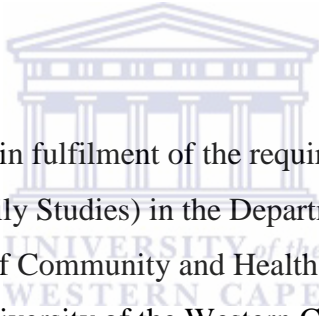


**THE EXPERIENCES OF FAMILIES OF AN INTERVENTION
PROGRAMME FOR FATHERS**

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Full thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
MA (Child and Family Studies) in the Department of Social Work,
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ABSTRACT

The importance of the role of fathers in the lives of their children and families has received much attention in recent years. This new focus on responsible fatherhood has led to an increase of programme interventions for responsible fathers.

The aim of this study was to explore how families experienced an intervention programme for fathers, and how the intervention contributed to child and family well-being. The study made use of a qualitative research methodology. The research sample included fathers, who participated in the intervention programme, as well as their life partners and children. The sample for the study included 10 fathers, 10 spouses, as well as 10 children of the fathers, who participated in an intervention programme for fathers. The final sample of participants in this study was 30 participants.

A semi-structured interview schedule was used to collect the data in face-to-face interviews. The data analysis was conducted by means of a thematic analysis. All ethical considerations were adhered to by ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of participants. The following themes were found in the study: Understanding of family well-being, Conceptualization of fatherhood and father involvement, Communication about the programme, Parent-child relationships, Parental involvement and personal matters, Discipline and conflict management, Experience of programme intervention the father attended.

The results of the study showed that (1) the intervention contributed to the well-being of children and their families; (2) the involvement of fathers in the lives of their children increased post-intervention; (3) fathers' communication skills improved; (4) fathers were more involved in unpaid care; (5) spousal relationships improved with less conflict in their relationships.

KEY WORDS

Fatherhood

Fathering

Father involvement

Parenting

Children

Child well-being

Family

Parent-child relationship

Ecological Systems Theory

Social constructionism



ABBREVIATIONS

- DoSD** – Department of Social Development
- StatsSA** – Statistics South Africa
- UNOHCHR** – United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- HIV/AIDS** – Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
- CWSC** – Children’s Well-Being and Social Connections
- NIDS** – National Income Dynamic Study
- SAIRR** – South African Institute for Race Relations
- HSRC** – Human Science Research Council
- UK** – United Kingdom
- NGO** – Non Governmental Organisation



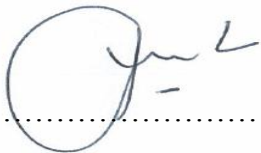
DECLARATION

I declare that, *The experiences of families of an intervention programme for fathers*, is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other University, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Andre Lewaks

November 2015

Signed:



DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to two of the most influential and inspirational people in my life. Both have already passed on, but still continue to inspire my life with the great role modelling that I received from them, Anna and Jan Lewaks. They were the motivation for all the success in my life. As parents, they were always willing to sacrifice, in order for me to get a good education. Thank you ‘ma’ and ‘pa’ for what you meant to me. I will never forget what I learned from you, on how to be a good, loving parent. You taught me to love myself, as well as the people around me, that I should always care for others in need, and that, when I leave your house, I should be able to be welcomed by everyone. I promise that I will dedicate all the parenting work that I do, to you. I am proud to be your son and I will always miss you.

May your souls be blessed and rest in peace.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this study is owed to my heavenly Father, Jesus Christ. I owe everything that I have obtained in life from Him. Thank you, Lord for teaching me to be a humble servant, and to be a blessing to others in need of care and protection.

To my mother and father, Anna en Jan Lewaks, for giving me wonderful parenting examples, with which, I will be able to bless my children. You will always be in my heart and your dedication, as parents, will always guide me.

To my wife, Sonia Lewaks, who has always been there for me and still is. Thank you so much for your love and for standing by me, for your encouragement and having the patience to allow me to focus on my studies. You have played a huge role in all my achievements. Thank you for believing in my abilities, and for being my motivation.

My children, Andrea, Shaundré and Caylynn, for your love and for accepting me as a father. Love you lots.

To my supervisor, Prof. N. Roman, for your professional and expert guidance. You are simply the best and I really enjoyed working with you. My Co-Supervisor, Ms Edna Rich, for your calmness, advice and wise words. May the Lord bless you.

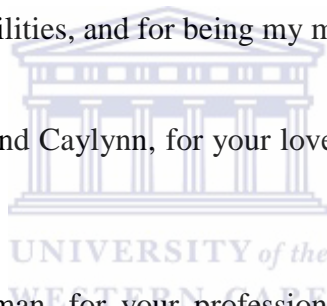


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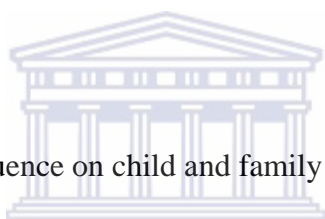
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

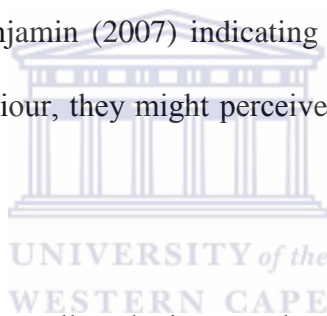
The absence of fathers in South African families, not only has a huge influence on the composition of families in South Africa, but also has serious developmental implications for women and children. About 1 in 2 children grow up with an absentee father in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Research also shows that only 1 in every 3 children lives with both biological parents; while a quarter of South African children, do not live with their biological parents (DoSD, 2011; Holborn & Eddy, 2011; StatsSA, 2011). The breakdown of families in South Africa is more evident when an analysis is done of how many black African children (27%) stay with their biological parents (StatsSA, 2011).



Becoming a father is a critical period of change in the life of men, with fatherhood having to be integrated into a male identity. The transition to parenthood will very likely change fathers' relationships with their partners and (Ahlborg, Misvaer & Moller, 2009) their families (Bell, Goulet, Tribble, Paul, Boisclair & Tronick, 2007). It will also change their habits of spending leisure time, affect their working lives, and is likely to transform them into individuals, who cherish interests and values that are different than before this transition (Claxton & Pery-Jenkins, 2008; Nomaguchi & Bianchi, 2004). Researchers have, therefore, found that fathering behaviour is central to father involvement and has a huge influence on child behaviour and development (Conger, Conger & Martin, 2010). Evidence shows that fathers are more open to nurturing behaviours, when they understand that these behaviours

makes a difference in their children's lives (Conger, Conger & Martin, 2010). When fathers become more involved in activities that engage children, it promotes the emotional development of children (Almeida & Galambos, 1991). Amato and Rivera (1999) proved that, when fathers spend more time, are more supportive and maintain close relationships with children, it contributes to less behaviour problems in children.

In their research, Conger, Conger and Martin (2010) found that 'men with high levels of stress may be more likely to exhibit punitive actions and fathering behaviours that may relate to negative child behaviours'. Negative fathering behaviours may begin to emerge when marital conflict and economic hardship increase (Lamb & Lewis, 2010). This links to research done by Gaunt and Benjamin (2007) indicating that because these fathers do not understand their children's behaviour, they might perceive that the children are difficult and oppositional.



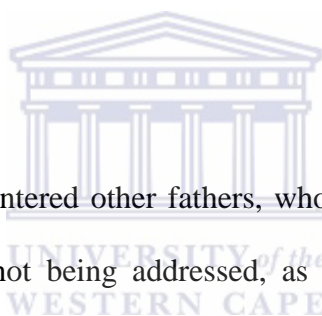
Changes in the family structure, as well as the increased participation of women in the labour market, has called for a redefinition of the father's role in the family. This view is confirmed in research conducted by Brown and Barker (2004) that highlights this role change from a care perspective. These views partly emanate from the politics and scholarship of identity; partly prompted by the changing nature of employment associated with post-industrial economics and globalisation, as well as by changes in the nature and composition of families (Lupton & Barclay, 1997). Another driver of this growing attention to men's relationships in the home and family is the increasing importance attached to children. This is very important from an economic perspective and because it is a critical period for the development of human and social capital. Declining fertility and family size has been accompanied by the creation, and even re-creation, of the child and childhood, as a life-stage with particular needs

and conditions (James, Jenks & Prout, 1998; Zelizer, 1994). With these changes in the economic and domestic spheres, it became important to relook at the role and importance of father-absence in child development.

Widespread increases in father-absence have elevated fathers 'from relative obscurity, to a central position' in efforts to understand and promote children's well-being. New types of fathers are being acknowledged in step-, recombined and cohabiting families (Tamis-LeMonda & Cabrera, 1999). All of these family types call for men – even those not biologically related – to increase their involvement in the lives of children (Tamis-LeMonda & Cabrera, 1999: 3). This involvement can be achieved through assisting mothers and children with care duties, school work and leisure time with children. The increased interest in programmes that promote responsible fatherhood, and the limited information currently available on the services provided, as well as the effectiveness of these programmes, has generated interest in the systematic evaluation of responsible fatherhood programmes. The purpose of this study is, therefore, to explore what the experiences of families are of a fatherhood intervention programme, in order to determine the programmes' contribution to child and family well-being. This research has focussed on an evaluation of a fatherhood programme intervention in a small fishing village called Lamberts Bay that is situated in the Cederberg municipal area of the rural West Coast of South Africa. The fatherhood programme intervention was implemented by a local social service provider that are funded by the Department of Social Development. The aim of the intervention was to strengthen families by providing services that promote positive father involvement in child and family live. Programme participants were the fathers of the local community of Lambertsbay that showed interest in joining a fathers group. The participants were recruited by programme facilitators.

1.2. Motivation for the study

The high crime rates in South Africa and the alarming rates of child abuse and neglect continues to put more pressure on families, which ultimately leads to the disintegration of families, where men are often identified as the main perpetrators. While research indicates that, the family, as an institution, is constantly under pressure, statistics indicate that more children grow up without their fathers. This father-absence has negative implications for mothers, children and to the fathers as well. It is often linked to increased social problems for children and an increasingly huge care burden for women. The need for fathers to become more involved in their children's lives, even if they do not reside in the same household, has become more important.



As a father, the researcher encountered other fathers, who felt totally disempowered by the fact that their challenges were not being addressed, as most of them wanted to become involved parents, but the nature of social services was mostly geared towards the protection of the women and children. The researcher also encountered many mothers, who struggled to care and provide for their children, because of fathers, who did not fulfil their parental responsibilities. In addition, the researcher has met children, who had dropped out of school at an early age, and had gotten involved in criminal activities. Most of these children had an absent father, or had poor father role models in their lives.

Recently, there has been a great effort and acknowledgement from government that fathers become part of the solution, and that more programmes be developed, to address the needs of fathers. This increasing awareness of fatherhood has also led to an increasing number of

responsible fatherhood programmes. As a father, activist and practitioner in the field of gender equality and family support services, the researcher has also become very interested in uncovering how these programmes contribute to the well-being of children and their families, as well as how the fathers experienced these programmes. Additionally, the researcher became curious about whether these programmes addressed the needs of fathers, in general.

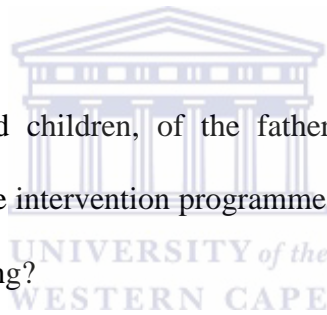
1.3. Problem Statement

With father-absence, traditional gender roles have played a major role in the lives of children and their involvement in unpaid care. In South Africa, more than half of the fathers are absent in the lives of their children (Stats SA, 2011). This absence increases the risks for children and the burden of care on women. A National time-use survey that was done in 2001, found that women were doing 8-times more unpaid care than men in South Africa (Budlender D, Chobokoane N, Mpetsheni Y, 2001). This care burden coupled with the high rates of father-absence, has serious negative developmental consequences for children in South Africa. In many societies, the father's role is traditionally defined as breadwinner or provider. It is, therefore, no surprise that men are generally found to have lower levels of engagement in childcare tasks, especially for young children (Lewis & Lamb, 2004). Father-presence contributes to emotional well-being (Johnson, 1997). Children in father-absent households are more likely to experience emotional disturbances and depression, although these effects may be confounded by socio-economic conditions and maternal stress (Choi & Jackson, 2011; Gee & Rhodes, 2003). It is clear that father absence in South Africa have major implications for child development as well as the wellbeing of women. It is therefore very important that the reasons for father absence be explored in order to address the problem effectively. Some of the reasons for father absence include economic reasons such as migrant

labor as well as cultural barriers that prevents father involvement. This reasons as well as other barriers of father involvement will be further explained in chapter 3 of this study. This study has focused on the exploration of the experiences of families of an intervention programme for fathers, in order to detimine how the intervention has contributed to the well-being of children and families.

1.4. Research Questions

- How does the intervention programme for fathers address the needs of fathers and family members?
- How does the intervention programme for fathers assist them in becoming more involved fathers?
- How do the spouses and children, of the fathers who attended the intervention programme, feel about the intervention programme for fathers, and its contribution to child and family well-being?



1.5. Aims and Objectives

1.5.1. Study aim

The aim of the study was to explore families' experiences of an intervention programme for fathers, in order to determine how the programme contributes to child and family well-being.

1.5.2. Study objectives

- To explore how the intervention programme addresses the needs of fathers and their family members;

- To explore how the intervention programme has assisted fathers to become more involved fathers; and
- To explore the contribution of the intervention programme to child and family well-being.

1.6. Theoretical Framework

This study uses the Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This theory presents a child's development within the context of the system of relationships that form his/her environment. Bronfenbrenner's theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) defines complex 'layers' of environment, each having an effect on the child's development. These layers include the micro system, mesosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. The micro system is the layer closest to the child, and contains the structures with which the child has direct contact. The mesosystem is the layer that provides the connection between the structures of the child's microsystem (Berk, 2000). The exosystem defines the larger social system in which the child does not interact or function directly. Finally, the macrosystem is the layer that may be considered the outermost layer in the child's environment. While not being a specific framework, this layer is comprised of cultural values, customs, and laws (Berk, 2000). The effects of larger principles, defined by the macrosystem, have a cascading influence throughout the interactions of all the other layers. The chronosystem is the system that encompasses the dimension of time, as it relates to a child's environment. Changes or conflict in any one layer will ripple throughout the other layers. Bronfenbrenner's theory defines complex 'layers' of environment, each affecting the child's development in particular ways. This theory has recently been renamed the '*bio ecological systems theory*', to emphasize that a child's own biology is a primary environment fuelling his/her development

(Berk 2000). The interaction between factors in the child's maturing biology, his/her immediate family/community environment, and the societal landscape, fuels and steers his/her development. Changes or conflict in any one layer will ripple throughout the other layers.

For the purposes of this study, the focus will be on the microsystem. The microsystem encompasses the relationships and interactions a child has with the immediate surroundings (Berk, 2000). Structures in the microsystem include family, school, neighbourhood, or childcare environments. At this level, relationships have an impact in two directions - away from the child and toward the child. For example, a child's parents may affect his/her beliefs and behaviour. However, the child also affects the behaviour and beliefs of the parent. The microsystem is one of the most important layers in the ecological system and it is therefore important to monitor which values and beliefs are carried over to the children as these will carry over to other layers at a later stage of the child's development. It is these values that will give an indication of what role the parents, in particular the role of the father, have to play.

1.7. Methodology

A qualitative research methodology was utilized for this study. Shank (2002: 5) defines qualitative research as 'a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning'. By systematic this author means 'planned, ordered and public', following rules agreed upon by members of the qualitative research community. By empirical, this author means that this type of inquiry is grounded in the world of experience. Inquiry into meaning is about researchers trying to understand how others make sense of their experiences. The theoretical underpinning for this

study was an interpretivist research approach. The interpretivist approach recognizes the self-reflective nature of qualitative research and emphasizes the role of the researcher as an interpreter of the data, and the individuals who represent the information (Creswell, 2007: 248). It is believed that people continuously interpret, create and give meaning to, define, justify and rationalize their actions (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:28). In addition, people are continuously constructing, developing, and changing the everyday interpretations of their world. Simultaneously, the qualitative interpretivist approach highlights how members in the family respond to the father's experiences of, as well as his behaviour after, attending the intervention programme. The interpretivist approach assists the researcher to observe the reasons that the participants give for their actions and behaviour, and examines the relations between belief and behaviour (Donatella & Keating, 2008).

1.7.1. Research Setting

This study will be conducted in the town of Lamberts Bay, which is situated within the Cederberg Municipality, part of the Rural Western Cape. Lamberts Bay is a small fishing town with a population of slightly more than 5 000 inhabitants. As a small fishing community, Lamberts Bay is still very much a patriarchal small town, where men are still seen as the main breadwinner. Most of the community members are dependent on the fishing industry, as well as potato farming from surrounding farms. With the current problems in the fishing industry around the allocation of fishing quotas more people struggle to find employment and often turn to unlawful practices in order to make a living.

1.8. Significance of the study

This study will add new knowledge to the already existing programmes. It will assist in exploring whether the intervention programme contributed towards the well-being of children and families. The study will assist social service providers in the identification of gaps within the fatherhood intervention programme, and also provide the service provider with recommendations on how to address these gaps. It will also assist the service provider to determine what the success rate of the programme is, and could be, with the further development of the programme intervention. In addition, this research project will assist the service provider to improve the standard of living of the families to whom they render services. The findings of this study can inform intervention programmes of different NGO's.

1.9. Key Concepts

Fatherhood - Although fatherhood has become a popular area of research, there is no universally agreed upon definition of the term. Researchers distinguish between biological, economic (breadwinner) and social fatherhood (Burgess & Russell, 2003; Morrell, 2006).

Fathering - Men's relationships with their own fathers are also significant predictors of parental closeness with their offspring, according to some findings (Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Belsky & Isabella, 1985), presumably also involving psychological factors. Snarey (1993:323) demonstrated that fathering by particular men is closely intertwined with intergenerational effects and relationships: 'fathering is a complex process that spans the three-generational family system'.

Father involvement - For the purpose of this study, the term father involvement refers to the positive involvement a father has with his children (Pleck, 1997). This includes observable behaviours, as well as affective and cognitive domains of involvement.

Parenting - is the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. It is also described as the activity of raising a child rather than biological relationship, which is usually done by the biological parents of the child in question (DoSD, 2011).

Children – The Children’s Act No. 38 of 2005 suggests that the child has responsibilities suitable to their age developmental level, including responsibilities towards their family, community and the State. Upon reaching the age of 18 years, the child becomes an adult as the Act stipulates. (Children’s Act No. 38, 2005).

Child-wellbeing - A state of successful performance throughout the life course, integrating physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional functions that result in productive activities deemed significant by one’s cultural community, fulfilling social relationships, and the ability to transcend moderate psychosocial and environmental problems (Pollard & Rosenberg 2003:14).



Family - A Family is an intergenerational social group organized and governed by social norms, regarding descent and affinity, reproduction, and the nurturant socialization of the young (White, 1991:7).

Parent-child relationship – Refers to the quality of the emotional bond between the child and the parents, (mother and father or significant parental figure) and the degree to which this bond is mutual and sustained over time (Lezin, Roller, Bean & Taylor, 2004).

Ecological Systems Theory – is a developmental theory that view human development from a person-in-environment context, emphasizing that all growth and development occurs within the contexts of the bi-directional relationships, *in* and *between* various levels of systems. (e.g. a child must be studied in the context of the family system, and the family needs to be

understood within the broader community and societal culture and values) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Social constructionism - Social constructionism may be defined as a perspective that believes a great deal of human life exists as it does, due to social and interpersonal influences (Gergen 1985).

1.10. Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter One - introduces fatherhood and provides a context, as well as a background for the study. The chapter gives broad information about father-absence in South Africa and the reasons that father-involvement is so important for children. It also presents an overview on the importance of this study and the methodology that was used to conduct the study, by discussing the research questions, aims, objectives, theoretical background, definitions, motivation and the significance of the study.

Chapter Two - Explores the theoretical framework of the study by giving an explanation on how the Ecological Systems Theory explains human development, from a father-involvement perspective. The chapter gives more perspective on how different systems in the ecosystem influence child development and behaviour. It also explains how father-absence and the relationship quality of parents, influence child development and behaviour. The chapter gives valuable insight into how different factors within the environment, in which the child and his parents live, affect or influence their lives. It stresses the importance of a stable family environment, and the way other systems, such as the school and broader community, influence child development. It is also important to understand that child development and behaviour, conversely, influences parenting behaviour. These factors are all explained through the Ecological Systems Theory.

Chapter Three - examines the importance of father-involvement. The chapter defines father-involvement and gives an overview of the determinants of father-involvement. It presents an in-depth analysis of the advantages of father-involvement, the disadvantages when fathers are not involved in the lives of their children and families, as well as the need for father involvement programmes. This chapter also provides a statistical analysis of the state of fatherhood in South Africa and the way it influences the well-being of children. This is further put into context by giving a global perspective on fatherhood, as well as the different factors that contribute to father-absence.

Chapter Four describes the research design and methodology, which employs a qualitative research design with an interpretivist approach. The chapter also discusses sampling procedures, data collection, data-analysis and the issues of reliability, validity, generalizability and reflexivity. It ultimately reaches a conclusion.

Chapter Five presents the results. It explores several themes and sub-themes related to fatherhood: the challenges of fatherhood; experiences of spouses and children of fathers, who had attended a fatherhood intervention; how the intervention contributed to their well-being; and suggestions on how fathers and families can be supported through future programmes.

Chapter Six presents the discussion that is supported by findings of other studies. It presents the conclusion of the study, indicates its limitations and makes recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

This study was informed by the ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979). This ecological theory gives valuable insight into child and family development and interactions, as well as how different systems can influence interactions and behaviour. According to this theory, the microsystem is regarded as the most important system for the child's socialization. The microsystem includes important relationships, such as the child-parent relationship, which is very significant for the child's development. Any relationship disruptions that the child experiences within this system might hamper the child's ability to explore and adapt in other systems. This chapter gives an overview on the different layers within Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and thereafter, focuses more on how the micro system influences developments within the family. It will also provide clarification on how parental relationships, especially that of the father, affect the child's, as well as the family's well-being, from a father-involvement perspective.

2.2. Ecological Systems Theory and Human Development

Bronfenbrenner's theory (1979) presents complex 'layers' of environment, each having an effect on a child's development. These layers include the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macro system and chrono system. Figure 1 provides an illustration of the different layers in society that human beings are exposed to, and which influences the socialization

process of people. Of these layers, the microsystem is perceived as the most important layer for the socialization of children.

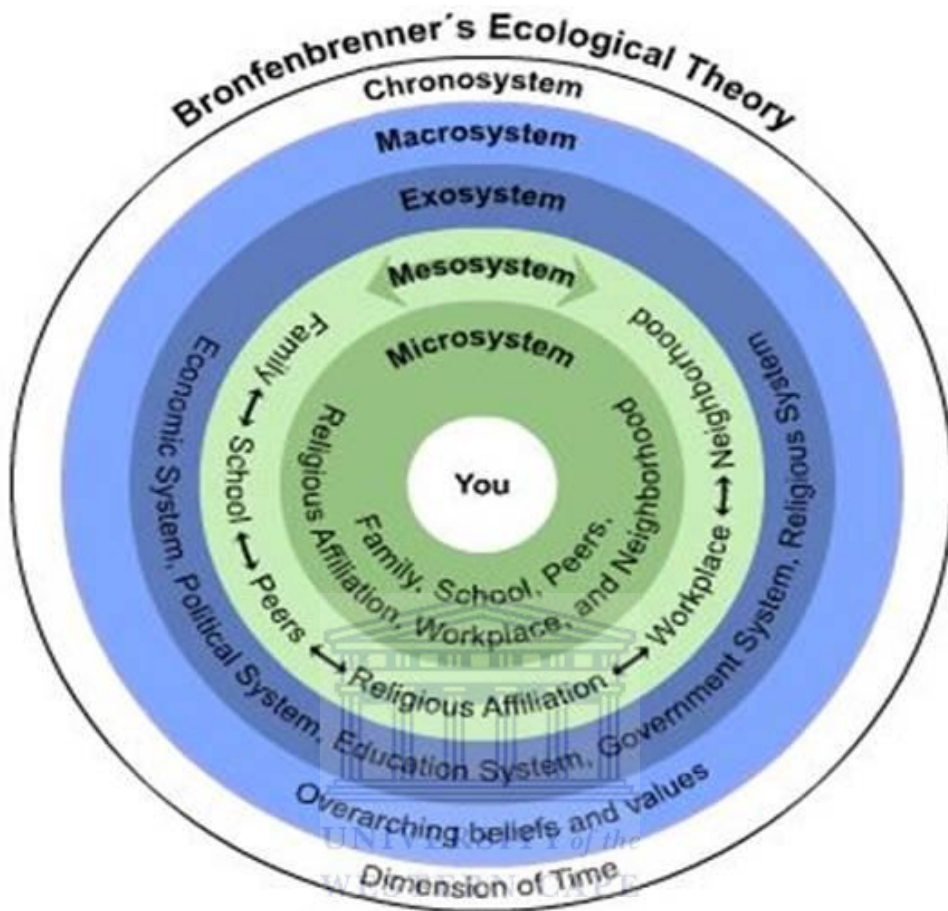


Figure 1: An illustration of the different layers of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological systems theory

Addison (1992) asserts that if there are any deficiencies in the child's earlier life cycle, these deficiencies may pose certain challenges for the child during adolescence, exhibited as anti-social behaviour, lack of self-discipline, or an inability to provide self-direction. Figure 1 provides a representation of the critical interaction, to which the child is exposed. The conditions of the environment that the child is exposed to could either have a positive or negative influence on the child's development. It is in this layer that the child-parent relationship is of utmost importance for the socialization of the child. The following sections

will provide an overview of the different systems within the ecological systems theory, followed by an in-depth discussion of the micro system, which is the focus of this study.

2.2.1. Microsystem

The microsystem is the closest to the child and includes structures that influence the child directly. It also includes relationships and interactions that the child experiences with his/her immediate environment (Berk, 2000). The different structures in the microsystem that have an influence on the child include the family, school, neighbourhood or childcare environments (see Figure 1).

2.2.2. Mesosystem

The mesosystem comprises of the linkages that link the developing person between the different settings. An example of this is the relationship between the school and the developing person. Paquette and Ryan (2001) define the mesosystem as the layer that links the child to different micro systems. These micro systems could also include the relationship between the class teacher at school and the parents; or the church that the child worships at and the neighbourhood (see Figure 1). The level of influence in this system is determined by the level of interaction between the different structures within the mesosystem. The lack of meaningful participation and interaction of parents within this system may compromise the developmental outcomes of the child and ultimately lead to the social exclusion of the child.

2.2.3. Exosystem

In the exosystem, the child is not directly involved. According to Berk (2000), the child's development is influenced through the interaction between the structures within the exosystem and the microsystem. Should the father, for example, be an absent father

and the mother had to work long hours, the work schedule of the single mother could have an impact on the child. Even though the child is not directly involved, it may affect his/her developmental outcomes. The exosystem, therefore, includes the linkages and processes, taking place between two or more settings, of which at least one does not ordinarily contain the developing person (e.g. for the child, the relationship between the home and the parent's work place; for the parent, the relationship between the school and the neighbourhood group) (Bronfenbrenner, 1989: 227).

2.2.4. Macrosystem

The macrosystem represents the outer layer of the development of the child. According to Berk (2000), this layer includes cultural values, customs and laws. The macrosystem has an impact on the interactions in all the other layers, with which the child comes into contact. The child-parent relationship and interaction is paramount in the development of the child, and the amount of time spent with the child, from an early age, therefore, could have positive or negative implications for the child. Through this relationship, positive or negative cultural values and customs could be transferred to the child. For example, if the child observes or is exposed to gender-based violence in the home, it could influence the child's view of conflict resolution and relationships.

2.2.5. Chronosystem

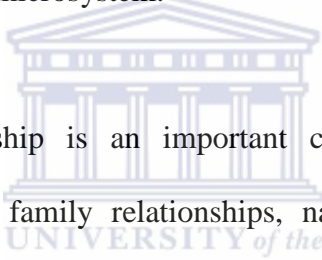
This system includes the dimension of time that the child is exposed to, as well as how it relates to a child. The elements in this system include external factors, such as the timing of a parent's death; or internal, such as the physiological changes that occur with the aging of a child. Children may react differently to these changes as they grow older, which may also determine the level of influence on them. Bronfenbrenner indicates that

the chronosystem models can cover short or long periods of time (Bronfenbrenner, 1989: 201-202).

2.3. The Microsystem and its influence on child and family well-being

2.3.1. The impact of family relationships on child development

Ecological Systems Theory proposes multiple levels of environmental and contextual influences on the development of individuals and, therefore, can help to explain sibling relationships (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As mentioned earlier, the microsystem is the closest to the child and the child, therefore, experiences interactions and relationships much more intensely in the microsystem.



The Parent-child relationship is an important component of the context of a microsystem and includes family relationships, namely mother-child, father-child, mother-father relationships. These relationships of the microsystem are placed within a mesosystem that connects the family with community, which, in turn, belongs to a larger abstract system (macrosystems) that includes cultural values and customs (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The Parent-child relationship is a crucial element of the child's socialization and can influence crucial relationships in all other systems (meso-, exo-, macro- and chronosystem).

2.3.2. The impact of family relationships within the microsystem

The stability in family relationships, especially the mother-father relationship, is very important for the development of stable relationships for children. The quality of this relationship (whether the mother and father are together or not) can also influence the

nature of the relationship between the father and the child, as well as the level of involvement of the father in the life of his children (Carlson & McLanahan 2004). There are many examples of mothers playing gatekeepers to the father's involvement. Therefore, parenting can be regarded as a very important aspect in the socialization of children, especially the union between mother and father. LaBahn (1995) disclosed in his research how important the parent is to the school success of the child.

Previous research has revealed that parenting is one of the most powerful socialization factors and is a huge contributor to either good or poor child outcomes (Elder et al., 1984). Parenting behaviour is one of the elements that affect child development and behaviour. The parents' behaviour is influenced by the environment and their exposure to historical factors, such as their relationships with their parents and other social conditions; however, their behaviour is also influenced by the characteristics and age of the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bradley & Wildman, 2002). Other factors that shape parenting include social class, culture and neighbourhood or community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Utting & Pugh, 2004).

Parenting also plays a crucial role in the development of a value system of the child. This value system influences the development of relationships, as well as how children should manage peer relationships. Parenting, especially fatherhood, in South Africa is strongly influenced by negative views of masculinity, as well as negative cultural views of manhood and patriarchy. These negative cultural norms and values are often intergenerationally transferred to children. All these influences are explored through Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of human development.

2.3.3. Other socialization agents within the micro system

The microsystem includes the child's closest surroundings (see Figure 2). These surroundings include the home, the day care group, peers, kids in the courtyard, classmates at school, as well as close relatives (Saarinen, Ruoppila & Korkiakangas, 1994: 88, 89). It also includes the broader neighbourhood and religious group, to which the child or family belongs (Penn 2005: 45). The home or family is seen as a very important factor in any individual's socialization, no matter what age the individual might be, and the parent becomes very central within this context.

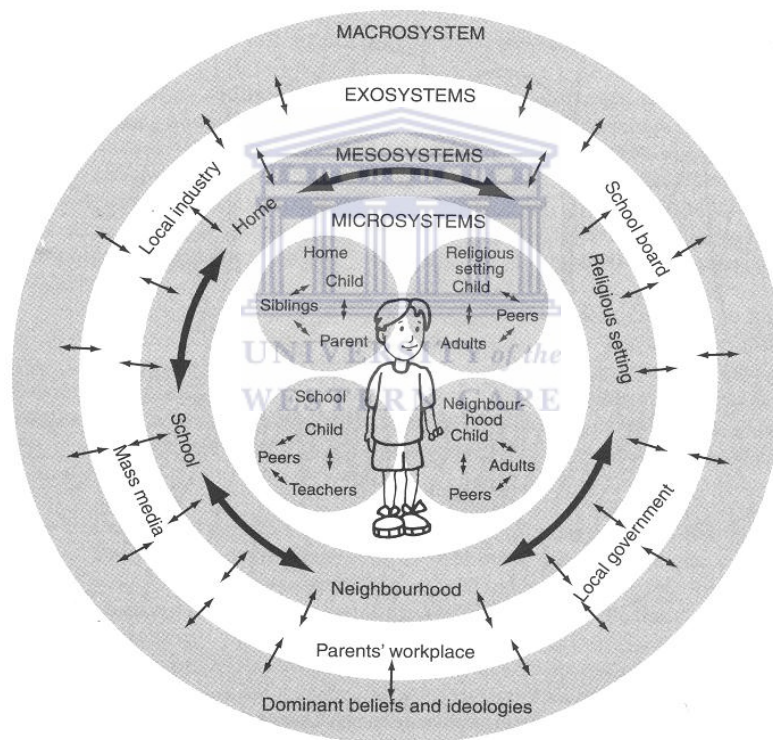


Figure 2: An illustration of how the different layers of the ecological approach influence the development of the young child.

(Picture scanned from Penn, H. 2005)

(Understanding early childhood education, Issues & controversies)

Figure 2 also gives a clear illustration on how the inner layer (microsystem) influences all the outer layers. Should the socialization in the microsystem be problematic, it could

influence the individual's interaction in all the other systems; however, it is also important to understand that the outer layers also influence the socialization or interaction of the inner layers. Socialization factors, such as religion and the school, play a fundamental role in the socialization of children, while also influencing the gender conceptualization of both parents and children. Many religions believe that the father should be the head of the household. There are also many societies, in which the education of the male-child is more valued than that of the female-child. The school, therefore, is an important agent in internationalizing gender conceptualization of male and female identity for children. Should the above socialization agents strengthen the negative cultural views of patriarchy and masculinity, it might negatively influence how children interact with their offspring, when they grow up. It would also have a negative influence on how fathers and mothers raise children to interact in gendered relationships. Positive gender equals role modelling, and parenting is, therefore, very essential in the microsystem and could influence the child's interactions in the other systems.

2.3.4. Family Structure and poverty

The previous chapter indicated the risks for children that were raised in absent-father households. Some of these risks include the probability of poor school performance, as well as involvement in crime. Another example of how the outer systems can influence the microsystem can be found in research conducted by Edwards and Young (1992). They provide a statistical analysis on family structure and poverty in the United States, as well as how this influences child outcomes. They also indicate that one-fourth of the children in America, live in single-parent families and that the figure increases to about 55% for African-Americans and Latinos (Edwards & Young, 1992). Concerning

poverty, about one in five children in the USA live in families with an income below poverty level, and the rate again doubles for African-Americans and Latinos (Edwards & Young, 1992).

With these statistics in view, the implications are that, because of the poor conditions families are exposed to, more mothers need to find employment outside the home environment (microsystem), which means that it becomes very difficult for these parents to be involved in the daily lives of their children, in order to influence the critical socialization of their children. With parents being absent, the environment that children grow up in may influence the development of the child. Should this be a poor environment, where the child is exposed to social factors, such as crime, the developmental outcomes of the child might be poorer.

2.3.5. Community and environmental factors

The community in which the child grows up is an important component of the child's socialization and can contribute either positively or negatively to the child's success in life. Lewis and Morris (1998: 34) illustrates in their research that people need five basic aspects: a personal one-on-one relationship with a caring adult; a safe place to learn and grow; a healthy start and a healthy future; a marketable skill to use after graduation; and a chance to give back to peers and community. These factors are supported by researchers, who argue about how the ecological systems' perspectives highlight these direct relationship factors, as well as how the different levels of the environmental factors, directly and indirectly, affect the person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Griffore & Phenice, 2001).

These arguments are highlighted by Bronfenbrenner (1992), who explains the importance of the development of personal qualities, as it reflects the immediate environment, to which the individual is exposed (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). Paquette and Ryan (2001) provide their own interpretation about Bronfenbrenner's ideas, by stating that the influence of relationships between people happens in two ways – from the parent to the child, as well as from the child to the parent. The parents, therefore, play a fundamental role in influencing the child's behaviour and belief system, but the child can also influence the behaviour and belief system of the parents.

This theory places a strong emphasis on the interactions within the different layers. The bi-directional interactions within the microsystem have the most influence on the child's development, but the interactions from the outer layers are also having an influence. The child's relationships with other people are mostly centred on the parents, during the early life stages, and only at a later stage, will the child manage several simultaneous relationships. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979: 56, 81; Puroila & Karila, 2001: 210-211)

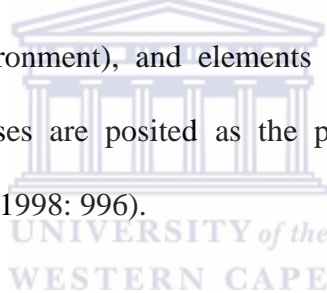
2.3.6. The influence of the value system in the microsystem

Bronfenbrenner (2002) has also emphasised the belief systems of individuals, who interact with the child, because their belief systems can influence the development of the child. Some authors have positioned the educational concepts and belief systems as elements that only happen in the microsystem and that these elements influence other systems (Puroila & Karila (2001). On the contrary, Bronfenbrenner (1989: 228; 2002: 264-266) places the belief systems in both the micro- and the macrosystems. He also asserts that the belief system can be found inside each system by the macrosystem (i.e

the micro-, meso-, and exosystems). Sage (1998a) has also highlighted that the child's immediate surroundings and relationships, including the mother, father, brothers and sisters, as well as other family members, have an important socialization influence.

2.3.7. Proximal processes and child development in the micro system.

Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) explain how the proximal processes and activities that the child interacts with, contribute to the child's development. An example of proximal processes includes objects or symbols, such as the participation in mealtime, listening to storybooks and visiting relatives. These processes are very important processes within the microsystem, but the influence of these processes on the developmental outcomes will differ from Person (child or other), characteristics of the Context (the broader environment), and elements of Time (duration and historical setting). "Proximal processes are posited as the primary engines of development" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998: 996).



The ecological systems theory also provides a framework, explaining the risk factors, which have a negative effect on the protective factors that promote resiliency in a person's life (Bronfenbrenner, 1990). Father-absence does not only pose economic risks for children, but it also increases parenting stress for mothers, who might experience difficulty finding a balance between work and family life, as well as surviving financially. When mothers struggle to find the family-work balance, it also poses some other risks for the children. A study on risk and resilience in families, conducted by Garnezy and Rutter (1983), explains the effect of parental stress on childhood illnesses. Recent studies on risk and resilience have also revealed the relationship between stress, coping and adjustment to childhood illnesses, as well as its

influences on the individual, family, and community-level positive and negative outcomes (Hough et al., 2003).

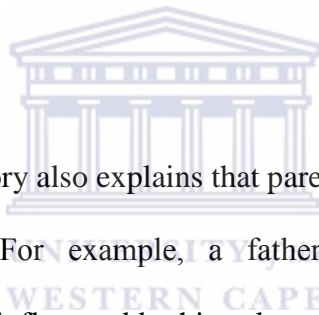
Two separate studies in Canada, conducted by McKay and Marsh (1994), as well as Curtis, Ronan and Borduin, (2004), found that single motherhood also contributes to negative physical, emotional and behavioural outcomes, when income and neighbourhood status are being compared.

2.3.8. Risk and Protective factors

The ecological systems perspective provides researchers and practitioners with a framework to identify and analyse the critical risks and protective factors for child or human development. The different system levels can also have different effects on the development of the child, depending on his/ her life stage and context. A close, intimate mother-father relationship can provide a safe space for child development, while, for men, who are fathers, the family system or community may have a dominant influence on parenting.

A study by Bennett, Deleuca and Allen (1995) provides practical examples on how the quality of a father's interactions with the mother, in the family system, is related to the quality and frequency of his interaction with the child and his/her special needs. It also presents an indication, on a community system level, of how the father's involvement in activities, such as support groups or church activities, can promote increased father involvement in the relationship with his child or family.

Some studies also found that there are risk and protective factors within each level that are interacting with each other (Reis, Barbera-Stein & Bennett, 1986). An example of this is on an individual level; a father's negative feelings about fathering a child with special needs might affect his interactions with the child, the child's mother, or other family members (at the mesosystem level). At the core of this system is the microsystem, which in this study is focused on the father, mother and children (While ecological models often start with the child at the core). The microsystem, therefore, contains the structures (fathering roles) that have the greatest influence on the individual father. In this level of the ecological model, within the microsystem, might consist of relationships with others that may influence parental practices and interaction (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).



The ecological systems theory also explains that parental practices or relationships have bi-directional influences. For example, a father's behaviour and the level of involvement in care can be influenced by his culture. His sustained involvement in care duties can also be influenced by the views of other people, on how he should conduct himself, according to his culture or religion. Bronfenbrenner (1986) indicates that the bi-directional influences are strongest at the microsystem level and, therefore, have the greatest influence.

While there are many risk and protective factors likely to influence the parent, child, as well as family functioning and outcomes in families with children, who have special needs (King, King, Rosenbaum & Goffin, 1999), this study focuses on the impact that fathers have on child and family well-being. It also explores how these risk factors can be eliminated in order to increase child and family well-being. The study focuses on the

positive and negative aspects of care giving and uses qualitative research methodology to listen to the experiences of children, mothers and fathers, in order to determine how fathers have affected child and family well-being, after attendance of a fatherhood programme intervention. The programme intervention that the research participants have attended has utilized a risk and resiliency approach, in order to stimulate positive father involvement in child-care. The findings of this study have implications for refining theory and programmes for families.

2.4. Conclusion

Bronfenbrenner provides a useful framework that could be used to interpret human behaviour. His ecological systems theory also assists researchers, practitioners and policy makers to develop a proper understanding on how the different layers in the ecological systems theory influence behaviour. The microsystem is highlighted as the most important system for children, as well as parents and emphasises how the quality of the child-parent relationship can assist the child to develop resiliency.

The micro system cannot be viewed in isolation of the other systems within the ecosystem, as child and human development are either, positively or negatively, impacted by the different layers that surround the child. Strong positive child-parent relationships are, therefore, very crucial to build resilience, because it is through this relationship that norms and values are transferred to children. The quality of the relationship between the mother and father, whether the father stays in the same household or not, are also an important determinant of positive father involvement. This chapter also gave an important overview on how other

socialisation agents, like the school and church, play an important role in the microsystem to install positive values and cultural norms that facilitates positive father-child interaction.

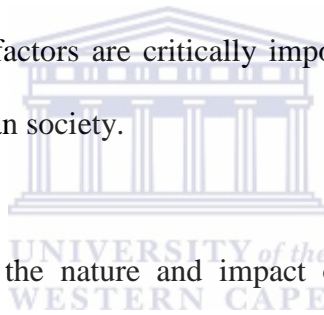


CHAPTER THREE

THE IMPORTANCE OF FATHER INVOLVEMENT

3.1. Introduction

Research suggests that positive father involvement relates to positive developmental outcomes for children, spouses and fathers. The positive outcomes for children do not only link to financial outcomes, but also links to the holistic health and well-being of the child. In contrast to these positive outcomes, father absence relates to much more than just poorer financial outcomes, but also links to negative academic achievement of children, as well as delinquent behaviour. All these factors are critically important, given the rapid increase of father absence in the South African society.



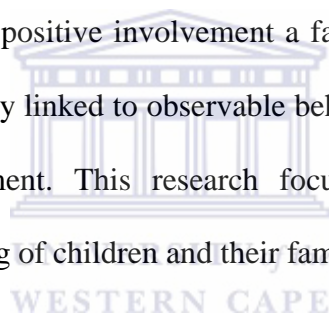
This chapter critically explores the nature and impact of father involvement and father absenteeism in South. It will also discuss the contribution of father involvement to child and family well-being. It provides an understanding of fatherhood within the South African context and will, lastly, also deal with the impact of the father's involvement on the well-being of the partner, as well as how gate-keeping plays a fundamental role in the continued involvement of the father.

3.2. The conceptualization of fatherhood

In order to understand the different dimensions and what it means to be a father, as well as how fatherhood implicates child and family well-being, we have to unpack our different perceptions of fatherhood and how the conceptualization of fatherhood affect father

involvement (Marsiglio, Amato, Day & Lamb, 2000). Given the high rate of father absence in South Africa, it is important to explore the diverse concepts or types of fathers and fatherhood. The definition of fatherhood, or being a father, is very important, and how men interpret these concepts, often indicates how they see and make sense of their roles in the family. Because there is no universal term for fatherhood, some researchers present three (3) concepts or types of fatherhood as biological, economic (breadwinner) and social fatherhood (Burgess & Russell, 2003; Morrell, 2006). Snarey (1993: 323) demonstrates that fathering by some men is closely intertwined with intergenerational effects and relationships. He also asserts that ‘fathering is a complex process that spans the three-generational family system’.

Father involvement refers to the positive involvement a father has with his children (Pleck, 1997). This involvement is closely linked to observable behaviours that include affective and cognitive domains of involvement. This research focusses on the effects that father involvement has on the well-being of children and their families.



3.3. Fatherhood

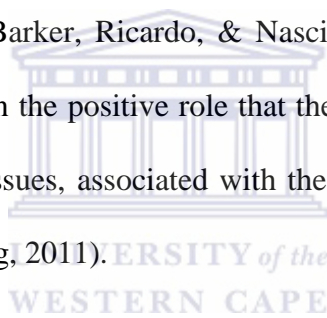
Enough evidence exists that indicate the positive benefits of positive father involvement for, both, mothers and children, as well as the negative consequences for children when fathers are absent from their lives. This section will provide an overview of the state of fatherhood, from an international and South African perspective. It will broadly focus on father absence on an international and South African level and indicate what it means for child development.

3.3.1. An international perspective on fatherhood

The increase of father absence is a global phenomonon. In the USA the percentage of children, growing up without a father, have more than tripled; from 12 per cent in 1960

to almost 40 per cent in 1995 (McLanahan, 1997). This trend of father absence has generated a huge concern among policymakers, due to evidence that link children, who grow up without fathers, to poorer developmental outcomes.

The challenge for men to become more involved in unpaid care has become increasingly important, not only from a child development perspective, but also to ease the huge burden of care for women. Many programmes assist mothers, which outnumber support programmes that engage men for gender equality (Lwambo, 2013). Most of the programmes that focus on men, also mainly focusing on gender-based violence prevention against female partners, as well as irresponsible sexual behaviour that includes HIV/AIDS (Barker, Ricardo, & Nascimento, 2007). Some of the other programmes engage men on the positive role that they can play as fathers, and usually focus on much neglected issues, associated with the equitable division of unpaid care (Cornwall, Edström & Greig, 2011).



The issue of gender-equal parenting and involving men in equitable unpaid care have become so important that the UN OHCHR Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights has recently published a report that highlights the need to address the inequitable burden of care on women (Sepúlveda Carmona, 2013). The report does not only contribute to the increasing debate of unpaid care in development debates, but also highlights the need to engage with men on the transformation of gender norms. The understanding of father involvement in care-giving is still very limited and the intersection between masculinities and care-giving is a very important area that still needs more research (Greene, Robles & Pawlak, 2011).

Research on an international level has illustrated a lack of engagement with men and the constructions of masculinities. Research in the Democratic Republic of Congo has revealed lots of back lashing against women, where gender initiatives only for women were implemented (Lwambo, 2013). Interventions that contribute to greater gender equality within couple-relationships have proven to be a very important aspect of parenting programmes. The inclusion activities that challenge rigid gender norms have proven to be more beneficial for women and children from a gender equal parenting perspective. Men may feel threatened when changes within the gender order occur. This has been highlighted through a research study conducted by Kabeer (2007), who addresses men's 'maladaptive coping strategies', when gender roles are reversed and their wives become the primary breadwinners, due to changing economic structures. Some examples of these can be found in research with migrant husbands in Laos, who have reported feelings of inadequacy, because of their inability to support the family without their wives working abroad, as well as the shame of having to do the housework. The same effects were found in Sri Lanka, where men reported feeling a loss of dignity and self-respect, due to the fact that their wives were taking on the breadwinner role. It was reported that these men were, consequently, compensating through drinking, gambling and womanising (Kabeer, 2007).

Conversely, it has also been revealed that changes in the gender order could bear positive results. This is clearly demonstrated with the younger generation of men in Germany, who have adopted more gender equitable attitudes with women and have rejected patriarchal social relations (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005)

3.3.2. South African perspective on fatherhood

There are different factors that have an impact on the role and level of involvement of fathers in South African families. The challenges that black African men face in South Africa have been well documented and father absence amongst black men is at its highest. Poverty and unemployment are some of the factors that have huge implications for child and family well-being in South Africa. The official unemployment rate in South Africa stood at 25.5% in 2015. (StatsSA, 2015). Although labour migration, which was institutionalized under apartheid, still continues today, the system has resulted in high rates of residential separation between fathers and their children. This has resulted in households functioning as ‘stretched’ residential units, with family members ‘dispersed’ between different households for reasons of work, care, support and housing (Murray, 1980). According to data from Statistics South Africa (2011), only 37% of children live with their fathers. Many scholars refer to this situation as a ‘crises in fatherhood’ and many interventions have been designed to address it. Father absence, particularly among black African men, has contributed to the notion that these men are losing their status in both domestic and public spheres (Lesejane, 2006). These notions are compounded by negative portrayals of fathers, who are disengaged and irresponsible, particularly, towards their children (Morrell & Richter, 2006).

Despite all the challenges that black African families have faced during pre- and post-apartheid regimes, fathering has always been considered an important factor for them (Morrell & Richter, 2006). Fathers have a very important role as the provider for their families (Moodie & Ndatshe, 1994; Silberschmidt, 1999) and the failure to do so is a cause for shame (Wilson, 2006). It is also the duty of the father to provide moral

guidance and affection to children through communication, play and role modelling (Hunter, cited in Reynolds, 1984). The fact that these children do not have a paternal link, and not being able to carry his surname or acquiring the father's clan name, is cause of great concern for children and youth (Ramphela, 2002; Richter, 2006), as well as their families (Madhavan, 2010).

Not much information on fathers exists in large South African population studies (Posel & Devey, 2006), despite the fact that there is an increasing interest in fathers, fathering and the impact of men on the well-being of children and families in Southern Africa (Morrell, 2006; Morrell et al., 2006). The lack of data about fathers and their involvement with young children in South Africa is of great concern. Richter (2006) asserts that a few large surveys have collected detailed information about non-resident fathers and father involvement. She further states that these surveys support the impression of many researchers and policy makers; that there is limited involvement of black African fathers in the care and support of young children.

Historically labour migration has been one of the main contributing factors of father absenteeism and low rates of co-residence between fathers and their children in South Africa. Historically, the Apartheid system played a huge role in regulating migrant labour in South Africa; however, this working pattern continues to be a huge factor that shapes the social structure and residential arrangements of black African households. The labour system has contributed to the fact that many families do not live in the same household, and are spread over several locations in South Africa (Murray, 1980; 1981; Ramphela, 1993; Spiegel, 1986; 1987). Non-resident members have become a common factor in many South African households, especially in rural areas in South Africa.

Many adult members of the family, especially fathers, are living away from their families, while working or looking for employment. This includes other adults, who are non-resident from the household, due to other reasons (Posel, 2009).

A study conducted by Posel and Devey (2006), indicate that 55% of the rural black African children (aged 15 years and younger) reported to have 'absent' fathers. Other factors that contribute to the decline in father presence in South Africa include the decline marriage; cultural norms related to household formation; and childbearing (Budlender, Chobokoane & Simelane, 2005; Locoh, 1988). Marriage play a very important role in family formation, as well as living arrangements of families, as indicated previously. In 2006, 55% of women, aged 40-44 years, in rural KwaZulu-Natal, had never been married (Hosegood, McGrath & Moultrie, 2009b). There has been a rise in non-marital cohabitation rates in the last decade, which practice is much more common in urban communities, with family and household formation in rural communities, typically restricted to individuals related through kinship or marriage.

When analyzing the Children's Well-Being and Social Connections (CWSC) study that was conducted in the rural Agincourt sub-district, Limpopo Province, in South Africa, it was revealed that co-residence and co-members were not significant predictors of financial support for children (cited in Madhavan, Townsend & Garey, 2008). The study concluded that children with co-resident fathers had the same likelihood of receiving financial support, as children whose fathers lived elsewhere and were not members of the same household. The available longitudinal survey data on fathers and child outcomes focus mostly on aspects of fathers' 'absence' and outcomes in older

children: age at first sex for girls, teenage pregnancy, school enrolment and educational attainment (Anderson, 2004; Timaeus & Boler, 2007).

There are many causes for absent fatherhood in South Africa and scholars have revealed most, which include: unemployment; poverty; income inequality; gender power; consequences of intimate partner violence; masculinity ideologies; migration and abandonment, while some biological fathers reportedly play a limited role in raising their children (Holborn & Eddy, 2011; StatsSA, 2011). It is also evident that post-apartheid black South African families are still under pressure, and it is clear that the historic impact of apartheid (force removals and migrant labour) still play a major role in the absence of fathers from black South African families (Bozalek, 2010).

The fatherhood deficit discourse is further bolstered by psychological studies that are framed in a range of assumptions about what families should look like, and the gendered assumption that fathers play a significant and different role to mothers in the parenting dyad. Studies indicate the importance of father involvement for positive childhood and adulthood social, psychological, psychiatric and behavioural outcomes, as opposed to children in single-parent families, with absent fathers (Boyce, Essex, Alkon, Hill Goldsmith, Kraemer & Kupfer, 2006). It is clear that father involvement cannot be divorced from the developmental outcomes of children. The presence and positive involvement of a father is associated with the following:

- lower psychological distress for male children;
- reduced likelihood of engagement in risk practices in adolescence;

- positive outcomes for female children, who are close to their fathers;
- better performance at school;
- better psychological adjustment and well-being in children;
- less antisocial behaviour and more successful intimate relationships;
- positive intellectual development;
- higher levels of social competence;
- internal locus of control; and
- the ability to empathise.

Several studies have shown that father absence is linked to the following: lower mental, emotional and behavioural well-being; and an increased likelihood of negative outcomes for children (Choi & Jackson, 2011; Flouri & Buchanan, 2003).

The huge numbers of absent fathers in South Africa have a major impact on the poverty situation of children in the country. The Latest Wave 1 (2012) and Latest Wave 2 (2012) of the National Income Dynamic Study (NIDS) published recent data on the percentages of fathers per population group that were living with their children. These figures are displayed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Fathers that were alive, resident with and supporting their children

2008	Fathers alive %	Fathers resident %	Fathers supports the child %
African	82	37	39
Coloured	90	60	37
Indian	94	87	62
White	98	78	59
Total	84	43	40
N	9,408	4,967	4,966
2010	Fathers alive %	Fathers resident %	Fathers supports the child %
African	82	37	41
Coloured	92	59	41
Indian	97	95	56
White	96	83	55
Total	9,847	8,020	5,248

Table 3.1 shows that, for both 2008 and 2010, only 37% of African children, whose fathers were alive, lived with the father in the household, while only 39% and 41% of fathers supported their children. The situation is better for coloured fathers, but still shows shocking figures of fathers, who are resident, but not supporting their children. In contrast, higher percentages of Indian and White fathers were living with their children. While most children (84%) had a father, who was alive, on average, only 40.5% of these fathers supported their children. This confirms the public concern about the lack of maintenance payments by fathers for their children. Financial support is an

important factor in breaking the cycle of poverty for children and, thereby, increasing their life chances.

Data published by Holbern and Eddy (2011) shows a huge increase in the number of absent fathers in South Africa. These trends have a huge impact on the health and well-being of children in South Africa. The data shows that the number of fathers, who were absent and alive, increased between 1996 and 2009, from 42% to 48%. Over the same period, the proportion of fathers, who were present, decreased from 49% to 36%.

There is also a racial dimension in trends of absent fathers. African children under 15 years had the lowest proportion of present fathers in 2009 at 30%, compared to 53% for coloured children, 85% for Indians and 83% for whites. The proportion of African children under the age of 15 years with absent, living fathers increased between 1996 and 2009 from 45% to 52%. There was also an increase for coloured children (from 34% to 41%) and for white children (from 13% to 15%). The proportion of children with absent, living fathers only decreased among Indians (from 17% to 12%).

A rural-urban dimension was also evident, with 55% of African rural children under the age of 15 having absent living fathers, compared to 43% of African children in urban areas. What is particularly of concern is that both the number and the proportion of children with absent, living fathers are increasing in post-apartheid South Africa, particularly among Africans, when one would assume that they would decrease, because of the end of the migrant labour system. The numbers and proportions of children with absent, living fathers are increasing among all race groups, except Indians (Holborn & Eddy, 2011).

Research done by Richter & Morrell (2006) indicated that about 54% of men aged 15-49 years, in South Africa, were fathers, but nearly 50% of these fathers did not make contact with their children on a daily bases. The fact that these fathers did not make regular contact, coupled with the high rates of sexual and physical abuse, perpetrated mainly by men, points to a situation of ‘men in crisis’ in South Africa. The SAIRR (2001, cited in Holborn & Eddy, 2011) also mentioned that socio-economic conditions like poverty, as well as the high rates of unemployment, may be some factors that contribute to the large number of fathers failing to take responsibility for their children, as, financially; they may be unable to do so.

3.4. Understanding fatherhood and father involvement

Scholars have long noted that men’s commitment to childcare is marked by wide variability, even when restricting the focus to ‘traditional’ families, loosely defined by households, in which fathers and mothers are co-resident (Lewis, 1986). Lamb, Pleck, Charnov & Levine (1987) have highlighted three different dimensions with regards to father involvement. These dimensions include the following:

- The amount of time that fathers spend interacting with children;
- Being accessible to their children; and
- Making arrangements for the care of their children.

Although these dimensions put a strong emphasis on accessibility and being involved in child-care arrangements, Lamb (1997) also emphasizes the importance of financial support, as an important universal expectation of fathers. The two dimensions (accessibility and responsibility) is seen as very important dimensions, especially in the South African context, as it captures the prevailing norms and expectations in Black African communities in South

Africa (Morrell, 2005). One important limitation of the model, from the Black South African context, is that it focuses on biological fathering, whereas it is acknowledged that social fathers, and other types of fathers, play as important a role in child rearing.

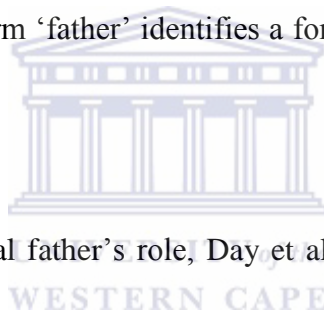
The mind-sets around fatherhood have changed internationally. Many surveys on public perceptions of father involvement have found that there are high social expectations for fathers to spend time with their children. These social expectations are also evident through workplace provisions of paternity leave and flexi-time in many countries (Andrews, Luckey, Bolden, Whiting-Fickling & Lind, 2004; Smeaton, 2006). These surveys indicate that, 43% of British fathers take paternity leave and 50% take annual leave around the birth of their children (Dex & Ward, 2007), while the percentage of new fathers in the UK, who work flexi-time to spend more time with their children, have increased from 11% to 31% between 2002 and 2005 (Smeaton, 2006). There are not only general perceptions of men to become more involved in the child's upbringing (McBride & Rane, 1997; O'Brien & Shemilt, 2003), but young men today uphold fewer traditional gender roles (Scott et al., 1998) and wish to participate more fully in family life (Henwood & Procter, 2003; Lewis, 2000).

3.5. Different types of fathers and father involvement

Marsiglio (1995) indicates in his research that there are different types of fathers and that these fathers can serve as biological (production of sperm), economic (financial provision for children), social (giving care and maintaining relationships with children) and legal (defined by law as responsible) fathers.

With declining numbers in father involvement and father absence, it has become more important that we study the contributions of the different types of fathers, like the role of the social father. Day, Lewis, O'Brien & Lamb (2005) cite some examples of Blankenhorn (1995) and Popenoe (1993) and highlight some of the problems relating to the 'natural' path to paternity (not via adoption, step-parenting, or sperm donor strategies). They mention that although non-biological fathers sometimes find it difficult to have the same connection as the biological father, they also make an important contribution and investment in children.

In Malinowski's (1927) famous case study of Trobriand Islanders, he gives recognition to the mother's brother, who plays the role of the social 'father'. Palkovitz (2002) mentions in his studies on fatherhood, that the term 'father' identifies a form of social, rather than biological relationship.

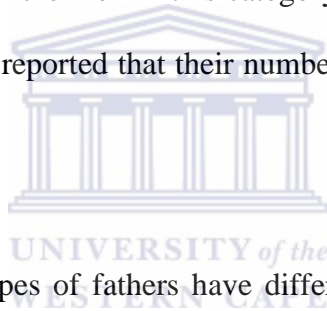


Just as the important as the social father's role, Day et al. (2005) also identifies four other types of fathers, as follows:

- Motivated biofathers - These fathers are identified as biological fathers, who are also committed to social relationships with their children. They are the most easily recognised and have been the main focus of attention in fathering research, even though; they are becoming less prominent in demographic terms. Research conducted in the UK shows that, 83 per cent of children lived with two parents in 1991; however, that statistic had declined to 77 percent by 2001 (ONS, 2003).
- Unmotivated biofathers (the 'deadbeat dads'), another type of father under discussion (Blankenhorn, 1995), however, their non-involvement is assumed rather than documented. Maclean and Eekelaar (1995) reveal that the nature and extent of the

contact that non-resident fathers have with their children has changed and there is many of them, who make increased contact with their children, after separation from the mother.

- The third type of father is called the motivated non-biofather. The step father is one example of such a father (Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992). Other examples of non-biofathers include adoptive fathers, who have not received much attention in research.
- Another type of father is the unmotivated non-biofathers, men, who have a relationship with the mothers, but there is very little engagement in childcare. It has been revealed that some of the men in this category have been identified as potential risks to children, and it is reported that their numbers appear to be growing (Kiernan, 2006).



Besides the fact that different types of fathers have different levels of father involvement, also other factors affect the involvement of fathers in the lives of their children. Research indicates that the biological ties of fathers are often assumed, but evidence shows that approximately four per cent (4%) of biological fathers were not the genetic fathers of their children (Bellis, Hughes, Hughes & Ashton, 2005). Storey, Walsh, Quinton & Wynne-Edwards (2000) reveals that men also experience hormonal changes at the birth of their child, as well as post-natal mood swings, which may be of biological origin (Ramchandani, Stein, Evans, O'Connor & the ALSPAC study team, 2005).

Yet another type of father that warrants attention is the teen father. Normally, most attention is given to the challenges and risks pertaining to teen motherhood. However, research shows

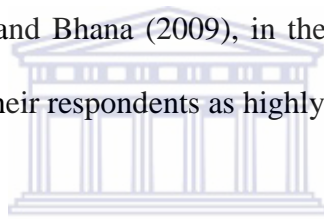
that the risk factors associated with teen fatherhood, are similar to that of teen motherhood. Several studies have examined the developmental aspects of teen fatherhood (Applegate, 1988; Cohler & Musick, 1996; Ketterlinus, Lamb, & Nitz, 1991). These studies shows that some teenage males, who become parents experience ‘developmental double jeopardy’, as they try to cope with the normative biological, social and psychological changes and challenges of adolescence, as well as those associated with normative father development (Applegate, 1988). Some of these teenagers already find it very difficult to cope with the stresses and challenges related to their transition from adolescence to adulthood. In comparison with their non-parent peers, teen fathers are burdened by additional challenges associated with their transition to parenthood.

3.6. Determinants of Father Involvement

Several key factors contribute to sustained father involvement. These factors include paternal attributes, maternal attributes and family factors. Unemployment is also one of the factors that affect the ability of black African fathers in South Africa to interact with their children. The fact that some fathers are not able to contribute financially to the upbringing of their children results in shame and depression (Thabane & Guy, 1984; Case & Wilson, 2000) and may cause fathers to disengage.

Another important factor is linked to the lack of local employment opportunities that forces some fathers to leave home in search of employment (Wilson, 2006), which affects the communication that these fathers have with their children, and disrupts the established family structure (Moodie & Ndatshe, 1994). Other avenues exist that these non-residentially employed fathers could utilize to maintain relationships with their children. These include

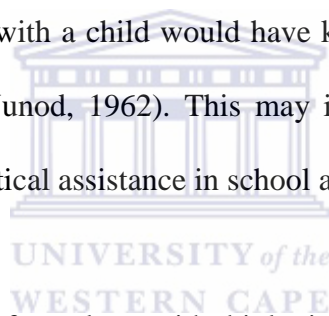
regular phone calls, visits and demonstrating commitment through regular remittances (Madhavan, 2010). The third avenue is the link between unemployment and the marriage union status. The lack of, or poor, employment prospects have served as disincentives for black African women to enter into and/or remain in formal marriage unions (Hunter, 2009). Consequently, there is concern that the women's choice to remain unmarried or disengaged from the fathers of their children would have a profound effect on the fathers' ability to maintain a healthy relationship with their children (Wilson, 2006). According to research on the fathers' age at their children's birth, men, who father children at a young age, may be involved fathers at the time of birth, but may not be emotionally or financially ready to take on the responsibilities of fathering and are, therefore, more likely to disengage (Danziger & Radin, 1990). However, Swartz and Bhana (2009), in their study of young fathers in Cape Town, portray, at least, some of their respondents as highly engaged.



It has been well established that mothers play an important role in mediating the relationship between fathers and their children (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999; Allen & Hawkins, 1999). The extent to which mothers support or inhibit father involvement depends on, among other factors, their age at the birth of the child, educational attainment and survival. However, young mothers may lack the skills to manage the relationship between the children and their fathers effectively. This may also hold true for those mothers, who have minimal educational attainment. The mothers' influence on father involvement clearly depends on the relationship that exists between her and the father of her children. Studies have consistently shown that positive relationships between parents, promote father involvement (Carlson & McLanahan, 2004; Gottman, 1998; Coley & Chase-Lansdale, 1999). The survival of the mothers is likely to have an important effect on father involvement, particularly in contexts of high HIV prevalence. While it might be expected that the death of the mothers will strengthen father

involvement, recent studies from South Africa reveal that maternal orphans are less likely to be co-members of households with their fathers, than non-orphans (Hill, Hosegood & Newell, 2008; Hosegood, Floyd, Marston, Hill, McGrath, Isingo, Crampin & Zaba, 2007).

Unlike Western contexts, in Africa, fathers' involvement with their children is not necessarily dependent on biological links. There is a well-established line of research in Africa, which reveals that the biological relationship between fathers and their children may not be as important as the kin group/clan into which children are born (Lesenjane, 2006; Riesman, 1992; Townsend, 2000) and that kin play an important role in child rearing within the African context (Mkhize, 2004). For example, in many Black communities in South Africa, the oldest brother of an unmarried woman with a child would have key paternal responsibilities as the 'social father' (Niehaus, 1994, Junod, 1962). This may include the provision of financial support, moral guidance and practical assistance in school and other activities.



Social fathers may exist, in lieu of, or along with, biological fathers. However, the influence of extended kin can sometimes be contentious. Swartz and Bhana (2009), in their study of fathers in Cape Town, South Africa, describe how extended kin both facilitate and inhibit young fathers from developing relationships with their children. USA based research that examined this relationship quantitatively, found either no effect (Danziger & Radin, 1990), or an inhibitive one (Kalil, Ziolo-Guest & Coley, 2005).

Other factors that are important and have an impact on the shift of paternal care patterns include cultural and historical, as well as economic and legal factors. Culture becomes important because different types of societies can be associated with very different types of paternal roles. There are some societies, where men spend a considerable amount of their

time to help keep their children alive, and in some cultures, like that of the Aka in the Central African Republic, this involves considerable amounts of daily care (Hewlett, 2004). Hewlett (2004) also highlights that, men seem to spend more time with their children in societies that are less differentiated based on age, gender, wealth or status.

Economic factors also affect the fathers' involvement in the family. Migrant labour is one of the factors that can influence father involvement and there are many countries, particularly in Southern Africa and Asia, where men work several hundreds of kilometres away from their homes, in order to provide for the financial needs of their families. Many other fathers work long hours, and often have to work more than one job, in order to keep their families alive. These factors make it very difficult for fathers to get more actively involved in the lives of their children. Alternatively, the increasing numbers of women participating in the labour market have led to an increase of men's domestication (Presser, 1988).

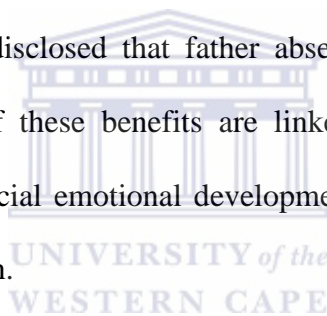
Historical changes, is another factor that influences paternal involvement. La Rossa's (1988) study made a comparison of popular fatherhood images over the past 80 years. These images have revealed a huge change in the roles of men and women, in different societal spheres, including the home. Sociologists, Beck (1992), and Giddens (1998), have also identified historical shifts, such as a growing emphasis on individualism, and more reciprocal parent-child relationships, as features of advanced democracies.

Legal factors include the preservation the relationships that children have with biological and social fathers, which is seen as an important factor about the legal jurisdictions throughout the world (Bainham, Lindley, Richards & Trinder, 2003, Trinder & Lamb, 2005). Some of the legal jurisdictions are concerned with the parental rights and responsibilities of social and

biological fathers (Scourfield, 2001). The fathers' relationships with the mothers have also been identified as key influences on the nature of father-child involvement in dynamic and organic family systems (Cummings, Geoke-Morey & Raymond, 2004). Research on families reveal, not only that parents influence the nature and degree of each other's involvement, but also that the quality of father-child relationships is correlated with the attitudes of both partners to paternal involvement (Beitel & Parke, 1998).

3.7. Impact of Fathers on Child development

Fathers matter to children in many ways. Literature has revealed that positive father involvement contributes to positive developmental outcomes for children, spouses, as well as the fathers themselves. It also disclosed that father absence could contribute to negative outcomes for children. Some of these benefits are linked to academic outcomes, social development, physical health, social emotional development and well-being, as well as the cognitive development of children.



3.7.1. Father Involvement and Cognitive Development of Children

Research with infants of highly involved fathers, measured by degree of interaction, revealed that high levels of play and care-giving activities resulted in infants being more cognitively competent at 6 months, scoring higher on the Bayley Scales of Infant Development (Pedersen, Rubinstein, & Yarrow, 1979; Pedersen, Anderson, & Kain, 1980). These children also scored a higher cognitive functioning (Nugent, 1991), better problem-solving skills, as toddlers (Easterbrooks & Goldberg, 1984), and higher IQ's by the age of three (Yogman, Kindlan, & Earls, 1995). Fathers also have unique interaction when it comes to communication. Compared to mothers, the fathers' talk with toddlers is characterized by more wh- ('what', 'where' etc.) questions, which

requires children to assume more communicative responsibility in the interaction. This interaction encourages toddlers to talk more, use more diverse vocabulary, and produce longer utterances, when interacting with their fathers (Rowe, Cocker, & Pan, 2004).

The National Centre for Education Statistics (1997) also found that children of involved fathers are more likely to enjoy and have a more positive attitude towards school (Flouri, Buchanan & Bream, 2002; Flouri, 2005), participate in extracurricula activities, and graduate. These children are less likely to fail a grade, display poor attendance, be suspended or expelled from school, or have problem behaviour at school, (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Brown & Rife, 1991; Mosley & Thompson, 1995; National Center for Education Statistics, 1997; Nord & West, 2001; William, 1997). Zimmerman, Slaem and Notaro (2000) concur that positive father involvement in 10th grade, predicted fewer problem behaviours in 11th grade.

3.7.2. Emotional Development and Well-being

Father involvement also plays a very important role in the emotional development of children. Formoso, Gonzales, Barrera and Dumka (2007) found that positive father involvement is strongly linked to an overall life satisfaction of children. They experience less depression and emotional distress (Harris, Furstenberg & Marmer, 1998); show less expressions of negative emotionality, such as fear and guilt (Easterbrooks & Goldberg, 1990); experience less conduct problems (Formoso et al., 2007); as well as less psychological distress (Flouri, 2005); and display a greater sense of social competence (Dubowitz, Black, Cox, Kerr, Litrownik, Radhakrishna, English, Wood Schneider & Runyan, 2001).

In addition, according to Jorm, Dear, Rodgers and Christensen (2003), children with more involved fathers show fewer symptoms of anxiety and lower neuroticism. The positive involvement of fathers is also linked to positive development outcomes for children in adoptive families. Scharz and Finley (2006) found that positive father involvement in adoptive families is positively linked to their social functioning, and parental acceptance is the self-reported psychological adjustment of young people.

3.7.3. Social development

Research studies have determined that positive father involvement is strongly linked to the broader social development of children, namely: social competence; social initiative; social maturity; and their capacity for relatedness with others (Amato, 1987; Forehand & Nousiainen, 1993; Gottfried, Gottfried & Bathurst, 1988; Krampe & Fairweather, 1993; Mischel, Shoda & Peake, 1988; Parke, 1996; Snarey, 1993; Stolz, Barber & Olsen, 2005). This impact begins early in the child's development.

In studies by different scholars, it was determined that children with involved fathers are more likely to have positive peer relationships. They are also more popular and well liked than their peers. Their peer relations are typified by less negativity, less aggression, less conflict, more reciprocity, more generosity, and more positive friendship qualities (Hooven, Gottman & Katz, 1995; Lieberman, Doyle & Markiewicz, 1999; Lindsey, Moffett, Clawson & Mize, 1994; Macdonald & Parke, 1984; Rutherford & Mussen, 1968; Youngblade & Belsky, 1992).

According to Mosely and Thomson (1995), a father's positive relationship with his children, contributes to moral maturity, and links to pro-social behaviour for both boys

and girls. Hoffman (1971) and Speicher-Dublin (1982), however, found a positive correlation with higher scores on measures of internal moral judgment, moral values, and conformity to rules. Remarkably, researchers of a 26-year longitudinal study with 379 individuals determined that the single most important childhood factor in developing empathy is paternal involvement. It was revealed that fathers, who spent time alone with their children, and who performed routine childcare of at least twice a week, raised children, who were the most compassionate adults (Koestner, Franz & Weinberger, 1990).

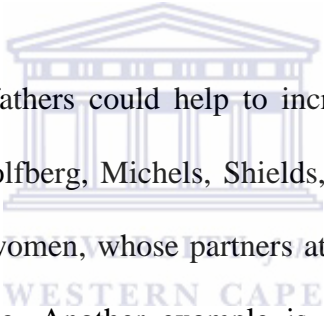
3.7.4. Physical Health

Researchers have determined that women, who live in stable relationships with men, experience lower levels of family stress, have lower risks of experiencing mental health problems, and have greater satisfaction from their roles as a parent (Richter, Chikovore, Makusha, Bhana, Mokomane, Swartz et al., 2011). It has also been established that men do not only contribute to women's well-being and happiness, but also play an important role as a buffer for children against neglectful or harsh parenting by a distant, demoralized or overburdened mother (Martin, Ryan & Brooks-Gunn, 2010).

In addition, when fathers are emotionally supportive of their spouses, their partners are more likely to enjoy a greater sense of well-being, as well as good post-partum mental health (Gjerdingen, Froberg, & Fontaine, 1991). Biller (1993) indicates that mothers with highly involved and supportive partners (fathers), have a relatively problem-free pregnancy, delivery process, as well as nursing experience, and also maintain healthy pregnancy behaviours (Teitler, 2001). According to Cairney, Boyle, Offord and Racine

(2003), single mothers experience higher levels of stress and depression, than married mothers with supportive partners do.

According to Matthews, Curtin & MacDorman (2000), infant mortality rates are 1.8 times higher for unmarried mothers than for married mothers. The reason for this statistic is linked to the fact that unmarried mothers are less likely to obtain prenatal care and are more likely to give birth to a baby with a lower birth weight (Padilla & Reichman, 2001; US Department of Health and Human Services, 1995). McLanahan (2003) indicates that unmarried mothers, who experience these problems, are more likely to report cigarette smoking during their pregnancy.



Some scholars argue that fathers could help to increase the physical health of their children in many ways. Wolfberg, Michels, Shields, O'Campo, Bronner & Bienstock (2004) found that 75% of women, whose partners attended a breastfeeding promotion class, initiated breastfeeding. Another example is, fathers, who provided monetary support to non-married mothers during their pregnancy, decreased the likelihood of a low birth weight baby (Padilla & Reichman, 2001).

3.8. Benefits of Father Involvement for Fathers

Research has determined that positive father involvement does not only have benefits for the children, but also held benefits for the fathers, as well. Different studies have determined that some of the benefits for men include, involved fathers feel more self-confident and effectual as parents (DeLuccie, 1996a; Russell, 1982). It has also been reported that these fathers find parenthood more satisfying (Owen, Chase-Lansdale & Lamb, 1982) and feel more

intrinsically important to their child (Lamb, 1987). Positive father involvement also encourages fathers to be even more involved (DeLuccie, 1996a). Fathers, who spend more time in taking up caring duties, are given an opportunity to display affection and to nurture their children (Almeida & Galambos, 1991; Coltrane, 1996; Lamb, 1997).

Positive father involvement also has psychosocial benefits, because men demonstrate greater psychosocial maturity (Pleck, 1997; Snarey, 1993), and are more satisfied with their lives (Eggebean & Knoester, 2001). These fathers experience less psychological distress (Barnett, Marshall, & Pleck, 1992b; Gove & Mongione, 1983; Ozer, Barnett, Brennan, & Sperling, 1998), are more able to understand themselves, empathically understand others, and integrate their feelings in an ongoing way (Heath, 1994).

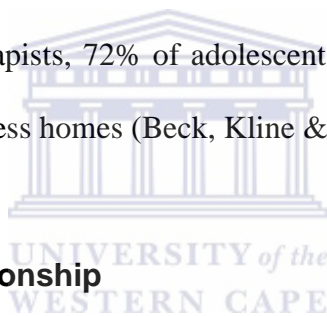
3.9. Impact of father absence

Prince (2009), in research on the South African family, found that about 40% of South Africa's approximately 18 million children are being raised by single mothers. It is clear that most children in single parent households are financially and socially worse off, than children in two parent families, and that the absence of a father has negative consequences for children, especially the boy child. This statement is consistent with research by Popenoe (1996) and Wright (1994), who assert in their findings that youth growing up in father absent homes, are more at risk of experiencing social problems, than boys, growing up in two parent homes. Father absence has risks for both girls and boys, but research has determined that the absence of a father increases the risks for the boy child to become delinquent, than a child with a father (Wynn, 1964).

Research gives a clear picture of the consequences for children, who do not have the benefit of a caring and involved father. The consequences affect everybody. Children without fathers are:

- Three to five times more likely to be involved in out-of-wedlock pregnancies (Whitehead, 1995);
- Two to three times more likely to have emotional and behavioural problems (USDHHS health survey, 1993);
- More likely to commit suicide; and
- More likely to have illnesses and physical problems (Hong, 1993).

In addition, 60% of America's rapists, 72% of adolescent murderers and 70% of long-term prison inmates come from fatherless homes (Beck, Kline & Greenfield, 1987).



3.10. The Father-Child Relationship

As the third and final domain of fathers' influence, the quality of the father-child relationships and the fathers' parenting behaviours are important in understanding children's behaviour (Capaldi, DeGarmo, Patterson & Forgatch, 2002; Thornberry, Freeman-Gallant & Lovegrove, 2009). Examples of the important aspects of this relationship include discipline, paternal involvement, attitudes about parenting, and emotional attachment to the child. Literature has determined father involvement to be positively related to children's academic performance (Cooksey & Fondell, 1996), as well as adolescents' behaviour (Carlson, 2006).

Fagan and Iglesias (2000) found that fathers' communication with their children improved children's communication skills, which, consequently, reduced behavioural problems. However, some research has found a non-existent, or inconsistent, effect of father

involvement on children's outcomes (Amato & Rezac, 1994; Flouri, 2006) and has emphasized the importance of considering the quality of the father-mother relationship, when investigating the association between father-child contact and child outcomes (Amato & Rezac, 1994). Not only are adolescent fathers less likely to be co-resident and, therefore, less likely to be involved in the child's day-to-day life, but some teen fathers have also been found to have less competent parenting skills (Fagot, Pears, Capaldi, Crosby & Leve, 1998).

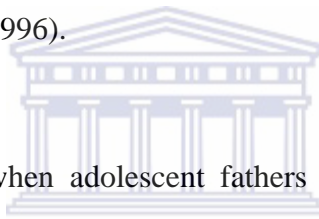
Coley and Chase-Lansdale (1998) noted the importance of conducting further research on the relationship between father-child bonds and child outcomes. In one study, Furstenberg (Jr.) and Harris (1993) analysed teenage mothers' children from a Baltimore Study, many of whom had also been born to an adolescent father. They found that strong attachments to co-resident fathers, led to improved behavioural and educational outcomes in adolescence. However, children with no relationship with their fathers had poorer outcomes than those, who had poor relationships with their fathers, or those, whose fathers were highly involved in early childhood, but decreased their contact over time. Coley and Chase-Lansdale (1998) noted that more research needed to be conducted in this area.

3.11. The Father–Mother Relationship and father involvement

Belsky (1984), as well as Patterson, DeBaryshe and Ramsey (1989) found that the quality of the relationship between the father and the mother has an effect on the fathers' parenting and child development. Fagan and Palkovitz (2007) found that a stronger bond between the mother and father increases the fathers' involvement in child-care. Another study by Gee and Rhodes (2003) found that father-absence was strongly associated with depression and anxiety among mothers. This finding is supported by the findings of a study with low-income African

American mothers in New York City, that there was a linkage between mothers' parenting stress and father involvement by non-resident fathers (Jackson, 1999). In a study by Harmon and Perry (2011) it was also found that fathers' cooperative co-parenting, and not their engagement with children, contributed to lower levels of parenting stress for mothers.

It is, therefore, clear that these findings are very important because of the fact that maternal mental health is perceived by many authors as an important determinant of children's development (Black, Papas, Hussey, Hunter, Dubowitz, Kotch & Schneider, 2002). Co-residence is also seen as a very important facet of the relationship between the parents, because living with the biological father tends to be more economically beneficial for the mother and child (Roye & Balk, 1996).



The household context differs when adolescent fathers are compared to teenage fathers. Adolescent fathers are found to be more supportive to mothers than teenage fathers. There are also several factors in marital relationships that influence father involvement (Bonney, Kelley & Levant, 1999).

Pasley, Futris and Skinner (2002) have found that fathers with partners, who encourage them through positive feedback on their fathering efforts, reported to be much more involved in child-care and regarded their fathering role as very important. Additionally, various authors concur that mothers' attitudes (Beitel & Parke, 1998), their role as a gatekeeper (De Luccie, 1995), and their perception of their partner's abilities, as a father (Bonney, Kelley, & Levant, 1999), had a huge impact on father involvement. Hoffman and Moon (1999) found that the gender attitude of mothers also play an important role in their perceptions of father involvement. Mothers, who reflected a more balanced gender-equal perception, were keen to

support father involvement, than those mothers with a traditional attitude (Hoffman & Moon, 1999).

3.12. Father Involvement and changes in family structure

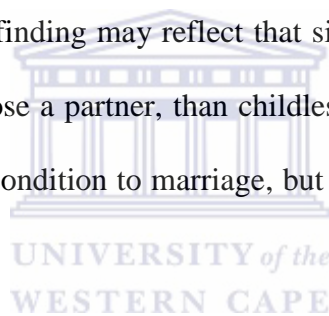
Father involvement varies in different types of families for different socio economic reasons. Simultaneously, scholars have noted that, while contemporary cultural scripts for fatherhood prescribe more involvement than in the past, the father is expected to be, typically, less engaged and responsible than the mother, except in a few specific realms, such as discipline, moral instruction, and physical play (Townsend, 2002).

With changing family types and huge upsurges of women in the labour market, there has been more pressure on fathers to take up more gender-equal parenting roles. It has also been determined that father involvement increases, when the father is home, and the spouse is not, as opposed to when parents make use of non-parental sources of child care (Brayfield, 1995; Nock & Kingston, 1988; Presser, 2003). It is logical that, if the father and mother work different shifts, the father does not have much of a choice, but to get more involved and take more responsibility in child-care. It is also more difficult for parents to find third-party care at night, than during the day, which may influence father involvement more positively.

Many studies confirm that children, who live in both social-father families, as well as cohabiting parent families, exhibit poorer average developmental outcomes, than those who live with their (married) biological parents (Artis, 2007; 2006; Hofferth, 2006). Exactly why co-residence with a social father, or residence in a cohabiting family, is associated with adverse child outcomes is unclear, although multiple hypotheses have been proposed.

Firstly, mothers, who are involved in a social-father family, tend to be less advantaged, than those mothers in a stable, co-resident relationship with the biological father of their children. Similarly, mothers, who cohabit, tend to be less advantaged, than mothers, who are married. Such disadvantages are apparent in the characteristics of the mothers themselves (education, employment) and, more generally, in their level of economic resources (Bzostek, McLanahan, & Carlson [in press]; Manning & Brown, 2006; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994).

Secondly, men who become social-fathers, or who cohabit with (rather than marry) their partners, tend to be less advantaged, on average, than those, who partner with childless women, and those, who marry their partners (Hofferth, 2006; Hofferth & Anderson, 2003; Manning & Brown, 2006). This finding may reflect that single mothers face a lower quality pool of men, from which to choose a partner, than childless women. Alternatively, financial stability may be viewed as a precondition to marriage, but not cohabitation (Edin & Kefalas, 2005).



Thirdly, co-residence with a social father, or residence in a cohabiting family, may be a marker of past, or ongoing, family instability, which is associated with adverse developmental outcomes for children (Fomby & Cherlin, 2007; Magnuson & Berger, 2009; Osborne & McLanahan, 2007; Cooper, Osborne, Beck, & McLanahan [in press]).

Research studies have also determined that children, who did not reside in the same household as their fathers, compared with children, who resided with both parents, face a number of economic and social disadvantages. These disadvantages contribute to increased risks of behavioural problems, subjective distress, and school failure (Amato, 2005; McLanahan and Sandefur, 1994). There are many researchers, who believe that non-resident

fathers can reduce these risks by maintaining a close and supportive relationship with their children. In support of these assumptions, scholars have found a positive correlation between a close and emotionally supportive relationship, between non-resident fathers, their children and the multiple dimensions of children's well-being (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999).

3.13. Interventions for fathers

There are many programmes, internationally, that focuses on challenging traditional gender norms and involving fathers in unpaid care. The MenCare Campaign is a collaboration between NGOs, which is co-chaired by Brazilian NGO Promundo and Sonke Gender Justice Network (Sonke) in South Africa. The MenCare Campaign is being implemented in 25 countries and focussing on policy-making that supports gender-equal and involved fatherhood, such as more equitably distributed parental leave or making maternity wards more accommodating to future fathers. Some of the other objectives of the campaign include advocacy campaigns on father involvement through media platforms, such as radio appearances, TV and poster campaigns (MenCare, 2014). MenCare also encourages fathers to become more involved in family life, and seeks to address gender-based violence, as well as sexual and reproductive health, by providing men with alternate positive masculine identities (Promundo, CulturaSalud & REDMAS, 2013).

In South Africa, one of the key focuses of the MenCare+ programme is to promote gender equality, by changing gender attitudes, and improving caregiving and fatherhood skills. The programme is being implemented by Sonke Gender Justice and MOSAIC Healing Centre for women. The programme mobilizes fathers, or soon to be fathers, through fathers' groups that

meet on a weekly basis, to discuss men's challenges with fatherhood and family life (MenCare, 2014).

3.14. Conclusion

Gender conception and men's understanding of gender equality have a huge influence on father involvement in South Africa. The negative gender norms and values are also influenced by patriarchal cultural norms and values, within society. The high rate of father-absence is an international phenomenon and has huge implications for child and family well-being. In South Africa, it puts children at a further disadvantage, as research studies have shown that father-absence is interlinked with poverty, the probability of high crime involvement, as well as other social problems.

A stable union between parents and the fathers' involvement in unpaid care, therefore, becomes very important. The fathers' involvement in unpaid care helps to reduce maternal stress and reduces the risks for relationship conflict. It, therefore, helps to create an enabling environment for fathers to become much more involved in child rearing. It is also evident that father involvement in the lives of their children has become very important, as the increased positive involvement leads to better development outcomes for children. Family structure and different types of fathers, also have an impact on the level of father involvement in child-care, and it is therefore important to realise that the challenges of fathers cannot be generalised. The rapid growth of father-absence in South Africa is a huge concern and could have a negative impact on the well-being of families.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

This chapter details the methodology used to conduct this research study. In this chapter the researcher will also identify and provide details of the various steps, principles and techniques, adopted in this research process. These steps, principles and techniques are: the use of one-on-one interviews as the main tool for data collection; the use of qualitative methods over quantitative; and the use of snowballing, as the main sampling method. Reflexivity and trustworthiness are considered and discussed.



4.2. Research Question

Santiago (2009) defines the research question as the organizing element for the topic that is under research. The research question guides the investigation into a narrow topic and also guides every aspect of the research project, which includes the literature search, research design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of results, and the direction of the discussion (Santiago, 2009). The Institute of International Studies (2001) has identified the research question as the most critical part of the research, as it helps the researcher to guide arguments.

In this current study, the researcher identified the following as the core research questions:

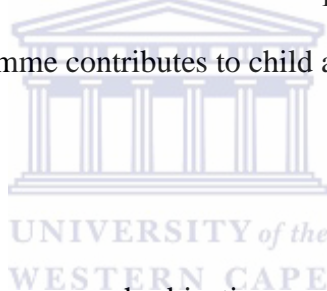
- How does the intervention programme for fathers address the needs of fathers and family members?

- How does the intervention programme for fathers assist them to become more involved fathers?
- How do the spouses and children of the fathers that attended the intervention programme, perceive the intervention programme for fathers and its contribution to child and family well-being?

4.3. Aim of the Study

The research aim is defined by Bryman (2004: 46) as a broad statement of desired outcomes, or as the general intentions of what the research would like to achieve. With specific reference to this current study, the aim of the research was to:

- “Explore families’ experiences of an intervention programme for fathers in order to determine how the programme contributes to child and family well-being.”



4.4. Research objectives

According to Goldblatt (2011), the research objectives can be seen as a specification of the main reason for conducting the research. Wheeldon & Ahlberg (2012) emphasise that the implementation of the research objective should be closely linked to the problem statement, and should summarize what the researcher hopes to achieve. With specific reference to this current study, the research objectives are:

- To explore how the intervention programme addresses the needs of fathers and their family members;
- To explore how the intervention programme has assisted fathers to become more involved fathers;
- To explore the intervention programme contributes to child and family well-being.

Having identified the aim and specific objectives relating to the study, the next section describes the research design of the study.

4.5. Qualitative Research

According to Henning (2004: 5), a qualitative methodology is defined as ‘an inquiry representing a research form or approach that makes way for different opinions and views of a theme that is studied, and whereby the participants have an open-ended way of expressing their views and actions’. Henning (2004) further states that a qualitative methodology is used to gather information, where the participants need to have the freedom to express themselves. A qualitative methodology was used to explore the experiences of fathers, their children and other family members, with a fatherhood intervention programme, as well as how the programme contributes to the well-being of the children and family (Henning, 2004: 5).

The researcher should be receptive to the perceptions of the participants, as they express themselves. The participants were encouraged to share their experiences of the fatherhood intervention programme. They were also encouraged to disclose whether the intervention addressed their own individual needs, as well as those of the family, and whether it contributed to their well-being.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), qualitative research has three aims. Firstly, a qualitative approach provides an in-depth and detailed investigation of the research area, without manipulating the research environment. Secondly, qualitative research provides answers to questions on subjects, about which little is known. Thirdly, qualitative research involves face-to-face contact with the participants. Therefore, the researcher selected

qualitative research methodology, as it was the ideal method to research the experiences of fathers, their spouses and their children.

4.5.1. The interpretivist research approach

Interpretivism presumes that individuals do not have access to the real world, suggesting that their knowledge of the perceived world (or worlds) is meaningful in its own right and can be understood through careful use of interpretivist procedures (Carson, Clare & Murphy, 1998). An interpretivist framework encourages the researcher to apply personal experience and prior knowledge, in stead of just being a detached observer, when the focus of a study is on understanding and interpretation. This framework accepts influences from both science and personal experience (Carson, Gilmore, Perry & Gronhaug, 2001). As a result, a model that is developed based on an interpretivist framework (suggesting a qualitative approach) will also be affected by the researcher's interpretation of the data collected from the interview transcripts. A number of other disciplines incorporate interpretivist methodologies, where the primary assumptions are that '...access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions, such as language, consciousness and shared meanings. Such interpretive research does not predefine dependent and independent variables, but focuses on the full capacity of human sense-making as the situation emerges' (Myers, 1997).

According to Carson et al. (2001), interpretivism:

- Is inspired by a series of qualitative concepts and approaches;

- In broad terms, takes account of the important characteristics of the research paradigm on the opposite continuum from positivism;
- Allows the focus of research to be on understanding what is happening in a given context; and
- Includes the consideration of multiple realities, different actors' perspectives, researcher involvement, taking account of the contexts under study, and the contextual.

In the context of studies seeking to understand the behaviour of various players, within the property profession, interpretivism may be an appropriate theoretical perspective to effectively investigate the complex nature of reality (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991).

An interpretive approach provides a deep insight into 'the complex world of lived experience, from the point of view of those who live it' (Schwandt, 1994: 118). Interpretive research assumes that reality is socially constructed and the researcher becomes the vehicle, by which this reality is revealed (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2001; Walsham, 1995a, 1995b). This approach is consistent with the construction of the social world, characterised by interaction between the researcher and the participants (Mingers, 2001). The researcher's interpretations play a key role in this kind of study, bringing 'such subjectivity to the fore, backed with quality arguments, rather than statistical exactness' (Garcia & Quek, 1997: 459).

Having explained the interpretive approach, it is necessary to make a distinction between qualitative research and an interpretive approach. They are not equivalent and interchangeable terms (Klein & Myers, 1999; Neuman, 1997). Interpretive research

assumes ‘that our knowledge of reality is gained only through social constructions, such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, documents, tools, and other artifacts’ (Klein & Myers, 1997, 69). Qualitative research is a broader term. In general, it refers to a study process that investigates a social human problem, where the researcher conducts the study in a natural setting and builds a whole and complex representation by a rich description and explanation, as well as a careful examination of informants’ words and views (Creswell, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Morgan & Smircich, 1980). As a consequence, ‘qualitative research may, or may not, be interpretive, depending upon the philosophical assumptions of the researcher’ (Klein & Myers, 1997, 69).

4.5.2. Underlying Philosophical Assumptions

The researchers’ basic beliefs and worldviews lie behind their theoretical perspective. Guba and Lincoln (1994) speculate about the need of researchers to make their ontological and epistemological assumptions explicit, before embarking on any research project. Answering the ontological question, ‘What is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it’ (Guba & Lincoln, 1994: 108) is the first step in the definition of how researchers can approach a research problem. The interpretive researcher’s ontological assumption is that social reality is locally and specifically constructed (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) ‘by humans through their action and interaction’ (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991: 14). Neuman (1997) affirms that ‘social reality is based on people’s definition of it’. From the previous assertions, it is apparent that interpretive researchers do not recognise the existence of an objective world. On the contrary, they see the world strongly bounded by a particular time and specific context. Therefore, the epistemological question, ‘What is the nature of the

relationship between the knower, or would-be knower, and what can be known' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994: 108) must be answered in a consistent way with the ontological view. The interpretive researcher's epistemological assumption is that 'findings are literally created as the investigation proceeds' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994: 111). Additionally, they explicitly recognise that 'understanding social reality, requires understanding how practices and meanings are formed, and informed, by the language and tacit norms, shared by humans, working towards some shared goal' (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991: 14).

4.6. Population and sample

Dodgen and Shea (2000) define population as 'the total number of units, from which data can be collected, such as individuals, artifacts, events or organizations'. According to Polit and Hungler (1999) the research population is a large collection of individuals, or objects, which are the main focus of query. With specific reference to this study, the population of interest were fathers, spouses and children of fathers, completed a fatherhood programme intervention in the community of Lamberts Bay. The fatherhood programme intervention comprises 4 sessions that include the following topics: The role of the father; Factors that influence the behaviour of the child; Self-esteem; Discipline; and Home values. Each session is about 45 minutes long. This population predominantly comprised a populace, historically labelled in South Africa as 'Coloured'.

Lamberts Bay is a small fishing community in the rural Western Cape. The population encompasses 6120 people (StatsSA, 2011). Purposive sampling was used to recruit the 30 participants. These participants included 10 fathers, 10 spouses and 10 children. The fathers

were part of a fatherhood intervention programme, at a local social service provider in Lamberts Bay. For the purposes of this study, the spouses and the children of the fathers were selected as participants in the study. The selection of the participants took into account their individual qualities and their suitability in terms of the research topic (Henning, 2004). Purposive sampling allows for the selection of interviewees, whose qualities and experience are relevant to the research topic (Henning, 2004).

The following criteria were used for the selection of participants: Fathers that completed a fatherhood intervention program for fathers, their partners and at least one child were selected to participate in the study. Children of the fathers that completed the fatherhood program intervention were automatically included. The only criteria were that the children should be schoolgoing children that were living in the same house of the parents. The result was a fairly, heterogeneous group of participants. The final sample of participants consisted of 10 fathers, who were part of the fatherhood intervention program, 10 spouses and 10 children of the fathers, who benefited from the programme. The racial classification for the 10 fathers was as follows: 9 fathers were 'coloured' and one was 'black'. All the spouses and children were 'coloured'.

4.7. Data collection tools

An interview schedule with 44 open-ended questions was developed. The following aspects were covered:

- i) Communication about the programme;
- ii) Understanding of family Well-being;
- iii) Family well-being, parent-child relationships;

- iv) Parental involvement in personal matters;
- v) Discipline and Conflict management;
- vi) Conceptualization of fatherhood and father involvement; and
- vii) Experience of the programme the father attended.

The interview schedule was used to collect the data (see Appendix D). It provided the researcher with a set of pre-determined questions that might be used as an appropriate instrument to engage the participant and designate the narrative terrain (Holstein & Gubrium 1995; Monnette, Sullivan & De Jong, 2005).

4.8. Procedures and data collection

The study was approved and permission granted by the Ethics Committees at the Western Cape Department of Social Development and at the university where the researcher was registered (UWC). The Director and fatherhood programme coordinator of the service provider, responsible for the implementation of the fatherhood intervention programme, assisted with recruiting participants, who met the inclusion criteria. The fatherhood programme coordinator first consulted with the families that participated in the study and asked if they would be willing to participate in the interviews on a voluntary basis. The interviewer explained the nature of the interviews to them, and once they agreed to participate, the interviews took place in a secure office space. The fatherhood programme coordinator also accompanied the participants and introduced them to the researcher. The researcher discussed the background to the study with the participants, as well as their rights as participants. The researcher later introduced the letter of consent, which the participants

signed. Thereafter, the interview began. This procedure was followed each time the researcher interviewed a different participant.

Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were individually and separately conducted with the fathers, spouses and children. Open-ended questions were used to guide and facilitate the interview process (Babbie & Mouton, 2008; Cresswell, 2007). In the interviewer-interviewee relationship, the participants were perceived to be the experts on the topic under study and were, therefore, allowed the maximum opportunity to tell their story (Smith, Harré & Van Langenhoven, 1995). The duration of the semi-structured interviews was forty-five minutes to one hour. The interviews were conducted in a private room at the offices of the service provider. The interviewer conducted the interviews in Afrikaans, as the first language of the participants was Afrikaans. A digital voice recorder was used to record the data. This was transcribed afterwards and will be locked in a safe place for at least seven years. At the end of each interview, the participants were thanked for their input and willingness to participate in the research; it was guaranteed that the research findings would be made available to them.

4.9. Data analysis

The recorded interviews were transcribed and thematic analysis was used to analyse the data from the interviews. It was the task of the researcher to transcribe the interviews, which were audio-recorded and then transcribed (Seidmann, 1998). A thematic analysis is a flexible approach to analysing data and enables patterns or themes to be identified (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It reflects reality, by reporting and examining the experiences of the participants and their construction of the meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The interviewer has followed the five data analysis steps identified by Creswell (2007: 156):

- The *first* step was analyzing the data by managing the data. Data managing refers to the checking and organizing of files for data;
- The *second* step was to read and re-read the text;
- The *third* step was to make margin notes to form initial codes;
- The *fourth* step was to place the participants' comments into a chronological order;
and
- The fifth and final step was to reduce the codes to themes.

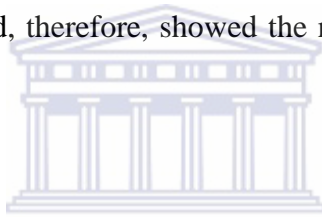
The information received from the participants were clarified and classified. In addition, the information was interpreted to give meaning to the participants' life experience. The themes were grouped into meaningful units (Creswell, 2007: 156-157). The meaningful units were related to an analytical frame-work of Bronfenbrenner (2002). The interviewer created a research point of view, highlighting the findings of the data (Creswell, 2007: 142). The final report should be logical, non-repetitive or argumentative (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Once the themes had been extracted from the transcriptions, the researcher analysed and discussed the information, using direct quotes from the participants, as well as from the supporting literature. Arguments relating to the validity of the information were presented.

4.10. Reflexivity

The concept of reflexivity is explained by Nightingale and Cromby (1999: 228). Reflexivity requires an awareness of the researcher's contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgment of the impossibility of remaining 'outside of' one's subject matter, while conducting research. Reflexivity then, urges

individuals to explore ways in which a researcher's involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs such research.

Nightingale and Cromby (1999: 228) argue that reflexivity is consistent with Hall and Hall's (2004) concept of reflection, which involves clear and constructive thinking about ways to improve the research study. This allows researchers to describe and analyse their feelings as the research progresses. Reflection allows researchers to evaluate themselves and identify their strengths and limitations. Reflexivity implies that the researcher should be aware of how the methods used to collect the information might influence the research findings (Mays & Pope, 2000). The researcher was aware that the information shared by the participants was personal, as well as sensitive, and, therefore, showed the necessary empathy and respect for their views.



The researcher endeavoured to remain objective throughout the consultation process, as well as the research process. Throughout the research process, the researcher made use of self-reflection, so as to ensure emphatic responses and objectivity (Cho & Trent, 2006: 321). As a father, the researcher was impacted on a personal level by the responses of the fathers, but remained neutral as the interviewer. The researcher consulted the study supervisor, on a regular basis, on the progress of the research, and was also debriefed when needed.

4.11. Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was ensured by the application of the following principles:

- **Neutrality:** The interviewer achieved **neutrality** by respecting the participants' individuality and not stereotyping or labeling the participants (Cho & Trent, 2006:

322). The interviewer also respected the participant's opinions and views by not influencing them in any way.

- **Credibility:** The interviewer maintained **credibility** by using an accurate reflection of the information provided by the participants (Cho & Trent, 2006: 321). The interviewer also checked for misinformation, by clarifying information with the participants.
- **Authenticity** is regarded as a feature unique to naturalistic inquiry (Schwandt, 2001). It is demonstrated when researchers can show a range of different realities (fairness), with depictions of their associated concerns, issues and underlying values. The ability to help people appreciate the view points and constructions of others is indicative of educative authenticity. Catalytic authenticity is verified by stimulating some form of action, while the fifth marker of authenticity, tactical authenticity, is established through empowering others (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The interviewer ensured authenticity by using open-ended questions and answers that afforded the participants the opportunity to authentically express themselves (Blanche & Durrheim, 2002: 152).
- **Triangulation** was used to find commonalities in the results of the participants' different views (Mitchell, 1986; Duffy, 1987). The method of triangulation is advocated to 'circumvent the personal biases of investigators and to overcome the deficiencies intrinsic to a single-investigator, single-theory, or single method study, thus increasing the validity of the findings' (Kimchi, Polivka & Stevenson, 1991: 365). The view that triangulation offered completeness, gradually emerged in the literature (Jick, 1983; Fielding & Fielding, 1986; Redfern & Norman, 1994). Completeness is important to qualitative inquirers, as it allows for the recognition of

multiple realities. Inquirers are thus not using triangulation as a means of confirming existing data, but as a means of enlarging the landscape of their inquiry, offering a deeper and more comprehensive picture.

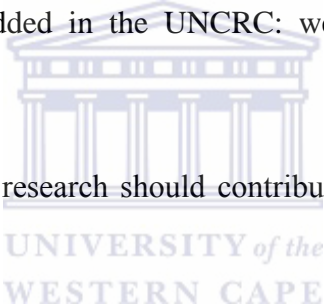
4.12. Ethical considerations

Studying the experiences of spouses and children of fathers, who participated in an intervention programme for fathers, are ethically complex. Although the researcher needed empathy to understand them, it is important to understand that these participants came from different backgrounds and some of them might have been experiencing difficulties in their relationships. The participants often reveal, in a research environment, personal information that is unknown to their friends and associates (Babbie & Mouton, 2008: 520).

Therefore, the following ethical considerations were honoured by the interviewer. Ethical approval was obtained from the Higher Degrees Committee of the University of the Western Cape. Informed consent was obtained from the participants and the researcher explained the research purpose, aims and objectives of the study. Additionally, the participants were informed about the research procedure that would ensue (for example the data collection process). During this process, the participants were assured of continued confidentiality and privacy. The participants were also encouraged to ask questions and to clarify any uncertainties that they may have had (Lucas, 2008: 37 & 67). Anonymity was ensured when the researcher allocated pseudonyms to each of the participants, masking their personal details, so that they remained anonymous (Cresswell, 2007: 143). The participants' identities were concealed in written and verbal reports of the results, as well as in informal discussions with colleagues and fellow students. Confidentiality refers to the protection of the

participants' identity, this was ensured by removing all the participants' details from the information that the participants provided. Besides, the personal details of the participants were only known to the researcher. Beneficence was ensured by informing participants that they would not be harmed or deceived in any way.

Special ethical consideration was given to the participation of the children. In general, minors cannot give informed consent without the permission of their parents or guardians. In this study, permission for children to participate in the study was obtained from their parents. However, the children gave assent to participate in the study. Hill (2005) offers a practical way forward, by suggesting that ethical child research can be guided by four commonly identified types of rights, embedded in the UNCRC: welfare; protection; provision; and choice of participation.

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1. Welfare – the purpose of research should contribute to children's well-being, either directly or indirectly;
 2. Protection – methods should be designed to avoid distress, and contingency arrangements should be available in case of upset, or situations of risk or harm;
 3. Provision – children should feel good about having contributed to research, as a service, informing society, individuals, policy and practice; and
 4. Choice of participation – children should make informed choices about all aspects of participation, including consent, opting out, determining boundaries of confidentiality and contributing ideas to the research agendas and processes (Hill, 2005: 81).

4.13. Conclusion

The experiences of the research participants were highlighted, which placed them at the centre stage of this research and also ensured that their voices were heard. This research not only focussed on the experiences that fathers had of the intervention, but were in essence very child friendly, as it also focussed on the experiences of the children and there mothers. By including the whole family have contributed to the credibility of the study as the research gave the researcher the opportunity to achieve a much more in-depth analysis of the findings.

The next chapter will present and discuss the findings.

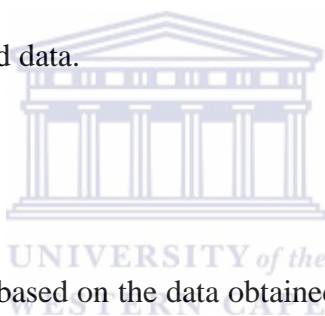


CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction

This Chapter provides an in-depth discussion on the results for this research study. The chapter also presents an overview on the profile of the participants, which includes their race and age. The results are divided into different themes and sub-themes that have emerged during the analysis of the collected data.



5.2. Participants profile

The data analysis was conducted based on the data obtained from the fathers, who completed a fatherhood programme intervention in the community of Lamberts Bay. The research also included a spouse and child that reside in the same household of the respective father. The profile of the participants, who participated in the study, is indicated in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Participants profile

Participants	Number of Participants	Average age	Race
Mothers	10	41.1	Coloured - 10
Fathers	10	46.7	Coloured – 9 Black African - 1
Children	10	17	Coloured -10

There were 30 participants in total, who participated in the study. The participants were 10 mothers, 10 fathers and 10 children. The average age of the mothers was 41 years, while the average age of the fathers was 47 years. The average age of the children was 17 years. Twenty nine of the participants were classified as ‘Coloured’ and one participant was ‘Black African’. This racial differentiation was mainly due to the area of operation of the service provider and the fact that the community of Lamberts Bay is predominantly ‘Coloured’, an estimated 74.53% (Statistics South Africa, 2011).

5.3. Themes and sub-themes

For easier presentation, the themes and sub-themes are shown in tabular form in Table 5.2, followed by the discussion of the themes.

Table 5.2: Themes and sub-themes that emerged from the collected data

Core Themes	Sub-themes
1. Understanding family well-being	I. Understanding family well-being
2. Conceptualisation of fatherhood and father involvement	I. Definition of a father II. Changed views of being a father III. Recruitment to the programme
3. Communication about the programme	I. Knowledge of the programme that the father attended
4. Parent-Child relationships	I. Quality of father-child relationships
5. Parental involvement and personal matters	I. Father’s involvement in child care and wellbeing
6. Discipline and Conflict Management	I. Discipline and Conflict Management
7. Experience of programme intervention	I. Addressing needs of fathers II. Experience of programme content

5.3.1. Theme 1: Understanding Family Well-being

Since this study explores a father’s contribution to child and family well-being, it becomes important to define child well-being and family well-being, in general. This

will help to measure how the intervention has contributed to the well-being of the families that participated in this study. Pollard and Rosenberg (2003) define child well-being as a state of successful performance, throughout the life course, integrating physical, cognitive and socio-emotional function that results in productive activities, deemed significant by one's cultural community, fulfilling social relationships, and the ability to transcend moderate psychosocial and environmental problems.

Susan Hird (2003) is also one of the researchers, who have an extensive literature review on the definitions, models, and concepts related to well-being. She found that the word well-being and the quality of life were sometimes used interchangeably. She also found, by investigating across disciplines and studies, that there was no consensus on how well-being should be defined or measured. Hird, however, found common factors in various definitions that include people's living conditions, as well as people's own thoughts, interpretations and experiences of well-being. As part of her research she developed a conceptual model of well-being. Hird also noted the work of Felce and Perry's (1995) review of fifteen important studies on the quality of life. Felce and Perry (1995) found that, although there was no consensus on the definitions of well-being, there was an overlap on the key components that contributed to well-being. The components included 'physical well-being, material well-being, social well-being, development and activity, and health'. Hird incorporated these components into her model, but substituted health with emotional well-being.

The purpose of the question (asked during the interview process) was to determine how the partners of the fathers view their family functioning and how they define the well-being of their family. The purpose of the question was also to determine whether the

spouses could confirm any changes to their family well-being. Five out of ten participants could identify what family well-being or a healthy family should present as. This indicates that half of the participants had an idea on how a healthy family should present, as one mother reported:

“’n Hegte familie. Almal weet van mekaar se doen en late. Almal is betrokke met dit wat die een en die ander doen. (A close family. Everyone knows what everyone does. Everyone is involved with what everyone does.)”

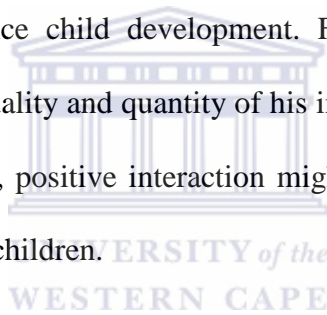
(M: Participant 13)

Two of the five participants indicated that the fatherhood programme intervention contributed positively to their family well-being. Two of the participants did not offer any comment on the topic, while the other participant indicated that she did not know what family well-being means. One of the mothers that reported positive contributions to family well-being reported the following:

“Hy stuur vir sy kinders geld soos ’n vader moet wees. Hy help my innie hys en hy is ook betrokke by die kind se skool. (He sent his children money like a father need to do. He helps me in the house and he is also involved at the child’s school.)” (M: Participant 15)

Although not all the participants understood the term, family well-being, there was a general indication in the results that the fathers made ‘an extra effort’ to become more involved in the health and well-being of their families, after they had attended the fatherhood programme intervention. The above quotation indicates that fathers took more responsibility, by providing for the financial needs of his children and supporting his child at school. He also played a better supportive role to his partner, through his involvement in domestic duties. Research indicates that when fathers are more involved in child-care and school based activities, it might contribute to positive outcomes for

the children. This result is consistent with the findings of a study by the National Centre for Education Statistics (1997) that children of involved fathers are more likely to enjoy school, or have a more positive attitude towards school (Flouri, 2005), participate in extracurricular activities, and graduate. These children are less likely to; fail a grade, have poor attendance, be suspended or expelled from school, or display problem behaviour at school (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Brown & Rife, 1991; Mosley & Thompson, 1995; National Center for Education Statistics, 1997; Nord & West, 2001; William, 1997). Zimmerman, Slaem and Notaro (2000) found that positive father involvement in the 10th grade predicted fewer problem behaviours in the 11th grade. The ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979) also offers an indication on how father involvement might influence child development. Fathers can influence the child's microsystem through the quality and quantity of his involvement with his child or other family members. Increased, positive interaction might therefore contribute to positive development outcomes for children.



5.3.2. Theme 2: Conceptualisation of fatherhood and father involvement

This question (asked during the interview process) tried to deal with the way fathers defined the term, 'father'. It was important to develop insight into how fathers defined, what it is to be a father, and how they viewed the role of a father.

5.3.2.1. Sub-theme 1: Definition of a father

Six out of the ten fathers still believed in the traditional, patriarchal role of a father. They believed that the father should be the head of the house and, therefore, needed to be in charge of the family. The fact that these men believed in a more traditional patriarchal role of fatherhood, might have negative

implications for the father's interaction with his partner and his involvement in unpaid care. In some instances, these views were influenced by religious, patriarchal views of fatherhood. Most of the participants struggled to define fatherhood, from a more gender-equal parenting perspective, as one father reported:

“Kyk, die pa, die pa, moet die voorbeeld wees in die huis. Hy is die hoof van die huis. U sou sê hy moet alleen besluite neem. (Look, the father...the father, must set an example in the house. He is the head of the house. You would say that he alone should make the decisions. I would say, he must make decisions alone.)” (F: Participant 22)

The above quote is an indication on how most of the participants defined their role in the household. This notion of fatherhood is not only a risk to achieving gender-equality in relationships, but it also creates poor parenting examples, from a role modelling perspective. With changing family structures and the increasing numbers of women, who enter the labour market, this patriarchal view defeats the efforts to encourage men to adopt an equal decision-making parenting style. The term patriarchy refers to ‘male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterise a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways’ (Bhasin 2006: 3). This male dominance manifests and is institutionalised as dominance over women and children in the family, and society in general. According to Lerner (1989), it means that ‘women are either totally powerless, or totally deprived of rights, influence and resources’.

The remainder (4) of the fathers held more gender-equal views of fatherhood and defined their role, as fathers, as a more supportive role to their children, and also highlighted the need for fathers to be good role models, as one father reported:

“n Vader is daar om teen alle tye hulle kinders te ondersteun en ook deel uit te maak van die kind se opleiding. (A father is there to support his children all the time and to be part of the child’s training.)”
(F: Participant 27)

The fact that these men held more gender-equal views, might contribute to more equal decision-making between men and woman and might also translate to increased involvement of fathers in unpaid care duties.

5.3.2.2. Sub-theme II: *Changed views of being a father*

The participants (fathers) were asked if the intervention had changed their views of being a father. The purpose of the question was to investigate how the views of the participants had changed, from a more traditional view of fatherhood, to a more gender-equal parenting view of fatherhood.

Although most fathers in this study viewed themselves in a patriarchal role, it was very encouraging that all the fathers, who participated in the study, confirmed that their views of fatherhood had changed to that of a more gender-equal parent. The participants confirmed that the programme influenced them to change their views of being a father. The results also showed a strong connection between being a father, father-child relationships, and fathering in a community context. The fathers also expressed that the programme change their views about taking on

more responsibility as a father. The results indicated, as well, that the programme assisted fathers to make more responsible life choices, as one father reported:

“Kyk, ek het, baie dinge wat voor die sessie, verstaan? Dinge gedoen wat ek nie moes gedoen het nie, maar nadat ek, nadat ek daai sessie ..., het ek besef...nee, maar jy doen die dinge verkeerd... of ek sê ... stel meer belang in die huislike lewe...(Look, I did, a lot of things before the session, understand? Things that I wasn't suppose to do, but after I, after that session...I realized...no, but you do the things wrong"-or I say..Show more interest in the family life then...)” (F: Participant 22)

Some of the positive results are that some fathers testified that the intervention made them realise that they needed to become more involved as fathers, and not only play the traditional role of being a father, as one father states:

“Ja, regtig dis 'n hele verandering ek het geglo die vader is daar moet werk toe gaan hy moet kos in bring en daar het ek agter gekom dis nie eindlik al waarvoor n vader daar is nie hy is vir baie dinge daar. (Yes really it's a whole change, I believed that the father is there to go to work he must bring food into the house and there, I noticed that it is not actually the only thing a fathers is suppose to do and he is also there for allot of other stuff.)” (F: Participant 23)

The responses of the participants highlight that the intervention helped fathers to change their views about being a father, to become more involved in child-care, as well as extra supportive towards their partners.

5.3.2.3. Sub-theme III: Recruitment to the programme

The questions (asked during the interview process) focussed on how fathers were recruited to the programme and the aim of the question was to get an

understanding of how the fathers got involved in the programme and what triggered them to become involved.

Most of the participants were recruited by the facilitators. It seems that most of the participants had a strong connection and believed in the facilitators, as one father reported:

“Ek het nie eindlik geweet van die besigheid nie met die verby loop het Patty my geroep ons ken al jare mekaar en gevra dat ek hom moet ondersteun en ek voel om hom te ondersteun...(I did not actually know about the business and with the waking by, Patty called me. We know each other for years already and asked me to support him and I felt that I should support him...)” (F: Participant 29)

Pre-existing demand, or the need of an intervention, are some of the factors that influenced the way, in which, participants were recruited to the programme (Mangham & Hanson, 2010). Hanson, Ranson, Oliveira-Cruz & Mills (2003) developed a criterion, which includes elements that contribute to pre-existing demand. These elements include:

- The clients’ awareness of the service; and
- The clients’ awareness of the service benefits.

The services need to address the unique needs of the fathers, taking into account the local context, in which the families live. Although it appears that the fathers were mainly recruited by programme facilitators, some of the participants mentioned that they were also attending the programme because of other participants, as one of the fathers’ reports:

“Uh by ’n oom van ons het mos nou vir my gesê en ’n toe vind ek dit die program baie interessant, baie leersaam.... (Uh a uncle of us told me and so I found the program very interesting, a lot of educational things...)
(F: Participant 30)

The above testimony by the programme participant indicates that the participants were aware of the possible benefits of the programme. Some of the participants decided to join the sessions out of curiosity, while others saw it as an opportunity to improve their parenting skills. The next main theme will examine whether the programme addressed the needs of participants.

5.3.3. Theme 3: Communication about the programme

The mothers and children were asked whether the fathers communicated anything to them about the programme they had attended, and whether they had observed the fathers attending the programme. The aim of the question was to gain a better understanding of the level of communication about the programme, between the fathers, their partners and children. It was also to gain an understanding of how mothers and children perceived their father’s involvement in the programme, and whether they observed any positive changes.

5.3.3.1. Sub Theme 1: Knowledge of the programme that the father attended

Good communication between family members is a very important component of good family relationships. Good communication also helps to create a strong bond between family members. It is essential that fathers communicate to family members, information about the programme they are attending, in its early stages, in order to establish support from other family members. The results show that seven out of the 10 children mentioned that they knew about the programme, their

father was attending. This results shows that most fathers had established a good foundation, for family members to support their journey to improved parenting skills and family relationships, as one child reported:

“Hy het dit genoem dat hy ’n vaderskap kursus bygewoon het. Ek weet nie regtig nie, maar as ek daaraan kan dink kan dit meskien wees aan ’n vader wat nie baie goed weet van dinge wat hy kan toepas op sy kinders nie, en meskien daarvan wou leer. (He did mention that he attended a fatherhood course. I do not know, but if I can think about it then maybe it can be (about) a father that does not know a lot of things that he can do with his children and maybe he want to learn more about those things.)”
(C: Participant 3)

The father’s communication with his children, especially at an early age, becomes important for sustained father involvement. Palkovitz (2002) confirms this in his research, by highlighting the importance of a strong relationship. He also reiterates that the value of involved fatherhood is determined by the quality of interaction between the father and the child. This relates to how the father respond to the needs of the child, rather than the amount of time that father is spending with children. The importance of such communications is highlighted in the next quotation:

“Ek was bewus daarvan ja...om die relations tussen vader en kind en moeder of sê ouer en die huishouding...ek en my pa...of kom ek sê ek en my ouers het nie ’n goeie kommunikasie verhouding gehad nie, maar na na die program het die kommunikasie drasties verbeter. (I did know about it yes...about the relationship between father and child and mother or say parent and the household...my father and I... or let me say my parents and I did not have a good communication relationship, but the relationship did improve drastically after the programme.)”

(C: Participant 8)

Early communication between parents and children play an important role in establishing a strong bond between parent and child. It is, therefore, important that fathers build a trusting relationship, by opening up to children about their challenges as fathers, and the programmes they are attending. The research results revealed that, where the father did not improved his communication with his children about the programme he was attending, there was no improvement in the parent-child relationships, and children showed strong signs of distress as one child reports:

“Nee...ek dink om die basic om die verhouding in onsse huis...hoe kan ek nou sê...in ons huis ...dit gaan nie goed nou nie.(No...I think basically because of the relationship in our home...how can I state it...it is not going well.)” (C: Participant 3)

The Ecological Systems Theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979) highlights the microsystem as the most important system for child development. It is in this system where good parenting relationships is of utmost importance. The quality of this relationship (whether the mother and father are together or not) can also influence the nature of the relationship between the father and the child, as well as the level of involvement by the father in the life of his children (Carlson & McLanahan, 2004). Good communication between couples, as well as parent and child, therefore, are very important for stable relationships. The majority of women confirmed that the fathers discussed the programme with them. This confirmation can be found in one mother’s quotation:

Hyt...vi my het hy gesê die program is baie interessant waarom die projek eintlik gehandel het...watit is tussen die verhouding tussen die familie, of ons openlik met mekaar is en of ons mekaar die waarheid vertel, of ons mekaar leuns vertel. (He told me that the programme was very interesting and what the project was about, that it is about the relationship between family. If we are open with each other and if we speak the truth and if we lie to each other. That is what he spoke about.)
(M: Participant 12)

Although eight out of ten spouses indicated that their partners informed them about the programme they were attending, not all fathers were open about their activities, as one mother confessed:

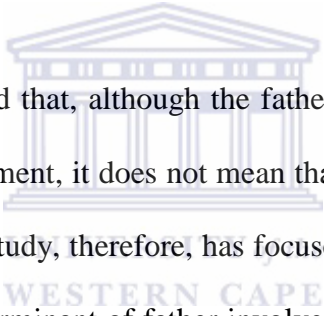
*“Ja. Ons hettie eintlik gesels daaroorie.
(We did not really discussed it.)”* (M: Participant 18)

Some of the fathers confirmed that it was beneficial for them to communicate to their family members about the programme from the start. It helped them to build their relationship and rapport with family members, as one father reported:

“Hy(die program) het groot bygedra as jy die program huis toe vat en jy gaan vertel vir hulle wat jy ondervind het en jy brei dit meer uit dan is dit verstaanbaar. Dan sien hulle dit uit dieselfde oë wat jy dit uit sien. Was vir my goed , maar die werkswinkel het meer my oë oopgemaak, hoe om na my kinders te kyk, hoe moet my kinders optree, hoe moet ek vir my kinders omgee dit het die werkswinkel gemaak. (The programme contributed a lot... if you go home and tell them what you experienced and then its more understandable.Then they see it through the same eyes that you see it from.It was good to me, but the workshop opened my eyes more on how to look after my children...how my children must act, how to care for my children.)” (F: Participant 24)

5.3.4. Theme 4: Parent-Child Relationships

Research has found that the quality of father-child relationships and the fathers' parenting behaviours are important to understand children's behaviour (Capaldi et al., 2002; Thornberry et al., 2009). Examples of important aspects of this relationship include discipline, paternal involvement, attitudes about parenting, and emotional attachment to the child. It has become clear, in many studies that the quality of the relationship between the father and the child contributes to better development outcomes for children. The effects of this relationship are better explained in the 6 year longitudinal study, conducted by Brody, Moore and Gleib (1994, cited in Rohner & Veneziano, 2001), which found that the care of fathers are, in some cases, the sole significant predictor of specific child outcomes (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001).



It is important to understand that, although the father-child relationship is regarded as important for child development, it does not mean that the relationship with the mother has no effect. This current study, therefore, has focused on the relationship between the mother and father, as a determinant of father involvement, and investigated how father involvement has contributed to child and family well-being. It has become important to investigate how the mother-father relationship has affected the well-being of mother and child, as well as the broader family. Fagan and Palkovitz (2007) confirmed, in their study, that a stronger bond between the mother and father increases the fathers' involvement in child care, while Gee and Rhodes (2003) found that father absence was strongly associated with depression and anxiety among mothers. This current study, therefore, has also focussed on the effect that the intervention has on father-child relationships, as well as the relationship between the mother and father.

5.3.4.1. Sub-Theme I: Quality of the father-child and spousal relationships

There are many researchers that have found that a positive father involvement is positively related to children's academic performance (Cooksey & Fondell, 1996) and adolescents' behaviour (Carlson, 2006). The results of this current research have shown that children place a high value on the increased support that their fathers have given them, after the intervention. Eight of the ten children of the fathers, who participated in the fatherhood programme intervention, confirmed that their relationships improved, as reported by one child:

Ons kyk partykeer tv...my pa, my ma en ekke en die meisie wat in die binnekant gewiessit. Partykeer skep my pa kos dan eet ons en dan kyk ek tv as ek klaar geeet het en dan slaap ek...my pa praat partykeer saam met my...hoe wassit innie skool...en partykeers bring my pa geld ok. Partykeer leer my pa en my ma vir my om my skoolwerk te doen... (Sometimes we watching tv...my mother, my dad and the girl that were inside. My dad sometimes dish up food and then we eat and if I am done eating then I go to bed...my dad sometimes talks to me...how it was at school...and sometimes my father brings money also. Sometimes my dad and mom teach me how to do my school work...) (C: Participant 4)

The ecological systems theory highlights the important role that proximal processes plays within the microsystem. Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) refer to these proximal processes and activities, as the primary engines of development that contributes to the child's development. Examples of proximal processes include objects or symbols, such as participation in mealtime, listening to storybooks, and visiting relatives. These processes are very important within the microsystem, but the influence of these processes on the developmental outcomes will differ according to Person (child or other), characteristics of the Context (the broader environment), and elements of Time (duration and historical setting)

(Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998: 996). The results of this intervention have also revealed that the quality of time spent with children; also improve father-child relationships, which have benefits for the whole family, as reported by one child:

“Dis orriat, ons kom goed oor die weg...gesels saam met mekaar. Dis reg...dit is nie soosit in nie verlede geweesitie. Dit het so bietjie verander vi wat hy na hy die vaderskap bygewoon het. Hulle het baie gestry onder mekaar, maar nou het hulle bietjie afgekoel. Daa het ‘n bietjie change gekom. Hulle het ‘n bietjie meer met mekaar beginne gesels as innie verlede. Vi my issit better assit innie velede geweesit. Hy stel meer belang aan my ma as in anne dinge nou. Hy staan Juan by met die skool biesigheid en vi my mos nou (...we have a good relationship...talk with each other. It is right...not like it was in the past. It changed a little after he attended the fatherhood. They did fight a lot with each other but it cooled down a little. For me it is better than it were in the past. He gives more time for my mother than other stuff now. He supports Juan with the school stuff and for me.)” (C: Participant 8)

Although the results of this research have shown a massive improvement in the father-child relationship, as well as family relationships, it also shows that not all (two out of 10 participants) children benefited from the intervention, as one of the children reports:

“Somtye oupa ombeskof met my..oupa moer my...hy gee my somtyds pak. (My grandfather is sometimes rude with me...he give me a hiding...he sometimes hit me.)” (C: Participant 1)

The relationship with the mother of the child is also a key determinant of father involvement, as mentioned earlier in the discussion. Amato and Rezac (1994) emphasize that the quality of spousal relationships play an important role in determining child outcomes. The stability in family relationships, especially the

mother-father relationship, is also very important for the development of stable relationships for children. The quality of this relationship (whether the mother and father are together or not) can also influence the nature of the relationship between the father and the child, as well as the level of involvement by the father in the life of his children (Carlson & McLanahan, 2004).

There are many examples where mothers play gatekeepers to father involvement. Parenting can, therefore, be seen as and a very important aspect in the socialization of children, especially the union between the mother and father. Many researchers have determined that the mothers play an important role in mediating the relationship between fathers and their children (Amato & Gilbreth 1999; Allen & Hawkins 1999). The father's relationship with the mother has been determined as a key influence on the nature of the father-child involvement, in dynamic and organic family systems (Cummings et al., 2004). Research on families not only shows, that parents influence the nature and degree of each other's involvement, but also that the quality of father-infant relationships are correlated with the attitudes of both partners to paternal involvement (Beitel & Parke, 1998). This current research, therefore, has also examined the effect that the intervention has on the relationship with the mother of the child, and the effect of this relationship on the well-being of the child and family. The results from the spouses were in line with the results of the children, who indicated that there was a general improvement of family relationship, and that the relationship between the mother and father has improved, as one of the mothers confirmed:

“Daar is ‘n baie groot verbetering as ek moet dink aan die velede was daar...die kommunikasie dit was nie r rig goed nie, maar nadat hy dit begin bywoon het is daar r rig waar ‘n groot verandering innie kommunikasie en die verhouding binne innie hys.(There are very big improvements if I can think about the past. The communication was not really good, but after he attended it than there were really big changes in the communication and the relationship at home.)” (M: Participant 11)

All the spouses of the fathers, who participated in the study, confirmed a general improvement in their relationships. They also confirmed that the father’s relationships with their children have also improved, as a mother reports:

“Die grootste verandering wat ek ervaar het is sy manier van praat met ons. Uhm...dus die grootste verandering. En ook sy manier van sy kinders nader trek. (The biggest change that I experienced is his way he speaks to us.Uhm...that is the biggest change. And also his way of pulling his children closer to him.)” (M: Participant 17)

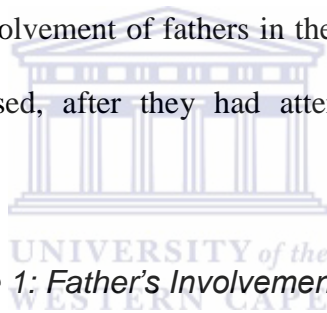
The above quote is also in line with the research of Belsky (1984) and Patterson et al. (1989), who found a correlation between the quality relationship between the mother and father and the affect on the fathers’ parenting, as well as child development. Fagan and Palkovitz (2007) support this argument in their research, which indicates that a stronger bond between the mother and father increases the fathers’ involvement in child-care. Another study by Gee and Rhodes (2003) found that father-absence was strongly associated with depression and anxiety among mothers.

5.3.5. Theme 5: Parental involvement and personal matters

The purpose of the question (asked during the interview process) was to test how the intervention has influenced the fathers’ involvement in unpaid care and other family

matters, especially involvement in the lives of his children. There is already enough evidence demonstrating that positive father involvement leads to better developmental outcomes for children.

Father involvement in family work, or unpaid care, is one of the important aspects of providing support to partners and adds to the general marital quality, as well as child and family well-being. Bahr and Bahr (2009) view family work as an important component of child rearing and relationship development. Although many examples of men's involvement in family work exist, such as taking responsibility for children and providing support to the partner, it does not measure the completion of household tasks (Hawkins, Bradford, Palkovitz, Christiansen, Day & Call, 2002). This current research found evidence that the involvement of fathers in the lives of their children, as well as unpaid care duties increased, after they had attended the fatherhood programme intervention.



5.3.5.1. Sub-Theme 1: Father's Involvement in childcare and well-being

With the spread of father absence in South Africa it is very important that fathers become more involved in the lives of their children. Statistics in South Africa has indicated that more than 50 percent of fathers in South Africa are regarded as absent fathers (Statistics South Africa, 2011). The high percentage of father absence has negative implications for children, and programmes that address father absence in South Africa, are urgently required.

South Africa is a highly cultural, diverse country; therefore, culture, as well as patriarchal relationships between men and women are often seen as major barriers to father involvement. It is no surprise, therefore, that men are generally found to

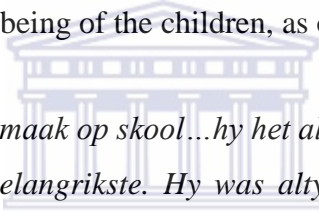
have lower levels of engagement in child-care tasks, especially of young children (Lewis & Lamb, 2004). A Time spent survey in South Africa found that women, as opposed to men, do eight (8) times more unpaid care work (Budlender, Chobokoane, Mpetsheni, 2001). Father-presence contributes to emotional well-being (Johnson, 1997).

Children in father-absent households are more likely to experience emotional disturbances and depression, although these effects may be confounded by socio-economic conditions and maternal stress. With an increasing emphasis on labour market activation policies and strategies for women in South Africa, it has become critically important to focus on programmes and strategies that activate father's involvement in child-care and support. This would, not only, reduce maternal stress, but also, help to optimise developmental outcomes for children. Evidence shows that fathers are more open to nurturing behaviours, when they understand that these behaviours make a difference in their children's lives (Conger, Conger, & Martin, 2010). When fathers become more involved in activities that engage children, it promotes the emotional development of children (Almeida & Galambos, 1991).

In order to assess the level and meaning of the father's involvement in care, some researchers have developed very comprehensive father involvement scales (Dick, 2004; Palkovitz, 1997). These scales address the child's perception of his/her relationship with the father (Dick, 2004). There are also other instruments that assess cognitive domains, which include: thinking processes and planning (Palkovitz, 1997); partners support (Hawkins et al., 2002); the influence of the

family of origin (Krampe & Newton, 2006); and some aspects of nurturing and affection towards the child (Dick, 2004; Hawkins et al., 2002). For the purpose of this current study, the researcher focussed more on the child's perception of his/her relationship with the father, and the father's involvement in care, as well as partner support.

This research found evidence that the fathers, who completed the fatherhood programme intervention, became more involved in the lives of their children and were more supportive towards their partners. The results show very encouraging signs of increased father involvement in child care activities, school work, as well as the health and well-being of the children, as one child reported:



“...ek het sport gemaak op skool...hy het altyd daai by gewoon. Daai was vi my die mees belangrikste. Hy was altyd by ons kant gewees, as ek meskien siek gewees het of Karen, meskien my broertjie. (I took part in sport at school...he always attended. That was the most important for me. He was always by our side, if I were sick, or Karen, or my small brother.)” (C: Participant 3)

The above statement highlights the important role of a father, who supports his children and partner, and how children view the importance of this support and relationship. This important contribution is also highlighted by another child, who reported:

“Hy is baie betrokke. Hy sal uit sy way uit gaan neh om...om veral...assit kom by die studies...Ek gaan nou vir jou wys na ek dink ek het 26 geraak, 26 jaar oud...toe issit die eerste keer wat ek ‘n drukkier by my pa gekry het...my pa vi my gewys het hy is lief vi my...hy is baie meer betrokke.(He is very involved. He will go out of his way neh...to...to...assist especially

when comes to the studies... I think when I were 26, 26 years old ... it was the first time that I got a hug from my dad ... my dad showed me he loves me ...he is much more involved...)" (C: Participant 7)

It is evident that the programme contributed towards the fathers' increased involvement in their children's lives. The participants confirmed that they had noticed a positive change in the way their fathers interacted with them, after attending the fatherhood intervention programme. The results also showed an improvement in the quality of father-child relationships. The fathers showed a strong involvement in the health and well-being of their families. The results also indicated a strong bond between the mother and father, and that this bond had a positive impact on the emotional well-being of the children.

The results from the children were also consistent with the results from the fathers and their spouses. Nine out of 10 participants confirmed that the father's involvement increased after the intervention. The tenth participant was a fisherman, who did not come home on a regular basis. The spouses confirmed that their partners became more involved in the health and well-being of the family, by caring for the mother and children when they were ill. One father's increased involvement was manifested in him assisting his children with their schoolwork, as one mother reported:

"En hy het vir Alex hy het ek wil amper sê hy het deel daaraan gehad Alex het verlede jaar eerste plek in sy klas gekry. Want ons het....finansieël kan ons hom nie alles gee wat hy wil he nie, maar liefde en aandag...Wat ek nou hierdie afgelope tyd kon sien (na die projek). Uhm. Jy kan sien hy probeer nog ek kan ook sien hy probeer om beter om nog beter te doen.He had a huge contribution to the fact that Alex

achieved first place in his class last year. Financially we cannot give him everything but we can give him love and attention. Recently (after the programme) I can see that he is trying and trying to be even better.)”
(M: Participant 13)

The mothers confirmed that they valued their partner’s contributions and that it made a huge difference, as reported by another mother:

“So die kurses het vir hom ‘n beter mens kom maak. Rerig waar. Tot op ‘n hele ander mens. Hy help my met die kinnners. Ek is partykeer verbaas. Hy wassie kinnners en hy help...en..en soos dinge wat ek moet doen doen hy. Ek raak partykeer skaam. Ek gaan nie eers meer skool toe nie want dan is hy daa. Hy het tot op gister die kinnners skool toe gevat en by die kinnners se klasse ingegaan en vi die menere maa gesê vat ma bietjie vas en so.(So the course made him a better person .Really.to a totally different person.He helps me with the children. I am surprised at times. He washes the children and helps...and...and like things that I normally do, he does. I sometimes get shy. I don’t even go to school anymore because when I do his there. Till yesterday he took the children to school and walked in to the children’s classes and told the male teachers to discipline a bit and so.)” (M: Participant 16)

5.3.6. Theme 6: Discipline and Conflict Management

Discipline is defined by Webb, Gore, Amend and De Vries (2007) as a manner, in which adults model and teach children appropriate behaviours. A significant number of parents made use of corporal punishment, as a means of discipline as, one mother reported:

“En die ouma slaan mos nie sommer nie. Uhm. Wilfred is mos die een wat slaan. (And the grandmother does not hit the children. Yes Wilfred is the one that hits.)” (M: Participant 13)

It is important that both parents understand the impact that harsh discipline methods have on children, as well as how it affects their development and emotional well-being, as one child reported:

“Dis orriaat (kommunikasie) maar ons praat nie eintlik baie met mekaar...as ek iets wil hê dan koop hy dit vir my as ek dit nodig het en as ek iets verkeerd gedoen het dan skel hy my en ek moet dit nie weer doen nie...baie ongelukkig want dit is nie reg wat hy gedoen het nie...hy praat reg, nie onbeskof en so nie. Dit is orriaat...hulle stry so bietjie en later praat hulle weer. (It is orriaat but we do not talk a lot to each other. If I need something, then he buy it for me what I need and if I did something wrong than he yell at me so that I do not do it again...very unhappy because it is not right what he have done....he don't talk rude and so on. It is orriaat...they have a little argument and later they talk again.)” (C: Participant 2)

The above testimony is very clear that crude verbal methods of discipline and relationship stress between mothers and fathers, also affect the emotional well-being of children, negatively. The risk of using corporal punishment as a means of punishment, or discipline, influences children in such a way that they might regard using violence as appropriate, to enforce obedience and order. According to the definition of Webb et al. (2007), this is indicative of poor role modelling by parents, as it suggests that violence is a means of problem solving. Parents needs to understand that harsh discipline methods have a negative impact on children, who, when subjected to this type of treatment, might develop behavioural problems, especially the sons (Hosley & Montemayor, 1997).

Cummings, Merrilees and George (2010) found that children, who are exposed to harsh parenting behaviours and parental conflict, may reflect *externalizing* behaviours

(yelling, hitting, or throwing objects), or *internalizing* behaviours (sadness, withdrawal, or fear). They further assert that in these situations, boys reflect more externalizing behaviours (Cummings, Merrilees & George, 2010). Additionally, research has also determined a correlation between positive parenting (warmth and appropriate discipline) and fewer behavioural problems in children (Kotchick & Forehand, 2002). In contrast, according to Simons et al. (1994), the effects of harsh discipline on child psychological well-being is not significant, if parental involvement (parental warmth, acceptance, monitoring, consistency, inductive reasoning) is controlled. The results of this current study suggested that the fatherhood intervention programme did contribute to better relationship conflict management by fathers, as one mother reported:

“Uhm. soos ek en hy het in die begin baie gestry. En voor die kinners...ons hettie getraak of hulle daa issie. En daarna toe hy die kurses geloop het toe weet hy ons moet eenkant toe...(Uhm like me and him argued a lot in the beginning .And in front of the children...we didn't care if they (the children) were there and after he attended the course he knew we should not argue in front of the children...)” (M: Participant 15)

About half of the participants reported improved conflict management skills from fathers. It also appears that some of the spouses struggled with their own conflict management skills and some couples did not have consensus on how to deal with conflict or how to discipline their children. It was also evident that, where some of the couples could find consensus on how to deal with their conflict, their relationships appeared to be more stable, with less relationship conflict, as one mother reported:

“Ons twee gesels oor ons se probleme. Ja. Ons sal gesels. As ek nie oor 'n ding goed voel nie sal ek altyd vir hom kyk ek is 'n persoon ek stres 'n bietjie baie gou dan sal hy mos maar altyd vir my ignoreer, dan gaan sit hy in die sitkamer

of hy sal nou wag tot ek afgekoel het en so dan sal hy weer nou kom. Hy sal altyd mooi met my werk.

(We talk about our problems. Yes. We talk. If I don't feel good about something, I will always tell them that I am human and that I stress a little and then he will always ignore me, and then he will go sit in the living room to wait until I cooled down and then he will get back to me. He will always treat me well.)" (M: Participant 16)

Relationship stress and punitive discipline methods are some of the factors that increase negative child outcomes. The ecological systems theory also provides a framework explaining the risk factors, which have a negative effect on the protective factors that promotes resiliency in a person's life (Bronfenbrenner, 1990). A study on risk and resiliency in families, conducted by Garmezy and Rutter (1983), explains the effect of parental stress on childhood illnesses. A more recent study on risk and resilience has also revealed the relationship between stress; coping with, and adjustment to, childhood illnesses; as well as its influence on the positive and negative outcomes of the individual, family, and community (Hough, Brumitt, Templin, Saltz, & Mood, 2003). Children experience relationship stress between parents differently than adults do and some children can experience this stress much more intense as reported by one child:

"My ma en my pa is baie strygerig...hulle stry baie. Hy was orriaat gewies voorheen, maar daar is mos opdraande en afdraande maar dus orriaat gewies. Rof, daar is nie dissipline en respek vir mekaar nie. My pa is nou rustig. My pa is meer soos hy gewies hittie, skelerig en so nie. Hy is nou rustig nou. (My mother and father have arguments...they argue a lot. Ruff there is no respect and discipline for each other. My dad is now calm now. My dad is not the same that he was, yelling and so on. He is calm now)" (C: Participant 3)

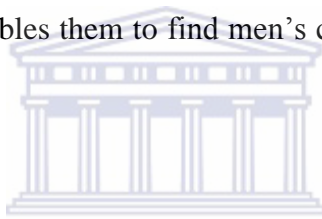
The above statement also indicates that change in how parents deal with relationship conflict is possible and that positive parenting interventions for fathers could play an

important role in addressing relationship conflict. Conflict is a normal part of family life, as well as couple or marital functioning (Cummings, Merrilees & George, 2010). When this conflict is not be managed properly, it can become too much and affect the relationship between the parents and the children. A study conducted by Gottman and Declaire (1997) found that children, who witness their parents fight, might become distressed. Papp, Cumming and Goeke-Morey (2009) concur that this parental conflict can probably cause behavioural and emotional adjustment problems for children. It is, therefore, important for both parents to find strategies that would resolve the conflict in their relationship appropriately.

Stable parental relationships are very important for optimal development of children. Conflict and violence in parental relationships can have an adverse effect on children. Evidence has shown that children, who are exposed to violence, may experience adverse developmental outcomes (Margolin & Gordis, 2000). Conflict in intimate partner relationships was identified as one of the strongest risk factors for behavioural problems (Marshall & Watt, 1999). This finding is in line with the ecological model of Bronfenbrenner (1979), which asserts that human development ‘is a product of interaction between the growing organism and its environment’ and further states that ‘the principle asserts that behaviour evolves as a function of the interplay between person and environment, by paying special attention to the interaction between the two’. The microsystem is the system that is the closest to the child. It is in this system that children interact with parents, which interaction helps to influence and determine their development. Any conflict and disruptions within this system can, therefore, have negative implications for the child’s development. Stable family environment is very

important for the optimal development of children. Undoubtedly, the intervention, referred to in this current study, has contributed to the creation of a stable family environment for both the partner of the father, as well as the child.

Different research studies have found a correlation between father involvement and marital quality. Low marital quality and high conflict often leads to poor fathering (Cummings, Goeke-Morey, & Raymond, 2004; Fincham & Hall, 2005). In a study done conducted by Holmes, Duncan, Bair and White (2007), it was determined that women feel more appreciated when their partners become more involved in unpaid care. Their research also argues that, women's socially constructed roles and responsibilities that are attach to care work, enables them to find men's care work sensitive and responsive to their needs.



The above evidence is very clear that the relationship between parents is one of the most important determinants of father involvement. The research results of this current study have revealed that the fatherhood programme intervention has assisted fathers to improve their relationships with both their partners and their children. The intervention helped to equip fathers with problem solving skills, as one father reported:

“...ons gesels nie eintlik (voor die intervensie) as ons gesels dan stry ons jy praat net waaroor jy wil praat en na die program praat ons oor enige iets. Ek weet nie wanneer laas ons gestry het nie na die werkswinkel. (We did not talk much (In the past), If we did then we had arguments, but after the programme we could spoke about anything.I cant remember when last we argued after the workshop.)” (F: Participant 23)

The results also showed that besides becoming more involved in unpaid care duties, the fathers also displayed less risk behaviour, as one father reported:

“Ek het nie verdra as my vrou dronk by die huis aangekom het nie as sy dronk is dan gee ek haar 'n paar klappe of sy soek geld dan stry ons. Maar toe hoor ek by die kurses as jou vrou of die man dronk is dan moet jy jou vrou of jou man help en jy moet nie vir jou vrou of jou man slaan nie sê vir haar of hom om n bietjie te gaan lê jy moet haar/hom net help.(I could not handle it when my wife came home drunk and if shes drunk I would I'd smack her a few times or she wants money then we'd argue.But so I heard at the course if you wife or husband is drunk you must help them and you mustn't hit them. Tell him or her to go sleep a little you must just help him or her.)” (F: Participant 29)

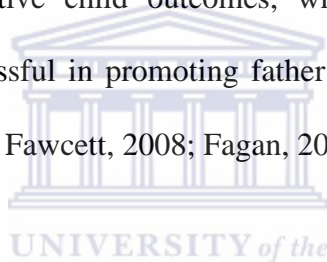
5.3.7. Theme 7: Experience of programme intervention

The purpose of this theme is to examine how the participants experienced the intervention, and to determine whether the programme addressed the needs of the participants. Retention to fatherhood programmes is a general concern and it is, therefore, important that practitioners constantly evaluate how participants experience interventions, and whether programmes address the needs of the clients. It is also important to assess whether interventions are suitably structured to address those needs. There is an existing body of evidence on how social service providers have done these evaluations. An example of some of these studies include, a study conducted by Fagan and Iglesias (1999), to evaluate the Head Start-based intervention programmes that found an association between high levels of participation in the programmes, and increased father involvement with children. Another study conducted by an Urban Institute study (Sorensen, Mincy & Halpern, 2000) that focussed on ‘fragile families’, in which mothers and fathers cohabited, found that some fathers were most likely to be present around the childbirth, only to disappear as the children grew older.

The purpose of doing these evaluations is not only to evaluate the effectiveness, but also to ensure that the programmes are suitably structured to address the needs of the families.

5.3.7.1. Sub-Theme I: Addressing needs of fathers

There are many examples of how positive parenting interventions have addressed the needs of fathers. One of these examples can be found in research evaluating social work practice, where fathers were included in permanency planning (Coakley, 2008), and parenting training (Lindahl, Tollefson, Risser, & Lovejoy, 2008). These interventions addressed the diverse needs of fathers and were associated with positive child outcomes, while couple-focused interventions appeared to be successful in promoting father involvement (Hawkins, Lovejoy, Holmes, Blanchard & Fawcett, 2008; Fagan, 2008).



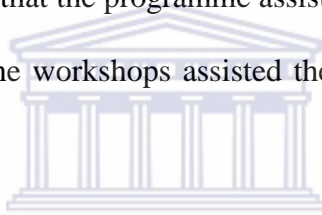
The participants of this current study felt that the programme catered for their needs and assisted them to learn more about how to become a better father. They also felt that they received ample opportunities to express their views and feelings, as one father reported:

“Ja daar was tyd gegee uh vir my was dit was so om te sê hoe ek voel en uh daar is punte aangeraak wat vir my persoonlik op my persoonlike uh van toepassing gewees het en daar was vir my geleentheid gegee om daaroor te gesels.(Yes,there was time given uh...to me... it was it was so to say how I feel and uh... there was points that was personal.. uh that related to me personally and there was opportunities given to me to talk about it.)” (F: Participant 30)

Some of the participants mentioned that they also learned a great deal, from what the other participants shared in the group. The atmosphere in the groups also contributed to the reality that participants felt safe and secure to contribute, as one father reported:

“Ja, ons het definitief, want dit was vir my aangenaam, want almal wat daar was, was openlik en eerlik vir mekaar en ons het dit baie geniet...Yes, we definitely did because it was pleasant for me because everyone that attended was open and honest with each other and we enjoyed it a lot...” (F: Participant 22)

The participants also felt that they were respected and being listened to. Some participants disclosed that the programme assisted them in their re-construction of fatherhood and that the workshops assisted them to develop a much better self-image.



5.3.7.2. Sub-Theme II: Experience of programme content

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Due to the constant changing in the composition and needs of families, it became important to assess how the programme material suits the needs of the participants, as well as how the participants experience the programme, on a regular basis. In a Canadian review of parent education and support programmes, in Greater Victoria, the Parenting and Education Support Task Group (2004) determined that there is a general absence of content analysis of parenting programmes. In a literature review, conducted by Betsy Mann (2006), she concluded that ‘parenting programs do affect the knowledge, behaviour, attitudes and values of parents and that these changes are associated with improved outcomes for children’. In a review of two studies on parenting education

programmes, Wolf and Hirsch (2003) found that their programme participants reported improved parenting attitudes, as well as a reduction of parenting stress. They also reported a willingness to use a more authoritative parenting practice. Although the participants of this current study were very enthusiastic and positive about the programme and programme content, not all the participants could remember what sessions they enjoyed the most as one father reported:

“Jy weet hulle is so baie na aan mekaar, hulle gaan so saam in een bak jy kan nie sê die een help die ander een nie hulle vleg in mekaar in so jy kan nie n uitsondering maak en se die een is beter as daai een nie.(You know they are so close with each other (the sessions). They go together in one bowl you can't say the one helps the other; they just mix with one another so you can't make an exception and say this one is better than the other)” (F: Participant 27)

It appears that the session on discipline was the most popular to some participants. The participants felt that the programme content was very suitable to address their specific needs, and they could apply the skills, they had learned in other settings, as one father reported:

“Dissipline het vir my uitgestaan. Dissipline is die een(1) van die grootste issues in 'n huishouding is as daar nie dissipline is nie dan is daar geen respek vir mekaar en geen orde in die huis, nou dit het vir my uitgestaan.(Discipline stood out for me. Discipline is the one (1) of the biggest issues in a household. If there is no discipline then there is no respect for each other and no order in the house.)” (F: Participant 24)

The participants felt that the sessions were very applicable and helped to improve their parenting skills.

5.4. Summary on data analysis

The researcher highlighted some of the experiences and effects of the programme on fatherhood participants and their family members in Lamberts Bay. The children confirmed that their fathers had become more involved in unpaid care, and that the quality of their relationship with the parents had improved. The results from the children and mothers were consistent and the research found that some of the fathers had become more involved with the health and education of the children.

Most of the fathers improved their communication skills with their partners and children, however, it was also clear that others had not improved their communication with their children and partners, as some of these children presented with signs of distress. There were also no signs of improvement in these relationships. A significant number of fathers defined the meaning of a father from a more patriarchal point of view, but it was evident that they were trying to embrace a more gender-equal parenting role. Most fathers indicated that their relationships improved and that they had benefited from the programmes. The programme assisted them to become involved parents. Most of these fathers were recruited by programme facilitators and the participants confirmed that the programme addressed their needs, was well structured, as well as facilitated. The group environment created a safe environment for fathers to share their personal views and opinions. The research results also indicated that some fathers showed less signs of risk behaviour, after they had attended the intervention programme.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

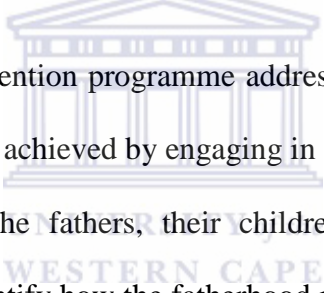
In this chapter, the researcher will present the conclusions and recommendations that emanated from the study, which aimed to explore the experiences of families of an intervention programme for fathers within the community of Lamberts Bay, Western Cape. The conclusions, therefore, are based on correlating the aim, objectives, methodology and findings of the study and assessing whether these were reached. The researcher also aims to summarize the main points of the literature review, while reflecting on the aims and objectives of the study, briefly review the research methodology, provide an overview of the main themes that emerged from the analysed data and discuss the broader implications of the findings. Finally, special attention will be paid to identifying limitations within the study and offer suggestions or recommendations for researchers, practitioners and policy makers.

The study was an exploratory qualitative one, which made use one-on-one, semi-structured face-to-face, interviews as the main method of data collection. After the completion of the interviews, all the data was transcribed and the data analysis process, with the use of thematic data analysis, ensued. Themes of interest were identified. The themes that emerged from the data were either, supported, or argued, by relevant literature from different scholars and organisations that have focused on parenting and fatherhood within the South African context.

The fundamental research questions that had to be addressed by the participants were:

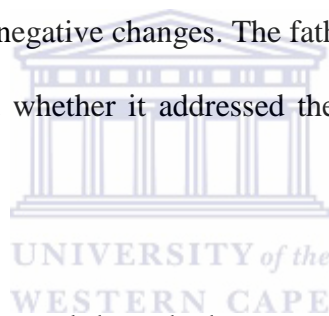
- “How does the intervention programme for fathers address the needs of fathers and family members?”
- “How does the intervention programme for fathers assist in becoming more involved fathers?”
- “How do the spouses and children of the fathers that attended the intervention programme feel about the intervention programme for fathers and its contribution to child and family wellbeing?”

By answering the research questions, the study achieved the following:

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- It explored how the intervention programme addressed the needs of fathers and their family members. This was achieved by engaging in one-on-one, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with the fathers, their children and spouses, with which the researcher expected to identify how the fatherhood programme intervention addressed the needs of fathers, their children and spouses.
 - It explored how the intervention programme has assisted the fathers to become better, involved fathers. This was achieved by engaging in one-on-one, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with the fathers, their children and spouses, with which the researcher expected to identify how the intervention assisted fathers to become more involved in child care and more supportive towards their spouses.
 - It explored the contribution of the intervention programme to child and family wellbeing. This was achieved by engaging in one-on-one, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with the fathers, their children and spouses, with which the researcher

expected to identify the how the fatherhood programme intervention contributed to child and family well-being and how the needs of the fathers, their children and spouses were addressed by the intervention.

The one-on-one, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews tapped into the many different forms of experiences that the participants (fathers, spouses and children) had in relation to how the fatherhood programme intervention affected the fathers. This form of discussion, therefore, revealed more about what people know, and more about what people experience (Kitzinger, 2005). With the use of the semi-structured interviews, the researcher was able to explore how the children and spouses experienced the fathers' behaviour before and after the intervention, whether positive or negative changes. The fathers were also probed on how they experienced the intervention and whether it addressed their needs, as well as the needs of their families.



Duckworth & Seligman (2006) penned that whether completing a math test or completing a dissertation, one must always stay focused on the set objectives. The researcher, therefore, had to constantly review the research process to ensure that it was in line with the objectives.

Seven (7) major themes of interests emanated from the study with a total of nine (9) sub-themes. Below is a list of the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the study:

THEME 1: Understanding of Family Well-being

THEME 2: Conceptualization of Fatherhood and father involvement

- Definition of a father
- Changed views of being a father

- Recruitment to the programme

THEME 3: Communication about the programme

- Knowledge of the programme the father attended

THEME 4: Parent-Child Relationships

- Quality of father-child and spousal relationships

THEME 5: Parental Involvement in Personal matters

- Father involvement in child care and wellbeing

THEME 6: Discipline and Conflict management

THEME 7: Experience of programme the father attended

- Addressing the needs of fathers
- Experience of programme content



6.2. Theme 1: Understanding of Family Well-being

Half the mother participants could identify or describe what family well-being or a healthy family should be like. Two of the five mothers indicated that the fatherhood programme intervention contributed positively to their family well-being. Although not all participants understood the term ‘family wellbeing’, there was a general indication in the results that the fathers made more effort to become involved in family life, after they attended the fatherhood programme intervention. Some fathers also took on more responsibility to provide for the financial needs of their children and made more effort to support their children at school. The fathers also started to play a better supporting role of assisting their partners in domestic duties.

6.3. Theme 2: Conceptualization of Fatherhood and father involvement

Six out of the ten fathers still believed in the traditional, patriarchal role of a father. They believed that the father should be the head of the house and, therefore, needs to be in charge of the family. In some instances, these views were influenced by religious and patriarchal views of fatherhood. Most of the participants also struggled to define fatherhood from a more gender-equal parenting perspective. The rest (4) of the fathers held more gender-equal views on fatherhood and defined their role as a father to be more supportive to their children. They also highlighted the need for fathers to be good role models. Although most fathers in this study viewed themselves in a patriarchal role, it was very encouraging that all the fathers, who participated in the study, confirmed that their views of fatherhood had changed to that of a more gender-equal parent. The participants confirmed that the programme assisted them to change their views of being a father. Some fathers also showed a strong connection between being a father, father-child relationships and fathering in a community context. The fathers expressed that the programme changed their views on taking up more responsibility as a father. Some fathers indicated that the programme assisted them to make more responsible life choices. Some of the encouraging moments were when some fathers testified that the intervention made them realise that they needed to become more involved as fathers, as well as not only play the traditional patriarchal role of father.

Most of the participants were recruited by the intervention programme facilitators. It appears that most of the participants felt a strong connection with and believed in the facilitators. Although the fathers were mainly recruited by the programme facilitators, some of the participants mentioned that they were also attending the programme, because they were referred by other participants, who had participated in the programme, previously. Some of

the participants decided to join the sessions out of curiosity, while others saw it as an opportunity to improve their parenting skills.

6.4. Theme 3: Communication about the programme

The majority of the fathers reported that the programme assisted them to establish good relationships with their family members and improve their parenting skills. Most of the fathers communicated with their children and partners about the programme that they were attending. This assisted them to build a stronger relationship and support system with their partners, as well as their children. The results also showed that, when fathers did not communicate with their children about the programme, the children showed signs of distress and their relationships with their fathers did not improve. The majority (8) of mothers confirmed that the fathers had discussed the programme with them. Some of the fathers confirmed that it was very beneficial for them to communicate to their family members about the programme from the beginning. It assisted them to build their relationship and a rapport with family members.

6.5. Theme 4: Parent-Child Relationships

The results of this research showed that children placed a high value on the increased support they had received from their fathers, after the intervention. Eight of the ten children of the fathers, who participated in the fatherhood programme intervention, confirmed that their relationships improved. The quality time that fathers spent with children helped them to improve their father-child relationships, and it seemed like these improved relationships also improved the emotional well-being of the spouses, as well. In general, the results indicated a massive improvement in father-child, as well as family relationships. The research results

from the spouses were in line with the results of the children that indicated a general improvement of family relationships. The results also showed a general improvement in the relationship between the mother and father. The mothers also confirmed that the father's relationships with their children improved after the intervention.

6.6. Theme 5: Parental Involvement in Personal matters

The results showed a general increase of the father's involvement in the lives of their children and unpaid care duties after the intervention. There was also an increase in child-care, support at school, as well as the health and well-being of children. The children confirmed that they had noticed positive changes in the manner that their fathers interacted with them, after they had attended the fatherhood programme. The results also showed improvement in the quality father-child relationships. There were stronger bonds between the mothers and fathers after the intervention, which positively affected the emotional well-being of their children. The results from the children were also consistent with the results from the fathers and their spouses. The spouses confirmed that their partners became more involved in the health and well-being of the family and provided care and support when the mother and children were ill. Some mothers confirmed that they valued their partners' contributions and that it made a huge difference.

6.7. Theme 6: Discipline and Conflict management

A significant number of parents made use of corporal punishment as a means of disciplining children. About half of the mothers reported improved conflict management skills from the fathers. It also appeared that some of the spouses also struggled with their own conflict management skills and that some couples did not have consensus on how to deal with conflict

or discipline their children. It was evident that where some of the couples could find consensus on how to deal with their conflict. Where couples managed to find consensus on how to deal with relationship conflict, the relationships appeared to be more stable with less relationship conflict. The results also show that besides the fact that fathers became more involved in unpaid care duties, they also displayed less risky behaviour as one father.

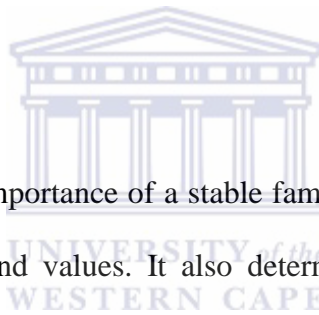
6.8. Theme 7: Experience of programme the father attended

Participants felt that the programme catered for their needs and assisted them to learn more on how to become a better father. They also felt that they were given enough opportunity to express their views and feelings. Some of the participants mentioned that they had learned a great deal, from what other participants shared in the group. The atmosphere in the groups also contributed to the fact that participants felt safe and secure to share their thoughts and feelings. The participants reported that they felt respected and heeded. Some participants also felt that the programme assisted them in their construction of fatherhood, and that the workshops assisted them to develop a much better self-image.

Although the participants were very enthusiastic and positive about the programme and programme content, not all the participants could remember which sessions they enjoyed the most. It appeared that the session on discipline was the most popular to some participants. Additionally, the participants felt that the programme content suitably addressed their specific needs, improved their parenting skills and they could apply the skills learned in the programme, in other social settings.

6.9. Summary

South Africa has one of the highest rates of father absenteeism, with more than 50 per cent absent in the lives of their children (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Previous research shows that children with absent fathers, are more likely to be less successful in life, and are also subjected to negative developmental outcomes, while children with positively involved fathers, are likely to be more successful, with more positive developmental outcomes. Some of the barriers to father involvement are linked to negative cultural norms and values, patriarchy, traditional religious and unequal gender relationships, gender-based violence and other social dynamics. Positive parenting programmes and interventions for fathers have proved to be very successful at increasing father involvement in unpaid care and family well-being.



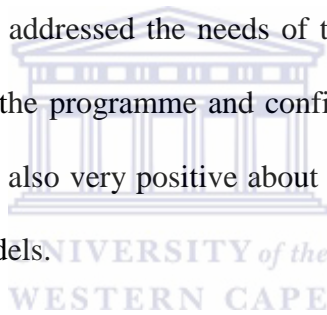
The research clearly shows the importance of a stable family environment, which is vital for the transfer of positive norms and values. It also determined that, where stable, positive relationships existed between parents, children showed lesser signs of distress. This correlates with Bronfenbrenner's theory, which indicates how a stable family environment and parental relationships contribute to positive outcomes for children.

This current study clearly indicated that fathers had become more involved in unpaid care. It also showed improved relationships with both children and partners. In addition the intervention assisted fathers to communicate better with their children and partners. Fathers also became more supportive to their spouses and their conflict management skills improved. Although a significant number of fathers still practice corporal punishment, as a means of discipline, more fathers are showing positive signs, or the need to find alternative ways, of

discipline. Some fathers still held strong patriarchal views of fatherhood, but a significant number indicated that the intervention assisted them to change their views of fatherhood, to a more gender-equal parenting view.

Mothers and children indicated that they enjoyed more stable relationships, after the fatherhood intervention programme. Fathers showed more care, and were more involved in the health care and schooling of their children, as well as the health and well-being of their partners. The children also confirmed that the programme had benefited their family and that the relationship between themselves, as well as between their parents, had improved.

It was clear that the intervention addressed the needs of the fathers and their families. The fathers were very positive about the programme and confirmed that the programme content addressed their needs. They were also very positive about the programme facilitators, whom they regarded as positive role models.



6.10 Recommendations

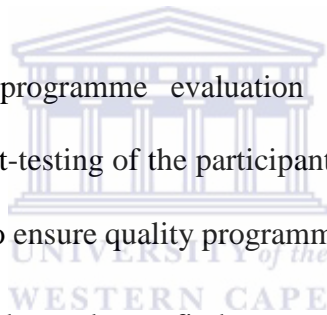
The following recommendations are made, based on the findings of this study. The researcher has developed three (3) sets of recommendations for a) practitioners working with fathers and their families, (b) policy makers, and (c) future research to improve family well-being.

6.10.1. Recommendations to practitioners

Discipline and Conflict management by partners were some aspects that were prominent in the research. Therefore, not holistically addressing these issues with both parents could have adverse outcomes for children.

The following recommendations are made:

- Spouses should be included in joint training sessions with fathers to deal with discipline and conflict management, in order to assist parents in developing strategies on how to deal with positive discipline and relationship conflict.
- Spouses should be included in separate information sessions about the programme, in order to understand what the programme is about and how to motivate and support their partners, while they are attending the fatherhood intervention programmes.
- Practitioners need to consider joint feedback sessions for both parents, in order to discuss the progress after training and to determine the need for further counselling.
- To strengthen the programme evaluation component, practitioners should consider pre- and post-testing of the participants, in order to track the progress of the participants and to ensure quality programme implementation.
- Because parents could not always find consensus on how deal with issues, such as the discipline of children, it is recommended that practitioners include sessions on parenting styles in their curriculums.
- It was clear in this research that fathers struggled with the definition of the concept of a father. Most fathers defined fatherhood in the context of the old traditional and patriarchal perception. It is, therefore, important that sessions on gender role clarification and gender-equal parenting be included in the fatherhood intervention programme.



- Facilitators should also be equipped with knowledge of the importance of gender equality, from a parenting perspective, as well as how to include these concepts in the training programme.
- Practitioners can strengthen the support by developing practical guides/or sessions on how fathers could provide more support to spouses in unpaid care and which practical activities they can engage their children in, in order to maximise father involvement.
- Due to traditional gender and cultural norms, communities are often not supportive of men, who engage in unpaid care and support gender transformation. Practitioners, therefore, should consider community mobilisation activities to create and encourage a conducive and supportive environment that supports father involvement in unpaid care.
- Due to the high number of father absence in South Africa, practitioners should consider broadening their criteria for programme inclusion, to include social, stepfathers, as well as non-resident fathers in their interventions.
- Fatherhood programmes should become more child centered and child friendly. The practitioners need to consider joint activities for fathers and children that would encourage bonding.

6.10.2. Recommendations for policy makers

South Africa has observed increases in father absenteeism between 2008 and 2010. Policy makers should consider funding strategies and funding models that encourage, or compel, social service providers to involve absent living fathers in fatherhood

intervention programmes. The following interventions should be considered to address absent fatherhood:

- Development of a national fatherhood strategy that includes criteria for the inclusion of diverse fathers and targets groups, such as migrant workers, fathers in correctional centres, defence force, grand fathers and other male role models.
- Courts should consider using fatherhood education and training sessions as diversion options.
- Fatherhood education and training sessions should be recommended to parents, who have been through a divorce, to attend a session that sensitises them on the implications of absent fatherhood and maternal gatekeeping.
- Fathers, who default on maintenance instalments, should also be compelled to attend sessions on the importance of involved fatherhood.

6.10.3. Recommendations for further research

Studies on a larger scale that include more ethnic groups is recommended, as they may yield more comprehensive, insightful results, validating the findings of this study. More research should be conducted on how social and stepfathers should cope with their parenting duties. Research that includes content analyses of the fatherhood intervention programme material, as well as the experiences of the programme staff, should also be considered. It is also recommended that the study should be repeated two years after the current research in order to determine the sustainability of the programme impact.

6.11. Limitations of the study

It should be emphasised that there were limitations to this study. One limitation was that the researcher should have specified an age group for the children in the criteria for selecting participants. One of the children, selected for the study, was much younger, and did not always fully understand the questions. Another limitation was that, in some instances, the researcher had to ask supplementary questions, especially when the participants responded with a simple 'yes' or 'no'. The reason for the supplementary questions was that some participants were not providing adequate answers. Some of them may not have understood the questions, even after these had been simplified.

6.12. Conclusion

According to the findings, the research questions were answered and the aim, as well as the objectives of the study were met satisfactorily. The findings established that the intervention assisted fathers to become more involved in the health and well-being of their families. The intervention also assisted fathers to develop better parenting and conflict management skills. After attending the intervention programme, fathers became more supportive of their partners and more involved in unpaid care. The more involved, fathers became in the family's life, child care and support, the less risk behaviour they reflected. Conversely, the families of the fathers, who were less involved, showed signs of conflict and distress.

Understanding these experiences formed a basis for the formulation of ideas for future research, as well as recommendations for current service providers and policy makers in Lambertsbay and in the greater South Africa.

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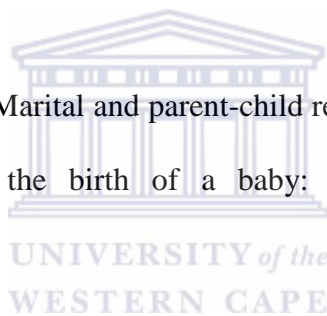
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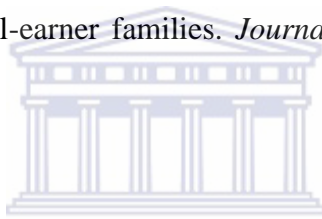
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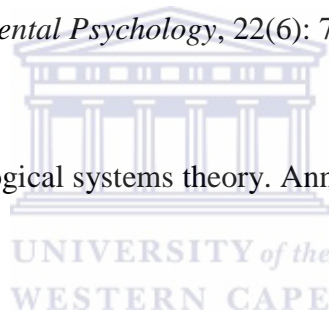
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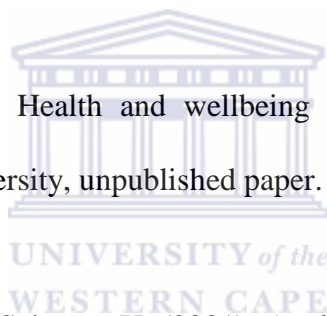
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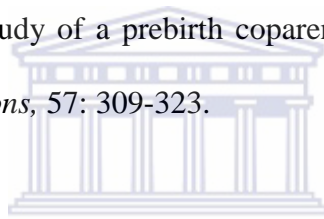
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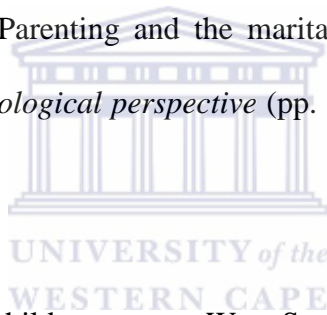
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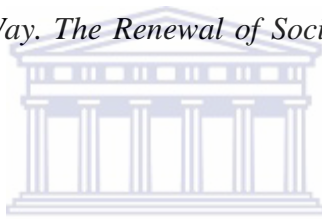
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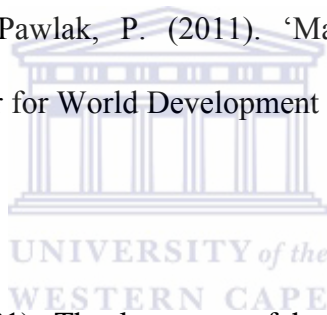
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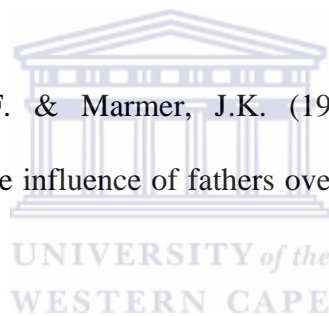
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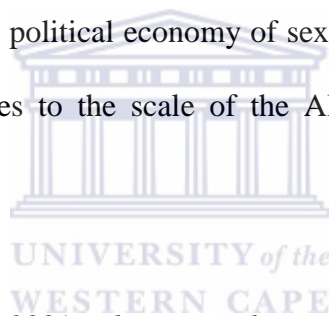
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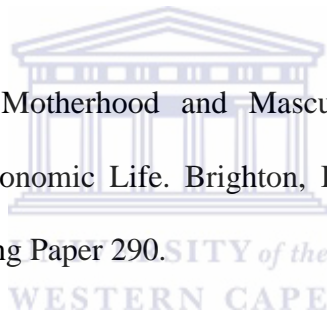
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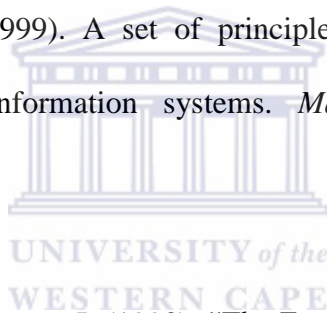
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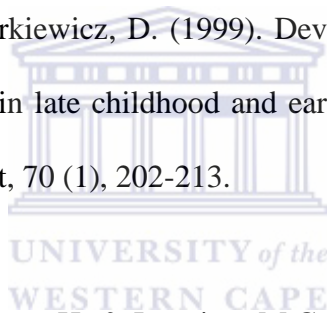
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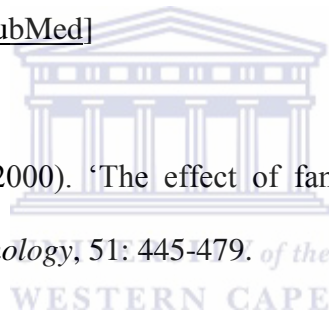
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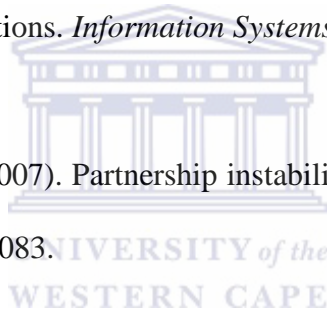
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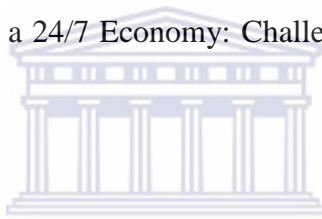
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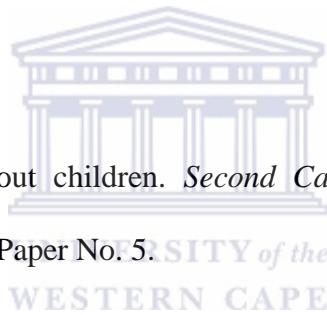
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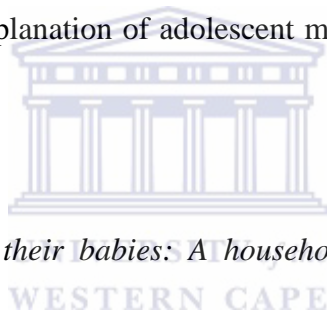
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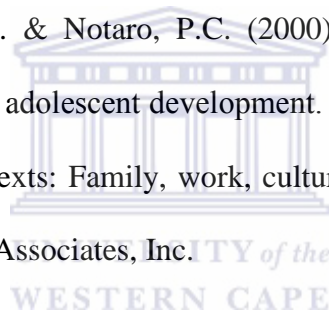
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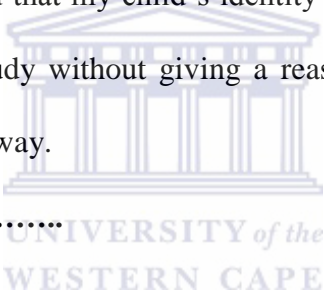
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CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS

Appendix A

Title of Research Project: The experiences of families of an intervention programme for fathers

The study has been described to me in a language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to allow my child to participate in the study. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that my child’s identity will not be disclosed and that my child may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively affect my child in any way.



Parent’s name.....

Parent’s signature.....

Witness.....

Date.....

Should you have any questions regarding this study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact the study coordinator:

Study Coordinator’s Name: Dr N Roman

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17, Belville 7535

Telephone: 021 959 2277/2970

Email: nroman@uwc.ac.za



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Appendix B

ASSENT/CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

Title of Research Project: The experiences of families of an intervention programme for fathers

The study has been described to me in a language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and that I may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively affect me in any way.

Parent's name.....

Parent's signature.....

Witness.....

Date.....

Should you have any questions regarding this study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact the study coordinator:

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INFORMATION SHEET

Appendix C

Project Title: The experiences of families of an intervention programme for fathers

What is this study about?

This is a research project being conducted by Andre Lewaks at the University of the Western Cape. We are inviting you to voluntarily participate in this research project because you and your family are the part of a fatherhood programme intervention that has been implemented. The purpose of the study is to explore the experiences of families of an intervention programme for fathers in order to determine its contribution to the well-being of children and families

What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?

You will be asked to participate in Face-to-face interviews. An interview schedule will be used as a guide to the interview process. The interview will take approximately 60 min to complete. Interviews will be conducted in your language of choice. Interviews will be held in a private room. The time date and venue will be pre arranged with you. Should, more information be required, I will consult with you and arrange a suitable time and date that will be convenient for you. The interview will firstly focus on, how the fatherhood intervention programme has impacted on you as a father. Secondly to explore if the fatherhood intervention programme have meet needs of fathers that participated in the programme. Thirdly to explore how the fatherhood intervention contributed to child and family well-being.

Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?

We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, the information you provide will be totally private; no names will be used so

there are no way you can be identified for participating in this study. Your information will be anonymous and treated confidentially. This will be done by (1) your name will not be included on the report and (2) a pseudonym will be placed on the report. If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. The reports will be kept in a locked cabinet and only the interviewer and the research supervisor will have access to this information. The research findings will not include any personal details.

What are the risks of this research?

There are no known risks in participating in the study. However, the parents and family members may identify possible parental needs or any other need for assistance. In cases where a parent or family member presents with such a need, the interviewer will liaise with appropriate resources to assist the participant.

What are the benefits of this research?

Information about the how fatherhood programme interventions impacts on children and families is limited. The research study will explore how fatherhood programme interventions, contributes to the wellbeing well-being of children and families. The research findings may be a guide for organizations that is presently presenting fatherhood and parenting programmes. The study will assist social service providers with the identification of gaps within the fatherhood intervention programme and also provide the service provider with recommendations on how to address these gaps. This research project will also assist the service provider to improve the standard of living of the families to whom they rendering services.

Describe the anticipated benefits to science or society expected from the research, if any.

Fatherhood is a very new and neglected area of study in South Africa. This study will attempt to explore how a fatherhood programme intervention contributed to wellbeing of children and families.

Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If

you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.

Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?

Every effort has been taken to protect you from any harm in this study. If however, you may feel affected you can be referred to your nearest community resource for assistance.

What if I have questions?

You may contact me at: 081 725 3993 or 021 483 4021 or alewaks@gmail.com or my supervisor **Prof Roman in the Social Work Department** at the University of the Western Cape. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Dr Roman at: Department of Social Work, tel. 021 959 2970, email: nroman@uwc.ac.za.

Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

Head of Department:

Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences: **Prof. H. Klopper**

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17

Bellville 7535

This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Senate Research Committee and Ethics Committee.

Appendix D

PROPOSED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR FATHERS

A basic framework of questions is outlined below. The individual interview with the father will center around these topic of discussion.

1. Tell me about your family?
2. How many children do you have?
3. What is your definition of a father?
4. What does being a father mean to you?
5. How did you get to participate in the Fatherhood Programme?
6. How were you given an opportunity to speak about your needs?
7. How have your needs been met through the programme that you attended?
8. What programme content did you find most interesting?
Prompt: Why?
9. Which part of the programme content did you not find useful/interesting?
Prompt: Why?
10. Did you get an opportunity during the duration of the programme to practice the new skills that you have learned at home?
Prompt: how did you do it and was it helpful?
11. How did the programme influence/change your perception of being a father?
12. Did the programme in any case influence your views around your relationship with your spouse?
Prompt: how?
13. How did the programme influence your views around your family?
Prompt: involvement in the house
14. How do you describe your involvement in the lives of your family before you attended the programme?
15. Did the programme in any case assist you to become more involve?
Prompt: Explain
16. Describe your relationship with your children before you attended the fatherhood programme?

Prompt: Changes in relationship with children

17. If you could change anything about the fatherhood Programme, what would it be?
18. How would you describe the communication between yourself, your children and family before you attended the programme?
19. How did the programme that you have attended address communication issues in your family?
20. How do you describe the quality of child parent relationship before you attended the programme?
21. How did the programme assist you as a father to improve your relationship with your children and family?
22. Did the programme in any case change your views around parenting?

Prompt: how?

23. Did the programme facilitators do an evaluation after each session that you attended?

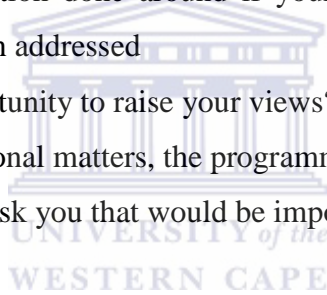
Prompt: where an evaluation done around if your personal issues been addressed.

Where all your issues been addressed

24. Did you get enough opportunity to raise your views?

Prompt: around your personal matters, the programme content

25. What have I forgotten to ask you that would be important for me to know?



Appendix D (2)

PROPOSED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHILDREN OF FATHERS WHO ATTENDED THE INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

A basic framework of questions is outlined below. The interviews will center around these topic of discussion.

ASSESSMENT:

1. Do you know that your father attended a programme for fathers? Do you know anything about the programme that your father attended?
2. Why do think your father attended the programme?

PARENT-CHILD OR SIGNIFICANT OTHER RELATIONSHIPS:

3. How do you feel about family relationships within your family?
Prompt: between you and your father, your mother and father
4. How was your relationship between your family members before your father attended the programme?
Prompt: Prompt: between you and your father, your mother and father
5. How was your relationship between your family members after your father attended the programme?
Prompt: Prompt: between you and your father, your mother and father
6. How do you view the importance of communication with your father and mother?
7. How do you describe the communication between your father and members in your family after he attended the programme?

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SOCIAL AND PERSONAL MATTERS

8. How do you view father involvement in your family life?

Prompt: family involvement, your school work or studies, when you sick, when your mother is sick, religion, money in the house, and love.

9. Do you think your father is more involved after he attended the programme?

Appendix D (3)

PROPOSED QUESTIONS FOR SPOUSES OF FATHERS WHO ATTENDED AN INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

ASSESSMENT:

1. What do you know about the programme that your partner attended? Do you feel your family interactions are much better since he attended the programme? What is your understanding of family well-being? Did the programme that your partner attended help to improve the well-being of your family?

PARENT-CHILD OR SIGNIFICANT OTHER RELATIONSHIPS:

2. How do you view family relationships within your family? How do you describe your family relationships before your partner attended the programme? Did the programme assist you to improve family relationships?
3. How do Describe the relationship between your partner and his child/ren ? How was their relationship between them before he attended the programme? Did the relationship improve prove between them after he attended the programme?
4. What are your views around communication in your family?
5. Prompt: between yourself and your partner, between him and his child/ren
6. What are your views around family conflict? How do you and your partner deal with family conflict before he attended the programme? Do you feel there is an improvement in how the two of you deal with family conflict?
7. What is your view regarding disciplining your children? How does your partner deal with discipline when it comes to your child/ren? Has there been a change when it comes to your partner and disciplining the children after he attended the programme?

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SOCIAL AND PERSONAL MATTERS

8. How do you view the involvement of your partner in your family life?
Prompt: family involvement, education of children, health of family members, religion, family finances, and love.
9. Do you think there is positive change in the involvement of your partner after he attended the programme? What changes do you experience?

SUPPORT

10. What other support do you need to improve the well-being of your family?



Appendix E
EDITORIAL CERTIFICATE

30 November 2015

To whom it may concern

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Editorial Certificate

This letter serves to prove that the thesis listed below was language edited for proper English, grammar, punctuation, spelling as well as overall layout and style by myself, publisher/proprietor of Aquarian Publications, a native English speaking editor.

Thesis title

THE EXPERIENCES OF FAMILIES OF
AN INTERVENTION PROGRAMME FOR FATHERS



Author *UNIVERSITY of the*
Andre Lewaks *WESTERN CAPE*

The research content or the author's intentions were not altered in any way during the editing process, however, the author has the authority to accept or reject my suggestions and changes.

Should you have any questions or concerns about this edited document, I can be contacted at the listed telephone and fax number, e-mail address or website.

Yours truly


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