

GO ISIWA GA NGWETSI EVENT: A TAPESTRY OF CULTURAL LEARNING

Bakadzi Moeti

University of Botswana

MoetiB@UB.AC.BW

Abstract

Escorting the bride to her in-laws' place is a very important event that completes Setswana wedding processes. The purpose of the study was to investigate the experiences of brides regarding go isiwa ga ngwetsi event. The study sample consisted of newlyweds who had participated in go isiwa ga ngwetsi. Purposive and snowball sampling was used to select the five women who took part in the interviews. This study assumed a phenomenological approach in its investigation. Findings of the study revealed that this highly valued activity both introduces the bride to her in-laws' family as well as allows her to participate in family activities with ease. The study found out further that there was preference for this revered traditional practice need to be continued.

Key words: Go isiwa ga ngwetsi event, bride, marriage, married women

Introduction

It is the desire of every newly wedded woman to feel that she is part of her husband's family. The wedding celebration is typically brought to completion by taking the newly married woman to her in-laws to join them and be welcomed in her new family (Pitso, 2002). This enables the new bride to officially enter and be part of the family of her in-laws (Moeti, Koloi-Keaikitse & Mokgolodi, 2017; Ngabase, 2016). This commonly practiced cultural activity is referred to as *go isiwa ga ngwetsi* (escorting the bride to her in-laws' place), and is highly esteemed in numerous African cultures. It is the procedure performed after all other processes have been completed and is the culmination of a traditional Setswana wedding. It is through *go isiwa ga ngwetsi* that the spirit of connectedness and oneness is demonstrated (Phiri, Mulaudzi & Heyns, 2015; Moeti & Mokgolodi, 2017), and spiritual leaders, members of the family and the community have various roles to perform (Khamis, 2013).

In Botswana, like other African societies, there are cultural procedures that are followed in the Setswana traditional marriage. These include *patlo*, *bogadi*, *moletlo* and *go isiwa ga ngwetsi*. There are differences in how these are conducted and implemented (Moeti et al., 2017) depending on the cultures of various ethnic groups in Botswana as well as family preferences. There is a married male and a married female from the groom's and bride's families referred to as *raditsela* and *mmaditsela* who act as intermediaries or 'go between' throughout the negotiation process. Their main responsibility is to receive information or direction from the family they represent and convey it to the other family, and receive information from the other

family to pass it to the family they represent. This ensures smooth running of events during *go isiwa ga ngwetsi*.

During *patlo* a delegation of men and women from the groom's parents visits the bride's family to seek the hand of the woman in marriage (Ellece, 2007, 2010, 2011; Mokomane, 2001). When the negotiations have been successful there is the payment of the bride price, *bogadi*. The amount varies from family to family and from one ethnic group to another (Moeti et al., 2017).

After *patlo*, there is the indigenous premarital counselling, *go laya*, which is usually performed by married men and women before, during and after the wedding ceremony (Ellece, 2010; Moloko-Phiri, Mulaudzi & Heyns, 2016; Moeti et al., 2017). In this paper, *go laya* refers to the counselling that is carried out at the in-laws place. The bride and the groom are counselled separately. The bride is normally taken to a secluded area while the groom and the men will use the family courtyard traditionally used by men, *kgotla*. Only married people participate in *go laya* and the tradition is that they put on a certain traditional attire (Moeti et al., 2017). The bride's parents also counsel their daughter in the presence of her in-laws when she is being handed over formally to her in-laws. The groom is counselled by his uncles (Ellece, 2011; Moeti & Mokgolodi, 2017). Like the modern premarital counselling, *go laya* provides people who are about to get into the marriage institution with vital information and guidance with the aim of keeping their marriages strong (Borowski & Tambling, 2015). Although nowadays it is not revered like in the past (Moeti et al., 2017) *go laya* is very critical because if it is not done, the marriage is considered incomplete (Moncho & Nyatshane, 1998; Ellece, 2010). Since it can be done even after the celebrations, it also helps couples to reassess their relationship and in some cases averts the risk of divorce. A married woman is expected to withstand all marital pressures, conform to her role as a submissive wife as well as an obedient daughter in-law (Moloko-Phiri, 2015; Rapoo, 2015). Divorce is not looked upon favourably and even if there are considerable marital problems, the bride is advised to persevere through it all (Masenya, 1998). The values of persistence, tolerance, patience and sacrifice are emphasized as pivotal in a successful marriage (Ellece, 2011). All these are relayed during *go laya*, through songs, proverbs and verbal contributions (Moeti & Mokgolodi, 2017; Ellece, 2011).

This paper examines this cultural practice of *go isiwa ga ngwetsi* with a focus on the experiences of the brides as they go through this process. Although a lot of effort is devoted to preparing the bride to be smoothly incorporated into the groom's family and into married life in general, there is dearth in studies on this area. From Botswana context, newlyweds always participate in this cultural activity but little or nothing has been documented on the experiences of the bride about *go isiwa ga ngwetsi*. The unavailability of the information on *go isiwa ga ngwetsi* event motivated this study to help bridge this knowledge gap.

There are variations on the implementation of *go isiwa ga ngwetsi* event. The bride can be escorted a day after the celebration especially if the groom's home is far from the bride's residence. Sometimes it can be after a week, a month or even a year. Uncles, aunts, siblings and

other relatives are usually part of the team, and some members of the team have various roles to perform. For instance, *raditsela* and *mmaditsela* may lead the team and provide guidance as indicated earlier. In some cultures, the bride's parents do not accompany the bride when she is taken to her in-laws. In most cultures it is forbidden to hand the bride during the day; so the handing over takes place very early in the morning. A home is arranged by the groom's family where the bride's family will stay temporarily during the event. Since it is a communal activity people volunteer to use their cars to transport the team, together with their possessions and gifts such as firewood, clothes and food. It is of critical importance that procedures be followed, otherwise the bride family would be fined for any perceived misconducts.

The reception at the gate and the handing over is done with utmost reverence as the bride's parents hand some items and the bride over to the in-laws; while the groom's family in turn receives and welcomes the new bride into the family. This is enhanced by ululations, singing and dancing. After the bride's family have been allowed into the yard traditional counselling is conducted, followed by feasting and celebration. The bride's family may depart when the celebration has ended. Two to three people—usually the bride's sisters or aunties—remain with the bride at the in-laws residence for a day or two to assist her in performing household duties such as cooking for the in-laws and cleaning the yard. The new bride is expected to execute these and other duties the next day, very early in the morning (Matlho, personal communication, October 2017).

Studies on marriage in Botswana have not addressed *go isiwa ga ngwetsi* in depth. Most of the studies focused on other aspects of marriage process such as *patlo*, *go laya* etc. For example Ellece (2011) examined the ritual advice *go laya* and how it impacts on power relations between spouses in marriage. She argues that the advice given influences inequality among spouses. In another study, Ellece (2010) explored the utilisation of metaphors in Setswana marriage ceremonies such as *patlo* and how they 'construct gendered subject positions' for the couple. The paper concludes that metaphors give diverse position meanings for brides and grooms. Moeti et al. (2017) explored the significance of traditional premarital counselling on marital stability. The study argued that even though *go laya* is a very good divorce averting strategy, it has lost its meaning because of how it is conducted nowadays. Mokomane (2004) examined the role of cohabitation in Botswana. The paper found that although there are many cohabiting people in Botswana, this does not endanger the institution of marriage. It rather delays the timing of marriage. Rapoo (2013) examined the constructions of traditional womanhood in Botswana myths, narratives and traditional marriage rituals. The study concluded that these issues contribute to the circulation of negative construction of African women. Pauli and van Dijk (2016) explored African marriages and the wedding in the last decades particularly in South Africa, Botswana and Namibia in the last decades. The paper found that even though marriage rates have declined in the region, the brideprice is still considered an important ritual in many African marriages. The paper also argues that though the institution is affected by world-wide developments, there is limited anthropological study on the issue in Southern Africa.

Furthermore, several studies have been conducted on mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship (Nganase, 2016; Cotterill, 1989; Merrill, 2007; Sibiya, 2011). Nganase (2016) examined the relationship between the daughter-in-law and the mother-in-law amongst the blacks in South Africa. The following themes emerged: influence of the family systems, socio-cultural influences, reflections about the relationship as well as dynamics of the relationship. Nganase and Basson (2017) explored the socio-cultural effects on relationships among black mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law. Ethnicity, religion education, finances and geographical distance were some of the themes that emerged from the study. Sibiya (2011) investigated the reasons why newlyweds among black communities are ill-treated. The study found that mother-in-law abuse daughter's in-law because they love their sons so much that they do not believe anyone can take care of them the way they would. Furthermore, some studies just mentioned *go isiwa ga ngwetsi* without discussing it in details. These include Ellece (2011), Senekane (1995) and Nganase (2016). The authors just indicated that the event is a cultural practice in an African marriage. Studies such as the ones reviewed above assist in appreciating and comprehending the process of marriage in Botswana as well as in the African context. Evidently, not much work has been done on *go isiwa ga ngwetsi*. The current study therefore focuses on *go isiwa ga ngwetsi* event and the experiences of the brides who have gone through it.

Theoretical Framework

The current investigation is guided by Attachment Theory. According to this theory, processes related to family of origin have an influence on future relationships. People's attitudes towards others, their relationships goals and how they deal with the suffering that stems from relationships are all influenced by their attachment style (Seligman, 2002). The style of attachment formed during childhood influences future relationships. Thus, a more tolerant atmosphere supports greater attachment security while less secure attachment styles ultimately manifest in anxiety and avoidance during relationship formation and maintenance (Hall, 2015). Securely attached people have better relationships and enjoy greater relationship satisfaction (Collins, 1996).

In this study, if the newlyweds had no difficulties to interacting with people because of childhood attachment style, it will not be difficult for them to establish relationships with their in-laws. In particular, the bride will not have problems integrating into her new family and be part of that family.

The purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the experiences of the brides regarding the cultural practice of being escorted to the in-laws' residence. The following research question guided this study: What are the experiences of brides regarding the cultural practice of being escorted to the in-laws?

Methodology

This study adopted a constructivist paradigm. According to Somekh and Lewin (2005, p. 344) constructivist paradigm is a ‘theory of knowledge which stresses the active process involved in building knowledge’. The paradigm further indicates that knowledge should not be assumed to be a set of rigid proposition which should be understood and memorised. Guba and Lincoln (1994, p.113) refer to constructivism as ‘understanding and reconstruction of the constructions that people initially hold’ with the aim towards consensus whilst being open to new interpretations due to change in information and to sophistication. This methodology is appropriate for this investigation in that the brides both interpreted the meaning of the event culturally and how it has changed over time. In this way the practice has not been rigid but has evolved overtime because of modernisation and acquisition of new information and practices. These interpretations thus contribute towards building knowledge on *go isiwa ga ngwetsi*.

The study was qualitative in nature and followed a phenomenological approach which seeks to comprehend the meaning of an experience or phenomenon or behaviour to some people (Van Manen, 1990). Stephens (2007) argued that lived experiences, culture, values and beliefs of research participants ought to be known and valued. This design therefore fits well in this study which focuses on lived experiences of participants (Schwandt, 1994). The researcher investigated married women’s experiences through individual interviews.

Participants and sampling procedures

The participants of the study were five married women aged between 25 and 45, who have participated in the escorting of the bride event. Their level of education ranged from a minimum of a diploma to a degree. Key participants known to the researcher were identified (Cohen, Manion & Marrison, 2007). The criteria for selection of key participants were willingness to participate, currently married and have participated in *go isiwa ga ngwetsi* exercise. These were then requested to suggest others who met the criteria for the study (Bell, 2014; Merriam, 2009). Participants volunteered and therefore they were not paid for their involvement in the research. They were first briefed about the purpose of the study and a convenient time was set for interviews and consent forms were signed before commencement of interviews.

Data collection and analysis

With permission from participants, the interviews were audio taped and lasted between 40 and 50 minutes. These were unstructured interviews which allowed participants to elaborate on their views in depth and facilitated the collection of comprehensive data. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, coded and analysed (Streubert & Carpenter, 1995). Phenomenological aspects such as reflexivity were taken into consideration (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). Reflexivity means self-reflexivity, the researcher’s ability to understand his or her influence in research and his or her drive to seek enhancement of the quality of their research (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). In this case, the researcher together with the participants, reflected on their experiences of *go isiwa ga ngwetsi*. The researcher reflected upon her experiences and views on

the event as she is married and had vivid memories of the experience. However, the researcher bracketed her views as Streubert and Carpenter (2011) emphasise that researchers should remain neutral in their research. This helps the researcher to collect data without being judgemental (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). According to Powers and Knapp (1995), the technique of bracketing involves an effort for researchers to hold previous knowledge or belief about the phenomenon under study as they interact with research participants with the intention of getting a clearer picture.

Themes were identified and classified into meaningful segments. The identified segments were then simplified as a way of removing redundant and recurrent information. These were organised into a nonrepetitive list that originated from every transcript. Interpretive themes that highlighted the women's experiences of *go isiwa ga ngwetsi* event were then generated.

Findings of the study

Various experiences by the brides emerged from the study as follows: Gained knowledge about marriage and culture, application of knowledge learnt during traditional counselling, it is both a joyous and emotional exercise, strengthens relationships with the new family, it is a form of punishment and it is time consuming. The themes that emerged from the study are presented and discussed in the following sub-section.

Gained knowledge about marriage and culture

Gaining knowledge about marriage and culture from senior members of the community, especially females, was found to be very fundamental during *go isiwa ga ngwetsi*. This theme was stated by all the participants. Learning from women in successful marriages, watching their conduct and practice, listening to them and interacting with them taught participants valuable lessons about marriage. One participant said:

After the wedding, there is the traditional counselling *go laiwa (to be counselled)*. Your parents, in the presence of your in-laws, will tell you everything about how a woman is expected to behave—like cooking, waking up early etc....Most of these things nowadays are no longer done; even if they are expected, they are not done. When I look at the newlyweds nowadays, this issue of waking up early, they no longer do it. Things have really changed; a lot of people are really moving slowly away from them.

The participants found that some of the teachings were good, such as *mosadi ga a tlhabelwe ke letsatsi mo ntlong* (the rising sun should not find a woman still in bed). Such teachings inspired them to work hard. One woman said, "I have enjoyed the sweeping part; it made me realise that I am no longer a girl but a woman. I have a home to take care of. This has taught me that a house needs to be swept". Evidently, *go isiwa ga ngwetsi* engraves the idea of hard work and commitment in the minds of the brides.

Participants further felt that the event gave them opportunity to learn about their in-laws' culture, especially if the cultures of the two families were different. To substantiate this idea one participant said, "the other thing that I learnt is the culture that is different from mine". However cultural clash was thought to be a challenge at times. For example, another participant said, "... you can imagine I was from a different tribe with a different culture and being married into another culture.... It is just a miracle that we are still together".

Application of knowledge learnt during traditional counselling-go laya

Majority of the participants said application of knowledge was paramount. During traditional premarital counselling the bride is taught and groomed on how she is supposed to behave in marriage. As soon as the celebration ends, the bride is expected to apply the knowledge she learnt during child upbringing as well as during traditional premarital counselling. Participants felt pressurised to work extremely hard to prove to the in-laws that they were the right choice for their son. Some of their comments were as follows, "In the morning you think of what you have been taught as you were growing up and during *go laya*". Another participant added, "I realised that what my mother used to tell me about a woman waking up early was real, and I used to do it at home. So it was not a problem for me. So I woke up in the morning and cleaned before they woke up" Another participant shared, "I also learnt household duties. Early in the morning I woke up to clean and cook for the family".

Participants who were assisted by relatives did not find this as stressful as those who did not have anyone to assist. One participant reflected on this experience by saying, "In the morning I was expected to clean and make tea. I had all the support from my sisters and aunts who remained with me. They did everything. I just did a little bit". Similarly the other one said, "I didn't do much. Naturally, I don't like sweeping the yard, so my sisters did that on my behalf. I only prepared tea for the whole family". On the contrary, the other participant showed how demanding and challenging the task was for her, especially that when her family members left no relatives remained with her. She explained that this was because her family lived very far. She shared her story by saying,

I was just alone since it was far. In my culture, you go with somebody who will be helping you do the tasks like fetching water. And the person is supposed to spend a week with you to help you and make you feel comfortable.

Furthermore, participants felt that proper orientation should be done to help the newly married woman to discharge her duties. One participant said, "I didn't know whether what I was doing was acceptable or not but all this time I was depending upon my husband. He helped me on certain things secretly because parents would not allow him to cook." Another participant said, "I kept on asking my husband 'how do I do it.' He was the reference person". This statement

indicates that proper orientation should be done especially if the bride comes from a different culture. This would assist them in carrying out expected responsibilities comfortably.

It is both a joyous and emotional exercise

On the one hand, participants reported that they had mixed feelings about the event which they described as joyous and as emotional. On the other hand, *go isiwa ga ngwetsi* gave a sense of relief and assurance that they are ultimately married after long and hectic celebrations. One shared by saying, “It was nice that I had always wanted to get married, especially us Christians as we have been abstaining. So I was happy”

Participants reported that they were stressed and exhausted because of the workload that the event requires. The stress was associated with being left with new people, a situation that was uncomfortable to the point that some even cried when their families were leaving. For instance, one participant said, “I cried a lot when my parents were leaving me behind” Various reasons were given for crying such as being left with strangers, songs sung during *go laya* ceremony and the whole process of *go isiwa ga ngwetsi*. One participant gave an example of the song that made her cry sorrowfully, “*O sale o di bona*”, which translates ‘remain with the challenges’. One participant’s unhappiness was reflected by the following statement, “I felt like I was an outcast, as if I was alone.... Yes, my parents and relatives escorted me but there came a time where they had to leave me alone with the in-laws”. Participants’ stress was also prompted by expectations placed on them. One participant alleged, “the fact that you are required to work amongst people you do not know is stressful. It seems like they are judging you”. However, other participants were used to this work expectation and their parents had warned and taught them. For them this was not a difficult thing to do. A participant even thanked her mother for her teachings during her upbringing and said, “mothers are really playing a very important part in our lives—to teach us cultural duties”. The event was also a time for them to think deeply about their decision to get married. The participant said: “I was asking myself whether they are dumping me and leaving me, and that’s when I felt the pain that these people are leaving me. And at the same time it was nice that at last I am with a person that I love and I have been with all these 3 years of courtship”.

Strengthens relationships with the new family

For the participants, the most treasured component of *go isiwa ga ngwetsi* was that it gives them an opportunity to interact with the in-laws. It reinforces relationships between the two families and establishes trust between them. The following are the experiences that they shared, “Some things were very good as your mother-in-law will introduce you to people so that you know them and they know you. This also helps you to take part in the family activities comfortably” The other said, “I was with them for some time for them to know me” Another said “my sisters’-in-law were very supportive; they taught me how to cook porridge in a way that my mother-in-law prefers. And truly speaking I was welcomed well”. Another woman said, “Being escorted *mma*,

when people welcome you it is very nice. You will see your in-laws happy, welcoming you with love and in peace because most of them would have left everything for your sake. That alone is very important in our culture.... It gave me an opportunity to be introduced to other family members” Another said, “You are even shown your house” This on its own makes you feel welcome and comfortable.

Nevertheless, to some the welcome was not so obvious. One participant said,

I don't remember them showing me any love whatsoever. They didn't even prepare a room where I would sleep that night. I made my own plan myself. They didn't care even the following day when we wanted to leave with my husband; they wanted him to work. I was not welcomed well and this has really affected our relationship.

Although it is just for a short period of time, the bride gets the opportunity to meet her new family, learn their different personalities and how to relate with each one of them. A participant said: “I now know how to deal with my in-laws”.

It is a form of punishment

Some of the participants felt that the event seemed like some sort of punishment. For example, the expectation that as a newlywed and new member of the family you should wake up early in the morning to carry out some household duties seems unbearable. Further, the whole family seems to watch with scrutiny and this makes the bride uncomfortable. Exploring on this point a participant said: “At times they do not even tell you how it is done. You will think what your mother told you is the correct way of doing things”. The other participant said, “I was expected to offer my mother-in-law water for bathing. But I wasn't sure whether she wanted it warm or hot. It was a struggle for me” The other said unexcitedly, “I was forced to call my mother-in-law ‘mum’. To tell you the truth, it was hard for me, when I called her using her sons name she would correct me and say, ‘Am I not your mum? Call me ‘mum’” The participant further said that although it was uncomfortable she ended up mastering it and made her mother-in-law happy. Another participant further said, “Even up to now I am struggling to call her ‘mum’. I have never called her ‘mum’ because all her children call her differently. So I was and am the only one expected to call her ‘mum’. I feel it is unfair and it really shows that I am not her biological daughter”

Time consuming

Another point that came out was that *go isiwa ga ngwetsi* can be very time consuming. For example, a participant said, “I wanted to go for honeymoon; I was not ready for this exercise.” Similarly another said, “I feel it took most of our time which we could have gone away and enjoyed our time alone. I wanted to be alone with my husband”. The participants were generally dismayed that they were forced to go to the in-laws place even when they did not feel ready.

Discussion

The aim of this paper was to explore the experiences of married women regarding *go isiwa ga ngwetsi*. The findings of this phenomenological study provide in-depth, comprehensive experiences of married women regarding the event. The findings generally seem to indicate that the event is essential and respected; and that wedding celebrations would be incomplete without it. The most significant part of the event is the acquisition of knowledge about marriage related things including the culture of the in-laws as well as marriage in general.

Most of the findings of this study are consistent with previous research. The study found that brides appreciated *go isiwa ga ngwetsi* for its educational value especially during *go laya* process. *Go isiwa ga ngwetsi* is embraced for its informational value. This finding concurs with Moeti et al. (2017) who found that the bride learns about her new roles when she is counselled before her in-laws. Similarly, Moloko-Phiri Mulaudzi and Heyns (2016) also noted that *go laya* enables the bride to know how she is supposed to behave in marriage. In agreement Ellece (2011) noted that it is a training ground for the bride to be a real woman. This learning part, especially the songs and proverbs, prepares brides for the challenges ahead as they convey societal expectations meant to guide brides in their new life (Moloko & Heyns, 2016). However, the study also found that some of these proverbs and songs have symbolic meanings that bring pain to the women. Moeti and Mokgolodi (2017) made a similar observation when they noted that some of the messages communicated to brides are entrenched in the songs sung during the celebration.

The current study observed that some participants were not competent in what they were expected to do. Ngabase (2016) stated that it is the duty of the mother-in-law to teach and guide the bride. This agrees with what some participants expressed when they said they expected guidance from their new families. In a traditional African family setup, the bride is expected to remain at the in-laws place for a certain period of time to prove to the in-laws that she is a bride of worth herself, study and learn from the in-laws and help the mother-in-law with household duties (Sibiya, 2011; Ngabase, 2016). This was also noted in the current study. However, due to work related circumstances brides no longer stay with their in-laws for extended periods of time. This could be attributed to an increasing number of African women in the workforce in the modern times (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002), as opposed to the past when most women were stay-at-home wives.

Anxiety was found to be prevalent among brides after they were presented to their in-laws. Huffman (2004) reports that when a newly wedded woman is welcomed to her new family, she is observed and taught the culture of her in-laws. The hard work maybe due to the need to make a good impression as Cotterill (1989) noted. This finding is in line with that of other researchers. Prentice (2005) opines that brides are usually uneasy about meeting their husband's families, and the uneasiness may come from being unsure whether they will be accepted by their in-laws.

Similarly, Ngabase (2016) confirms that daughter's-in-law are usually anxious about being accepted into the new family.

This study also found that some brides initially had nerves on the first day(s) after the celebrations but were nevertheless still able to learn their husband's culture and other valuable lessons regarding married life. Silverstein (1990) states that families are different. Every family has its beliefs, attitudes, values, morals and culture. Silverstein (1990) further says that these differences have the potential to cause conflicts between the couple and the in-laws. Moloko-Phiri (2015) found that married women felt insufficient to carry out chores in the way expected by their in-laws. This confirms what this study found. According to Ali (2011) a virtuous wife is perceived a virtuous daughter in-law if she treats or regards her mother in-law as her own mother as well as the way she endures mistreatment. Moloko-Phiri (2015) noted that inability to fulfil these roles may often leads to depression. This finding affirms that of Bryant, Conger and Meehan (2001) who observed that dealing with in-laws can be stressful, and can ultimately lead to relationship dissatisfaction (Rosan et al., 2014).

According to McGoldrick, Giordano and Garcia-Preto (2005), there are varied and multifaceted expectations among in-laws; and all these can lead to complicated relationships. In this study, for instance, there were reservations in some cases when some brides were expected to call their mother-in-law "mum". This expectation or requirement did not urge or sit well with these brides although harmonious relationships were achieved in the end, they did not seem voluntary and willingly on the part of the brides as they were forced to comply with expectations against their will. In some case the reservations remained.

The other significant finding was that the event introduces and connects the bride to her new family as well as their greater extended family. Nganase (2016) has indicated that meeting someone for the first time is always a challenge although it is important to create good relations. The establishment of relationships is very sensitive as it can either leave good or bad imprints in the life of the bride, and if it is not done properly many future relationships can be ruined and sometimes for good. This is supported by Prentice (2005) that glitches in family relationships are occasionally instigated during the initial meeting. One study found that dissatisfaction with relationship, especially among women, creates a higher chance of relationship dissolution (Rosan, Slinning, Roysamb & Tambs, 2014). Therefore it is critical that relationships are nurtured appropriately at the beginning when the newlywed is welcomed so that she can be as happy and as comfortable as possible in her new family. In the African culture a married woman is not expected to leave her marital home; she is rather expected to endure hardship and marital challenges (Moloko-Phiri, 2015; Masenya, 1998).

Participants also revealed that they had good relationships with their in-laws which in turn strengthened relationships between the two families. This is in line with (Goetting, 1990; Merrill,

2007; Nganase, 2016; Carter & McGoldrick, 1980) who noted that in-laws can be a source of love and support.

However, some participants reported dysfunctional relationships with in-laws due to poor welcome which ruined relationships for good. Mchunu (2005) has argued that it takes a long time to establish good relationships between newlyweds and the in-laws as well as integrating them into the new family. A good welcome can contribute significantly to good future relationship with in-laws. Prentice (2005) argued that it is expected that married women establish woman-to-woman relationships in the society and families.

The investigation also found that due to cultural expectations, some parents of the bride prepared their daughters well regarding household chores. This childhood knowledge and experience helped them in their new life. Such brides stand a better chance of withstanding challenges within the institution of marriage. According to Ali et al. (2011), a good mother should take the responsibility of teaching and raising a responsible good daughter. As Medhi (2002) noted, such parents should be applauded for doing a good job in raising daughters who can ultimately become good daughters-in-law.

Implications of the findings to the theoretical framework

Seligman (2002) noted that people's attitudes are influenced by their attachment style during childhood which ultimately influences their future relationships. The current investigation observed that some of the brides found it difficult to be attached to their new family. The theoretical framework would suggest that this could plausibly be caused by the way in which relationships were handled at the beginning. According to Hall (2015) a more welcoming atmosphere supports a greater attachment security while less secure attachment styles exhibits anxiety. On the one hand, in-laws who welcomed new brides well demonstrated that they had a good attachment style during their formative years. They therefore found it relatively easy to create good relations with new members in their families. On the other hand poor welcome indicated an attachment style that was lacking in many respects. The consequences of that would be seen in problematic relations with new people. Similar observations could be extrapolated onto brides— if their attachment style in early stages of their lives was good it helped ease them into good relations with their in-laws and vice-versa. An example could be one regarding preparation of the daughter by the mother. Brides who had been trained for household chores had established good rapport with their mother/parents and this consequently bore good fruit relationship wise when they were integrated in their new families. The same cannot be said of brides who did not have this training and the attachment that comes with it.

Implications of the study on education/learning

The current study should be deemed as having a bearing not only on acquisition of cultural information in general but also on learning in the formal education system. On the one hand,

community members who are imbued with, informed about and deeply entrenched in their culture have a healthy sense of identity. These kinds of people can make meaningful contribution in and can function effectively and independently in their communities (Maina, 2003). On the other hand, ignorance regarding one's culture can typically lead to identity crisis and lack of skills or ability to participate relevantly in one's cultural environment. This study therefore argues that in a world where more and more African countries are abandoning their own culture in favour of western education, there should be a strong consideration for integrating indigenous culture in the school curriculum. As *go isiwa ga ngwetsi* has shown, education derived from culture and tradition makes a significant impact in making community members holistic.

Conclusion

This study investigated *go isiwa ga ngwetsi* event and noted that it is a very significant component of Setswana marriage. It is a mandatory cultural exercise, otherwise the wedding is deemed to be incomplete. It is clear from the findings that while core aspects of the practice have remained, it has also changed somewhat because of modernisation. For instance, in the past women were expected to remain at their in-laws' residence for some time after the wedding. Nowadays women are working; hence most remain at the in-laws' place for short periods of time. This leads to missing out on the observation component that used to help women learn more about the new family they were becoming a part of. Although there was encouraging evidence that suggest that participants learn a lot from this event, there were instances that made them uncomfortable. It is unfortunate that nowadays some brides enter into marriage unprepared and tend to struggle to keep up with the pressures of married life. The responsibility therefore lies with the mothers to prepare and teach their girl-children household chores so that when their turn to get married arrives they can easily and smoothly fit into the new family and endure marital pressures that typically characterise marriages.

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