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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL-INTERPRETIVE INQUIRY ABOUT THE EXPERIENCES OF FATHERS WHO ARE IN A SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLD

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A research report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters (Social and Psychological Research) in the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Date: 15 March 2023

Declaration

I declare that this research report presents my own work, which has been done after registration for the degree of Master of Arts in Social and Psychological Research and has not been previously included in a research report submitted to any other institution. All arguments, words, and ideas have been appropriately acknowledged.

Mmatsatsi Letsiya



Abstract.

It is becoming increasingly common for fathers to raise their children solo, as the prevalence of single-parent households rises overall. In this qualitative study, seven single fathers who are primary caregivers were interviewed regarding their experience of primary caregiving, adjusting, and coping with the transition to primary caregiving, and their needs and concerns for their children's future. This study utilised a phenomenological approach to look at fathers who head single-parent households as the best and most informed individuals to explore and describe their lived experiences of being primary caregivers. The rationale for using interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) is that it is concerned with individuals' subjective reports and assumes that participants seek to interpret their experiences in some form that is understandable to them. I utilised seven semi-structured, in-depth, face-to-face, and virtual interviews as a method of data collection. I identified four main themes namely: Single Fathers' Parenting Experiences; Responsibility and Challenges; Fathers' Perceptions of Single Fatherhood as a Social Phenomenon and Being a Good Father. The participants reported both negative and positive experiences of raising their children. Parenting, as challenging as it is, is not innately predisposed to mothers or women. Men can play the role of provider, nurturer, and caretaker, just as mothers can. This research demonstrates that they are capable of raising their children and meeting their emotional, physical, psychological, and social requirements.

Keywords: Parenting; Lived Experiences; Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis; Single Fatherhood; Parental Caregiving.

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Table of Contents

Title Page 1

Declaration ……2

Abstract ……..……...……...…….....3

Acknowledgements …….…..4

Chapter 1: Introduction 8

1.1. Background and Introduction of the study 8-9

1.2. Rationale ……...……..... 9-10

1.3. Aims …….…..... 11

1.4. Objectives of the study……....…...11

1.5. Glossary of Terms …….……..…...…… 11-12

Chapter 2: Literature Review ……...…….……..... 13

2.1. Introduction ……...……..... 13

2.2. Family structure and the single-parent household …….…..……. 13-16

2.3. Alternative family structures in South Africa …….……..…. 16-26

2.4. Single-father's parenting experiences …….…….…..... ….26-27

2.5. Gendered stereotyping and the influence on men's experiences of single parenthood

……..……..... 27-31

2.6. Theoretical Framework …… 31-33

2.7. Research Questions ……..…. 33

Chapter 3: Methodology ……..……. 34

3.1. Introduction ……..…….…… 34

3.2. Research Paradigm …… 34-36

3.3. Research Design …… 36-37

3.4. Sampling ……. 37

3.4.1. Sample site ……..……. 37-38

3.4.2. Sampling and Sample…… 38-40

3.5. Data Collection ……..…..……..……... 40

3.5.1. Semi-structured Interview ……. 40-41

3.6. Data Analysis ……. 41-42

3.7. Ethical Considerations ……..... 42-43

3.8. Research Rigour and Credibility ……..... 44-45

Chapter 4: Research Findings …….……. 46

4.1. Theme 1: Single Father's Parenting Experiences …….……. 47

4.1.1. Experiences of adaption and self-reliance ……..……..…..…… 47-49

4.1.2. Single fatherhood and support system …….…….……. 49-53

4.2. Theme 2: Responsibility and Challenges ……..…….……. 53

4.2.1. Changes to their lives ……..……54-57

4.2.2. Parenting practices ……..……...…… 57-58

4.2.3. Childhood experiences of father absence and its relation to participants' parenting practice …….. 59

4.2.4. Setting goals for their children ……. .59-61

4.3. Theme 3: Fathers' Perceptions of Single Fatherhood as a Social Phenomenon

…….…..... 61

4.3.1. Culture and community values ……. 61-63

4.3.2. Single fathers' understanding of their roles ……,….. 63-64

4.4. Theme 4: Being A Good Father ……. 65

4.4.1. Father and child relationship ……. 65-68

4.4.2. Contributions of being a good father ……. 68-71

4.5. Summary of the Findings ……... 71

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion ……... 72

5.1. Introduction ……..…… 72

5.2. Discussion of the Findings ……. 72-77

5.3. For Fathers who head single-parent households ……..……..……..…77-78

5.4. Limitations of the Study ……..……..……... 78-79

5.5. Suggestions for Future Research ……..…. 79-80

5.6. Researcher Reflexivity ……..……..…… 80-81

5.7. Conclusion ……..……..……..... 81-83

References ……. 84-98

Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet ……... 99

Appendix B: Informed Consent for Participation ……..….100

Appendix C: Informed Consent for Interviewing and Audio-recording ……...101

Appendix D: Letter to Access Organisations ……..…...102-103

Appendix E: Interview Schedule ……..……. 104-105

Appendix F: Ethics Certificate ……..… 106

Appendix G: Ethics Training Certificate ……..… 108

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background, rationale, aims, and objectives of this study. It further presents the glossary of terms.

1.1. Background of the study

In recent years, there has been a shift away from typical two-parent families and towards more diversified family arrangements, such as single parenting due to spousal death, divorce, separation, or unwanted pregnancy (Ratele et el., 2012). The caregiving pattern in families has been socially, economically, and politically shifted to mothers, with little attention paid to single-father parenting (Ndagurwa et al., 2023). Several children in South Africa do not live continuously with their biological parents (Cable, 2017). This is a well-established aspect of childhood in South Africa, and international research indicates that the country is unique in the degree to which parents are absent from their children's everyday lives (Hall et al., 2018). Many variables contribute to parental absence, including apartheid-era restrictions on population movement, labour migration, poverty, housing and educational prospects, low marriage and cohabitation rates, and traditional care arrangements (Hall & Posel, 2019). In South Africa, the proportion of children living in single-parent families is increasing. The proportion of children living with both parents declined from 39% in 2002 to 34% in 2010, and then remained steady at around 34% for the following decade. 42% of children (8.6 million) live with their mothers but not their fathers. Just 4% of children live in households with absent mothers and present fathers (Makiwane et al., 2016).

The stereotypical role of a father within a heterosexual relationship is that of a breadwinner, provider, and dispassionate leader and the desire to be a support to their partner (Cable, 2017). On the other hand, mothers are expected to be and play the expressive role; as she is expected to cement and provide emotional support and nurturing activities that ensure the household run smoothly (Morrell & Richter, 2004). Contrary to the mentioned stereotype, fathers are taking on the role of rearing their children, resulting in the stereotypical role of the father evolving (Hall & Posel, 2019).

Fatherhood and fathering are concepts that can denote many forms of identities and practices and this study explored the views of fathers who head single-parent households from disrupted family unions and how hegemonic masculinity (Pleck, 2010) contributes to these practices. It further provided single fathers an opportunity to tell their stories and describe their

experiences as single parents in a changing South African society, as well as getting a better knowledge of this under-researched and increasing family unit.

Becoming a parent is a vital era of transformation in a man's life, as fatherhood must be integrated into a man's identity. Transitions to parenthood will almost certainly alter dads' relationships with their partners and families (Richter et al., 2010). It will also modify their leisure habits, impact their professional life, and most likely turn them into individuals who treasure interests and values that differ from those before this transformation (Claxton & Pery-Jenkings, 2008; Ratele et al., 2012). This study aimed to describe how fathers who head single-parent households manage their newly acquired roles and their experiences.

Changes in family structure, as well as growing female labour-force participation, have necessitated a redefining of the father's position in the family. This viewpoint is supported by Brown and Barclay's (2004) research, which underlines this job transformation from a care perspective. These perspectives are influenced in part by identity politics and scholarship; in part by the changing nature of employment linked with post-industrial economics and globalization; and in part by changes in the nature and makeup of families (Nsamenang, 2010). The roles of men within families are always shifting, and this is especially true for fathers who head single-parent households as they acquire and establish new responsibilities.

1.2. RATIONALE

A single-father family is a concept that is relatively new to the family structure. For centuries across many cultures, men have been the breadwinners and the head of the family. The idea of fatherhood is still limited to stereotypes such as the ideal breadwinner, family man, or deadbeat dad (Chikovore et al., 2013; Mkhwanazi & Block, 2016). In recent years, single fathers, single mothers, and same-sex parenting have become much more of a reality in society (Morison & Macleod, 2015). Since there has been an increase in the number of non-traditional family structures, especially the single-father family, an account must begin with their experiences, parenting styles, and perceptions of their roles (Ndagurwa et al., 2023). We must gain a better understanding and awareness of fathers who head single-parent households so that better support systems can be put in place, more consideration can be given to these fathers, and move away from the general stereotype that fathers cannot nurture and provide care for their children. Unfortunately, to date, fathers who head single-parent households have not been the subjects of substantial research. Society and our culture still hold the family to such a high, idealistic standard (Van den berg et al., 2018). We still define what it means to be a man or

woman through the expectations and roles of fathers and mothers within the family. Van den berg et al. (2018) state that the concept of the family conceals the fact that families have always differed in their makeup. This study strives to demonstrate how a man defines himself when his family does not fit the ideal mould, through roles, experiences, and attitudes.

Since 1976 fatherhood has been receiving increased attention in the popular and professional literature (Ndagurwa et al., 2023). The most common studies that date back the furthest have been conducted in the USA where several different findings can be identified (Morison & Macleod, 2015). Firstly, the idea of role adjustment arose as fathers either found themselves in the role prematurely due to the death of a spouse or were able to adjust to the role over time due to divorce. The results indicated that although the transition and adjustment to single parenthood were difficult initially, fathers were familiar with roles in home management and childcare (Morison & Macleod, 2015). The study also revealed that fathers handled the responsibilities of management alone or with their children and the difficulty of the transition stemmed more from the over-burdening of roles than from unfamiliarity with the tasks facing them (Morison & Macleod, 2015). Reconceptualization of both men's and women's familial and work positions is occurring within these families and is being maintained over longer periods than has been evident in previous research on fathering (Rabe, 2016).

However, research on the experience of fathers who head single-parent households as primary caregivers is still a growing area in South Africa. Many studies in the South African context have focused on fatherhood and father involvement rather than on single parenting from a paternal perspective (Van den Berg et al., 2021). The motivation for the present study in the South African context is based on the fact that most of the previous research conducted on single fathers rearing their children is based many years ago and more commonly in America. There is little literature on fathers who head single-parent households raising children in the South African context. Most literature found in the South African context deals with the absence rather than the presence of fathers in their children's lives (Richter, 2010; Statistics South Africa, 2022). Fathers are now able to gain care of their minor children which was not the case in previous years (Alemman & Vlahovicova, 2020; Dowd, 2000). As a result of this, the increase of single-father households is on the rise making this study relevant to the South African context.

This study aimed to illuminate the direct voices and parenting experiences of fathers who are in single-parent households. I highlighted the daily tasks, routines, and responsibilities

of full-time fathers who head single-parent households. The research moves beyond the surface of their physical parental duties. I aimed to explore childcare practices adopted by men who are in single-parent households. This study looked at individuals who do not conform to gender norms.

1.3. AIMS OF THE STUDY

1.3.1. This study aimed to explore the parenting experiences of men who are in single-parent households.

1.3.2. This study aimed to explore child-care practices adopted by men who are in single-parent households.

1.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Trigueros (2019) defines the research objectives as the specific outcomes of the research project and should summarise what the researcher hopes to achieve (Wheeldon & Ahlberg, 2012). With reference to this study, the objectives of this study are:

1.4.1. To explore participants' experiences of fatherhood as head of a single-parent household.

1.4.2. To explore participants' practices of child-care.

1.5. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Caregiver: The terms 'single father', 'primary caregiver', 'fathers who head single-parent households', 'parent', 'caregiver', and 'father' was used interchangeably to describe the participant population. The caregiver term is most preferred as it accommodates all these contextually driven terms. Furthermore, the term 'caregiver' means a person who is responsible for looking after another person (e.g., a disabled or ill child or elderly person) (White Paper on Families in South Africa, 2021).

Childed couple: refers to the strictly nuclear form (two parents with one or more biological children) and for ease of reading is labelled "nuclear".

Childcare: is, where appropriate, to provide the child with a suitable living place and conditions conducive to health, financial support, safeguarding and promoting well-being, protecting the child, guiding education, respecting the child's rights, and guiding behaviour (Children's Act, 2005. No. 38 of 2005).

Family: “a societal group that is related by blood (kinship), adoption, foster care, or the ties of marriage (civil, customary or religious), civil union or cohabitation, and go beyond a particular physical residence” (The White Paper on Families in South Africa, 2021, p. 10).

Father: a child’s male parent (Sherriff et al., 2010).

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 (Doucet, 2004). This research applies to biological fathers.

Parenting: is the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. It entails the activity of raising a child rather than biological relationships, which is usually done by the biological parents of the child in question (Draft Integrated Parenting Framework: Department of Social Development, 2011). Melissa and Kathleen (2014) define parenting as making the decision to have children, assuming and accepting parental responsibilities, and reframing one's aims and beliefs. It is the birth of children, their protection and care for their upkeep, existence, and development, as well as directing and aiding their growth. All of these are deliberate acts and activities that a parent conducts and performs to guarantee that all of these goals are realized.

Single Fathers: A single father is a male single parent. For the purpose of this study, the **single father/father who head single-parent households** is an uncoupled individual who shoulders most or all of the day-to-day responsibilities for raising a child or children (Kowtal & Prabhakar, 2009).

This research report consists of five chapters, that is: the introduction, literature review, methodology, findings chapter, and lastly the conclusion. Chapter two provides a solid review of existing literature relevant for the study’s research topic. The study looked at existing literature within South Africa and globally, in order to understand the experiences fathers on head single-parent household on fatherhood and parenting. This chapter also explores a theoretical which is phenomenology to better understand the research topic. Chapter three is the methodology chapter. In this chapter, information on how the study was conducted is provided. This chapter addresses the methodological framework used for this study, which is the qualitative approach, and provides explanations

on why this was a suitable methodological approach for this research study. Chapter four is the findings chapter. This chapter presents a detailed analysis of the findings on the experiences of fathers who head single-parent household on fatherhood and parenting. Chapter five is the conclusion. This chapter summarises the main arguments of the study and also provides final remarks and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This part of the report explores the theoretical framework utilised for this study and reviews the empirical literature for the study. There are limited studies on fathers who head single-parent households which is why this study is an important addition. To successfully advance the understanding of single fathering, it is important to consider that individuals form their behaviours and lives in terms of the experiences and expectations influencing them (Cable, 2017). The first section of the chapter reviews research-based literature related to the aims and objectives of this study. In this section, a selection of viewpoints from both South African and international researchers and authors will be highlighted and discussed. It further provides a global perspective on family structures, single parenting by fathers, roles, and experiences.

To better understand single-father parenting, a variety of perspectives from South African and international researchers will be discussed. Furthermore, a global perspective on family structures, single-father parenting, single-father experiences, and single-father responsibilities is addressed. Literature relating to family structure, alternative family structure, and single fathers' experiences will also be considered.

2.2. Family structure and the single-parent household

The origin of the family is depicted in creation myths in many cultures around the world. Creation myths are symbolic stories that describe how the world came to be and how humanity first came to occupy it. Anderson and Sabatelli (2011) states that the process of defining the family is challenging, and the difficulty stems from the mythology that surrounds the concept of family. Hall et al. (2018) define family as social groupings that are linked by blood or by the bonds of marriage, non-marital union, adoption, or some other affiliation and that continue through both space and time.

The family structure that society believed in the African 1800s became recognized academically as the nuclear family: the fundamental family-building unit, consisting of a mother, father, and at least one child (Nduna, 2014). This family exhibited the expectation that the mother would stay at home with the children while the father went to work.

With the emergence of the gold and mining industries in South Africa in the 1800s (the so-called Mineral Revolution which would eventually usher in industrial capitalism),

the racist State-imposed taxes on 'black' people living in rural areas so that they would seek jobs in cities (Roy, 2008; Worden, 2011). By creating a migrant labour force, family life in the country was interrupted, with 'black' fathers having to spend most of their time away from their families, sometimes seeing them just once a year (Morrell & Richter, 2004). During apartheid, the Group Areas Act of 1950 did even more to disrupt families deemed to be 'black', 'coloured', and 'Indian', by forcibly relocating whole communities which were racialized in these ways. Men in these families could work in cities on one-year contracts and were prohibited from bringing their families with them. Pass laws and job reservations also ensured that these men had little chance to live with their families. In contemporary South Africa, the effects of apartheid legislation (which was officially repealed in 1991) are observed in numerous ways, including rapid urbanization, racialized poverty, and wealth inequality. Added to this, gendered roles within the family, along with fragmented family structures, have become especially entrenched (Helman et al., 2019; Morrell et al., 2016).

Paternal non-residence in contemporary South Africa is relatively high. Using data obtained from the General Household Survey (Statistics South Africa, 2017), the 2018 State of South Africa's Fathers report found that although 71% of children who are 17 years old or under live with an adult male in the same household, of these children, only 36% live with their biological father, with the remaining 35% living with an adult man to whom they are not related (Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018). Hatch and Posel (2018) note that only 11–12% of children in the country receive primary care from their fathers. Indeed, single-parent households in South Africa are often headed by women who provide physical and financial care for children, irrespective of their biological relation to them. The reasons for such high rates of paternal non-residence are myriad and complex. While fathers are certainly expected to engage in care work (Ratele et al., 2012), traditional masculine performance remains entangled with waged labour (Helman et al., 2019).

This masculinized expectation for fathers to provide, coupled with the feminization of poverty, may, as argued by Morrell (2006), render ashamed of those fathers who are unable to provide financially (Hatch & Posel, 2018). Added to this, a residual effect of apartheid is that, today, unemployment – which affects 29.1% of the country's population (Statistics South Africa, 2019) – and consequently poverty, are especially salient among 'black' families. Resultantly, the ability of 'black' men to 'provide' has been systemically undermined, with expectations around paternal provision not having shifted significantly.

Indeed, Spjeldnaes et al. (2011) observed that for South African teenage boys from low socioeconomic backgrounds, being a man meant providing for one's family in financial as well as emotional ways. Similarly, Helman et al. (2019) found that adolescents from two low-income South African communities drew on a 'Father as Provider' discourse to establish legitimate fathers as those who provided financially for their families. In turn, this discourse rendered fathers personally responsible for systemic economic inequalities. Speaking to these kinds of expectations that are placed on fathers in South Africa, Hatch and Posel (2018) argue that paternal non-residence does not, in every instance, indicate father absenteeism. Indeed, it should not be assumed that a father's physical absence results in his financial or emotional absence (Dermott, 2008). There is limited research on fathers who head single-parent households in South Africa. There is a need to explore men's experience of being the head of the single-parent household since this kind of family structure is on the rise.

In most Western societies, the African nuclear family has been the most normative family model, and the most common family formation is between heterosexual adults. The White Paper on Families in South Africa (2021) provides a medical classification of the family, describing it as "a societal group that is related by blood (kinship), adoption, foster care, or the ties of marriage (civil, customary or religious), civil union or cohabitation, and go beyond a particular physical residence" (p. 10). This has led to the belief that nuclear families in Western culture are flawless and a highly effective family form for raising children (Burr et al., 1996; Clowes et al., 2013, Pleck, 2010) since the couple is happily married, the children feel nourished and supported, and each member's physical and emotional needs are met (Hatch & Posel, 2018). This common heterosexual family, however, has been disrupted, and different alternative units have emerged as a result of events such as spousal death, divorce, separation, or unexpected pregnancy.

Families, according to Richter and Morrell (2006), share common tasks that they must complete, and they must establish distinctive interaction patterns and dynamics to accomplish these duties. A family must be viewed as a system to highlight common qualities while embracing the complexity and diversity present within them (Madhavan & Roy, 2012). The family is defined by two central dimensions, structure, and tasks when seen as a system. Structure relates to the family's composition and organisation, with composition referring to the individuals that make up the family and organisation referring

to the unique set of rules that regulate interaction patterns. Family members' common and fundamental responsibilities are referred to as tasks (Anderson & Sabatelli, 2011).

Statistics South Africa (2017) has tended to use four household types: single-person, nuclear, extended, and complex. The report shows that the largest single category is the “extended” family household (36% of all households), followed by single-person households (22%). Less than one-fifth of households in South Africa takes the form of a nuclear family (i.e., “childed couple”). A study conducted by Wittenberg and Collinson (2007) in the rural in South Africa reported nuclear family structures continues to decline and extended household forms (any household that does not fit into one of the above categories, but all members are related) continue to predominate (Hall et al., 2018).

2.3. Alternative family structures in South Africa

Families are often defined as social groups that are related by blood, marriage, adoption, or affiliation and have intimate emotional bonds to one another that last throughout time and extend beyond a physical abode (Amoateng & Richter, 2003). This concept of the family is seen as most relevant in a multi-cultural, multiracial, and changing culture such as South Africa, where there is a diversity of non-nuclear family structures. The traditional nuclear family is the most typical family arrangement in most Western societies, and the most common family formation is between heterosexual adults. Therborn (2006) reported that the African continent is of global importance due to the conspicuous and distinctive features of family systems. Polygamy and the right of homosexual 'married' couples to adopt children in South Africa (Civil Unions Act, 2006) have also contributed to the growth of these alternative family structures. The University of South Africa (2010) recognized five major family structures in an overview of South African family structures, including nuclear, extended, child-headed, single–parenting, and multi-generational households (Sherriff et al., 2010). Russell (1998) investigated the architecture of urban family households in South Africa. She observed that the "real nuclear family," which consisted of the husband, wife, and children, was the most prevalent family structure identified across all demographics. Dintwat (2010) made an interesting observation while doing a study on family structure in Botswana.

This observation is equivalent to the formation of family structures in South Africa and will be discussed further shortly. According to Dintwat (2010), a few significant socioeconomic changes, such as education, health care, employment, and, most typically,

forced separation, such as migration, contribute to the alteration of traditional family arrangements (Clowes et al., 2013). He emphasises that labour migration is a common factor that weakens the family structure because husbands or fathers are separated from their families for extended periods, resulting in the mother rearing the children, putting enormous strain on the family structure, and leading to the breakdown of domestic control.

Hall et al. (2018) reported that the extended household category is much more prevalent with 62% of children living in such households in South Africa. A quarter of all children live in strictly nuclear households (consisting only of children and their biological parents), while 10% live in single-parent households. When weighted to the population, approximately 5 million children live in nuclear households and 2 million live in single-parent households, and 12 million are in extended households (Hall et al. 2018).

The extended household is the most common configuration nationally, and even more so for children. Extended households include multiple-generation households (for example, children, parents, and grandparents) as well as many other permutations, such as a mother living with her child and her sister, or households where cousins are included (Statistics South Africa, 2017). Extended households are not necessarily large: a two-person household with a child and her aunt would fall into this category, for example.

In South Africa, about one-fifth (21,3%) of children aged 17 years and less, did not live with their parents (Statistics South Africa, 2019). This is against the international norm where the majority of children under 18 live with both their parents. However, in South Africa, children are more often not co-resident with their biological parents. This is mainly due to labour migration of the parents as well as low marital rates of mothers (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Consequently, many children are raised by their grandparents or other relatives, especially in rural areas. Approximately 14,7% of households contained three generations, while 4,5% were skip-generation households in which grandparents lived with grandchildren, with no parents in the household (Statistics South Africa, 2019). The highest percentage of skip-generation households were found in Eastern Cape (8,5%). Triple-generation households were most common in Limpopo (19,0%), KwaZulu-Natal, and Eastern Cape (both 18,4%).

In South Africa, the more children there are in a household (more than 4 children), the greater the chances are that they are being looked after by extended family members (84,5%) (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Ultimately, it is the family who is responsible for

shaping our children and influencing their values, skills, socialization, and security during their childhood development stages. About one-fifth (21,3%) of all children did not live with their parents. By comparison, one-third (32,7%) lived with both parents. Most children, however, lived only with their mothers (42,0%) while a much smaller percentage (4,0%) of children lived only with their fathers.

There have been persistent and widely held assumptions that child-headed households are without family support – and that parents or adult caregivers are "permanently absent" (Hall et al., 2018). The dominant narrative on orphans and vulnerable children has suggested that children in child-headed households are mainly orphans and that they have proliferated because of HIV-related orphaning (Statistics South Africa, 2019). While it is true that South Africa has high rates of orphaning, and that the rapid increase in orphaning during the 2000s was driven by HIV, this does not explain the phenomenon of child-headed households. In 2017, 80% of children living in child-only households had a living father and 88% had a living mother. Only 5% were double orphans. These distributions have remained fairly consistent since 2002, and over the past decade, the share of children living in child-only households has remained small (around 0.5% of children). The assumed or implied link between orphaning and child-headed households has been promoted by international agencies, non-governmental organizations, and government departments and has remained remarkably persistent even in academic literature.

It has been suggested that assumptions or even deliberate misrepresentation of child-headed households "served to justify the intervention of diverse donors into the (re)construction of the South African family" (Hall et al., 2018). The available evidence suggests that orphans are overwhelmingly cared for by family members, while child-headed households may be an outcome of family strategies (for example, to access education, or to maintain a rural homestead while adults migrate for work) (Statistics South Africa, 2021). Child-headed households can be temporary arrangements, and they are not necessarily without family support (Hall et al., 2018). Statistics South Africa reports that most children living in child-headed households are not orphans at all (Statistics South Africa, 2021). The 2006 General Household Survey found that only 8% of children living in child-headed households were children who had lost both their mother and father. 80% had a living mother. In 2006 almost half (44%) of child-headed households consisted of only one child. Most child-headed households have between one and three members

(Statistics South Africa, 2021). Over half (55%) of children living in child-headed households are 14 or older. In the vast majority (88%) of child-headed households there is at least one child who is 15 or older. About 90% of all child-headed households are located in three provinces – Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, and the Eastern Cape (Hall et al., 2018).

In South Africa, the discourse on sexuality was also rigidly controlled by the apartheid system. While a blind eye was turned to the history of black male homosexuality in the mine compounds, incidents of white middle-class homosexual encounters were intensely scrutinised by the state (Githens, 2009). During the 1970s, the (mostly white) gay subculture of both men and women underwent an expansion, mostly because of increased urbanisation, the effects of the women's liberation movement, the human rights movement, and greater post-World War II acceptance of a 'single' lifestyle. Developments in media might also have improved communication and this meant that homosexuals of both genders were able to follow (to some extent) the ideological and political trends of the gay liberation movement in the United States and the United Kingdom (Githens, 2009). This was limited, however, in that censorship laws during the apartheid years prevented all but the most innocuous texts from entering the country. Lesbian and gay voices are no longer silent in South Africa, and a relatively new (lesbian and gay) voice that is starting to speak out is that of the same-gendered family. Although they once lived on the margins of society, same-gendered families are also emerging as part of a ‘collective’ gay community. In South Africa in particular, the terms of the new Constitution give gay people permission to advocate their right to establish life partnerships, become eligible to adopt children, keep custody of their own children in divorce proceedings, and, more recently, to be able to establish co-parenting. In spite of this, real-life attitudes towards gay and lesbian people are slow to change (Knoesen, 2004). Acceptance and understanding that is characterised neither by silence nor by open judgement and condemnation will naturally grow slowly after decades of bigotry, persecution, and discrimination because these negative attitudes are deeply embedded in the societal matrix.

South African society still exhibits signs of a culture of discrimination and judgement. Because of the legacy of South Africa's historically race-determined and neo-colonial system of capitalism in which 'great men' dominated history textbooks, the points of view of workers, women, LGBT people, and people from lower socio-economic strata were seldom heard (Valocchi, 2017). South Africa has a long history of deliberate disruptions of family life that in the past were sanctioned by law. This has, however,

changed over the course of the last decade in particular. Eurocentric and patriarchal definitions of the family are being replaced by more inclusive definitions that take into account (among other factors) the role of culture, gender, history, sexual orientation, autonomy, and religion in determining family relationships (Knoesen, 2003). The scientific literature on same-gendered families and parenting remains limited in South Africa. Until the late 1980s and early 1990s, much of the literature documented the fact that homosexuality was regarded as deviant and criminal behaviour, and same-gendered parents were believed to have a negative and even a corrupting influence on children's development (Botha, 2000).

Polygamy, which is defined as the practice of having more than one spouse, is a common, and widespread, socially as well as culturally accepted phenomenon in many African countries. The experiences of women in polygamous marriages vary according to the socio-cultural context. Historically, many factors are thought to have perpetuated polygamy, and these include higher mortality rates of men, satisfaction of sexual desires, and the need to have as many children as desired. Consequently, the practice of polygamy has been associated mainly with a patriarchal social system or societies in sub-Saharan Africa. Polygamy has been criticized. However, polygamy continues to be practiced in much of Africa. In South Africa, polygamy has a long history in some cultures and males with both middle and low socio-economic background practice contemporary polygamy. However, there is limited data on polygamy and its effect in South Africa. Unlike in other sub-Saharan countries, no nationwide survey has investigated polygamous relationships except for the 2002 national HIV prevalence, behavioural risks, and mass media household survey.

Families and households are the most important socioeconomic institutions and play important roles in the care and development of children. Families and care arrangements for young children are particularly important for vulnerable children. However, in South Africa, government support for parenting and families is limited. Significant gaps exist in nutritional services and in providing care and learning opportunities for young children.

In South Africa, three out of every five households have a male head while two out of every five have a female head (Statistics South Africa, 2021). The Gauteng province has a similar ratio. The focus of this research is on the lived experiences of these fathers who

are in a single-headed household, how they take care of their children, and what their single-parent status means for the developmental outcomes or well-being of their children. This is important as there is such a lack of both maternal and paternal presence in the lives of South African children, specifically as being cognisant that the majority of Black South African children reside in an extended family structured household and do not live in a nuclear family structure and that most do not live with both of their biological parents in the same household. Fathers, like mothers, are pillars in the development of a child's emotional well-being. Children look to their fathers to lay down the rules and enforce them. They also look to their fathers to provide a feeling of security, both physical and emotional. Children want to make their fathers proud, and an involved father promotes inner growth and strength. Studies have shown that when fathers are affectionate and supportive, it greatly affects a child's cognitive and social development. It also instills an overall sense of well-being and self-confidence. Research has focused on different types of family structures in South Africa like polygamy, child-headed household, mother-headed household, and grandparent-headed household. The father-headed households have not been given substantial research; it is pertinent that we investigate this type of family structure.

Little research has been done on fathers who head single-parent households and their children (Cable, 2017; Lesejane, 2006). Little attention was given to the day-to-day challenges experienced by single fathers, with the majority of research focusing on whether or not they were capable of solely caring for and rearing their child or children. According to Makusha et al. (2016), single fathers are routinely expected to assume societal tasks for which they have not been trained or socialized. This raises the question of whether these single men believe they are able to raise their children, or whether their male-sex role socialisation has been so pervasive that, by maturity, fathers lack both the desire and the ability to care for young children (Rabe, 2016). Bhana and Nkani (2014) propose that fathers who express non-traditional attitudes about parenting duties feel more competent as single parents. This shows that fathers who head single-parent households are categorized as single parents far too frequently. This is problematic because fathers who head single-parent households represent a distinct group whose experiences and obstacles differ from those of single mothers.

Studies indicate that single parents are more likely than married parents and couples who raises their children together to utilize inefficient parenting techniques, give less oversight and parental control, and be less involved (McLanahan, 2007). However, some

research suggests that single fathers parent differently than single mothers because single fathers are more likely to allow their children to interact with their peers and engage in independent activities, whereas single mothers are less permissive and less likely to allow their children to control them (Bronte- Tinkew et al., 2010). The authors identified significant disparities in the parenting styles of single fathers and their family arrangements. The parenting styles of single fathers were less authoritarian and authoritative and more lenient. Further research suggests that, with the exception of the existence of a partner, single custodial father families did not differ from other types of families in terms of routine, and the household had the lowest levels of family routines (Bronte-Tinkew et al., 2010).

Due to the small number of single fathers in society, research on single-parent families rarely focuses on single-father households as the rate of divorce rises in many countries (Raymo et al., 2014). In numerous Western countries, the mother is the primary caregiver in the majority of households and the vast majority of parental separation cases. Society's acceptance of the reality that fathers care for their children far less than mothers reflects the expectations and recommended role of a father in childrearing (Morrell, 2006). In many societies, fathers who raise their children on their own are a rare occurrence (Richter et al., 2010). For the first time, fathers were viewed as nurturing, active, and caring parents. Active parenting was identified as a crucial aspect of fatherhood and the standard by which "good fathers" may be evaluated (Malherbe & Kaminer, 2020, p. 10). Blackenhorn, in Dowd (1997), critiques and demolishes "the New Father," the sensitive, loving, and involved father, on the grounds that he resembles a father who has learnt to mother. Men's families of origin and procreation are tied to the elements that influence their procreative behaviour. Hatch and Posel (2018) highlight the centrality of women in both households, including the status of the men's mothers and, more importantly, the career and educational status of their wives. The strong parental engagement was significantly associated with marital commitment (Hatch and Posel, 2018). Men's fathers play a vital role in their child-rearing practices, either as a model to be imitated or as an example to be modified or rejected.

Morrell (2006) argues that fathers who express non-traditional beliefs about parental roles feel more competent in their roles of single parenting. Besides financial and emotional challenges, often the little things prove to be the toughest. Some parents said that they found it very difficult to combine the two roles, to be loving and affectionate but also

to be the disciplinarian (Richter et al., 2010). A single father or mother is faced with the difficulty of fulfilling both these roles.

According to Altenburger and Schoppe-Sullivan (2020), fathers have a nine-to-five quality to their parenting. Men do mothering whereas women are mothers. This means that men exhibit more separateness when parenting and women more connectedness. Altenburger and Schoppe-Sullivan (2020) believe that a father is much clearer as to where he stops and the child starts, whereas mothers have a hard time sorting out their own needs from their children's. Fathers have a profound and lasting impact on their children's development. Parents and caregivers are the most important providers of nurturing care for children, and while women have historically taken the role of principal caregivers, the authors recognizes the need to support fathers and male caregivers to assume a central parenting role, together with the children's mothers or female caregivers, as in practice, men's involvement in childrearing although increasing, is still limited across the world. Fathers today have permission, tentative and unsure, but permission nonetheless, to be more emotionally present in their families, rather than having fatherhood defined primarily by the breadwinner/provider role (Viljoen, 2013). Makusha and Richter (2016) claim that a good enough father is expected to be close but not too close, and strong but not overwhelming. The difficulty for fathers at times is how to combine the contrasting images of authority and intimacy into a coherent whole. Viljoen (2013) believes that the very definition of what it means to be a good father has shifted from being concerned primarily with the provider/breadwinner role to embracing more ambiguous expectations of emotional involvement and responsiveness: "We live in a time with many contradictory demands on men—— that we are open with our feelings but also be able to get the job done, that we are expressive but also stoic, be gentle but also strong and be able to protect and defend" (Padi et al., 2014, p. 6). There is no single-father role to which all fathers should aspire. Rather, a successful father, as defined in terms of his children's development, is one whose role performance matches the demands and prescriptions of his socio-cultural and familial context (Makusha & Richter, 2016). According to Richter et al. (2010), roles within the family such as father and mother are constructed by society. These 'agreed-upon meanings' would change over time and individual behaviours and routines associated with these roles will adapt in response to these different meanings (Richter et al., 2010). Fathers and mothers make different but equally important contributions to the emotional well-being and adjustment of their children. But fathers, especially influence self-esteem, scholastic

achievement, and healthy sex role development in both their daughters and sons. There is copious research supporting the notion that involved fatherhood is crucial for the development of healthy, well-functioning families (Cable, 2017; Makusha & Richter, 2016; Malherbe & Kaminer, 2020).

The study of new expectations of involvement shaping fathers' identity is linked to what kind of fathers' men want to become. Palkovitz (2002) describes the idea of "good fathering" as containing three components: relational (e.g., caring and loving); role (e.g., provider of needs such as economic, boundary setting, and support); and personality (e.g., patient and invested). Research shows that men want to be good fathers and they perceive this desire as fuelling their fathering behaviour (Asenhed et al., 2013; Tach et al., 2014). In one qualitative study, all but one of the 30 first-time fathers interviewed expressed the desire to be a good father (Henwood & Procter, 2003). The fathers also described specific ideas about what it meant to be a good father, including the routine care, or nurturing of their child, helping with housework, and cooperating with the mother of the child.

In another study with six teenage Latino fathers, findings revealed that the men wanted to be good fathers for their children and were thoughtful about how increasing their responsibilities could help their children (Parra-Cardona et al., 2006). These findings shed light on the meaning of being a "good father." Although these studies shared findings of men's desire to be good fathers, the social locations of the study samples differed. In two of the studies, the samples were low-income, mostly men of colour, who weren't married to the mother of the child (Tach et al., 2014). In three other studies, the majority of men were White, living with the mother of the child, and married (Cook et al., 2005). The common finding demonstrates being a "good father" strikes a chord among a range of social locations of the fathers. However, two important aspects of this "good father" construction warrant consideration. Although fathers may share a common desire to be a "good father," what a good father may mean or look like varies greatly.

The prevailing perception amongst fathers in society is that it is an unusual choice for men and one they were not raised and socialised to make, and they believe that single fathers are an understudied group that has much to tell us about gender and parenting (Hook & Chalasani, 2008). There are few detailed documented studies of single custodial fathers' experiences and parenting styles. Previous research on fathers who head single-parent households, and their children has been limited in South Africa. These studies not only

focused on factual issues such as their social economic profile and how they obtained custody but also explored their functioning and difficulties as fathers (Bronte-Tinkew et al., 2010; Coles, 2015), their emotional adjustment and their relations with their children (Coles, 2015). Findings from these studies suggest that most fathers perceived their role as one of "Generative fathering" and attached supreme value to raising, educating, and nurturing their children on the same level as the mother (Ngubane, 2021). Richter et al. (2010) reported that the majority of these studies found that fathers delegate more responsibilities to their children and at the same time enjoy greater respect from them. Single fathers were also less occupied with disciplinary matters and used more positive parenting behaviours and less authoritative behaviours (Hilton & Desrochers, 2000).

Early in the twentieth century, mothers were automatically granted custody of children, and this practice was sanctified in the doctrine of "the tender years" (Hook & Chalasani, 2008, p. 12). This held the presumption that mothers were best suited to providing care for the child as their parenting skills were ordinarily superior to those of their husbands. Consideration is now given to what is in the best interest of the child. An interesting fact worth noting is that until the mid-nineteenth century, custody following a marital breakdown was typically awarded to fathers (Mercer, 2015; Tanfer & Mott, 1997). Presently, in many Islamic countries, the father as a single parent is a common occurrence, that is because governments of these nations do not recognise the value and ability of women. However, these studies focused mainly on whether single fathers were capable of solely caring and rearing their children and little attention was given to the lived challenges and experiences they faced.

Despite women's dominance in taking care of the emotional responsibility of children, there is increasing evidence that fathers can also be nurturing, affectionate, responsive, and active with their children (Madhavan et al., 2014; Morrel, 2006; Richter et al., 2010). The findings about fathers' capabilities were evident in a Canadian study that found fathers capable of nurturing (Doucet, 2004). Doucet (2004) identifies four aspects of nurturing, namely the fun and playful side, the physical and outdoor approach to caring, promoting children's independence, and the encouragement of risk-taking. One facet of the father's emotional connection with children is their role in facilitating processes of autonomy in children (Richter & Morrel, 2008). It was found that fathers play a strong role in promoting the children's physical, emotional, and intellectual independence (Morison & Macleod, 2015). The majority of fathers involved in the study said that they responded

differently from their mother counterparts when children fell down or hurt themselves, either through physical play or through exploring (Morison, & Macleod, 2015).

The other aspect examined was risk-taking. Doucet (2004) states that risk-taking is closely linked with children's independence. Fathers present more masculine qualities in caring, as they would encourage their children to take risks rather than a cautious parental approach which is often displayed by mothers (Ngubane, 2021). In Ngubane's study, three reasons emerge for fathers who head single-parent households to have this approach. These are: the residue of gendered upbringing; strong beliefs held by mothers and fathers that mothering and fathering are inherently different as identities; and lastly, fathers mentioned social taboos around men and physical touching (Mercer, 2015). Furthermore, fathers in this study expressed deep-seated differences between mother and father caregiving styles and perceived mothers as having a greater propensity towards emotional connection, nurturing, and protection (Mercer, 2015). In the everyday life of parents, there is a great deal of emotional responsibility that is often assumed by the mother, and it is frequently expected that the mother will more readily take on the emotional responsibility for children (Wall, 2007).

However, when mothers are not available, fathers do come to take on and fill that powerful and protective space and emotional responsibility is taken on. Richter et al. (2010) point out that when families are thrown into situations, mothers and fathers will act in ways that change their own deeply felt beliefs about nurturing and emotional responsibility. Evidence of this was found in Doucet's (2004) study where single fathers admitted to becoming a different kind of father as a result of being on their own with their children. Fathers displayed care and nurture in ways that demonstrate qualities that would generally be considered masculine, for example, physical play, outdoor sports, promotion of independence, and risk-taking. However, it was not clear whether these differences were differences in actions or differences in their deeply held beliefs about how men should act. She further explains that the perceptual weight attached to gender differences may at times supersede practices as there are deeply held gender scripts and discourses around mothers as the primary caregiver and fathers as the breadwinner (Luxton & Corman, 2011).

2.4. Single father's parenting experiences

Single parenthood in general has its challenges. Research suggests that single parenting, especially when the household is headed by a woman, is a challenging duty for

the single parent (Kowtal & Prabhakar, 2009). There is very limited research on the actual experiences fathers who head single-parent households encounter when solely rearing their children in South Africa (Makusha & Richter, 2016; Mercer, 2015). A common stressor found amongst single-parent households is a financial burden. The financial burden, responsibility, and upbringing of the child lie solely on the single parent. In South Africa, single mothers bear the financial burden of caring for their children because of the high maintenance default by fathers (Mills, 2003). In South Africa, like in many other countries, tax exemptions are allowed for children, and child support is tax deductible. There is a trend, for example, in the United States, France, Germany, the United Kingdom – and South Africa - to expand tax credits to benefit families with children, especially working families (Kamerman & Gatenio, 2002). However, in South Africa, unemployment is high (close to 30%) and the informal economy is so large, that tax benefits operate mainly for those men with better-than-average salaries, who generally live at home with their children anyway (Malherbe & Kaminer, 2020).

South Africa has an extensive social security system to protect vulnerable individuals from destitution and to support families to care for children. An old-age pension facility forms a critical source of support for children from low socioeconomic status, and most of the money is spent on food, clothing, and school fees (Case et al., 2005). In addition, children from low socioeconomic status qualify for a monthly Child Support Grant, given to the child's caregivers, including the father. Currently, 8 million South African children benefit from this support (Statistics South Africa, 2018). However, for a variety of reasons, including lack of knowledge and accessibility, very few fathers take up the grant, even when they are the primary caregiver of an eligible child (Case et al., 2005, Pleck, 2010). Limited research has focused on fathers' personal experiences, attention was drawn to the actual experiences and day-to-day practicalities single fathers encounter when assuming the primary caregiver role. There is very limited research on how men construct meaning for their caring activities and the circumstances under which they do so.

2.5. Gendered stereotyping and the influence on men's experiences of single parenthood

There is some evidence in a study conducted on single fathers by Cable (2017) that single fathers perceive a lack of social approval due to strong negative attitudes from family and professionals that only mothers are the proper primary caregivers. In light of the above, father-custodian families still face unique problems because of fathers'/ males' status in

society. The status exists in a climate of prejudice, wariness, and disapproval of the ability to perform as a single parent (Wall, 2007). Single fathers adjust well to their new role of parenting if there is no hostility regarding the custody of the children (Mkhwanazi & Block, 2016). Studies on father-infant relationships (Bray et al., 2011; Mercer, 2015) showed that both mothers and fathers are capable of behaving sensitively and responsively in interaction with their infants. Except for lactation, there is no evidence that women are biologically predisposed to be better parents than men (Hall & Posel, 2019). Madhavan et al. (2014) further argues that social conventions, not biological imperatives, underlie the traditional division of parental responsibilities. According to Buckley and Schoppe-Sullivan (2010), children who experience positive father involvement are likely to develop their personal resources and social competence.

Bray et al. (2011) explored the difference between father-adolescent and mother-adolescent relationships, and their findings showed fathers to be a weak link in the companionate family. These conclusions, which portray fathers as worse parents than mothers, are based on the deficit approach of single parenting. How a man defines his role within the family is important in shaping his interactions with his children (Ngubane, 2021). Fathers may not be as uninvolved and distant as the research suggests. Instead, the findings may be based on the instruments used, which may be focusing on the negative characteristics of fathers (Bray et al., 2011). In a society that relies heavily on experts, it is important to realize that what the experts tell us depends largely on the questions they ask or the questions they consider important (or possible) to ask (McNeely & Barber, 2010; Van den berg & Makusha, 2018).

The notion that maternal care is exclusive, and that the primary caregiver has a gendered connotation, has been criticised by certain researchers. As fathers are expected to be breadwinners and mothers are expected to be caregivers, the ideology of intensive motherhood sets standards for maternal care while defining male caregivers as inadequate (Ratele et al., 2012). Hook and Chalasani (2008) report that single fathers face competing interactional pressures, to simultaneously act like mothers and also like men. McKeown (2001) confirms that by suggesting that many fathers experience the stress of having to combine investment with the involvement role and being able to rely on the role model of their own father. As fathers who head single-headed households are now required to engage in the mothering role, they are considered to be in a unique position compared to other parent types. Single fathers have to face the pressure of being the sole primary caregiver

and sole primary breadwinner and are expected to modify their usual way of performing their parental role (Lamb, 2010; Morrell, 2006). In a nuclear family, mothers are expected to supervise and care for the children while the father is at work, financially providing for the family (Mkhwanazi & Block, 2016). When single fathers are faced with the additional roles of providing supervision and protection to the child, homemaking, and tending to the children's emotional needs, they have to make special psychological and sociological adjustments (Mendes, 1976). The nurturing aspect of fatherhood has been neglected due to the normative expectations of financial provision from the 'good' father (Makusha et al., 2016; Ratele et al., 2012). The role of the fathers who head single-headed households has not yet gained social recognition and acceptance and these fathers perform their roles without role clarity and certainty of fatherhood (Doucet, 2004). When some men became single fathers and assumed primary responsibility for childcare and household maintenance, they were confronted with a lack of role clarity about their new parental status. Pollack (2000) suggests that men's nurturing urge, which is often suppressed in child and adult- socialisation tasks, can be stimulated dramatically by becoming a father.

Nevertheless, some studies found that becoming a single parent can involve considerable role strain, such as role conflict and role overload as new roles are being added without others being taken away (Hilton & Desrochers, 2008). Role strain refers to the amount of stress and individual experiences when the single father is unable to comply or has difficulty in complying with the expectations of a new role (Burr, 2003). It has been reported that single fathers cope better with the role of the provider than the role of the caretaker as men are more likely to have been socialised into the breadwinner role and women the caretaker role (Hilton & Desrochers, 2008). In a survey conducted in South Africa on the role of a father as a single parent, Morrell (2006) states that most men felt comfortable and competent as single parents, regardless of their financial status or their reason for attaining custody of children. Further findings in this study suggest that single fathers are better situated than their female counterparts as they typically have higher education levels, are in the labour force, and are well situated economically. Roy (2008) corroborated this survey, with a study conducted in the USA and South Africa, which found that single fathers are more likely to be in the labour force and less likely to be poor than single mothers. More so than single mothers, single fathers are expected to be sole providers who are less likely to access government grants. However, McKeown (2001) does not support Roy's (2008) study as it is suggested that the reality of life for single fathers, as

indeed for single mothers, is that most of them live in relatively disadvantaged circumstances; many of them have low levels of education and poor earning capacity; and many of them are not able to meet the cost of independently supporting a family.

While there is intervention and assistance by the state, such as grants and services to assist single-parent families, McKeown (2001) notes that the predominant focus of services for families is on the mother rather than the father and there is a good deal of many studies and observations indicate that professionals tend to avoid fathers, and possibly vice versa. Women are more willing to ask for help than men when a family problem arises and the low uptake of family services by men may be due as much to the way those services are designed and delivered (Pleck, 2007). This is corroborated in a limited study conducted by Ratele et al. (2012), where single fathers expressed that they experienced strong negative attitudes among family, teachers, and professionals in that only mothers are proper primary caregivers. McKeown (2001) expressed that not only do single fathers face exclusion from the labour force, which is an important source of identity and fulfilment, but they also face a deeper sort of social isolation from family life and an irreplaceable stake in society by raising their children as breadwinners, homemakers, or both. McKeown (2001) closely examines the factors which exclude single fathers from family life and identifies four barriers, namely: Ideological barriers which take the form of seeing single families from either a mother's perspective or a child's perspective but rarely from a father's perspective; Legal barriers which take the form of excluding the single father from full parental rights; Income support barriers which see to the administration of child support grants which supplant rather than support the breadwinning fathering role; and finally barriers through the absence of family support services for the parenting role of single fathers. There is general agreement that single fathers are more involved with their children than married fathers (Cooksey & Fondell, 1996; Hawkins et al., 2006, Lucas et al., 2013). However, these findings conflict with studies on the comparison of single mothers' and fathers' involvement. McMunn et al. (2017) conducted a study on parental time in engagement and accessibility, with engagement encompassing all forms of direct contact between parents and child, such as care and play; and accessibility which encompasses parents' availability.

It was found that there are contradictory factors pushing fathers away and towards mothering, such as employment characteristics, household compositions, and care arrangements. Previous research on fathers who head single-headed households, and their children has been limited (Richter & Smith, 2006; Spjeldnaes et al., 2011). These studies

focused mainly on whether the single father was capable of solely caring and rearing the child/children and little attention was given to the lived challenges and experiences they faced. Heilman et al. (2017) claim that single fathers are often expected to fulfil social roles for which they have not been trained or socialised. This raises the question of whether these single fathers feel competent to raise their children or whether their male-sex role socialisation has been so overwhelmingly consistent that by adulthood, fathers have neither inclination nor aptitude to provide care for young children (Leman, 2015). Jones and Mosher (2013) argue that fathers who express non-traditional beliefs about parenting roles feel more competent in their roles as single parents. This suggests that all too often fathers who head single-headed households are put under the umbrella term, single parents. This is problematic since fathers who head single-headed households represent a unique group, with experiences, and challenges that are different from that of their single-mother counterparts.

The above sections reviewed the evidence-based research on families, alternative family arrangements, and the roles of single fathers. The majority of previous research on single fathers concentrated on fathers' abilities to develop nurturing and mothering roles, with little focus on their experiences. There appears to be a research gap in providing a detailed analysis of single men's parenting experiences.

2.6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework describes the theoretical underpinnings of the researcher's work. Theories are developed by researchers to explain phenomena, draw connections, and make predictions. In a theoretical framework, the researcher explain the existing theories that support their research, showing that the topic chosen or paper is relevant and grounded in established ideas (Swanson & Chermack, 2013). The theoretical framework plays an important role in guiding the entire process of the research study.

The theoretical framework is phenomenological; this research was conducted through a phenomenological lens with further refines the overall qualitative design of the study. Phenomenology emphasises giving a voice to the participants in the research (Larkin et al., 2006); it concerns knowing, describing, and interpreting the experiences and meanings of these experiences (Creswell, 2013; Reiners, 2012). The word itself means "bring into the light" (Pringle et al., 2011), thus making the perceptions of experiences of individuals its focus and developing an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Kafle, 2011; Matua & Van Der Wal,

2015). A key aspect of phenomenology is looking for the "essence" or common thread in experiences, which may lead to useful insights that have wider implications (Creswell, 2013; Kafle, 2011; Pringle et al., 2011). Phenomenology can either be further specified as descriptive or interpretive/hermeneutic. This research employed a hermeneutic phenomenological framework as it suggests that it is not enough to simply describe the experience of the phenomenon, one should interpret it too (Reiners, 2012). In this process, a double hermeneutic process is employed whereby the researcher tries to make sense of the way the individual made sense of the experience (Tuohy et al., 2013). Moreover, this framework posits that subjective influences cannot be ignored and views any person in context as part of a meaningful world, thus including the researcher (Larkin et al., 2006). It is the responsibility of the researcher to embrace subjectivities as part of the research (Tuohy et al., 2013). That is to say, we can only understand the fathers' reality through their experience of that reality, which may be different from another person's shaped by the individual's historical or social perspective.

Interpretive-phenomenological theory emphasises that the research exercise is a dynamic process with an active role for the researcher in that process. I am trying to get close to the participant's personal world, to take, in Conrad's (1987, p. 22) words, an 'insider's perspective', but one cannot do this directly or completely. Access depends on, and is complicated by, the researcher's own conceptions; indeed, these are required in order to make sense of that other personal world through a process of the interpretative activity. Thus, a two-stage interpretation process, or a double hermeneutic, is involved. The participants are trying to make sense of their world; I am trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world. IPA is therefore intellectually connected to theories of interpretation. In this case, I attempt to explore personal experience and is concerned with an individual's personal perception or account of an object or event, as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself.

It involves researchers interpreting elements of the study, thus interpretivism integrates human interest into a study. Accordingly, interpretive researchers assume that access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, and instruments. It is important for the researcher as a social actor to appreciate the differences between people. Moreover, interpretivism studies usually focus on meaning and may employ multiple methods in order to reflect different aspects of the issue. This study applied this contention and studied the multiple socially constructed experiences of fathers who are in a single-parent headed household.

This framework is appropriate in the context of this research because it aims to explore the experience of the phenomenon of fathers who head single-headed households. This framework is useful for understanding the essence of an experience and considers looking at multiple, similar experiences (Creswell, 2013). These experiences were interpreted in analysis, rather than merely described, and thus involved my subjectivities as the researcher. I aim describe the meaning of fathers who head single-headed households' experience—both in terms of *what* was experienced and *how* it was experienced. Research questions in IPA projects are usually framed broadly and openly, and there is no attempt to test a predetermined hypothesis of the researcher. Instead 'the aim is to explore, flexibly and in detail, an area of concern' (Smith & Osborn, 2003, p. 53). As the focus in the present study was exploring fathers who head single-headed households' experience, that is their phenomenological experience, of involving fathers in raising their children, it was considered appropriate to make use of IPA. This will help me helps us to understand the meaning of the fathers who head single-headed households' lived experiences.

2.7. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

2.7.1. How do men who are single fathers in a single-parent household experience fatherhood?

2.7.2. How do fathers in single-parent households engage in childcare?

2.7.3. How do participants understand the paternal role in the context of a single-parent household?

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the methodology that the study used. It begins with a description of the chosen research design and data collection tool. Thereafter, the sampling method, data collection procedure, and the procedure of data analysis are outlined in detail. The chapter concludes with an exploration of the ethical considerations that were taken into account during this study.

3.2. RESEARCH PARADIGM

Research paradigms establish the structure and foundation for a research project. The philosophical basis of the study guides what knowledge is sought, how that knowledge can be discovered, and how to form the collected information or data into the knowledge being sought. The research paradigm clearly outlines the path to investigate the chosen topic. It provides a framework of ideas from which your study's theories and methods can be derived. This study was grounded in the interpretivism paradigm. Interpretivism assumes that there are "multiple, apprehendable, and equally valid realities" subject to interpretation (Ponterotto, 2005. p. 129). Further, participants and researchers (each with their idiosyncrasies) co-construct meaning through interaction and interpretation (Ponterotto, 2005). As Fossey et al. (2002) note, the participant's world is "a social, cultural and historical product, as well as a pole of individual subjectivity" (p. 720). Thus, interpretation is understood to be context-specific and varied among individuals, groups, and cultures (Creswell, 2009).

Informed by the interpretivism paradigm, a phenomenological approach is uniquely positioned to support this study. Phenomenology emphasises giving a voice to the participants in the research (Larkin et al., 2006). It concerns knowing, describing, and interpreting the experiences and meanings of these experiences (Creswell, 2013). The word itself means "bring into the light" (Pringle et al., 2011), thus making the perceptions of experiences of individuals its focus and developing an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Matua & Van Der Wal, 2015). A key aspect of phenomenology is looking for the "essence" or common thread in experiences, which may lead to useful insights that have wider implications (Creswell, 2013; Kafle, 2011; Pringle et al., 2011). Phenomenology can either be further specified as descriptive or interpretive/hermeneutic. This research employed a hermeneutic phenomenological framework as it suggests that it

is not enough to simply describe the experience of the phenomenon, one should interpret it too (Reiners, 2012). In this process, a double hermeneutic process is employed whereby the researcher tries to make sense of the way the individual made sense of the experience (Tuohy et al., 2013). Hermeneutic phenomenology aims to describe and understand a phenomenon from the perspectives of those who have experienced it directly (Neubauer et al., 2019). That is, the participants are attempting to make sense of their surroundings, and the researcher is attempting to understand how the participants are attempting to make sense of their surroundings (Smith & Osborn, 2009). Accordingly, the value of a phenomenological approach in this study lies in its capacity to glean new insights from fathers who head single-headed households' experiences. Further, a review of the literature has shown parenting to be a highly contextually and culturally embedded activity. Caregivers, in particular, occupy complex and often conflicted positions in homes across South Africa. Phenomenology, as a theoretical framework, is appropriate for exploring phenomena that are complex, ambiguous, and emotionally laden (Smith & Osborn, 2009).

Moreover, this framework posits that subjective influences cannot be ignored and views any person in context as part of a meaningful world, thus including the researcher (Larkin et al., 2006). It is the responsibility of the researcher to embrace subjectivities as part of the research (Tuohy et al., 2013). This framework is appropriate in the context of this research because it aims to explore the experience of the phenomenon of fatherhood. This framework is useful for understanding the essence of an experience and considers looking at multiple, similar experiences (Creswell, 2013), which is the case here with single fathers' experiences.

3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a procedure for collecting, analysing, interpreting, and reporting data in research studies (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The research design sets the procedure for the required data, the methods to be applied to collect and analyse this data, and how all of this is going to answer the research question (Grey, 2014). A qualitative approach to research was used in the study to gain an in-depth, descriptive exploration of the research questions. Qualitative research methods attempt to gather a detailed examination of personal lived experience (Smith & Osborn, 2015). Qualitative research allows for the use of suitable methods and theories, and the analysis of different viewpoints, and it takes into account the researcher's own reflectivity as a process of knowledge

production (Flick, 2007). Qualitative research views words as naturally occurring data and relies on language in its studies (Cooper et al., 2009).

It is interested in meanings and patterns and aims to capture the complexities of the real world (Cooper et al., 2009). Qualitative research values subjectivity and depth of understanding (Cooper et al., 2009; Merriam, 2002), as such, the data gathered in qualitative studies involves rich, thick descriptions and tends to be open-ended and emerging (Cooper et al., 2009; Creswell, 2003). Qualitative research is essentially concerned with the lived experience of individuals. The research done in this regard is collaborative, valuing both the researcher and the participant (Creswell, 2003). This approach generates an understanding of the meanings that individuals associate with their experiences and perspectives.

This approach is appropriate because it allows an exploration of fathers who head single-headed households' experiences and how they understand their own experiences which allows for thick descriptions and deeper exploration into their experiences. This approach is best suited for answering the research questions above as it is a subjective approach that is concerned with understanding human beings and the contexts, in which they are situated. This kind of research design influences the kind of theoretical framework we worked from, and this is specific to the Phenomenological Approach.

A version of Smith's (1995) Interpretive Phenomenological Approach (IPA) was also used to investigate, in detail, participants' views of the occurrences under investigation from their own perspectives, to understand how they make sense of their worlds (Brocki & Wearden, 2006, Smith & Osborn, 2015). Interpretive Phenomenological Approach is particularly focused on the meanings that specific experiences and events hold for participants and tends to focus on the in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, to understand perceptions and views (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). Thus, the aim of Interpretive Phenomenological Approach research is "to explore in detail the processes through which participants make sense of their own experiences, by looking at the respondent's account of the processes they have been through and seeking to utilise an assumed existing universal inclination towards self-reflection" (Brocki & Wearden, 2006, p. 3). The aspect of self-reflection refers to IPA's assumption that participants seek to interpret their experiences in a way that is comprehensible and more easily understood by them (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). This approach to research has its historical origins in the theoretical frameworks of

phenomenology and interpretation. The approach is phenomenological as it comprises a thorough consideration of the participant's life, and endeavours to explore his or her personal experiences (Smith et al., 1999; Smith & Osborn, 2007). Furthermore, the approach aims to understand individual experiences around events, as opposed to producing an impartial statement about the event (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Thus, Interpretive Phenomenological Approach research is concerned with the participant's individual, subjective reports rather than expressing objective accounts (Flowers et al., 1999).

Interpretive Phenomenological Approach is also rooted in hermeneutics, the branch of theory or knowledge that deals with interpretation, and theories of interpretation (Packer & Addison, 1989; Palmer, 1969; Smith & Osborn, 2015). Interpretive Phenomenological Approach combines an empathic hermeneutic with a questioning hermeneutic as it is concerned with trying to understand the participant's point of view empathically whilst also asking critical questions (Smith & Osborn, 2007). This is due to the active role of the researcher in the Interpretive Phenomenological Approach, whereby the researcher attempts to access the participant's world, which is complicated as this also depends on the researcher's own perceptions (Smith & Osborn, 2007; Smith & Osborn, 2015). Therefore, the research exercise can be considered a dynamic process (Smith et al., 1999). The researcher is required to make sense of the participants' worlds through his or her own process of personal interpretation (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Smith et al., 1999). Thus, a two-stage interpretation process, or a double hermeneutic, is involved as the participants are trying to make, and understand the meaning of their world, and the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make meaning of their world (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

3.4. SAMPLING

3.4.1. Sample site

The study was conducted in Gauteng Province of South Africa. Gauteng is South Africa's smallest province, covering an area of 18 178 km2, or about 1.4% of the country's total surface area. It is bounded by the provinces of Free State, North-West, Limpopo, and Mpumalanga. While it is the smallest province, it is also the most populated, with 13 399 725 residents - 24.1% of the national population. The participants in this study emanated from Johannesburg, Soweto, and Pretoria.

Gauteng is the country's and the subcontinent's economic engine, accounting for more than 34.8% of the country's GDP. Gauteng is South Africa's economic engine and the centre of its commercial and industrial industries. Finance, real estate, and business services are the major contributors to GDP, followed by manufacturing and general government services. Gauteng is also Africa's financial services capital. More than 70 foreign banks, as well as at least the same number of South African banks, stockbrokers, and insurance behemoths, have their headquarters here. Gauteng is divided into three metropolitan municipalities, the City of Ekurhuleni, the City of Johannesburg, and the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipalities, as well as two district municipalities, which are further subdivided into six local municipalities (Statistics South Africa, 2014)

The population group has 77.4% Black, 15.6% White, 3.5% Coloured, and 2.9% Indian or Asian. This racial categorisation is that of Statistics South Africa and it does not represent how the population of this country self-labels their racial deposition, for example, ‘Coloured’ is not acceptable for such individuals, and the term mixed races is more appropriate.

3.4.2. Sampling and Sample

Studies have a population of interest, which is the population the study is aimed at studying (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2015). Results can be broadly applicable to different people or situations when it represents good generalizability. Aspects such as time, accessibility, and cost-effectiveness are always considered when selecting a population to study (Shi & Nambudiri, 2017). This study used purposive and snowball strategies to obtain the sample. The use of purposive sampling allows a way of attaining a workable total of data (Ames et al., 2019). Purposive sampling is generally used for identifying and selecting profuse information cases using limited resources (Patton, 2015). Purposive sampling allows a researcher to identify and select individuals with great knowledge and experienced a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Purposive sampling takes into consideration the significance of willingness and convenience to participate, capability to communicate, share experiences and effectively convey viewpoints and from reflection (Bernard, 2006; Spradley, 1979).

Purposive sampling was used to identify and select specific cases that have experience and knowledge of the questions at hand (Patton, 2002). This method of sampling allowed me to obtain a closer sample for which the questions were most significant in an

attempt to yield rich information (Chapman & Smith, 2002). Snowball sampling is a technique used in research where participants are asked to assist researchers in identifying other potential participants (Naderifar et al., 2017). Snowball sampling starts with a purposive sample where the initial participant serves as the start of a ripple effect, recruiting subjects, who then also recruit, expanding the sample wave by wave like a snowball (Etikan et al., 2016).

The inclusion criteria in research are used to define the requirements participants must meet for participants to take part in a study (Hornberger & Rangu, 2020). The inclusion criteria for this study included, be biological fathers aged 25 and older, the primary caregiver to their children aged 2-18 for more than a year and they must be the only adults in single-parent households from all racial groups. The reason for the chosen age group is that the critical parts of the brain involved in decision-making are developed at 25 and more (UNICEF, 2020). People are considered to be mature at the age of 25 years (Steinberg, 2009); in that case, we can trust them to make decisions and take care of themselves and their children. Ethical approval for this study was granted by the University of the Witwatersrand's Human Research Ethics Committee (Appendix F). Thereafter, I began recruiting the sample through networking and social media. I sought access and assistance in the identification of potential volunteers from an NGO called "Dads in The Picture". Volunteers were also sought through participant-referral, researcher-networking, father-related community programmes, and online platforms. An invitation to participate in the research (Appendix A), detailing the research in full, was sent to single fathers by me via email and WhatsApp. The fathers were asked to sign an Informed Consent Form (Appendix B), which was also verbally explained to six fathers by me on Zoom platform and one father in person. The consent form outlined the research process and the terms of participation, as well as addressed many of the ethical concerns for the participant to consider when agreeing to participate in this research. This included issues of confidentiality, voluntary participation, as well as the use and storage of the data. I explained the process of participation, answer any questions the caregiver may have, and set an appointment to meet with each father for the data collection.

The final sample consisted of seven participants that met the full inclusion criteria as set out by me. Each of the seven participants was assigned a pseudonym to protect their identity, they included Simon, Mkhulu, Peter, Ben, Masilo, Joseph, and Henry.

A snowball approach was used through referrals where participants recommended others (Howitt & Cramer, 2017).Interpretive Phenomenological Approach studies are performed in limited sample sizes. The comprehensive case-by-case review of the individual transcripts takes a long time. The purpose of the research is to tell more in-depth about the attitudes and understandings of these single fathers rather than making more general statements prematurely.

Table 1: Demographic details about the participants

Pseudonym	Age	Race	Relationship	Education	Work	No. of children	Children's age
Simon	26	Black	Single	University	Employed	1	3
Mkhulu	50	Black	Single	University	Employed	3	12; 13; 20
Peter	26	Black	Single	University	Employed	1	7
Masilo	44	Black	Divorced, Single	University	Employed	2	12; 16
Ben	47	Black	Divorced, Single	University	Employed	3	4; 12; 15
Joseph	38	Black	Divorced, Single	University	Employed	2	4, 14
Henry	52	Black	Divorced, Single	University	Employed	2	8; 10

3.5. DATA COLLECTION

3.5.1. Data collection instruments.

The data were collected through semi-structured interviews which lasted between forty-five minutes to an hour and a half. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and virtually on MS Teams and Zoom with each participant at a date, time, and place that was

opportune for the participant to convenience them and conduct the interviews in an environment where they were most comfortable (Smith & Osborn, 2007). One interview was conducted face-to-face, and six interviews were conducted virtually on Teams and Zoom. At the beginning of each interview, I once again outlined and explained the research process in full to the fathers. Thereafter, they were requested to sign the Informed Consent Form (Appendix B) to permit their participation in the research. Furthermore, they were required to sign an Audio-Recording Permission and Release Form (Appendix C) for the interviews to be audio-recorded. Any concerns that were raised were discussed with each participant to ensure that they understood the extent of their participation and felt comfortable in proceeding with the interview. Once the participant had consented to participate, I administered a brief demographic interview to ascertain the caregiver's socio-demographic characteristics. Thereafter, I commenced the interview using the semi-structured interview schedule. The interviews were audio-recorded and at a later stage transcribed by me. After listening to the audio recordings and reading the transcriptions of the initial interviews, the I felt that no secondary interviews for clarification, explanation, or elaboration were necessary.

3.6. DATA ANALYSIS

Interpretive phenomenological analysis was used to analyse the data. This involved a systematic qualitative, case-by-case, inductive analysis of transcripts to detail the experiences and understandings of each case before the researcher could seek a broader, generalised understanding of the specific group of participants (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Such an analysis involved listening to and reading each of the participant's audio recordings and their transcriptions several times before annotating each case with free associations and possible themes around phrases that may stand out as relevant or important to the study (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008; Smith & Osborn, 2007). Once this had been done, significant phrases that were notably repeated were grouped to form salient themes. These themes were then checked against the participants' transcripts to make sure that they were not too far removed from the original wording used by participants (Smith & Osborn, 2007). The themes were then reviewed and ordered to form a coherent and organised thematic account of each case (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). After each of the individual transcripts were analysed completely, a group analysis took place in which the themes for each case were compared with one another to deduce any commonalities or differences between them. The common threads were then formulated into new clusters or

themes, encompassing all of the individual cases (Smith & Osborn, 2007). These themes were further checked against the original transcripts, once again, to ensure that they were not too far removed from the original wording used by participants. A table of these themes was then created to summarise the overall themes extrapolated from all the participants. Finally, a narrative analysis of these themes, where the themes are outlined, exemplified, and illustrated with verbatim extracts from the participants took place in the form of a research findings chapter (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

3.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

When conducting social research, it is important to be aware of the potential problematic ethical issues surrounding the conduct of research, particularly with human participants. The researcher must at all times apply the principles of beneficence and non-maleficence to ensure that the researcher acts in the participants' best interests and no harm comes to them (Andersson et al., 2010). This study aimed to abide by these principles through the implementation of the following ethical considerations. I have received Ethics training as part of the Masters research module PSYC7022A for the Masters in Social and Psychological Research at the Department of Psychology, University of the Witwatersrand (Appendix G). Firstly, I sought permission from the institutional Non-Medical Ethics committee to conduct the proposed research (Appendix F). After being granted permission by the University of the Witwatersrand's Human Research Ethics Committee, the recruitment process offered the participants full information on the aims of the research project, the processes of data collection, and the intended use of the collected data. This information was provided to the participants in an Invitation to Participate in the Research Form (Appendix A). Furthermore, I contacted each of the interested participants to verbally explain the research process to them in full and answer any questions they might have had so that they may make an informed decision as to whether they wished to partake in the research or not. Upon recruitment to the research, single fathers were asked to sign an Informed Consent Form (Appendix B), which was also verbally explained to them by me. The consent form outlined the research process and the terms of participation, as well as addressed many of the ethical concerns for the participant to consider when agreeing to participate in this research.

It was emphasised that participation in the study is voluntary, with no risks or benefits to participating. Issues of participant consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and

potential harm were explained and procedures to deal with them were given, such as the availability of counselling, if necessary, at the Emthonjeni Community Psychology Clinic at Wits University and the contact details for the counselling service are 011 717 4513.

Participants were asked to sign a participant consent form and an audio-recording consent form (Appendix C) if they agreed to participate. These forms outlined participation requirements, their right to withdraw, data usage, and the use of audio recordings. In addition, the details and contact numbers of the free counselling services were outlined in the Informed Consent Form for single fathers to access at any time should conflicting emotional effects arise from their participation in the research. The single fathers also had to sign an Audio-Recording Permission and Release Form (Appendix C) to allow me to audio-record the interviews. The form further outlined the confidentiality, usage, and safe storage of the audio-recorded data for participants to consent to. During the data processing, the participants' identifying details were withheld on all documentation through the assignment of a personal number and pseudonym to each case that was only known to me. The documentation was kept in a secure location in a locked filing cabinet and computer documents were kept as password-encrypted documents on a password-encrypted laptop.

Great care was taken throughout the research process to protect participants' personal identifying details. Participants were notified that direct quotes from the interview were to be used in the final report. However, these quotes are given under a pseudonym assigned to the participant by me, and any identifying factors in the quotes are excluded to reduce the chance of the participant being identified. Corden and Sainsbury (2006) found that including verbatim quotations in qualitative research is useful as a matter of inquiry; evidence; explanation; illustration; deepening understanding; giving participants a voice; and enhancing readability. Furthermore, the inclusion of quotations from transcripts is believed to help clarify links between data, interpretation, and conclusions for improved reliability and validity (Spencer et al., 2003).

3.8. RESEARCH RIGOUR AND CREDIBILITY

Qualitative research is often critiqued for lacking "scientific rigor" (Cope, 2014). Accordingly, several strategies were employed to improve the credibility and trustworthiness of this study. I believe the selected method (i.e., IPA) is most suitable for answering the research question considering its capacity for handling rich descriptive data. Further, I have delineated the steps I took to perform the data analysis because the use of a

robust analytic procedure increases the trustworthiness of the study (Elo et al., 2014). Discussions on the validity of qualitative research are far more prominent in the social sciences, where researchers have offered methods for evaluating the validity of research results. According to Creswell and Miller (2000), validity criteria may be affected by "the specific methodological design" and "the paradigmatic assumptions invoked by the research." Validity taxonomies consider factors such as the rigor and sincerity of the work (Tracy, 2010), making a substantive contribution to our understanding of social and cultural life, having the potential to impact its participants, and providing "experience-near" accounts that are fair to participants (Dennis, 2013). As a result, it is critical for the researcher to clarify the grounds for their validity assertions. These ways of determining validity can be useful for analysing qualitative research findings. When the research findings are completed, the measure of credibility in this study was used to establish its trustworthiness (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). A measure of credibility focused on whether the findings from the participants reflect on each other or even on the population of single fathers. To ensure the accuracy of interpretation, I referred to the transcripts often to check whether the themes identified are consistently true to the data (Elo et al., 2014). Furthermore, the themes identified were reviewed and corroborated by the supervisor to assess the credibility of my findings and identify any biases or preferences I may have had toward the data (Shenton, 2004). I also used triangulation. The purpose of triangulation is to contrast and validate the data if it yields similar findings (Arksey & Knight, 1999). The methodology was triangulated in two ways, used in-depth interviews, and collected data from three locations. A triangulated approach allows for a comprehensive and in-depth description of people’s experiences concerning a given phenomenon (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Through the triangulated approach, I was able to demonstrate that regardless of differences in sociodemographic characteristics and places of residence, the experience of fathers solely raising their children is largely similar. The use of short representative quotations from the transcripts shows a connection between the data and my findings (Elo et al., 2014), allowing the reader to personally evaluate the credibility of my claims while further enriching the trustworthiness of the study (Fossey et al., 2002).

Chapter 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter presents the research findings on fathers who head single-parent households' experiences of raising their children. An array of distinct themes emerged from the analysis of the participants' accounts of caring for their children. However, the emerging themes were sometimes quite varied with the participants' own experiences. This section reports on the highest-ordered themes derived from the analysis. I identified several common themes from the participants' experiences, which were then arranged into the following four encompassing domains with subordinate themes, which can be seen in Table 2 below. Each theme is presented in systematic order and illustrated by the use of verbatim extracts from participants' narratives to illustrate the thematic finding. In presenting these excerpts minor hesitations such as repeated words and words like "ah" have been removed for readability. Ellipsis (…) have been used to indicate any omitted material.

Research Questions:

1. How do men who are single fathers in a single-parent household experience fatherhood?

2. How do fathers in single-parent households engage in childcare?

3. How do participants understand the paternal role in the context of a single-parent household?

Table 2: Research Findings Themes

Main Theme	Sub-Themes
Theme 1: 4.1. Single Fathers' Parenting Experiences	4.1.1. Experiences of adaptation and Self-reliance 4.1.2. Single fatherhood and support system

Theme 2: 4.2. Responsibility and Challenges	4.2.1. Changes to their lives 4.2.2. Parenting practices 4.2.3. Childhood experiences of father absence and its relation to participants' parenting practice. 4.2.4. Setting goals for their children
Theme 3: 4.3. Fathers' Perceptions of Single Fatherhood as a social phenomenon	4.3.1. Culture and community values 4.3.2. Single fathers' understanding of their roles
Theme 4: 4.4. Being A Good Father	4.4.1. Father/Child Relationship 4.4.2. Contributions to being a good father

4.1. Single Fathers' Parenting Experiences

Parenting and single parenting require sacrifices and adaptions to one's life. All seven fathers reported that the transition from being a single parent to a primary caregiver was a difficult process. It seemed that many aspects of the transition were difficult. These include becoming single homemaker and the emotional needs of the children. The fathers mention that it is not an easy journey, but it is rewarding.

4.1.1. Experiences of adaptation and self-reliance

For these fathers, the experience of adapting to being a single parent has been challenging as reflected in the following excerpts:

> "*It is not easy as I said earlier because I had to adjust, because what we see is that I don't know…in a community, a father's role was just to provide financially and then you are done, that's your role as a father. But being a single parent means you play every role. So, everything my daughter needs, I must do it. If you want me to be a mother, I will be a mother and if you want me to be a father, then I will be a father…"*
> (Peter)

"It is really difficult because I must make sure that kids have to eat, I have to make sure. It was difficult at the time when I was at work whereby, I had to come back from work and stand by the stove and make sure I cook for the girls so that they see that there is tension between myself and their mother. So, it is not easy, even though I am trying to adjust day by day, but aiii, I feel like I am failing, yah." (Masilo)

"Yoh, single fatherhood is not for the weak boys, it is not for everyone. It is quite difficult on its own, but it is an enjoyable journey if you are open-minded, you are willing and you are putting in your all, so, yeah. I can say it is quite a journey and then, it needs you to be prepared fully so, you must be responsible" (Simon)

"The experience is quite intense in the sense that one doesn't really have time for themselves, it is very limited and in a sense that now, I get to know a lot about my limits, what I can tolerate, what I can accept or what I can live with, I also learnt a lot about the dynamics, uh, that I am involved in…being the only parent in the house and juggling, you know being employed and earning a living, caring for the little ones as well as ensuring that you basically give them time and show them your presence, you know, beyond the expenditures, beyond you going to work and beyond them going to school…" (Mkhulu)

Ben narrated that he did not choose to be a single father and further explains that it is a fight that he is battling - So he is trying to be patient with himself and learn along the process:

"*It is a fight I did not choose but it is one that I am learning to be good at. So, that is my experience of being a good single father…The fight that I did not choose but the one I am learning every day to be good at because I don't even have another choice, I know. So, my experience of being a single father is a lesson, it is a lesson."*

Two fathers spoke of single parenting as an experience of learning: "*For me, the experience is quite intense in the sense that one doesn't really have time for themselves, it's very limited and in a sense that now, I get to know a lot about my limits, what I can tolerate, what I can accept or what I can live with, I also learnt a lot about the dynamics, uh, that I am involved in…being the only parent in the house and juggling, you know being employed and earning a living, caring for the little ones as well as ensuring that you basically give them time and show them your presence, you know, beyond the expenditures, beyond you going to work and beyond them going to school…"* (Mkhulu)

"*It is a humbling experience, so, you learn to be patient, to tolerate certain things that get done repeatedly, and then, you learn that certain things will happen whether you like it or not, and you must come up with means and ways of resolving whatever that you are looking at …*" (Henry)

All seven fathers narrated their experiences as challenging and that becoming single parents is a big adjustment. They reported that as much as it is challenging, their experiences are rewarding. Their experiences show that being a single father is different for everyone and whether they have chosen to become single fathers, or they may have had to take on the role because of separation or divorce- their unique circumstances affected how they felt about their roles.

4.1.2. Single fatherhood and support system

All fathers in this study initially found it difficult to adapt, although they received assistance from various sources such as their family members, and professionals in their lives. Two fathers narrated that they received support from their sisters in such a way that they would take their children to their sister's homes to visit them so that the fathers have some time for themselves as reflected in the following excerpts:

"*I have my sister who works at Menlyn, I know that I can call her at any given time, you know, and I would call her and say this weekend I am meant to be with the children, but I am exhausted, can you come please pick up the children and she would come and pick them up. And I would say, you know, my boy is playing soccer, or he was playing soccer, or he was in a debating competition, or they have an activity at school, he needs to be picked up, she would be there, so, for me, single parenting form that point of view, it's awesome."* (Mkhulu)

"*I do have sisters…I will phone and say "eish, uhm, they boys want to come and see you" and then she would say okay, they can come, then, I am taking them there, then I can go and visit my friends. Yes… if really really, I need help, those are the only people… except some of the ladies at work, they do step in, they know that I have been taking care of the kids, so, they will always be like shout if you need anything and then I would shout if I needed anything".* (Henry)

Two fathers received support from their mothers as they struggled to meet their children's needs such as money for transport to school, food, and school fees. We can see this in the following excerpts:

> *"My mom sometimes, when she has something, she knows for the past two months, I have been struggling, when she has something, she would send me money and be like "take this money and you will buy bread for when kids go to school and all things that make a lunch box, so that at least they shouldn't see that you are struggling, you will pick up and all that. She, she helps me. For the past two months, I have been getting support from my mom."* (Masilo)

> *"So, my mom would help me financially to pay for school fees and transport."* (Peter)

Joseph received support from his parents, school, and parents of other children who are friends with his child. He narrates that his child would forget pocket money for school, then teachers would call and inform him and further offer to help the child. Parents of other children supported him with gender-related issues, for example, Joseph would dress his daughter like a boy and the parents would intervene and make him aware that he is raising a girl child and that she should dress as a girl:

> "*The only help I got was, to say maybe on school holidays, when I am really tired, I need to rest, then, I would send her to my parents, that's when she was younger, now, she doesn't want to go there, she doesn't want to go there because my mom has passed on… I used to get help at school because, at school, they knew that okay, I am a single parent and what…and they knew how close I was and then, they would call me, let's say sometimes she forgets to carry the money and the teacher would say, nah, I will give her the money, don't worry, I would be like, okay, I am coming to school and she would say no, no, no don't worry, I know you going to be here, I will give her the money and you will bring the money whenever you want to and then I used to get help from other parents, from the friend's parents, so, she's a girl and I am a guy…whenever they are going to a party, they would say, no, hey, this is a girl, she needs to dress up as a girl and I would quickly dress her up differently and they would help me with her hair*."

One father received a different source of support namely professionals. His kind of support is different from the kind of support six other fathers received: "*My support system is the professionals, it is the lawyers, it's the business partners and soon it will be the counsellors and so on. Not family, not friends, not nothing…"*. (Ben)

Simon narrated that his kind of support is through social media where he watches videos on single fathers and their experiences. He also added that he is in touch with one podcaster who is on the same journey as him who helps him with advice and encouragement:

> "*He has been giving me tips, even though I haven't met him but he helped me a lot even at times I felt like giving up, He told me look, man, this is a journey, I think he has daddy's podcast where he speaks with single fathers and their experiences…and then, uh, currently worldwide or should I say in South Africa, I don't think we have quite of programmes that do help single parents, especially males, we don't have such platforms….*"

All seven fathers were aware of the struggles that they face, as men raising children alone. These fathers had strong and extensive support systems or networks that facilitated their parenting and daily lives. These fathers indicated that their social support network helped to meet their needs, as well as those of their children, including assisting with work or school demands in addition to allowing them to take some time to themselves. These fathers' use of support networks varied, with several of them having no real forms of social support, three having a strong reliance upon them, but five fell somewhere in between.

The use of support networks also varied in their reliance from solely daily assistance and logistical care of their children to the inclusion of emotional and mental support. Five of the fathers had a decent and stable support network of some form and only two were significantly lacking any such network. All these fathers had intentionally built some form of a support system for themselves and their children. These networks consisted of family, friends, community, and other parents, as well as some school faculty and staff networks for emotional and childrearing support. Although the fathers highlighted in this section tended to use familial support, other respondents depended on other parents, friends, etc. which is briefly discussed in chapter five concerning childcare issues.

After discussions of services that were used or not, and discussions of support networks, these fathers were asked about what services they would like to have available and to identify resources they felt were lacking that would be beneficial for single fathers or single parents in general. The fathers overwhelmingly identified the desire and need for a support network system, counselling, child sharing, and basic community bonding ideals that they felt would increase their success and contentment as parents in general. They stated that support services

such as counselling are needed, and these included some of the resources they were currently lacking such as support from women, listening to them, help with gender-related issues, and online support groups.

Simon believed that programmes that teach single fathers about single fatherhood would be helpful as it is difficult to raise a child as a single father:

> "*I feel like there should be more programmes that teach fathers about parenthood because raising a child, is not child's play, it is quite a difficult situation, it is challenging, let me put it this way, I feel like there should be more programmes that alert us as fathers on how to raise our children, not as fathers, actually before we become fathers, one should be taught about fatherhood, so that you know that if ever you be a father, whether you are with the mother or without the mother, how are you going to attack this situation. I think there should be just, or put more out there, I don't know how but there should be more educational programmes out there about these things, where they teach people about parenthood, especially the single ones. It can make things easier…"*

During the interviews, four fathers also spoke about the need for a larger community ideal of support from society and women, not only for themselves and their children but also for the building of a supportive community or village at large for the betterment of all involved. They mentioned that being single fathers is challenging but if women change their approach to relationships, not being given weird looks by society when they buy things like sanitary pads for their daughters; they believe this will make a difference. We see these in the following excerpts:

> *"Maybe women need to change their approach there if they are going to be dating single fathers, so that they can identify that okay this is now our kid because even if I meet you with your kid, I would never address your child and say "your child", no!, I would address that child by the "name" and "our kid" and if there's a problem, let's resolve it. Do not say "your child" and then, like, yah, every time whenever the child is wrong, you get blamed and still feel like you are a single father…"* (Joseph)

"Just be there for fathers, listen to them because one thing they need the most is just someone to just listen to them even though you do not offer anything but just listening because sometimes its…. I don't know about men raising boys because that one, we had a debate with other fathers the other day, that we think it's much better, easier with fathers raising boys compared to fathers raising girls. So, I think at this point, the support we need from people, especially women is just listening to us because my kid will be acting up sometimes and I don't understand why she's doing that, so maybe if I can sit down with you as a woman and tell you what my daughter is doing and then you tell me that okay you can do this and this and this because I think sometimes when I see a father on twitter saying my kid has started her periods, I don't know what to do, she locked herself in her room, what must I do? People were advising him, to do this and that. Sometimes what these guys are doing, we feel like this need a woman or whatever so listening to us can be very helpful." (Peter)

"My daughter, I think she was 12 when she started having her menstrual cycle, even till this day, I still get looked at funny when I go to the shops and buy her lil-lets or tampons and all those things and for me, it's ridiculous. The other support is, if I take my daughter to the doctor or my son to the doctor, the doctors need to be, aware that it happens, they shouldn't be asking about where the mother is, it is irrelevant unless they want a blood sample or something…so, society needs to…society is secondary, primary is the service providers, the social workers, psychologists, teachers, they all need to understand that it is okay for the father to be the one that is bringing the child to school, or the hospital or buying them everything for the child or doing a thing for the child…So, for me, it's not about making things special concession for the father, but it's about letting the father be…"(Mkhulu)

The expressed necessity of these support networks emanated throughout the conversations with six fathers concerning daily coping and childrearing.

4.2. Responsibility and Challenges

This section presents the way the fathers view their responsibilities and how they navigated through changes that happened in their lives. All the fathers emphasise being there for their children and being involved with overseeing the lives and daily care of their children.

4.2.1. Changes to their lives

All fathers mentioned that being the sole caregiver comes with a lot of responsibility. They reported that all children need care, and this means that there needs to be changes in their lives. All these participants made a lot of changes to their lives as they became single fathers raising their children without a partner. The changes meant less going out, losing friends, putting their children first, and changes to their lifestyles. We see this in the following excerpts:

> *"A lot, I made a lot of changes, I had friends, I had places to go on weekends, I had a park that kept me busy over the weekends, so ever since I am taking care of the boys, I can't do all of that, I need to be mindful that they have got clean clothes, schoolwork is up to date, the house is clean, you know? Homework is done, so, those things take a lot of my time. That's why my day starts at 2 o'clock in the morning, so, as I said, a lot has changed, I put them first than any other person in my life."* (Henry)

> *"Less going out, that was a big one, less going out and no more smoking in the house, uh, coming back from work to pick up my daughter, that was the first change and she was young cause I have to, okay, first of all, I must sleep with the child, I cannot sleep whichever way in want, I must wake up and iron for this person, second change was, every time I drive because home is Soweto and we used to live in Midrand, no I must have a car seat, I must have a pram, I was driving a citi golf, I needed to take my speakers out at the back, that was unpleasant experience because I needed to fit the pram…. the other big change that I had to do was to get a washing machine because now I needed to do laundry for two, with the washing machine, I didn't care because my parents were still doing laundry for me, so, it was fine, but then, when I had a child, I couldn't abuse them like that, So, I needed to get a washing machine and this thing of cooking every flipping day, I used to not cook on Fridays but right now I need to make sure that this person eats, and it's a big role that is underestimated in many households because it's just assumed to be a woman's role, but then, it's exhausting, but that was one of the big thing that I had to adjust and say okay cool, I need to cook every day, I know I need to get her from school, I need to get home, the food must be ready by 6, whether she's hungry or not…because if she's hungry at 6 o'clock, then, there's no food and then she's going to throw a tantrum, so, that's why I need to make sure that the food is ready by 6."* (Joseph)

"I had to cut a lot of friends, my lifestyle, I used to be a people's person, Fridays you know, I drink, I would go out with my friends to drink and come back late at night, even my ex knew that Fridays I go out with my gents to drink and then come back maybe around 12 and 1. So, that I am no longer doing, I would go out on Fridays, then around 9 and 10, at least I am home, maybe I would find them sleeping. But sometimes on Fridays, they would sleep late, then I would sit with them and go to bed at the same time. So, I cut a lot of friends, the lifestyle in which I would go out with friends, especially on weekends, yah, I am no longer doing that, I cut that completely, just to make time with my kids, that is it." (Masilo)

"You must cut out everything, going out, working too much, drinking too much, and dating too much…Everything changes, your work balance situation gets messed up" (Ben)

"Sometimes I work over hours, so, if I come back late, I would be like I will just see the food tomorrow. But now, tired, or not, I have to cook. That's the first change, uh, maybe one spoon is fine at my place, its only mine but now I have to go but another one because she's using this one, and I can sometimes take two days without cleaning my room, but now, I have to clean my room more often, maybe back then, I was stingy and walk naked in my room but now I can't do that anymore. There are things I do not like but if this person like them, I have to like them. The TV is not exciting to me anymore because even if I am watching soccer if this one wants to watch Sofia the first, we are going to watch Sofia. Even if there is a girl that I like, she's not going to be only my girlfriend, but in everything I do, I have to consider this one's feelings…, I lost some friends during the process because I wasn't going out now, I am forever indoors, so, I lost friends, uh, yah. I am always indoors but not by choice but because of this person I need to look after. So, I don't go out anymore, I lost some friends because the things we used to do as friends, I can't do them anymore…" (Peter)

Simon mentioned that his child encouraged him to finish his degree, do better, and make better choices in life. He did all this so that his daughter will be proud of him in the future.

"I made a lot of changes, I guess even now, it has helped me finish my degree, maybe I would still be at the university, enjoying the university life, I was a politician at the time

but then I had to change my ways for her because I wanted to be good for my daughter, I focused on my career and trying to make something out of it... So that when she grows, she will say, that's my father, and what what…She encourages me to make better choices in my life…"

Mkhulu spoke of thinking about the things he was not thinking about before such as buying groceries, preparing the children for school, and dropping off them at school.

"Grocery has to be my primary responsibility obviously and the grocery, I needed to think of it as five days in a week, they have to have lunch and they have to have snacks…and the decision that I am going to buy fruit, I am going to buy something like biscuits and Simba for afternoon snack and lunch is going to be bread or whatever or it is going to be macaroni and cheese. So, that planning, literally all my friends were out of the picture for that...it became me and them, obviously, there was an expense of getting them into the gym, getting them gym clothes, towels and all of that, gym bags, and the we started going to the gym and from there, I would drop them off at school, then, after in the afternoon I would go and pick them up."

Two fathers experienced changes in their lives, and they further realised that their focus is no longer on them anymore but on their children in terms of decision-making, creating bonds with their children, and what is important for their children.

"I live for very few things; one is politics and power and two is my children. I don't care about any other things…" (Ben)

"You know that now you are not living your own life alone, you are sharing a life with someone, so whenever you do something, you must think of them." (Simon)

We see this when Peter also reported that sometimes he gets back home time and he will be feeling like he does not want to cook but he must cook because the child has to eat: "*Now everything I want to do, I can't do it the way I want to do it, I have to consider that I have a second person in my life. Sometimes, I would come back from work tired, feeling like today I don't want to do whatever, but there's someone who needs to be cooked for".*

While navigating and learning to be a father, these fathers structured their lives around their children. Some of the changes they reported were changes in the living arrangements, loss of friends, and less going out. But they all remained diligent in their responsibilities, by any means necessary. These changes to these fathers' lives influenced the way they thought about themselves as fathers and how they do not miss anything happening in their children's lives. These experiences allowed them to reflect on the role of sole caregivers in their households and what is meant for them as fathers and the value of having their children.

4.2.2. Parenting practices

All these fathers have their own unique ways of instilling parenting practices. These fathers reported specific behaviours that they use to socialize with their children such as honesty, respect, love, and support. Here we see their parenting practices and the effect it has on their children.

> *"Principles, respect, willingness, and honesty. So, I instil a lot of principles, like you eventually respect every other person you meet, uhm, you don't steal, you do not lie, no matter what, so, if you did something wrong during my absence, immediately when I get into the house, you need to tell me exactly what you did, and we can talk about it. Don't wait for me to ask you what happened. You clean after yourself, even if you do not do it perfectly but that mindset of knowing I must rinse my cup after using it. Those are some of them. And, to understand that people are different, uhm, they shouldn't take this, their parents' situation and apply it in their lives, they might meet different people from me and mommy, aunty, so they must have an open mind."* (Henry)

> *"Way of raising her? I do not know…I don't know how to describe it but, its more of a friendship because I have realized that most of the time, I am all she has, and that is why I need to support her in everything, that's why I have never missed a day when she was at the hospital. I have never missed a single sports day that she had, I never missed any big moment that she experiences, so, I feel like it is more of a…she sees me more of a friend than I am her dad and she knows that I can count on my dad any day."* (Joseph)

> *"I am a disciplinarian although I am strict and harsh sometimes, I am very loving and supportive, so my children have the best of life…this one just had MacDonald now, and*

the older ones just had a pizza now. I love my children and my method of raising them is that I am being hard on them as well as being a disciplinarian. obviously in different amounts, because the younger one is fine, such a cry baby, a cheese boy, and then uh, the older one is dating, she's got 15 years. You understand?" (Ben)

"I was raised by a single mother, so, when it comes to morals, you must be, uh, I don't know to put it but you must be a good person, you must be respectful, you must not give up in life, you must not let anyone break you, you must have high confidence, actually, you should be a free spirit while considering others, yah, that's how I raise her to be herself and to never apologise for anything that she is and to always know that its right to be herself, to love and be loved back…" (Simon)

"I believe in structure, I believe in reward, I believe in play, I believe in consistency, so, structure as in I believe they need to have woman influence, motherly…and male influence which is fatherly, whether they get if, from an uncle or an aunt or grandmother or a grandfather, it doesn't matter but they need to have it in their lives and I believe that love is an expressive word but it is more of an action they need to feel the love, I always say to my friends that until your children know and felt that you love them, you cannot discipline them because that discipline could actually end up unknowingly being abused…" (Mkhulu)

All these fathers reported raising their children in different ways. They reflected on their own experiences of how they were raised and instilled the same principles. So, this encouraged them to seek the same for their children. Love and care are highly visible in these fathers' parenting practices. All of them emphasise being there for their children. They say they show them warmth psychologically by showing an interest in them, keeping up with what they are doing, and supporting them, as well as making time to listen to them and have conversations with them about anything and everything. They also show their children love and care by encouraging and complimenting them. They emphasise independence and freedom because they believe that is one characteristic of good parenting, and the same applies to discipline, boundaries, and rules. They believe this emphasis is good for their children.

4.2.3. Childhood experiences of father absence and its relation to participants' parenting practice.

Participants who had fathers at home expressed that their fathers lacked caring and supportive characteristics such as availability, being listened to, patience, and attention which they understood to be essential requirements of fathers. Four fathers said that if they were able to include these characteristics in their fathering it would make them better fathers:

> "*By the way, I was raised by a single mother, so the fathering was new to me because I grew up without a father and I had no father figure, no uncles, or brothers. I am the only first male in my family, so I had to learn everything from the scratch and mind you, we are only two from my mom, it's me and my younger brother, so now…she's the first girl in the family, I had to adjust on how to treat a girl child because, with my brother, we were always fighting since primary and stuff, you know how brothers are…so, now, there's a new person in the picture, who is a girl and I have never had a sister or a younger sister in my life, now I get to adjust and I still say this.*" (Peter)

Mkhulu said that his father was not there physically when he grew up; he appreciates living with his children and being there for them: "*Initially, even before I had my first child, I had lots of thoughts, having grown up with a father who was not there, who was not next to me when I grew up, but what I have come to appreciate is the joy that they bring and fulfilment…*"

These single fathers developed a new understanding and perception of a good father based on their own experience with their fathers. They took their own experience and constructed a perception and awareness, which falls into the paradigm of interpretivism. They wanted to give their children the experience they did not get to experience. They wanted to do well with their children.

4.2.4. Setting goals for their children

The well-being of their children is a leitmotif running through the fathers' parenting goals: They want their children to do well, especially in relation to their happiness and success. They want their children to be at peace with themselves and with life, have interpersonal skills, follow rules and customs, have healthy lifestyles, and be independent and self-reliant.

> *"I try to teach them to be independent especially on things like, that they need to know at their age, they need to wash their socks, they are not forced to, but they can try…even if you do not wash them cleanly, the fact is it makes sense that, they know what to do*

for themselves. So, if they grow with that mindset, they will continue to do it until they do it correctly." (Henry)

"I may be alone with my kids, they will grow up, it is fine, even if I die alone, it is okay. As long as they grow up and be independent, its fine…" (Joseph)

"I make sure I protect them, make sure they eat until they can be independent when they are done at school, at varsity, and make sure they get jobs and after that, yes, I can retire but then I will still be their father and still protect if when they are married and all that." (Masilo)

"That is why the companies are there…the children also must be strong and independent, that's why the companies are there, so, my support system is the professionals, it's the lawyers, it's the business partners and soon it will be the counsellors and so on. Not family, not friends, not anything…Because I feel if I do that, I will subject my children to demands from people when I am not here… Their education is the most important thing in my life. Their education and their health. But their education more, that's why she's not going to university, it's her choice…She's going to take a gap year, she's going to London to see how life is overseas, So, that's my most important thing." (Ben)

Four fathers spoke about their focus on having their children be independent, put themselves out there, and be able to take responsibility for themselves. Their focus on independence can be seen, for example, in their emphasis on seeing the children become self-reliant, pursue education, and become financially independent, and responsible. These fathers emphasise working hard and making a habit of the industry early in life, so they can manage by themselves.

Simon wanted his daughter to be confident and loved: "*That is how I raise her to be herself and to never apologise for anything that she is and to always know that its right to be herself, to love and be loved back…"*. This is part of Simon's parenting approach. He teaches his daughter to stay true to herself and that she does not try to be someone else when she is outside.

4.3. Fathers' Perceptions of Single Fatherhood as a social phenomenon

All the fathers spoke of how society does not treat all parents equally. These fathers reported how they always feel misunderstood, and they expressed negative attitudes and stereotypes towards them as single parents as the greatest difficulty of single parenting. They spoke about the situations of direct disapproval of society due to their status as single fathers, including condemning, ridiculing, underestimating, or lack of support.

4.3.1. Culture and community values

A particular cultural context may influence the way that a father is understood, which indirectly affects how a single father is understood. The participants reported that they are perceived as less caring than mothers, with poor parenting skills, and poorer relationships. They experience their single parenthood status through social interaction within the Black South African context. All these fathers are questioned for whether they can provide care for their children by society and people who are close to them such as families and close friends do not believe that they are capable of nurturing or caring for their children. We can see these in the following excerpts:

Henry said that his family wants him to get married so that he can get help with raising his children: *"When I go home, it is a different story, like "what kind of a man are you who is raising children?' You, see? Why don't you get a wife? So, I get these types of questions, few people are asking and few people that are a bit sceptical."*

Henry further added that some people appreciate what he does for his children because it is not what they see every day in terms of fathers in a single-headed household: "*A lot are very appreciative of what I do".*

Joseph said that his parents and grandmother wanted him to marry the mother of his daughter because they believe that his daughter needed both parents in the household and that there was no way he can manage raising her by himself: "*From parents and my grandmother, they would, dude, there's no way, you should get…uh, they actually wanted me to marry the girl's mother but then I can't, we are not vibing anymore, and I told them that I am fine with my daughter and they told me she needs both parents yada yada…"*

Peter told of his experiences of social interaction with other people as a single parent and father: "*The other day I was in Menlyn, going back to Pretoria, she was 3 years and she started crying and people were like why can't you take her to her mom? Where is she? And I do not like it when people ask me about the mother because I am there, I can do this…why does it have to be it's only the mother that can do this, and when people compliment you, you guys are so cute, where is the mother? So, why does it have to be like…the mother be included in this? Why can't it be for me and my daughter alone? Or maybe you are hitting on someone, it's like you are such a nice guy, and I would like to know you better but where is the mother, I don't like baby mama drama and stuff like that, but when it's the mother doing that, we do not ask where the father is, you see?"*

Simon added: "*I am glad the critics turned into appreciation because now that she is 3 years old, they see her talking, they see how we are with one another, but, yah I get it a lot, even now if I can post her on the social media, people ask don't you give this kid to the mother? Do you think its health for the kid? They say a lot of things… People have stereotypes and that is what makes me appreciate her more because the more they judge us, the more I do better…"*

Mkhulu stated that his experiences of being a single parent encourage him to empower himself: "*The worst thing is that these things are from your own family, my own mother didn't believe that I can successfully do that…She's used to boys being marginalized at home when they grow up, by the time they are 10, they can change the colour of the bicycle, and they can't really boil rice whereas daughters can…when they were in the house, and there was a nappy that needed to be washed, back in the day…it was handed to the girls and it is the narrative that distorted that, for me, now, I can only point it to divine intervention, that something in me wanted me to be better than the generations before me but not only wanted me to be better, it pushed me into empowering myself on the how of changing nappies and on the how of…"*

Society has placed expectations on males, which shaped these single fathers' idea of good fathers and what their roles are. These fathers felt that they were perceived negatively by other males, family, friends, etc., and that solely rearing their children was a fault on their part. They spoke about how their societal norms impacted the way they were perceived. All these fathers experienced judgment from others and this impacted whether they felt they were doing the right thing, solely caring for their children. They felt that it is the perception that mothers are best suited for caring for the children and that he would be frowned upon because he is a

male wanting to care for his children. In all these, these fathers felt encouraged to do right by their children. They acknowledged their responsibilities and wanted to provide for their children and make them happy.

4.3.2. Single father's understanding of their roles

Four fathers in this study expressed that they initially experienced role challenges when attempting to engage in the expressive role. Questions exploring the roles fathers employed while rearing their children and their level of involvement and engagement in tasks related to child rearing were posed to these single fathers. The motivation for the successful engagement of tasks was the responses they received from their children. This ultimately encouraged these fathers to get the job done and this is illustrated in the responses from the fathers below:

> *"A father is the…as a protector, as everything you know, as the provider, that's how I understand it, that I do not have to fail my kids, I must be there for them each time they need me. That is my role, I make sure I protect them, make sure they eat until they can be independent when they are done at school, at varsity, and make sure they get jobs after that, yes, I can retire but then I will still be their father and still protect if when they are married and all that…"* (Masilo)

> *"If you have children, you have one of two choices, you can run away from them or you can run towards them…I am running towards my children, what are my reasons for that? Is to understand my children and run towards their needs, run towards them, understanding them as people..."* (Ben)

Mkhulu added*: "For me, the role of a father is not equal to any other role, it is equitable to the role of a mother because the two of them bring nurturing for the child but the role of a father, I see it as a day to day mentor, I see it as a day to day provider, a day to day carer, and a day to day helper of making sure that the children are actually cared for…not somebody who stands in the background and he's there for certain aspects but somebody who literary is at the forefront of making sure that they are nurtured, they are taken care of, they are, you know, they have what they need, they understand the difference between a need and want. It is crucial, it's the most important role that a man as a human being could ever have…"*

Two fathers expressed that if they were not doing two roles together (mothering and fathering), they would have different views of their roles. We see these in the following excerpt:

> *"No, I can't really say I really understand my role as a father because I am trying to do two roles at the same time, if only I was playing a father role, uhm, while there's a mother, maybe I would give you a different answer."* (Henry)

Peter narrated that he plays two roles and further adds that his initial understanding of a father's role was to provide for the family through finances but now he sees that it is way beyond what he initially thought: "*It is not easy as I said earlier because I had to adjust because what we see is that I don't know…in a community, a father's role was just to provide financially and then you are done, that's your role as a father. But being a single parent means you play every role. Sometimes I am a mother when my kid says, I am not sure if you saw a picture on Instagram. She will say daddy can I put makeup on your face and then I must be a mother and what we understand as a father's role is that uh, in a black community is that we don't have to cook but now I must cook, so I am doing both, fathers and mother's roles.*"

Five fathers had mixed responses when answering questions relating to the role challenges they experienced. The initial idea of being a father changed once they became fathers who head single-parent households. They also reflected on how their roles had changed in terms of responsibility. It was understood that their roles as protectors meant that they were to be a compass for their children. This meant that instead of just exercising authority, being a protector as a father entailed providing direction; much like a compass would provide direction. Even though the idea of a father being the leader in the family emanated from a heteronormative view, the way the fathers interpreted their roles as leaders here was slightly more dynamic. The feelings of entrapment these single fathers experienced are a result of role strain and the inability to perform male as well as female roles within parenting. In history, there have been separate roles allocated to mothers and fathers. It was argued that mothers contribute daily care, routines, and nurturing and fathers provide protection, economic, and disciplinary facets of parenting. For men, there is also a general struggle over their identities as fathers, and when in a single-parent situation there is a drive to "prove" themselves capable of traditional mothering roles. Nevertheless, these single fathers willingly altered their gendered roles and fully embraced them in their daily lives with their children.

4.4. Being A Good Father

This section describes how single fathers construct certain feminine characteristics within the role of a father. Questions relating to single fathers' involvement and attentiveness, in terms of reading, homework, emotional support, and providing affection were posed to single fathers. All these fathers felt that their initial response to solely rearing their children was a challenge but as time passed, they became more comfortable with their new roles and found it easy to construct these roles. Single fathers expressed that they felt comfortable engaging in these tasks.

4.4.1. Father and child relationship

A high priority for these families was the importance of relationships; all fathers revealed that they needed others and others reached out to others when they needed help. For these fathers, it is important to have an open and honest relationship with their children. They appear to derive pleasure in their interactions with their children and although available quality time is limited, they have activities that bring them together to connect on a deeper level. These fathers have taken charge of their lives; they are resilient and determined to make the best of the situation in which they find themselves. We see these in the following excerpts:

Henry said he has a friendly relationship with his children: "*We get along very well."*

"My relationship with my children…Uh, the love man, the love I have for those people, the minute they were born, it's something else man, uh, When my daughter was born, my grandmother was still alive, she used to say, never go the clinic when your child is born, I don't go there, whatever, but I have been there both of their beds, and yah man, it is something special, we bonded immediately the minute they were born." (Joseph)

"Ohh, excellent! Uhm, I will even show you some videos and pictures at the end of this interview to show that we are good. Right now, I am coming from home before I met you. We had a very good time, we were dancing together, it was all fun and nice. We were making jokes, and we are good. On weekends, I would take them out for a walk or maybe go hiking and all that. When things are good, then we would go out as a family, then got to holidays, and vacations, stuff like that, yah, it's like that. We are very close to each other." (Masilo)

"It is nice, it's not bad," said the kid. So, that's the answer, it's not bad but it can be improved…That was my daughter, I am sitting with them at the park hey…All three of them. But I am not sitting with them in the interview, but they see me." (Ben)

"Yoh, our relationship is excellent. It is amazing. Our relationship is amazing because, even my mother complains a lot that, when I am not around, this kid is not free, when she visits my mom that side, after 3 days, she would call me like daddy please come fetch me, I want to come back to you. I remember the other time I went to, uh, earlier this year, I went to visit my friend in Alex, it was raining that day, and I had to drive back home around 12 because this kid is crying for daddy, and it's been a day since I didn't see her. So, I had to drive back. So, my child is everything, yes…my child is first and last." (Peter)

"It Is very right, we even gave each other names, she doesn't call me "Papa' or "Daddy", it is Dodo, and I also call her Dodo…like, we never take anything serious, we are all about fun and experiencing life….I don't want to lie, I was depressed during the process of raising her but then, at the end of the day, she was giving me hope and love each and every day, so, I don't want to consider it a depressing situation, I consider it as a helpful situation, given an opportunity to raise her myself." (Simon)

"Uh, the eldest is a girl, so we sort of built quite interesting relationship, I am the first one she goes to when anything just goes beyond her daily needs, uh, I was the first one to know that she was having periods, she trusted me with that information because the difference between me and her mom is that my responses are always cognisance of her feelings and how she would react and all of that so, I am, you know when it comes to them being naughty, I trust the mom to actually speak up and get them in line quicker I would because I would want to understand first what were they doing, what went through their heads and all of that, so, even when it comes to them needing something, if one is hurt, I would be that last person to say "what were you doing", you see? It's me who would say, "sorry, let us sort this out" …" (Mkhulu)

One of the positive factors that emerged from being single fathers in the home was that closer relationships were formed between the fathers and the children. Their closeness makes it easier for them and the children to bridge the sex-role model stereotype. They connect with

their children on many levels; they can talk about almost anything. They want to participate more fully in parenting their children. They want to have more of a relationship with their children in three ways. They want to be emotionally closer to them, to have more and deeper conversations with their children, and to spend time with their children.

The single fathers described how they made their children's well-being their priority. Four fathers appreciated the good that came with single parenting and that they learnt new things about themselves, which they think they would have not learnt if they were not solely raising their children. We see these in the following excerpts:

Henry said that he used to become angry easily. He decided to go for counselling and that is when he realized children need time to understand things and that he needs to change his behaviour towards them and be tolerant: *"I used to shout a lot because now you are repeating the same thing all over again and again. So, I realised that when I raise my voice, they get very scared, so, now, they feel like I am trying to abandon them, or I am not treating them well, so they don't have anywhere to run to. I had to go for counselling, and then, uh, then I realized that no, I am scaring these guys, I need to change the way I am speaking to them, I need to be tolerant. They taught me tolerance. I am very short-tempered by nature, but these boys, they humbled me".*

Joseph said he learnt to be a good cook and not to be selfish*:" I make a good cook, I make a good comforter, uh, I want my kids to experience the best of what they can have and yes man, you learn to experience not being selfish, I was a last born for a very long time in my house, I have always been so selfish and entitled, but then when I had my daughter man, all of that went to hell and everything must revolve around her, my decision must revolve around her, the other day, the other year, I wanted to move to Australia, she was going to come along, everything I do must revolve around her."*

Peter added that he did not know that he is a fashion designer until he became a single father solely caring for his daughter. He mentioned that he met important people through single fatherhood conferences and this is what he appreciates about single parenting: *"The first one is designing, I did not know that I am a fashion designer until I became a single father because in most cases, I would sit here and imagine something like yoh, what if I make a dress and a trouser matching and staff and then I go to the workshop and do it….Also, I did not know that*

I love kids the way I love them now. I prefer my child bringing her friends over to my place than her going to other people's place because I don't know, maybe I am overprotective and staff but the way I act and bond with these kids, I never knew I love kids the way I love them now….I have met DJ Sbu and staff, if I was not a father, I was not going to get the opportunity to meet with those people because we sometimes organise fatherhood conferences where only fathers and we are talking about fatherhood and the challenges that we face, uh, maybe after the conference, we also get a chance to talk about our businesses and also get business partners and that, so those are the relationships that I have built on fatherhood."

Mkhulu said that his son made him aware of the words that he should not use with his children: *"Big boy, shame, he's an intellectual young man, he thinks a lot, he internalizes everything before he speaks, uh, I know we one quarrel, me and him because I used one word on him once when he was….I think he was about 9, I said something, that "you are slow", and then the following day I said it again for whatever reason, and then right there, he shed a tear and said daddy I am not slow and that was the last time I used that word, so, like I was saying earlier, they have sort of helped me, built me into the person I am today."*

4.4.2. Contributions to being a good father

All these fathers felt that their children came first, above work, school, or themselves. The fathers also described specific ideas about what it meant to be a good father, including the routine care, or nurturing of their child, helping with housework, and cooperating with the mother of the child. These fathers shared their desires and motivation to become good fathers as part of their identity development during their transition to fatherhood. Fathers did not communicate this desire and motivation by using the word good but used more nuanced language to describe the "positive" fathers they wanted to be. Fathers identified the awareness that behavioural and attitudinal change was necessary. They also recognized the importance of the time to implement that change was an important element. Specifically, the desire to be a good father arose for almost all men during the prenatal period when they found out they were going to become fathers, and it motivated them to reflect and act.

> *"It is being a good listener, being compassionate, understanding that you were once a child, so don't expect miracles from this little one. They are prone to make mistakes from time to time. And they are likely to repeat the same error, from time to time. You just need to have a way and you just need to be patient. At first, maybe you haven't*

asked me about my frustrations, uh, but one of my frustrations was that I couldn't, uh, reprimand them calmly at first. Yeah, I used to shout a lot because now you are repeating the same thing all over again and again. So, I realised that when I raise my voice, they get very scared, so, now, they feel like I am trying to abandon them, or I am not treating them well, so they don't have anywhere to run to. I had to go for counselling, and then, uh, then I realized that no, I am actually scaring these guys, I need to change the way I am speaking to them…" (Henry)

"I think spending more time with them, I think that's what my girls want, they love spending time with me, you know? Doing things together, sharing jokes you know? Yeah, when I have got money, at least go out for breakfast and you know? Things like that, going out on holidays, we go out a lot when I am with them." (Masilo)

"Love, respect, and discipline. I am not their friend (laughs)…As long as they respect me, I respect them, love them, they love me, I discipline them, and they understand discipline. There's nothing else…And they know that you can call the anytime, once we are done with this interview, when you want to talk to them, you can ask them, what does daddy say every day…I say to them, "in order to grow, you must learn" …" (Ben)

"I think it's love, patience, and understanding. The other day I was listening to metro FM, and they were interviewing this other kid like she was 14 years and she's already a mother. So, they asked her, don't you regret being a mother at this age? She was like no, it's always been something that I always wanted to be, having someone calling me a mother, so, one thing that came to my mind was like as people who are already parents, I feel like we are failing our kids because we only talk about the good side of parenting, we don't tell them and we always post about these and these kids have a social network, they see these mothers posting a struck, posting and think it's all cute but they don't know what is happening behind the scenes. They only see the good side of parenting so that's why they think it's cool to be a parent at that age…So, when I talk about fatherhood with people, I also talk about the hard side. So, raising my kid has been hard, I don't want to lie, it's very hard…It's been nothing but super amazing but also a hard journey…" (Peter)

"Seeing my daughter smile, I don't want to see her upset, teaching her to be good and to do good to others and have fun, don't be too serious about life man…just have fun, we watch cartoons together, we laugh, feeding one another, putting her first…" (Simon)

"Listening…listening, it is one thing that contributes, one, and two is patience…listening so that you can hear and record what they are saying so that you can remember tomorrow, not just listening but passively and making sure that at the end of the day, you are patient, if they come to you and say I want this sneaker, I do not have to turn them down at that moment even though I know I can't afford it, I would afford in the next 6 months, I need to find a way to put it objectively, you know, my boy, that's a nice sneaker, let's see how the budgeting goes, and that brings the whole issue of budgeting and all that to say you need to bring them into your life, they cannot only be in one part of your life, I am biker, one in a while I need to bring them to those environments so that they see what happens and not them stand at the gate and wonder every time where is this man going… he is going to come back, then the next time I come home tipsy and they do not understand that lifestyle and then they start aspiring for it or hating it alternatively because its taking me away from them and they are not part of it so, there is no aspect of my life that they shouldn't be part of, if I was to be a golfer, they should have their mini golf carts, they should be able to come to the golf course once, even if its once in a year, but they need to be able to…" (Mkhulu)

Love and care are many of the values that almost all fathers emphasise. It is highly visible throughout the data and can be seen in their values, goals, and parenting practices. They talk about love and care as "basic needs"; they say we "die in a way" if we do not receive them, and that they are "necessary for well-being." In fact, the well-being of the child is the father's main goal. They want their children to do well and focus especially on their happiness and success in life. Their love and care and emphasis on the happiness and success of their children can be seen, for instance, in their determination that the children be self-confident and at peace with themselves, that they are happy and content with life, and that they get something out of life. It can also be seen in their insistence that their children have healthy lifestyles, become self-reliant in the future, and can take full responsibility for themselves, and become independent individuals. They emphasise those aspects because they believe it is good for the

child. In addition, the fathers' emphasis that the children be themselves (that is, not be too moulded by the parents) shows a certain acceptance.

Love and care are also highly visible in the fathers' parenting practices; giving security, love, and care was the main theme they mentioned in that respect. All of them emphasise being there for their children. They say they show them warmth physically by hugging them, and psychologically by showing an interest in them, keeping up with what they are doing, and supporting them, as well as making time to listen to them and have conversations with them about anything and everything. They also show their children love and care by encouraging and complimenting them. They emphasise independence and freedom because they believe that is one characteristic of good parenting, and the same applies to discipline, boundaries, and rules. They believe this emphasis is good for their children.

4.5. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The findings reported above provide insight into fathers who head single parent households' experiences of raising their children. The participants reported numerous experiences that outlined the immense impact of their starting to care for their children at such a young age. These experiences were often accompanied by varied and intertwined emotional responses. However, positive aspects of raising children in a single-headed household were also raised with many of the fathers relaying their journey to acceptance in acknowledging their children for who they are, engaging in parental practices, and coming to realise their resilience, coping, and strengths as an individual and family. All participants felt that their initial response to solely rearing their children was a challenge but as time passed, they became more comfortable with their new roles and found it easy to construct these roles. They mentioned how they were perceived by society and people who are close to them as fathers in a single-headed household. They reported both negative and positive perceptions. They reported a new level of self-awareness that pushed them to want to do right by their children.

Chapter 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a general overview of the research study and discusses the main findings concerning the fathers' experiences of raising their children. This includes a discussion of the findings in relation to the literature. The discussion will then be used to make parenting-related recommendations for consideration. Thereafter, I will evaluate the research, wherein the limitations of the study will be outlined and suggestions for future studies will be discussed. Finally, a conclusion of the research will be surmised.

5.2. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Through an interpretative phenomenological analysis of the data, the research identified four main themes, which were made up of ten sub-themes. These themes were supported by literature-based research findings and gave insight into the fathers who head single-parent households' experiences of raising their children within the South African context. The following section is a discussion of the findings in relation to the literature and research questions guiding this inquiry.

Research pertaining to men who are single parents highlighted that fathers who head single-parent households played a central and important role in most aspects of their children's lives, including care, education, and supervision. This is aligned with the conclusions of Brown (1998) and Spiegel and van der Pol (1993) who attest that paternal caregivers provide invaluable insights and demonstrate issues of pertinence to their children. In considering the paternal caregivers' narratives, I obtained insight into their lived experiences of raising their children. The fathers elicited both negative and positive experiences that offered insight into the broader social perceptions that impacted their narratives and methods of meaning-making in parenting.

Every single father represented in this study is uniquely different, yet there are threads of commonality underlying their situation. As the seven fathers described their experiences as single parents, commonalities and unconventional behaviours were noted in their integration of work and family responsibilities. All fathers who head single-headed households in this study described being good fathers as ones who can provide for and protect their children. Single fathers' definitions varied according to the circumstances that led them to solely rearing their children and there was a clear indication that the social influence on masculinity theory

impacted and informed these fathers' understanding and perceptions of a good father. The single fathers experienced discomfort and conflict in their new roles as single parents. It is sometimes the little things that prove to be the toughest for single parents; for instance, some parents find it difficult to combine the two roles, to be loving and affectionate and also to be the disciplinarian (Richter et al., 2010).

Parenting their children on their own is not easy, but they realize that they have to move on for the sake of their children. Dowd (2000) reports that single fathers manage to take care of their children generally better than single mothers in the same situation. Richter et al. (2010) argue that men's nurturing urges, often suppressed in boyhood and adult socialization tasks could be stimulated dramatically by becoming single fathers. Lamb (2010) adds that single fathers are capable of giving loving care to their children who need emotional and physical support. A provider and protector appeared as inherent requirements in their definitions and formed the basis for their understanding of a good father. The fathers included components relating to the nurturing aspect of mothering, as well as characteristics such as being supportive and present in their children's lives. The fathers who head single-parent households included characteristics normally associated with the mother expressed a particular need to be supportive and involved in their children's lives and child-rearing activities. Most single fathers' definitions were influenced by their own childhood, and they used their own fathers as a reference point for their own parenting styles and the idea of a good father. Some of these references were negative, as their fathers had played a minimal role in raising them or were absent.

The findings of this study indicate that fathers who head single-parent households felt being a good father did not only entail being a provider and protector but that it had to be infused with maternal qualities of caregiving, nurturing, good listening, and being supportive. The findings also show that single fathers' own fathering experiences of their upbringing encouraged the nurturing side of their parenting style. All seven participants perceive themselves positively as fathers; they see themselves as good fathers. In support of this finding, Hatch and Posel (2018) found that two heterosexual parents are not necessary for healthy cognitive, emotional, or sex-role development in children. High-quality parenting in single-parent families can compensate for the lack of the other parent (Hatch & Posel, 2018). Although fathers who head single-parent households embrace their experiences, they do not recommend single parenting and they acknowledge that they feel that if the mothers were present, the experience would less difficult. Helman et al. (2019) add that single fathers find it less difficult

to adjust to the new role of sole parenting if they were involved in child-rearing while the children were still young. All seven fathers were responsible in one way or another for caring for their children before they became single fathers. The fathers perceive themselves as being too harsh, and their greatest challenge is to keep the balance between giving love to their children and maintaining discipline. Lamb (2010) indicates that the difficulty for fathers is how to combine the contrasting images of authority and intimacy into a coherent whole. Clowes et al. (2013) note that the very definition of what it means to be a good father has shifted from a predominant provider/breadwinner role to more ambiguous expectations of emotional involvement and responsiveness.

All fathers who head single-headed households' perspectives and decisions on adapting to their circumstances, discipline, and work were influenced by their changing circumstances in terms of parenting. Most constructed their parenting experiences from an alternative masculinity perspective. In the initial stages of single parenting, all fathers found it difficult to cope but once they found their feet in their new roles they managed effectively. Most of the fathers indicated that they did not have an issue with asking for help and would use whatever means necessary to provide efficiently for their children. All fathers who head single-headed households indicated that their parenting experience was an ongoing learning process and were open to constructing new roles. The majority of the single fathers showed evidence of role strain and role conflict and had to make adjustments to schedules, educate themselves and seek help to manage their new roles. The single fathers indicated they initially experienced challenges of balancing work and personal schedules, getting their children to and from school, cooking and cleaning, and other household chores. Many single fathers struggled in adjusting their work schedule and found it to be extremely difficult to balance the two.

All fathers who head single-headed households put in place a routine for their children to manage their single lives effectively and also made special arrangements at work, to the extent of reorganising their work schedule and seeking additional help in childcare so they could experience fewer stressors and balance their lifestyles. These findings articulate alternative masculinity as these men are adapting to their new roles as a carer and are including 'feminine' roles in their repertoire of parenting. The findings of this study showed that single fathers were determined to achieve success in solely rearing their children and would not let male pride and ego hinder the process.

The majority of fathers who head single-headed households expressed that they initially experienced role challenges when attempting to engage in the expressive role. Three fathers had mixed responses when answering questions relating to role challenges they experienced. These fathers exhibited overwhelming feelings in caring for their children coupled with feelings of entrapment. Most fathers who head single-headed households felt that their initial response to solely rearing their children was a challenge but as time passed, they became more comfortable with their new roles and found it easy to construct these roles. Role confusion was likely to be prevalent as they had to take on 'feminine' roles for which they were not socialised. This again reflects on their ability to interrogate hegemonic masculinity where men are most dominant, and women subordinated. All the fathers who head single-headed households indicated that they treasured the quality time they spent with their children and saw it as an opportunity to strengthen their bond with them. These single fathers expressed a desire to be available to their children on all levels and even though challenges existed, this remained the ultimate goal and what they strived towards. Most single fathers expressed that the responses from their children influenced and motivated them to engage in tasks and get the job done. The positive responses from their children would have encouraged them further to construct alternative masculinity. Three fathers indicated that since becoming single fathers, their traditional role of a father was being replaced with a more nurturing role. They identified with the emotional role which traditionally is considered displayed mainly by the mother and indicated a noticeable change in their behaviour and roles. Gender is deconstructed when there are no clear roles for men and women. In this instance, the emotional connection came naturally to these men as there were no women to provide that support. Most fathers indicated that there was an increase in their level of awareness when it came to the safety of their children. They indicated how they were more worried about their children and whether they were safe and took extreme measures to ensure their safety and peace of mind. Single fathers rejected the concept of risk-taking and were more concerned with the well-being and safety of their children. It was not clear whether this awareness was directed at male children or female children. The findings of this study show that single fathers integrated both masculine and feminine characteristics into childcare activities and constructed nurturing angles when attending to their children. The findings also indicated that there was an increase in awareness since becoming single fathers.

These fathers have different ways of being the best parent they can be for their children. Having a good relationship with their children was perceived by the seven fathers as a positive

part of being single parents. Parent-child relationships constitute a very special type of relationship in which every human is personally involved. According to Pleck (2010), the parent-child relationship is specific in nature and differs from all other kinds of relationships (such as partners, family, and friends) because of its degree of intimacy. Researchers who have studied parent-child relationships focused on different aspects. Some characterized their study based on how the parent-child relationship influences children's decision-making and communication (Field et al., 2007) and the effects of the parent-child relationship on the development of children's emotional functioning and regulation (Boutelle et al., 2009). They stated that it had been rewarding to see how much closer they were to their children compared to the time before the single-parent status. It has taken a lot of work from the fathers to secure closeness with their children. Madhavan and Roy (2012) maintain that fathers are capable of being emotionally present in their families. The fact that fathers can be more than breadwinners or providers is viewed as one of the reasons why studies found that widowed men cope better with lone parenting (Spjeldnaes et al., 2012).

Fathers who head single-parent households generally experienced social support and social approval. However, in line with other literature on single parents, they were also found to have faced stigmatizing interactions. These were experienced particularly with strangers. The fathers had also been exposed to negative representations of their family type, in addition to being the target of questioning by others. Such findings paint a nuanced picture of how fathers who choose to start a family alone are perceived socially. They highlight that the fathers, despite receiving support and praise, also experience both distal stressors in the form of stigmatizing interactions. They wish not to get questions about the mothers of their children whenever they are seen with their children in public spaces.

Despite the challenges that these fathers experienced as fathers who head single-parent households, their families were functional and what they did was consistent with the structure of their family system. Pleck (2010) argues that there is no single father role to which all fathers should aspire; rather, a successful father as defined in terms of his children's development is one whose role performance matches the demands and prescriptions of his socio-cultural and familial context.

All fathers who head single-parent households described contributions of being a good father and that included listening, caring, understanding, and being patient with children. These fathers believe in allowing their children to be themselves and they make sure that they put their children first before anything else. They have been showcasing the characteristics of being

good fathers because they did not experience this with their fathers. This was a motivation for them to do right by their children.

Independence is the ability to manage everything we have, walking and thinking independently, in accompanied by the ability to take risks and solve problems (Debora, 2006). Independence is a part of the personality which is an arrangement of elements of the reason that can determine differences in the behaviour or actions of each individual (Nsamenang, 2010). The participants spoke about their focus on having their children be independent, put themselves out there, and be able to take responsibility for themselves. Their focus on independence can be seen, for example, in their emphasis on seeing the children become self-reliant, pursue education, and become financially independent, and responsible.

The parents in this study, in their endeavour to be good parents, are still trying to negotiate how to look after themselves without neglecting their children. At the moment they feel that their children come first. Mkhulu says that the best part of being a single parent is being able to deliver for the children and making sure that everything in the house is normal as before. Haine et al. (2008) add that most bereaved parents try to keep the balance between their own and their children's needs with varying degrees of sensitivity and responsiveness to their children.

5.3. FOR FATHERS WHO HEAD SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS

The seven fathers who are in single-headed households in this study showed that although it is not easy and not without sacrifices, single parenting is accomplishable. Richter et al. (2010) suggest that single male parents who are required to execute both male and female responsibilities may face role strain. Nsamenang (2010) adds that single parenting presents problems, but that single parents can adapt to their new role. These men are the heads of functional families, and they do not want to abandon their responsibilities simply because they occasionally feel incapable of handling the demands of single parenting. They view their families as typical. Developing social norms and values that encourage many sorts of family structures would be advantageous for society. Labelling non-traditional family structures as "deviant" appears to have had no purpose for the single-parent family. According to Richter et al. (2010), a single-parent family is a synonym for a "problem family" and is viewed as a form of social disease. Single-parent homes are dysfunctional, broken, deviant, and issue families, according to the findings of studies that have concentrated on the problems faced by these families (Javo et al., 2004). Nsamenang (2010) adds that the stigma attached to single-parent

families has the most important effect of isolating them economically and socially. Due to the stigma that prevents any recognition of the insights exemplified by single-parent families, positive features of single-parent families have been neglected (Helman et al., 2019).

5.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is acknowledged that the research has various limitations. These limitations are believed to exist in the research methodology, measures, and data analysis. A key purpose of qualitative studies is to generate hypotheses that can be further tested with greater methodological rigor (Forero et al., 2018). Therefore, the study limitations are outlined below in the hope that they will guide future research that is sounder in its methodological approach.

I attempted to obtain a sample of eight to ten caregivers through purposive and snowball sampling from a broader population of fathers who head single-parent households whose children are minors. However, I experienced difficulties in obtaining this sample size due to a lack of interest and availability from fathers who head single-parent households. This may be due to their experiences of being already overburdened and their generally negative experiences. The recruitment process took longer than expected. Therefore, the sample consisted of the minimum requirement of only seven participants. Although smaller sample sizes might be considered a limitation of IPA studies, Smith et al. (2009) consider that reduced participant numbers might also allow for a richer, in-depth analysis. Furthermore, Smith et al. (2009) advise researchers to recruit a fairly homogenous sample of participants in IPA studies, which is true of the fathers who head single-parent households in this study as they share similar traits in terms of their age, gender, and background. However, this may be considered a further limitation of this research, as the sample was predominated by black males that stemmed from a Western middle-class background. This had implications for the research gathered as it reflected Western middle-class norm values and cultural standards. The effectiveness of an IPA study is judged on its ability to relate to the broader context (Smith et al., 2009). However, I acknowledge that the sample was not representative of the broader, more prominent social demographics of South Africa. Therefore, to obtain a richer and more diverse set of findings reflecting the diverse cultural and socio-economic landscape that is inherent in South Africa, it would have been useful to include participants from varying racial, social, and economic classes. Lastly, this study focused on the specific urban cities' context of Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Soweto within South Africa. This specific context makes it problematic to generalise the findings as Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Soweto represent South Africa's

wealthiest urban population. The development of relevant and appropriate interventions needs to take into consideration contextual conditions and make optimal use of local resources. Furthermore, it is not the aim of qualitative research to generalise at a statistical level (Hancock et al., 2009).

Despite these limitations, the present study serves as a first glimpse into the nature and context of the experience of single-father families in a South African context. It also aims to bridge this gap and provide greater insight into the experience of fathers who head single-parent households. As it is evident that there is a vast amount of research conducted on fatherhood and the reasons why fathers become single parents in South Africa and abroad not much is aimed at researching the experiences of fathers who head single-parent households. The present study aims to bridge the gap by highlighting the actual experiences of fathers who head single-parent households from their perspective. This was largely achieved through the use of interpretive phenomenological analysis of fathers who head single-parent households' experience of primary caregiving which involved a series of semi-structured interviews that gave participants the opportunity of telling their stories in a manner understandable to them. My job was to capture the essence of their stories through their narratives, body language, and cues.

5.5. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study validates the findings of prior research indicating that men can successfully raise children as single parents. The research on single-parent families is still in its infancy, despite the fact that they are the fastest-growing family form in South Africa. There were few studies on single parents in South Africa that did not focus on the deficit model. As the typical two-parent family in this country rapidly dissipates as a result of AIDS-related fatalities, men will likely become more involved in childcare. There is a need for additional research on the impact of single fatherhood on child development. It would be fascinating to hear the children's stories about their single-parent fathers. How do children perceive their fathers' parenting practices? How would these families' children fare as adults? What do they think of the notion that moms are naturally nurturing and caring? What are their thoughts on culturally influenced conceptions of gendered parental roles? Additional research in the future may involve both fathers and their children to investigate any differences. Evidently, these men were in charge of their lives; they were resilient and determined to survive. This study demonstrates, as does the relevant literature, that single parents have a profoundly positive impact on their children;

they may be the most influential factor in their lives. Yet, I get the impression that the process is bidirectional and mutual shaping is occurring. How this occurs and the impact the child has on the father would be most intriguing to examine. Although the primary focus of this study was on fathers who head single-parent households, this does not eliminate the necessity to investigate the influence of their birth families on their opinions toward single parenting.

5.6. RESEARCHER REFLEXIVITY

Accordingly, reflexivity (i.e., the process of self-reflection) was used both as a tool to guide my research and as a measure to limit any personal preconceptions that may affect the credibility of this study (Darawsheh & Stanley, 2014). Researchers are always advised to express themselves, their choices, assumptions, and thoughts during the research process (Mruck & Breuer, 2003). Ortlipp (2008) reported that keeping and using a reflective journal allows a researcher to turn the disorganization of a research process into a clear, visible one resulting in making it visible to the readers and "thus avoiding producing and reproducing and distribute the discourse of the research as a neat and linear process" (p. 11). In the context of this study, I kept a reflective journal to write down experiences, opinions, thoughts, and feelings visible during the research process. Although, I had concerns about my gender, as a young 22-year-old black girl, having an impact on the contentment of single fathers during the data collection process. I come from a privileged background. I was raised by two parents and I experienced love from both parents present. I was helped to flourish educationally, socially, and economically. During my first two interviews with the fathers, I was nervous because I did not know what to expect but with time, it got easier. These fathers showed interest in my research and wanted to provide me with information about their experiences. They told me that they appreciate the research process and it is good have someone who gives them an ear and who understand what they are saying as most of the times they are misunderstood.

Their interest and the suggestions they made me want to share their experiences in meaningful manner. They informed that they are grateful to have a researcher who is interested in solo fatherhood and their words made me want to do better and put their words out there. I have a profound interest in fatherhood, however I acknowledge that I do not have any children and I am not personally affected. To this end, I aimed to remain sensitive and open to these differences and the impact they may have on these fathers throughout the research study.

As a young female that was conducting research with male participants, I was always keeping in mind that this can affect the process, my understanding, and interpretations of the single father's experiences. Throughout the process, I kept a reflective journal and consulted my supervisor when necessary.

Reflection entails interpreting one's interpretations, evaluating one's perspectives, and examining one's authority as an interpreter and author with a self-critical eye. Reflection is foremost about recognizing the ambivalent relationship between a researcher's text and the researched realities.

I noticed that the conversation flowed differently with each participant, as a result of our diverse personalities and my growing confidence as the interviews progressed. After listening to the audio and reading the transcripts, I saw how abrupt and context-insensitive I was when I did not ask questions following some participant statements. If I were to interview the same people again, I would conduct the interviews differently, I believe. I am not claiming that I would obtain a better story from the participants if I asked fewer leading questions, but I would ask fewer leading questions.

As I reflect on the entire process, I am now aware of how prejudiced society is towards single parents in general and fathers who head single-parent household in particular. These fathers did not ignore their children or pursue relationships quickly after being single. These are proud men who head single-parent households, are conscious of the obstacles they face, yet are unwilling to abdicate their parental responsibilities.

5.7. CONCLUSION

The transition to single parenting and primary caregiving is a difficult process to adjust to and cope with. Fathers may be riddled with confusion, doubt, and anxiety, they may be unsure of themselves and their capabilities as primary caregivers. This transition period, however, difficult it may be for the father who heads a single-parent household and his children, can be overcome if they work together and each member of the family fulfils a role in the family and the home.

Parenting as difficult as it is; is not biologically predisposed to the mother or female. Fathers just like mothers can fulfil the role of provider, nurturer, and caretaker. They have the capacity and the ability to rear their children and meet their emotional, physical, psychological, and social needs. The important element is that fathers can parent as long as they are willing and able to step up and fulfil the role necessary or expected of them by their children. It is important that fathers who do step up and take care of their children realise that they also need to take care of themselves emotionally, psychologically, and physically. A lot of the time fathers who head single-parent households are faced with guilt and neglect of their own needs, but it is important to realise that as important as it is to step up and raise children it is also

important to value yourself and your well-being. This proves to be a great lesson for children, and they learn to model the behaviour of their parents.

Support of any kind is valued and valuable as this shows fathers who head single-parent households and children that they are cared for and loved by others. Support mainly comes from extended family; however, it is evident in the research that care and love for single parents and children is also extended from friends. As single father households are still a relatively new phenomenon and for this reason, support from community and community members is still a rare occurrence. Throughout the transition period, it becomes evident that one of the most important occurrences in single-father households is the closer bonds formed between father and child and between siblings. Fathers are not normally seen as approachable or nurturing parents; however, in the present study, it was evident that the bonds between father and child became a great source of emotional support.

These parents moved from the stereotyped role of single parents who are not coping with parenting to an archetypal role where they are the best for their families. These parents and their families moved from loneliness to reconnection. Other parents made use of the support system from their extended families, school, and friends. Isolation of the nuclear family from the extended family assisted some in maintaining control of their nuclear family and protecting it from disintegration. A shift from helplessness to adequacy was facilitated by managing time available for family and for self. To compensate for difficulties in coping with the overwhelming task of doing everything alone, lists of actions were made to put structure to activities of daily living.

This study focused on fathers who head single-parent households' experiences of single parenting. Based on the deficit model of single parenting, it is assumed that single parents are inadequate as parents and that children raised by single parents are mostly delinquents (Richter et al., 2014). The literature states that fathers are not capable of caring for their children and that children need two parents to be well-adjusted. Hall et al. (2018) sex role theory claims that men's role in parenting is that of being financial providers to the family, while mothers are the nurturers. Men in this study are both providers and nurturers to their children; although it is a struggle to combine the two roles, they are doing the best they can.

Children from these families could expect to be cared for, nurtured, and loved by their fathers. Haine et al. (2008) state that fathers who head single-parent households need to develop a balance between their own needs and those of their children. Cope (2014) adds that fathers

who express non-traditional beliefs about parenting roles felt more competent in their roles as single fathers. Another aspect that seemed healthy is the extent and quality of communication between children and their fathers. There appeared not to be an issue regarding sex-role identification between fathers and their daughters. The fathers with girls claim that they have grown closer to their daughters. Richter et al. (2010) argue that the traditional theoretical approach to female and male behaviour has been in terms of a unidimensional, bipolar construct in which masculinity-femininity is roughly equated with the instrumental-expressive dimension. Richter et al. (2010) further state that it has been found that men and women are androgynous, and they are more likely to perform cross-sex behaviours; they are less constrained by sex-role stereotypes. Three fathers who have been single for 3 years and more state that they connect better with their daughters and there is an openness that transcends gender. Burr (2003) states that fathers and mothers seem to influence their children in similar, rather than dissimilar ways.

A high priority for these families was the importance of relationships; all fathers revealed that they needed others and seven of them reached out to others when they needed help. For these fathers, it is important to have an open and honest relationship with their children. They appear to derive pleasure in their interactions with their children and although available quality time is limited, they have activities that bring them together to connect on a deeper level. These fathers have taken charge of their lives; they are resilient and determined to make the best of the situation in which they find themselves.

At the time of the study, one of the fathers was in therapy and six of them felt that they found healing through interaction with others. These fathers stated that the best advice they could give to someone in their position is that they should make use of the available support and that they do their best to be there for their children. Simon said: “just do it without doubting yourself, be free, and do not judge yourself, just do it, do it. Do not be afraid, people will always judge and be there for your child, it is always good for your child to rely on you as a father than to rely on someone or the mother. It is undefinable…”. Several studies have shown that single fathers get more support from the extended family than other parents do (Morrell & Richter, 2004).

Fathers who head single-parent households in this study are motivated to submit to single parenthood, perhaps due to the positive sentiments they hold for their children. The negativistic structural approach to the study of families has limitations (Crawford, 2020).

Single parents are capable of creating a cohesive, warm, supportive, and favourable environment for the development of their children (Richter et al., 2010).

This study has revealed that fathers who head single-parent households while continuing to fill the traditional family role of providers are also capable of providing tender, loving care for the emotional and physical needs of their children.

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Appendix A: Participant Information sheet

Dear Sir / Madam

Re: Invitation to Participate in Research: A phenomenological-interpretive inquiry about the experiences of fathers who are in a single-parent household.

My name is Mmatsatsi Letsiya, and I am a Masters student in Social and Psychological Research at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. As part of my studies, I am required to undertake a research project, and I am exploring the experiences of fathers who are in a single-parent household under the supervision of Ms. Leonie Human.

As part of this project, I would like to formally invite you to take part in my research study. This will involve you taking part in an individual interview with me around the topic mentioned above. The interview should last about an hour. With your permission, I would also like to audio record the interview using a digital device. This recording will be stored on password protected computer and only my supervisor and I will have access to this recording.

There will be no personal costs to you if you participate in this project, you will not receive any direct benefits from participation but there are no disadvantages or penalties if you do not choose to participate or if you withdraw from the study. You may withdraw at any time or not answer any question if you do not want to. The interview will be completely confidential and although I will have access to your name, you will remain anonymous to everyone and the information you give to me will be held securely and not disclosed to anyone else. I will be using a pseudonym (false name) to represent your participation in my final research report. If you experience any distress or discomfort at any point in this process, we will stop the interview or resume it another time. If you need some support or counselling services following the interview, these are available free of charge at SADAG (0800 70 80 90) and Life Line (0861 322 322).

If you have any questions during or afterward about this research, feel free to contact me and my supervisor at the details listed below. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you. The results will be available six months after data collection. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), by telephone at +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za.

Yours sincerely,

Mmatsatsi Letsiya (Researcher)
2498288@students.wits.ac.za
068 270 0425
Protocol number: MASPR/22/05

Ms. Leonie Human (Supervisor)
Leonie.Human@wits.ac.za
011 717 4508

Appendix B: Informed Consent for Participation

Title of project: A phenomenological-interpretive inquiry about the experiences of fathers who are in a single-parent household.

Name of researcher: Mmatsatsi Letsiya

I, ……., agree to participate in this research project.

I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about.	YES	NO
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	YES	NO
I agree that direct quotations from my interview may be used by the researcher in their research report.	YES	NO
I agree that my participation will remain anonymous (my name will not be used by the researcher in their research report)	YES	NO

…… (signature)
…… (name of participant)
…… (date)



……
Mmatsatsi Letsiya (Researcher)
30 April 2022

Appendix C: Informed Consent for Interviewing and Audio-recording of interview

I, ……., consent to the audio recording of the individual interview with Mmatsatsi Letsiya for her research study on *experiences of fathers who are in a single-parent household*, I understand that:

1) The tapes and transcripts from the interview will remain confidential to the researcher and her supervisor.

2) The tapes and transcripts will always remain on a password-protected computer.

3) No personal or identifying information about any of the participants will be used in the transcripts for the final research report.

4) Direct quotes from the transcripts will be used in the final research project, I will be referred to by a pseudonym given to me at the beginning of the interview, and thus any identity will be protected. Any other identifying factors in the quotes will be elicited to further protect my identity and ensure confidentiality.

…… (signature)

…… (name of participant)

…… (date)



……

Mmatsatsi Letsiya (Researcher)
30 April 2022

Appendix D: Letter to Access to organisations

University of the Witwatersrand,
School of Human and Community Development, 011 717 4541

Dear Sir/Madam,

Permission to conduct research.

My name is Mmatsatsi Letsiya. I am studying for a Master of Arts in Social and Psychological Research in the School of Human and Community Development at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am seeking permission to do research at your organisation.

I am conducting research on the experiences of South African fathers who are in a single-parent households.
This study aims to illuminate the direct voices and experiences of these men. I will highlight the daily tasks, routines, and responsibilities of full-time single fathers. The research, however, will move beyond the surface of their physical parental duties. I will shed light on their emotions, feelings, and attitudes towards their parental duties. This study will look at individuals who do not conform to gender norms. Regardless of the circumstances behind their position, single fathers turn traditional gender roles upside down.

I am requesting permission to conduct research on fathers who are in single-parent household who may use your premises or are part of a support group under your auspices. I require your permission to approach such fathers and invite potential participants to take part in my study. If they agree, they will be asked to be interviewed individually. The interview will take 45 minutes to an hour. The data collection will take place on MS Teams or Zoom with time suitable for them. The participant's responses will be audio recorded.

Participants will be asked to give their written or verbal consent before the research begins. Their responses will be treated confidentially, and identities (their names and the name of the organisation) will be anonymous unless otherwise expressly indicated. Individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

All research data will be kept on a password-protected computer in a password-protected file. The researcher and the supervisor will be the only people to view it.

Umthombo Building – 2nd Floor, Room U211, Braamfontein East Campus, Private Bag 3, WITS 2050
T +27 11 717 4503/53 | **E** psych.SHCD@wits.ac.za | www.wits.ac.za/shcd/psychology/

The results will be communicated through a research report.

Attached, please find a participant information letter If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor (details below). Your assistance in granting permission for me to conduct my research with your members would be greatly appreciated.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

Mmatsatsi Letsiya (Researcher)
068 270 0425
2498288@students.wits.ac.za

Ms. Leonie Human (Supervisor)
011 717 4508
Leonie.Human@wits.ac.za

University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical)

011 717 1408

hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

Appendix E: Interview Schedule

The aim of this interview is to obtain insight into your own personal experiences of caring for and raising your child in a single-headed household. It is a platform for you to speak openly so please feel free to share actual examples, experiences, events, and emotions that have come up for you. I would like to know how you have felt, mentally and emotionally, how you have experienced changes in your child, and what the relationship is like between you and your child. I am really interested in your experiences, good and bad, to a full extent, drawing on your personal emotions and reflecting on specific incidents that you can remember.

Section A

Biographic Information

1. Age
2. Number of children
3. Duration of fatherhood
4. Employment status
5.Ethnicity

Section B

Research Focused Questions

1. Please tell me of your experience of being a father in a single-headed household.
2. Can you please tell me how you experienced the birth of your child?
3. How do you feel about being a father?
4. Please could you tell me about your experiences as a father-to-be prior to the birth of your child?
5. How do you understand your role as a father?
6. How would you describe your way of raising or caring for your child?
7. How would you describe the relationship between you and your child?
8. How would you describe your experience of being a father to your child prior to separating from your partner?
9. Since you became a single father do you have any help with caring for your children?
10. How do you experience single fatherhood?
11. What kind of support services do you think are available to you as a single father?
12. Do you feel that these services meet your needs?
13. How did you experience this support?
14. How do you feel fathers such as yourself should be supported?
15. Are there any experiences of being a father that has been particularly important to you?

16. Think about your relationship with your children, what contributes to being a 'good father'? 17. How does your role as a single father fit into your cultural expectation of being a man/father?

18. When you became the main carer for your children, what changes did you make to your life?

19. Tell me about the day-to-day challenges you experience as a single father?

19.1. How do you deal with these challenges?

20. How has single fatherhood impacted your future relationships?

21. Have you ever felt that you needed practical help or advice on how to be a good single father?

22. Do you experience any specific challenges about caring for your children and your work life? Please explain how you accommodate the two.

23. How do you manage your time, e.g., work and taking your child to and from activities?

24. How available are you to your children? When do they need your help with something?

25. Would you like to tell me anything else?

26. Do you have any questions?

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Appendix F: Ethics Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ETHICS COMMITTEE
CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE:	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: MASPR/22/05**
PROJECT TITLE:	A phenomenological-interpretive enquiry about the experiences of fathers who are in a single-parent household.
INVESTIGATOR	Letsiya Mmatsatsi (2498288)
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR	SHCD/Psychology
DATE CONSIDERED	30 May 2022
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
RISK LEVEL	Minimal Risk
EXPIRY DATE	31 December 2024

ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE 11 July 2022 **CHAIRPERSON** ____ (Dr Sahba Besharati)

cc: Ms Leonie Human (Supervisor)

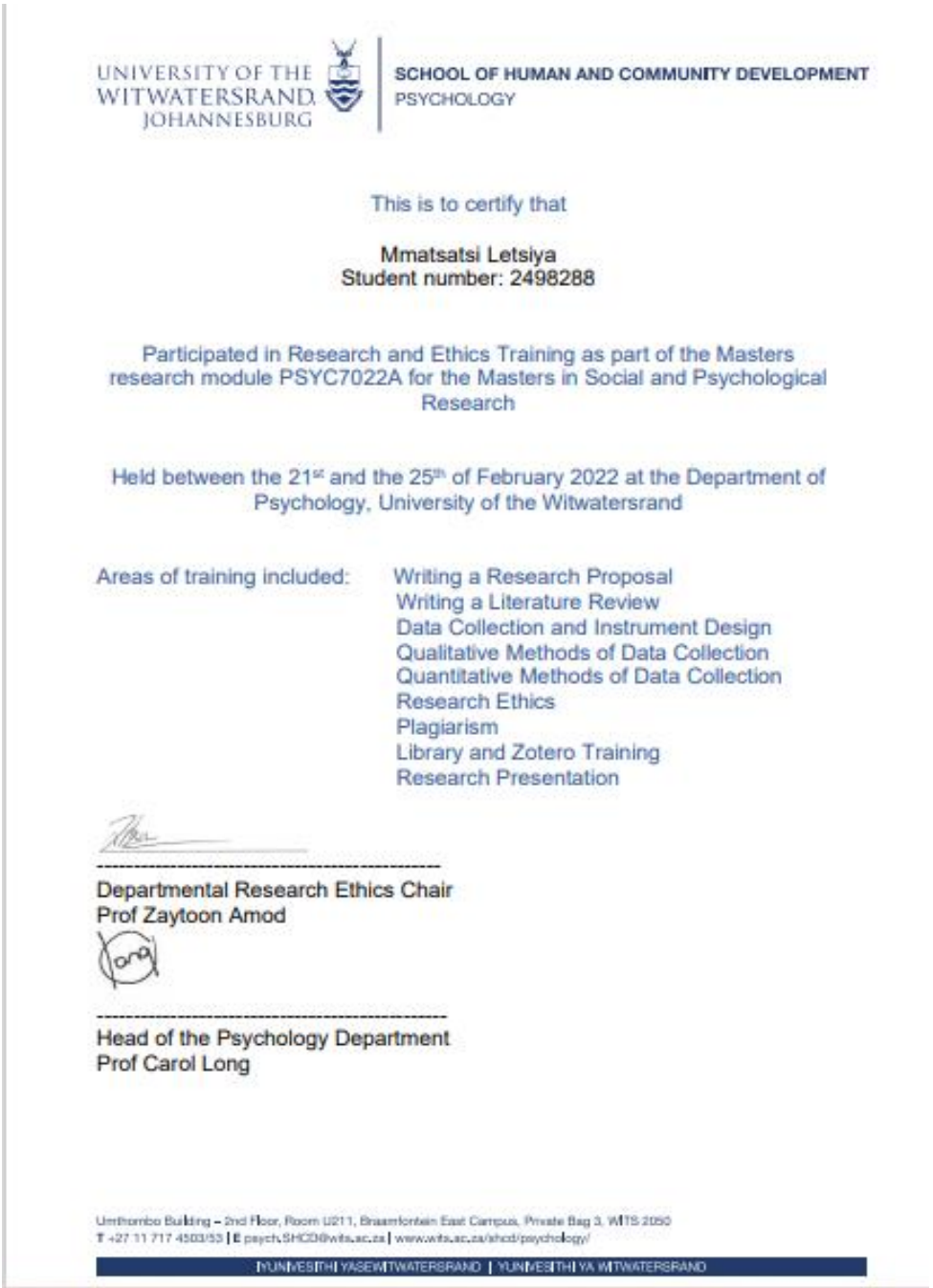
DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

Signature **Date** 14 / 07 /2022

Appendix G: Ethics training certificate



UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
PSYCHOLOGY

This is to certify that

Mmatsatsi Letsiya
Student number: 2498288

Participated in Research and Ethics Training as part of the Masters research module PSYC7022A for the Masters in Social and Psychological Research

Held between the 21st and the 25th of February 2022 at the Department of Psychology, University of the Witwatersrand

Areas of training included:
- Writing a Research Proposal
- Writing a Literature Review
- Data Collection and Instrument Design
- Qualitative Methods of Data Collection
- Quantitative Methods of Data Collection
- Research Ethics
- Plagiarism
- Library and Zotero Training
- Research Presentation

Departmental Research Ethics Chair
Prof Zaytoon Amod

Head of the Psychology Department
Prof Carol Long

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