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subjective cultural reality and experiences. This environment of acceptance might further help in creating a positive academic and work experience for scholars and employers respectively (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013). For example, if employers understand their employees' different cultural experiences that might promote understanding and further create a supportive environment; especially surrounding the issues of death and mourning (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013). For example, if an employer is aware of the culture of his employees, he or she will understand when his or her African black employee needs to take time off from work during a time of mourning (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013).

As it was highlighted from the study and its exploration of the hair shaving ritual within the Ndebele culture, South Africa is rich with different cultural backgrounds. Therefore it is recommended that a further study be done to develop a training programme for educators and employers on how to adequately and effectively take care of mourning learners and employees from the different black African ethnic groups because sometimes disagreements within the workplace are caused by the absence of supportive policies which do not accommodate the different population in the workplace or academic context (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013). Some educators and employers might reject black African's cultural reality as they might not have an understanding of black African's cultural experiences. Hence, it is recommended for educators and employers to attend to and adequately address cultural differences within the academic context and work environment (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013). This needs to first start with a respect and understanding of cultural differences between black Africans and their educators and employers. Therefore, it would be recommended for the parties involved to create a dialogue to achieve a significant and harmonious relationship (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothatha, 2013).

6.6.4. Researchers

From the findings of this study, the hair shaving ritual was passed on to the participants through observation, participation and what they have been told by their elders. Through more research work using indigenous knowledge systems and realities, indigenous culture could be widely accepted in the academic field; as it was proven in this study that story telling is significant and relevant in research. In some contexts it is termed narrative enquiry. It is important to acknowledge that story telling is widely used by black Africans to produce and spread knowledge from one generation to the next. One way that the researchers may assist in preserving this knowledge is by producing it in a written format and by acknowledging that cultural values, beliefs and cultures are embedded in the stories that have been passed on from one generation to the next.

It would be recommended that another broader study be done on this topic, whereby all the ethnic groups that exist in South African may be incorporated into the study. This will give a substantial amount of evidence concerning the similarities and differences that exist amongst the different ethnic groups. This will also make a contribution to the academic context and enhance knowledge surrounding mourning processes and mourning rituals amongst black African cultures.

6.7. Conclusion

The journey of doing this research was a journey of learning; it was a journey that involved risks. One of them was that mourning is a sensitive issue and one always had to be sensitive and extra cautious when dealing with such issues especially when addressing the elders within the Ndebele culture. The other risk was that of searching for the significance of mourning rituals which are

sacred within the Ndebele culture. However, the participants were willing to share the knowledge that they hold dear to their hearts.

Hence, the main theme that is central for this research study is that of reciprocity. Even though the researcher was a stranger to most of the participants, the participants were still willing to openly share this sacred information with her. The information is not only valuable for research purposes but also added to the knowledge of the researcher and in that way helped the researcher to have a new found appreciation and respect for the Ndebele culture and their cultural practices.

The participants were also given a voice and an opportunity to tell their stories in their own language, according to their subjective experiences and the meaning attached to those experiences. Most participants appreciated the fact that the researcher was interested in their knowledge systems and took the time to listen to their stories. This further helped to establish rapport and create the connection between the participants and the researcher.

Throughout the process, the researcher learnt that there is still a lot to learn surrounding the issues of African culture, values and rituals. This journey has also sparked interest in the researcher to do more research on indigenous knowledge systems. By embarking on this journey until completion, the researcher also hopes that she has inspired others in the academic context to develop an interest in furthering studies on black African culture.

Another element of reciprocity is that this information acquired from this research will further be available, specifically in the academic context which will be useful in enhancing black African's cultural knowledge systems.

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CONSENT FORM

Title of the study:

The Psychological significance of shaving hair as a ritual during mourning within the Ndebele culture.

Details of the Researcher:

Name of researcher: Zanele Tshoba

                    Tel number: 0839967960

                    E-mail address: zaneletshoba@yahoo.com

                    Master's student at UNISA (University of South Africa).

Name of supervisor: Dr. Mapula Mojapelo-Batka

                    Tel number: 012 429 8239.

                    E-mail address   mojape@unisa.ac.za

                    Psychologist, UNISA, Department of Psychology.

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Zanele Tshoba.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to explore the psychological significance of rituals (specifically hair shaving ritual) during mourning process within the Ndebele culture.

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Participation: My participation will consist essentially of participating in interviews with the researcher. The place, date and duration of the interviews will be decided upon by both the participant and researcher.

Risks: My participation in this study will entail that I volunteer personal information and experiences and this may possibly lead to me feeling some emotional and psychological discomfort. I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to minimize these risks.

Should there be a need for counselling, I will be referred to the UNISA PSYCHOTHERAPY CLINIC (which provides a free counselling and therapy service) at UNISA in Pretoria, contact details: 012 429 8930, alternatively, I will be referred to an institution that offers counselling services closer to my area of residence.

Benefits: My participation in this study will hopefully educate and expose knowledge to the public regarding the psychological significance of the ritual and understanding its cultural value.

Confidentiality and anonymity: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only for research purposes and that my confidentiality will be protected, code names will be used to label documents involving participant's information. **Anonymity** will be protected in the following manner: only the researcher and the supervisor will know the identity of the participants. In the research report, names of participants will not be used, pseudonyms will be used.

Conservation of data: The data collected both hard copy and electronic data like tape recordings of interviews, transcripts and notes will be kept in a secure manner, it will be kept in the researcher's and supervisor's possession.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be recorded, however it will not be used further in the study.

Acceptance:

I …………………………………………………………………………., agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Zanele Tshoba, student of the UNISA (University of South Africa) Faculty of Psychology; which research is under the supervision of Dr. Mapula Mojapelo-Batka.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or her supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the HPCSA's (Health Professions Council of South Africa) Ethical rules, regulations and policy guidelines on www.hpcsa.co.za/online_ethics.php or

 012 338 9300/9301

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is retained by me.

Participant's signature: …………………........................   Date: …………………...........................

Researcher's signature: …………………..................... Date: …………………..............................

In cases where the participant is not able to read the consent form (illiterate, blind, etc.) or if he cannot consent for him/herself a signature from a witness or an authorized third party would also be needed.

Witness_:_ …………………….......................... Date: …………………..............................

Authorized third party……………….................. Date: …………………..............................