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Employed fathers' experience of fatherhood and engagement in parenting practices

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Employed fathers' experience of fatherhood and engagement in parenting practices.

A research report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements toward the degree of **Master of Arts in Social and Psychological Research**, faculty of Humanities, School of Human and Community Development, University of the Witwatersrand.

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November 2020

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own, original work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Social and Psychological Research in the Department of Psychology, School of Human and Community Development, at the University of the Witwatersrand.

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Date

Protocol Number: MASPR/10/001 IH

ABSTRACT

Current literature on the experience of fatherhood in South Africa often portrays fathers as uninvolved and seldom having caring relationships with their children. Much research has focused on father absenteeism which is pervasive within the South Africa context. However, since 2012 there has been an increase in research that focuses more on involved fathers and how they engage in caregiving for their children. This research study explores how employed fathers experience fatherhood and their engagement in parenting practices. A purposive and snowball sampling strategy was employed to recruit participants. Eight South African fathers participated in the study and were interviewed using semi-structured interviews that focused on their experience of fatherhood and how they experienced engaging in caregiving practices for their children. A thematic content analysis guided through an interpretive phenomenological approach was used to analyse the content of the interviews. All the participants were employed, working fathers employed and the findings indicate their engagement, commitment, and their defined roles in care giving for their children. Surprisingly it was also indicated that to some extent the participants experienced emotional engagement with their first born child. The gender and age of their children also seemed to influence how they determine what role they play in their children's lives. This research study contributes real-world insights into how South African fathers experience fatherhood and how they perceive practices of care for their children, as well as how they choose to engage in such practices for them.

Keywords: Fatherhood, parenting practices, caregiving practices, work-related commitments

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

In South Africa, there is a shift in ideas surrounding fatherhood, parenthood and family structures (Meyer, 2018). People are engrossed with understandings of both traditional and contemporary fatherhood – as well as motherhood – and how this relates to their relationship with their children (Richter, Chikovore & Makusha, 2010; Meyer, 2018). Traditional fatherhood, on the one hand, emphasizes the main obligation of fathers in their family life was to be the provider (Suwada, 2015). Contemporary fatherhood, on the other hand, highlights the idea of the father's nurturing role in the lives of their children and that love, reliability, availability, and support are elements that contribute highly to the development of their children, irrespective of biology (Morrell & Richter, 2004; Malherbe, 2015).

The General Household Survey (GHS) (Stats SA, 2016) shows that 71% of children between the ages of 0 and 17 years live in a household with an adult man; of this 36 % live with their biological fathers, and 35% reside with a non-biological father. Involvement or quality of caregiving cannot be measured by these statistics (Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018). Caregiving can be seen as a class of involvement, albeit positive or negative, and does not only comprise of activities of care. Care can be defined as caring about, or caring for (Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018); however, for this research study care will refer to practical caregiving in which the father is practically and/or actively providing care to his child. Such activities could include engaging with childcare tasks such as talking about personal matters or helping with school tasks.

Hauari and Hollingworth (2009) hold the notion that when a man's first child is born, he becomes a father, however, this is countered by Rabe (2007) and Richter et al (2010) to include that to a large extent fatherhood is about more than just conceiving children, but also includes adult males who have close social relationships with children, whether such children are their own biologically or not. Thus fatherhood can be experienced by men who have various relationships with children in which they assume fathering roles and duties (Makusha, 2013). For instance, men can be fathers to their biological children who reside in the same home as them, to biological children who reside elsewhere, to children who are not biologically the

men's but reside in the same home as him and their mother, or men who live with their sister who has children and whose fathers do not reside in the same home (Makusha, 2013).

South Africa has an established multi-disciplinary body of work on fatherhood studies and policy (Richter, 2006; Yogman & Garfield, 2016). High profile NGOs and government programmes are aiming to increase knowledge on HIV prevention, reproductive health and gender-based violence, particularly amongst fathers (Sonke Gender Justice, 2010). Paternity and fatherhood are imperative to South African men's identities (Hunter, 2008; Morrell, 2006), and while many children are born to unmarried parents, and primarily reside with their mother; fathers acknowledge that they have fathered children (Hosegood & Madhavan, 2012).

Detailed accounts of how men are involved in families, particularly concerning their children, are infrequent in South Africa. It has been reported that co-residence only implies a minimal indication of father involvement; and although the father's involvement is undoubtedly still in terms of financial and material provision; other dimensions of their involvement is underreported (Hosegood & Madhavan, 2012). Therefore qualitative studies on fathers' subjective accounts are required to provide valuable information on how they experience fatherhood and how they experience this phenomenon with their children, and thus how they engage in caregiving practices with their children (Hosehood & Madhavan, 2012).

1.2. Research aims

This research study aimed to:

1. Explore employed, working fathers' experiences of fatherhood.
2. Explore how employed, working fathers engage in practices of care for their children.
3. Explore how being employed full-time influences how fathers engage in practices of care for their children.

1.3. Research objectives

The objective of this research study was to gain a new perspective of working fathers' subjective experience of fatherhood and how they engage in practices of care for their children. Furthermore, this study will gain valuable insight into the influence fulltime employment has on fathers' ability to engage in caregiving practices for their children. This study would also contribute to a topic gaining ground in Fatherhood studies particularly in South Africa.

1.4. Research questions

1. How do participants experience being a working father?
2. How do participants engage in parenting practices of caregiving with their children?
3. How do participants perceive their work-related commitments to influence their parenting practices with their children?

1.5. Research rationale

Over the past years, it has become evident that research centering on fathers paid much attention to the fact that fathers are uninvolved and that they seldom had caring relationships with their children. It has been dubbed a widespread and problematic phenomenon that is of considerable concern (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor & Mphaka, 2013). However, there has been an increase in current research that focuses more on involved fathers and how they engage in caregiving for their children, as well as the shift in the predominantly 'patriarchal' role of fatherhood (Coles, Hewitt & Martin, 2015).

Fathers can provide support to their children which can be very important, however, with the statistics depicting that many South African children and their biological fathers do not reside within the same home, little is known about how fathers are involved in the caregiving practices of their children (Mercer, 2015). Research from North America and Europe demonstrate that greater paternal involvement in caregiving could have a constructive outcome for the psychological, behavioural, and social capabilities of children (Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid & Bremberg, 2008). Therefore this research study wants to examine how fathers may be involved in the family structure so that the idea that South African fathers are largely absent and uncaring is challenged.

The first State of the Fathers Report (Sonke Gender Justice, 2018) highlights the significance of father involvement after key amendments were made to South Africa's labour law that allows fathers parental leave (Sonke Gender Justice, 2018). The report moves away from absent fathers and rather focuses on how non-resident biological and social fathers are involved in parenting and caregiving (Sonke Gender Justice, 2018). 'Baba? Men and Fatherhood in South Africa' is a crucial piece of research that forms the basis of research into South African fathers which has aided immensely to the contribution of national and international debates about the

importance of encouraging and supporting relationships between men and their children (Richter & Morrell, 2006).

Subsequent research includes "Teenage Tata" which poses questions about what poverty and having very few employment opportunities to provide materially for one's dependents means (Swartz & Bhana, 2009). The research delves into what it means to become a teenage father, what circumstances led to this reality, how these teenage fathers negotiated to disclose this information to their friends and family, as well as highlights the ways in which their educational and work ambitions alter their relationships with the mother of their children, and consequently, with their child (Swartz & Bhana, 2009).

"The New Dad", a research project that has done extensive work over the past decade highlights that the role of the father is changing in respect to a "career-caregiving conflict" in the United States, which includes how men experience being fathers, what their experience was when they first found out that they were becoming fathers and what aspects they perceive to be the most joyful, but also the most challenging about fatherhood (Harrington, Van Deusen & Ladge, 2010). Research into fatherhood in South Africa has received more attention over the past decade; however, it has yet to depict the experiences of fathers within the working context. Therefore this research study thus aims to explore the nature of working fatherhood and how they experience caregiving for their children within the South African context. The research study will specifically look to give a voice to working fathers who co-reside with their children and the mother of their children.

Fatherhood studies are a growing body of literature that is relatively recent that can provide invaluable information about how fathers within the South African context construct and understand their fathering and in essence their fatherhood through a reflective process (Malherbe, 2015). Fathering literature focuses immensely on how fathers contribute positively to their children's development as well as what deficits might exist if they do not reside with their children; and very little is known about how fathers construct their own experience of fatherhood, and their account of how they engage in caregiving practices for their children (Madhavan, Townsend & Garey, 2008; Malherbe, 2015). Thus this research study would contribute to this understanding of fathering particularly about their personal experience, within the South African context.

1.6. Chapter Outline

This chapter of the research report offers an introduction to the study and thus describes the research aims, research objectives, research questions, and rationale. This chapter also provides a basic outline of the structure of the research presented here within. In chapter two, the relevant literature pertaining to fatherhood and fatherhood studies is reviewed and presented. Chapter three illustrates the research method employed for this research study. Chapter four will report the results of the study. Five core themes emerged from the thematic analysis. These include the experience of being a father, becoming a father for the first time, experiencing the fatherhood role, how fathers engage in caregiving practices and the role work-related commitments influence how fathers engage with their children. Chapter five will provide a discussion of the findings and integrate the analysis; as well as consider the attainment of insights from this study, and with the limitations of this study in mind, provide recommendations for further research into fatherhood.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In South Africa, the majority of the child population does not have a close father-child relationship. The marriage rate for this country is the lowest on the African continent; South Africa ranks second for father absenteeism, and reports of abuse against women and children further endorse negative impressions of fathers (Rabe, 2018; Richter, Chikovore & Makusha, 2010). A considerable amount of research studies published by the Human Science Research Council focusing on 'The Fatherhood Project' (2006) have aimed to change these impressions and bring positive impressions of fathers to the fore (Rabe, 2018; Swartz & Bhana, 2009; Morrell & Richter, 2004).

2.2. Definition of terms

2.2.1. Care

For this research study, ***care*** is described as the practical or active way in which fathers are involved in providing care for their children, which differs from the way in which fathers care for or about their children (Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018).

2.2.2. Caregiving practices

Throughout this research study, the term ***caregiving practices*** refers to practices such as bathing, feeding, dressing and changing nappies of young children. As children grow older, their needs change and the caregiving practices fathers engage in thus shift toward helping their children with homework, transporting their children to and from extra-curricular activities, being emotionally available to their children and providing guidance and support.

2.2.3. Family

A ***family*** is described as a "group of people related by blood, adoption, foster care or through martial ties, civil union or cohabitation" (Department of Social Development, 2012, p.11), and this relationship goes beyond where each person resides. This distinction is made as to not confuse families with households in which family members may or may not reside together; as it is important to note that in South Africa 'fatherhood' cannot be understood as existing within

the walls of a 'nuclear' household – that is a heterosexual, married couple residing with their biological children (Rabe, 2018).

2.2.4. Fatherhood

Fatherhood takes on many dimensions and a father should not be understood only to be a man living with his biological children (Rabe, 2018; Marcisz, 2013) because this neglects to acknowledge the many instances in which social fathering takes place (Langa, 2014). Thus fatherhood could be described as a process of childrearing; the taking on of roles and responsibilities to care for a child (Langa, 2014); the state of being a father (Habib, 2012) and which bears cultural, social and biological meanings (Cabrera, Tamis-Lemonda, Bradley, Hofferth & Lamb, 2000). Fatherhood describes the social context in which fathering occurs, this includes both the father's individual role in his family as well as his position in society (Helman, 2015; Elliot, 2015). The traditional African view of fatherhood that has endured for generations is that fatherhood affords higher levels of social status to men who are fathers (Franklin et al, 2014).

2.2.5. Father

The term '***father***' has thus been loosely associated with a man who makes the 'biological contribution' to form a child (Richter & Morrell, 2006), however distinction must be made between the different types of fathers.

2.2.6. Traditional father

The concept of a '***traditional father'*** can be understood as a man who is the provider or breadwinner that provides economic support to their families. In addition to this, traditional fathers are responsible for the moral oversight for their children and modelling gendered roles to them (Khewu & Adu, 2015). Traditional fathers are known to be the authoritative figure within the family structure (Makusha, 2013).

2.2.7. Social father

The term '***social father***' is given to many men who assume the paternal role in caring for biological and non-biological children (Richter & Morrell, 2006). Social (non-biological)

fathers could include brothers, grandfathers, uncles, cousins, stepfathers, and neighbours (McDougal & Charles, 2016: McDougal, Durnell & Dlamini, 2018; Richardson, 2009; Green & Chuang, 2020). These men assume the social parent role by demonstrating parental behaviours (Green & Chuang, 2020).

For this research study ***father*** refers to a man who co-resides with his children (biological and non-biological) and the mother of his children, and who engages in caregiving for these children (Morrell, Dunkle, Ibragmov & Jewkes, 2016).

2.2.8. Father involvement

Father involvement refers to an involved father who is present and takes responsibility for the welfare of his children, such as protecting them from harm and providing for their needs (Flouri, 2005; Makusha & Richter, 2014). It can also be understood to include the level of involvement a father takes in caregiving practices and financial provision (Hauari & Hollingworth, 2009; Yogman & Garfield, 2016).

2.2.9. Fathering

Fathering is then depicted as a father's presence and involvement in the lives of his children and family (Flouri, 2005; Williams, 2008). It refers to both the socially and culturally constructed practices and behaviours fathers engage in with their children, which range from being relatively engaged to being involved in activities such as feeding and cleaning of infant children, and/or helping school-going children with school projects and homework (Helman, 2015; Morrell et al., 2016).

2.3. Fathering and Fatherhood

Fatherhood is characterised by a process of maturity, which increases one's consciousness of the importance of relationships, enhances new empathetic abilities, and betters one's self-confidence (World Health Organisation, 2007). It is also a concept that can be culturally defined and is largely based on one's experiences (Roopnarine, 2015). This is further influenced by how a community views and understands masculinity and the caregiving role.

Wall, Aboim, and Marinho (2007) propose that fatherhood had changed since the evolution of modern masculinities. Here it is suggested that masculinity has changed from a provider ideology to a more supportive one in which fathers also foster nurturance and care for their children (Hunter, 2017), after substantial adjustment in expectations surrounding heteronormative parental gender roles and relationships; i.e., more men are getting involved in household work and childrearing (Latshaw & Hale, 2015). In South Africa, it is common to find both men and women pursuing demanding careers as the context of widespread unemployment and poverty necessitates the working of both parents (Hunter, Riggs & Augoustinos, 2017).

It is understood that men take on a central role within the family structure (Talitwala, 2005). Thus fatherhood is of particular importance as the father's most important role within the family structure is to nurture and protect his children (Mkhize, 2004). More recently, fathers have been reported to identify their fathering style related to that of their own father (Williams, 2008; Roman, Makwakwa & Lacante, 2016). Their comparisons are also made by assessing what they see occurring in other families, as well as what is popular in the media (Williams, 2008; Roman et al., 2016).

The presence of engaged fathering is important for the development of children (Makusha & Richter, 2018; Arifin, Mujahidin & Arief, 2017). Arifin et al (2017) and Fogarty and Evans (2009), propose six dimensions of fatherhood including the leader, economic provider, protector, educator, playmate, and friend. A father is also involved in the moral-spiritual growth and development of their children, as well as the instilling of discipline and socio-cultural values (Parke & McDowell, 2003). Engaged fathering could be understood to include all these dimensions and subsequently inform the way in which family and household members' engage in child care which has an influence on the way in which the child matures and how the child will engage in educational activities, consequently impacting on the child's development (Arifn et al., 2017).

A good father is reported to be a male who is present for his children (Ratele, Shafer & Clowes, 2012), with great emphasis placed on the quality of time he can spend with his children. The same cannot be said for South African men whose perceptions and experiences of what a father is significantly predisposed by this country's history (Richter & Morrell, 2006). Father presence was greatly fragmented under the apartheid regime where a father's worth was

measured by his financial capacity to provide for his children, this was particularly true among Black South African men (Richter et al., 2010).

2.4. History of fatherhood

Research indicates that fathering in the context of South Africa is socially derived from the histories of apartheid, migration, unemployment, poverty, family structure, and racism (Ramphele & Richter, 2006). This is largely represented then in the definition of 'family' offered by the White Paper (Department of Social Development, 2012) on Families presented above. The component of this definition that is of utmost importance is the notion that family extends 'beyond a particular residence' because it clarifies that in South Africa fatherhood cannot be understood to only exist within a nuclear family household (Rabe, 2018).

Racial separation policies led to the marginalisation of people of colour under the apartheid regime, resulting in non-white, and particularly Black people, having to move into 'homelands' or townships. 'Homelands' were remote, rural and impoverished (Rabe, 2018) and employment opportunities were few (Hall & Posel, 2019). Due to the migrant labour systems, men were allowed to migrate to 'White urban areas' or to the mines as labourers, causing them to leave their homes, ultimately leading to the fragmentation of the family structure (Rabe, 2018; Hall & Posel, 2019).

The 'father as breadwinner' role was highly influenced by the capitalist system and reliance of African labour migration in South Africa (Rabe, 2018). This has a direct link to patriarchy. Oftentimes patriarchy has been seen to have many negative connotations associated with it, however an earlier interpretation of patriarchy suggested that in southern African societies the patriarchal father was a respected figure (Atkinson, 2009; Rabe, 2018). Fatherhood was thus viewed as a position an individual would assume as a means to exert power, but it was also seen as dependent on members of kin and how the individual was connected to these members (Manderson & Ellen, 2016; Rabe, 2018). However, due to political, social and cultural changes within contemporary society, the authority and status African men held within the family has been undermined (Atkinson, 2009; Rabe, 2018).

The beginning of the 21st century has revealed a marked increase in South African fathers' involvement in caregiving practices (Madhavan, Townsend & Garey, 2008). Although the extent to which men are involved in the lives of their children is not to the same extent as that of women; men are now generally more involved in caregiving practices than their own fathers

were (Rabe, 2018). There is an increase in fathers negotiating paternity rights and fighting for paternal custody (Khunou, 2006) in South Africa, suggesting that many men want to be involved to a greater extent in the lives of their children (Rabe, 2018).

In 2001 Edwards, Borsten, Nene and Kunene conducted a study in Kwa-Zulu Natal to investigate how urbanisation effected South African fathers' perceptions of their responsibilities. They hypothesized that there would be a change in paternal responsibilities as a result of urbanisation. Their sample was made up of rural, transitional and urban fathers, and what these fathers perceived to be the most important responsibilities regarding breadwinner responsibilities (economic provider), governor responsibilities (community representative) and family responsibilities (husband, father, educator and emotional supporter). This study found that rural fathers emphasized governor responsibilities over the others as this was compatible with their traditional cultural expectations, in which the father is viewed as answerable for the behaviour and decisions of his family to the community (Edwards et al., 2001). The transitional fathers, given the social, economic and political climate of South Africa at the time of the study, highlighted breadwinner responsibilities as most important because they were mostly migrant workers who sent money home to their families who still reside in rural areas. The urban fathers stressed the importance of family responsibilities (Edwards et al., 2001). This could have been as a result of conforming to modernisation and moving away from strict tribal authorities. These fathers' acceptance of individual achievement through education and their duty as husband, father and emotional supporter demonstrates acceptance of westernised values (Edwards et al., 2001). The sample for the present study included fathers from urban areas across the Gauteng region who could provide an alternate perspective on their perception of fatherhood in the contemporary South African context as employed, working fathers.

2.5. The Paternal Role

There is a belief that fathers play a unique role in the lives of their children and is centred on levels of involvement with the children (Lamb & Lewis, 2010). This section therefore examines the paternal role in terms of the role of fathers as a provider and role model as these are the prominent roles presented in literature (Wall & Arnold, 2007; Eddy, Thompson-de Boor & Mphaka, 2013). In traditional terms, the provider speaks to the father's ability to provide tangible resources which is typically monetary in value; however, the provider is also understood as providing practical care for the child (Fogarty & Evans, 2009).

The paternal role is compromised by high demands of consumerism and modernisation because their families and children have higher demands for materialistic and financial support (Eddy et al., 2013; Allen & Daly, 2007). This resulted from the notion that fathers are the sole providers for their families (Mlotshwa, 2016), coupled with South Africa's high unemployment rates (Eddy et al., 2013) amplifies the social pressure for fathers to be 'men', and in order to be considered as such they need to demonstrate certain attitudes and prove that they can provide for their families regardless of whether or not they are employed (Murray & Hwany, 2015; Allen & Daly, 2007).

Fathers are often expected to provide leadership and guidance on topics related to family values and social customs; offering advice about education, friendships, and relationships (Fogarty & Evans, 2009; Pleck, 2012). Fathers tend to take the lead to discuss issues of truthfulness, earning one's keep and that by showing love and affection to the people one loves will demonstrate that, particularly in the adolescent phase when the child transitions into his own person (Fogarty & Evans, 2009; Helman, 2015). Research reports the father's role has altered to include someone who actively demonstrates love and care to and for their children and someone who engages in emotional expressions and openness (Helman, 2015).

Being a role model is therefore a central role fathers play for their children (Tladi, 2017). A role model is thus described as an individual who embodies good behaviour or someone who has a positive influence on the behaviour or thought process of others (Murray & Hwany, 2015). It has been reported that boy children are more inclined to model the behaviour of a male role model and therefore the presence of his father would be beneficial to this (Langa, 2014; Richter & Morrell, 2006; Makusha & Richter, 2014).

Research conducted by Chideya and Williams (2013) in disadvantaged communities in Cape Town, South Africa highlighted adolescent fathers' perceptions of their paternal role. They found that some of these adolescent fathers experienced a sense of pride as they were considered to be men, as fathers, in an African cultural context. They also experienced feelings of ambivalence, partly because of the looming responsibility associated with becoming a father as some of their parents had withdrawn financially and expect their adolescent sons to take responsibility for their new families, while several reported feelings of guilt associated with becoming a father as an adolescent (Chideya & Williams, 2013). These fathers thought of fatherhood as entailing being a provider in which they would be required to finance the material needs of their children, and to act as a role model to their new child which includes providing

guidance, as well as being devotedly engaged in their child's life (Chideya & Williams, 2013). However, these fathers also willingly assumed a nurturing role and found pleasure in engaging in caregiving practices traditionally assigned to mothers (Chideya & Williams, 2013).

The South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) (Human Sciences Research Council, 2012) explored family structure family-related roles and -values (Franklin, Makiwane & Makusha, 2014). According to responses in the survey when asked "What are the attitudes of South African men towards children, childrearing, fatherhood and discipline?" it was found that the majority of male respondents experienced their presence in the lives of their children as joyful as opposed to being financially burdensome and restricting of their career development (Franklin, et al, 2014). However when asked if attitudes of South African men vary by designated racial groups of Black, Coloured, Indian/Asian or White; a greater number of Black male respondents had the view that children interfered with their freedom, that they are a financial burden and that they do to some degree restrict employment opportunities (Franklin et al, 2014). Black South African communities are characterised by widespread poverty, low educational levels and high levels of unemployment (Cilliers & Aucoin, 2016) which could contribute to understanding these findings.

Interestingly, the majority of male respondents expressed that they had concerns about the amount of father absence in South Africa (Franklin et al, 2014). These men indicated that having a close, loving relationship with their children is something that they desired and is extremely important to them (Franklin et al, 2014). This research study could thus contribute to these findings, to understand how they experience fatherhood through their relationships with their children.

2.6. Caregiving Conflict

It is reported that many fathers face high levels of conflict between their desire to engage more actively in child-care and the imperative of their role as financial providers (Harrington, Fraone & Lee, 2017).

Literature suggests that fathers who spend less time in paying careers and more time with their children was for one of two reasons; firstly to engage with the ideology of involved fatherhood; or secondly, due to personal circumstances such as a partner who works away or over long periods of time (Hotler, 2007; Pinho, 2017). Research suggests that fathers who assign time to dual career-caregiving roles identify as both financial provider and 'involved father' (Gaunt &

Scott, 2014). Many times it can be seen that the different roles conflict with one another resulting in one role dominating another such as, father's experiencing involvement with their children as positive when they invest less time in work-related activities. This also implies a reduced importance of fathers' engagement in work-related activities (Roeters, van de Lippe, Kluwer & Raub, 2012).

Research has found that working fathers who spent more hours working are involved in less caregiving practices for their children, which highlights that there is competing nature of both roles as they both require significant amounts of time and resources (Roeters et al, 2012). Research furthermore suggests that fathers who have a higher socioeconomic standing have the opportunity for more intensive parenting practices and more closely identify with the 'involved father' role, thereby spending more time with their children (Gracia, 2014; Coles, Hewitt & Martin, 2015).

An important factor influencing a father's ability to spend time with their children is the nature of his employment. Fathers who work in the private sector and particularly in male dominant environments report that they believe if they adapt their work-related activities to be more flexible in accommodating the needs of their children, the resultant may be pay reductions, promotional penalties and/or stigmatisation in the workplace (Coles et al, 2015). Thus understanding how formally employed fathers experience fatherhood and how they are able to engage in caregiving practices for their children might offer important information regarding how they divide their time between their different roles.

Harrington et al. (2017) explored father's beliefs and practices about caregiving and report that work-related demands present a 'caregiving dilemma' for some of these fathers. They present a model of three types of fathers, namely egalitarian, conflicted and traditional. Egalitarian fathers whose aspirational level of caregiving and the reality of their caregiving was found to be equal between themselves and their partners (Harrington et al., 2017). Conflicted fathers aspired to engage in equal caregiving with their partner, but in reality engaged in less caregiving than their female partners and kin (Harrington et al., 2017). The traditional fathers believe that their female partners should engage more directly with their children than themselves as men (Harrington et al., 2017).

From this study, the conflicted fathers seemed to express the desire to engage in more caregiving activities for their children, or just simply spend more time with them (Harrington et al., 2017). Almost all Egalitarian partners were employed, while about half of the traditional

partners were employed, and only 3 of 4 conflicted partners were employed; and the majority of these men's partners had either obtained a Bachelor's or Master's degree (Harrington et al., 2017; Harrington, Van Deusen, Fraone & Morelock, 2015). This study found that men who pursue highly demanding careers, as well as career oriented partners, tend to share caregiving practices equally with their partners (Harrington et al., 2017).

Egalitarian fathers have reported feeling responsible to take care of their children should they fall ill and have to stay home and thus would willingly stay home from work; this differs from traditional fathers who think that their female partners are required to stay home to care for their sick children as part of their nurturing duties (Harrington et al., 2017; Harrington, Van Deusen & Humberd, 2011). Conflicted fathers, on the other hand, acknowledge an equal responsibility to care for their sick child (Harrington et al., 2017). Conflicted and traditional fathers were reported to feel comfortable with their partner providing more care than they do, whereas Egalitarian fathers reported that they do not. This could indicate more commitment to sharing the caregiving practices with their partners (Harrington et al., 2017).

An emphasis on the emotional aspects of fathering has received much attention as fathers have used words such as "listening", "understanding", "compassion", "being a role model" (Harrington et al., 2010, p. 12) to describe their role as a father. Other fathers described their role as "being there, being present, being accessible, to be participatory and to take an active interest" (Harrington et al., 2010, p. 12). Harrington, Van Deusen and Ladge (2010) investigated the experiences of fathers who have been a father for at least 18 months and their findings focused on the feeling of being a "real family". The majority of fathers in that study depicted their best experience of fatherhood being able to connect with and build a loving relationship with their child (Harrington et al., 2010; Taylor, Parker, Morin, Patten & Brown, 2014). These fathers expressed finding joy in watching their children develop and reach new milestones, witnessing the influence they have on who their child will become (Harrington et al., 2010).

Conflicted fathers expressed feeling least satisfied in their current jobs and more holistically described their experience as not belonging at their place of work; whilst Egalitarian fathers reported that when they experience being treated with respect in the workplace, their job satisfaction increases (Harrington et al., 2017). This research thus proposed that the new ideal would be for men to adopt an Egalitarian stance and to shift away from the belief that "earning is caring" (Rehel & Baxter, 2015; p. 3) in which men are seen to contribute to the family

structure solely by financial means. This has been seen to result in increased social pressure for men to be engaged in child care and domestic responsibilities (Rehel & Baxter, 2015).

Overall, conflicted fathers are reported to struggle the most with balancing their careers and their caregiving responsibilities whilst reporting low levels of job satisfaction. It would appear that the challenges conflicted fathers are experiencing is similar to reports on the experience of working mothers, and as such is not an entirely new phenomenon (Harrington et al., 2017). The way in which fathers manage the balance between career pursuits and caring for their children is an important consideration in understanding the findings for this study.

2.7. Student-fathers

Little is known about mature, student-parents who also return to education and engage practices of care for their children in the South African context. Student-parents comprise of non-traditional students as their role as a parent is carefully balanced with their efforts to complete a degree program (Robertson, Weider, Weider & Morey, 2012). From existing literature from the United States, a handful of studies address the experiences of these students at all levels and ages in attempts to understand better their needs in terms of institutional and social-emotional support (de Oliveira Urpia & da Rocha Sampaio, 2012; Medved & Heisler, 2002; Robertson et al., 2012; van Rhijn, 2014). It is suggested that student-parents feel tension about splitting their time between parenthood and being a student (Brooks, 2015; Robertson et al., 2012). This tension has been described feelings of selfishness or internal conflict (McCourt, 2018). Many student-parents balance multiple other roles such as employee, spouse, and family member to which they must devote time (Robertson et al., 2012; McCourt, 2018).

The decision to re-engage with education at any age is a significant journey for anyone to embark on (Graham, 2015). Returning to education for mature-age students can increase employment prospects, provide educational opportunities missed in the past, facilitate new friendships, and help develop new interests (Graham, 2015). Although large numbers of people return to education to improve their employment prospects, for others it can be a life-changing event that would result in personal growth, intellectual development, and an increase in their self-esteem and confidence (Fenge, 2011; Graham, 2015). Re-engaging with education can often mark a new start for people taking on the challenge of lifelong learning (Shafi & Rose, 2014).

The decision to re-engage with education is not without challenges. Some of the biggest challenges include but are not limited to time, financial capacity, confidence issues, lack of support systems, accessibility to university campuses and classes, feelings of being too old to learn, and social anxieties (Dawson, 2003; Graham, 2015; Giddens & Sutton, 2013). The most significant challenges are finances, relationships with partners, other external commitments, and the academic components of assignment writing and examinations. Online, after-hours and weekend correspondence classes have helped to address these concerns for those students who are unable to attend a university (Graham, 2015).

2.8. Paternal values and their childrearing attitudes

A study conducted in Iceland has highlighted the notion that the paternal values - the core underpinnings of a father's beliefs, attitudes and motivations - are what determine his parenting practices in respect of discipline, indulgence, or promoting a child's overall well-being and growth (Ingudóttir, 2015). It is proposed that to investigate how fathers engage in parenting practices it is useful to determine what their parental goals are (Ingudóttir, 2015; Le & Impett, 2019). Parenting goals refer to the interpersonal relationships parents have with their children and what they aim to achieve with their children (Le & Impett, 2019). Parenting goals that underlie parental care can have effects on parents' sense of emotional well-being, the quality of the relationship with their children, as well as how they respond to their children's needs (Le & Impett, 2019). Society is dynamic and ever-changing and so too is parenting values and goals, forcing parents to constantly adapt their parenting role (Inguóttir, 2015). Different parenting practices are driven by different parenting goals, which result in different outcomes for their children (Collins, Madsen & Susman-Stillman, 2002). Therefore it might be valuable for this study to gain an understanding of how these fathers' values influence their parenting practices.

2.9. Paternal caring

Paternal care is also known as *alloparental* care, which is care provided to a child by any individual other than the mother (Boner & Fernandez-Duque, 2017). Paternal care can be defined as behaviours performed by an 'accepted' father that would improve a child's development, well-being, or survival (Fernandez-Duque, Valeggia & Mendoza, 2009).

Historically the primary responsibility of men as fathers has been to financially provide for their partners and children; however, women have increasingly started to share in this responsibility (Maurer & Pleck, 2006). As a result, fathers' roles, responsibilities and functions have changed within the family structure (Palkovitz, 2002), where fathers are more actively taking part in caregiving practices (Maurer & Pleck, 2006; Promundo, 2014). According to Doucet (2004) fathers report feeling social pressures to be the provider in the family structure, however, they report having personal desires of being more involved in the caregiving practices for their children (Henwood & Procter, 2003; Promundo, 2014).

Fathers' increased engagement in care giving of their children highlights some challenges to heteronormative notions of fatherhood (Maurer & Pleck, 2006). The idea of engaging in caregiving practices is still largely considered to be an expression of femininity and responsibility of women and female kin, so may present a threat to men (McGinley, 2011). Men need to redefine caregiving tasks so that by participating in these activities, a threat is not posed to their heteronormatively complaint expressions of masculinity as disengaged from physical and emotional dimensions of child care (Maurer & Pleck, 2006; McGinley, 2011). The media portrays the idea that caring for children physically is a mother's role as a woman and that these activities are largely voluntary and negotiable for men (Fleming & Tobin, 2005), perpetuate heteronormative parenting practises where the primary caregiver in the family structure is still the mother and that fathers primarily engage in financial provision (Maurer & Pleck, 2006; Gaunt, 2012).

2.10. Theoretical Framework

The interpretive phenomenological approach is used to underpin this study as its prime aim is to focus on the participant's subjective experiences of being employed, working fathers and what these experiences mean to them.

Phenomenology is fundamentally rooted in describing a particular phenomenon. The goal of phenomenology is to gain an in-depth understanding of a specific phenomenon and to describe it so as to reach the essence of an individual's lived experience (Cilesiz, 2011; Moran, 2013). The knowledge produced from the participants' point of view will inform the perception and interpretation of the experience within a particular context (Qutishi, 2018). The focus of phenomenological studies in psychological enquiry is the detailed description of the individual's subjective experience (Gallagher, 2012; Moran, 2013). This focus will guide a

qualitative exploration of the subjective experiences of employed fathers, and how such fathers engage in caregiving practices with their children. A phenomenological framework thus allows one to grasp the subjective experiences of research participants as individuals who live it and describe it in their own words (Moran, 2013; Qutoshi, 2018). This allows both the researcher and other readers to gain a detailed understanding of paternal involvement in child care and social practices surrounding it (Qutoshi, 2018).

The phenomenological approach requires that the researcher set aside their own understanding of an experience through what is referred to as "bracketing" (Pathak, 2017; p.1720) in an attempt to assume the position of the interviewee in gaining an understanding of their lived experience (Pathak, 2017). According to Arslan & Yildirium (2015) research participants become co-researchers during phenomenological research as the essence of the phenomenon under study is derived from the perceptions and experiences of the individual participants.

Hermeneutics will serve as a methodological approach guiding the qualitative design of the study and research process. Hermeneutics can be seen to be founded upon two central concepts; one is concerned with interpretation and the other is concerned with understanding (Tomkins & Eatough, 2018). In terms of interpretation, the focus lies on the practical process of how data is collected and systematically presented (Tomkins & Eatough, 2018). The notion of understanding a phenomenon or experience has a more abstract and conceptual focus on the co-constructed meaning of lived experience as reflected through interpretation of a participant's words used to describe such experience (Tomkins & Eatough, 2018).

Plato's theory of recollection lends hand to the idea of a hermeneutic circle, in which people only learn about an unknown phenomenon by recognising that it has a direct relation with something that already exists (Tomkins & Eatough, 2018). The hermeneutic circle comprises of two arcs. Hence human understanding can be seen through a forward arc as one projects a certain framework onto one's world, one's own context (Mantzavinos, 2016). This allows for the information to be interpreted within a particular context which shapes the understandings and expectations related to the study (Mantzavinos, 2016). The return arc is then used to identify how these new understandings are integrated into one's understanding, and how this might inform a new perspective or understanding which leads to a greater comprehension of the social world where the phenomenon takes place (Mantzavinos, 2016).

Hermeneutic phenomenology, otherwise known as interpretive phenomenology, originates from the work of Martin Heidegger. Heidegger focused on human experience and how the

human experience was lived; and conceptualised individual people as "actors" in the world (Neubauer, Witkop & Varpio, 2019). This allowed Heidegger to focus on an individual and their relationship with his/her 'lifeworld' (Neubauer et al., 2019). The term '*lifeworld*' coined by Heidegger refers to the notion that an individual's reality is habitually influenced by the world in which they (Lopez & Willis, 2004). This understanding suggests that individuals have always had an understanding of themselves within the world, even though this is sometimes not something they are constantly or consciously aware of (Staiti, 2012). Consciousness is thus seen as a formation of historical and cultural lived experiences in which the individual was raised (Lopez & Willis, 2004; Neubauer et al., 2019). This implies that people cannot separate their lived experience from their background understandings. Hermeneutic or interpretive phenomenology therefore aims to understand individuals' lived experience in their day-to-day lives, in their '*lifeworlds*', through studying their narratives (Neubauer et al., 2019).

It is thus helpful to make use of the hermeneutic principle which requires of the researcher to remain faithful to the phenomena as it appears within social contexts, describing itself in the manner in which it is manifested to consciousness (Qutoshi, 2018). Hermeneutics focuses on producing understanding and attributing meaning to these understandings through interpretation (Mantzavinos, 2016). Thus for hermeneutic phenomenology a description or interpretation of the phenomenon experienced by participants is required (Pathak, 2017); there is an emphasis on the interpretation rather than just the recollection of the experience of the phenomenon (Arslan & Yildirium, 2015). The focus here is to highlight details in lived experience that may otherwise be taken for granted, with the intention of creating new meaning and thus a sense of understanding (Pathak, 2017; Neubauer et al., 2019).

In addition to the interpretive phenomenological approach, it would be helpful to examine Baumrind's Theory of Parenting Styles. Baumrind's theory can be used to identify what parenting style each of the fathers subscribe to and how this may influence the way in which they engage with caregiving practices for their children.

Parenting practices and parenting style are concepts that exist in conjunction with one another (Raya, Ruiz-Olivares, Pino and Herruzo, 2013). In the mid-1960s, Diana Baumrind proposed three models of parental strategies, namely permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parenting (Baumrind, 1967).

Baumrind's research indicated that in general parents who adopt a permissive parenting style raise children who have poor self-control, low self-esteems and struggle with aggression;

parents who adopt an authoritarian parenting style raise children who have poor academic achievement and who could potentially suffer from depressive symptoms; and parents who are more authoritative in their parenting style tend to raise children that are emotionally stable, have positive adaptive coping mechanisms and are generally satisfied with their life (Power, 2013).

Maccoby and Martin (1983) elaborated on this and proposed two broad onthogonal dimensions relating to parenting styles, namely demandingness and responsiveness. The dimension of demandingness states the rules, limits and boundaries parents set in place to regulate their children's behaviour, and the extent to which their children comply with them; whereas the responsiveness dimension denotes the extent to which parents are involved with and show affection to their children; the degree to which the parents accept their children's behaviours and feelings; and the extent to which parents are sensitive to the needs of their children (Gorostiaga, Aliri, Balluerka & Lameirinhas, 2019).

This then brings about a typology that includes four parenting styles, that is authoritative or democratic in which there is high demandingness and high responsiveness; authoritarian in which there is demandingness but low responsiveness; indulgent in which there is low demandingness and high responsiveness; and uninvolved or neglectful in which there is low demandingness and responsiveness (Gorostiaga et al., 2019).

Literature reports that there are many positive effects father involvement may have on child development (Sheeber, Davis, Leve, Hops & Tildesley, 2007). It is also suggested that actively involved fathers manifest greater developmental change within themselves, and are more socially connected to their family (Ingudóttir, 2015). Some studies have found that fatherhood is beneficial to men's health mentally and physically (Bartlett, 2004; Hosegood, Richter & Clarke, 2015). Some fathers are reported to have a positive attitude toward child-rearing and actively engage in parenting practices (Franklin et al, 2014); and they believe that their quality of life improves when they engage in caregiving practices for their children (Bartlett, 2004). Hence it is important to explore fathers' understanding of child-rearing and its meaning for their experiences of fatherhood.

The parenting role is largely socially and culturally constructed, and for this reason culture and community values play a complex role in the way in which fathers are expected to behave as parents (Ingudóttir, 2015). Different social contexts vary in expectations regarding parental practice; dictating how parents should feel about their children, how they discipline their

children and the achievements their children should attain. Community values are thus seen to be upheld by parents, both through their expectations and their goals (Ingudóttir, 2015); and in South Africa this has become more westernised as parents tend to promote independence, individualism and for their children to be self-reliant (Amos, 2013).

Nicholson, Howard and Borkowski (2008) propose that men use their encounters with their own fathers as 'mental models' for how they choose to approach fathering. It is thus suggested that men who grow up in nuclear families model the behaviour of their own father because they spend much of their time with their own parents as opposed to other adults (Nicholson et al., 2008). It is however necessary to understand that family structure alone is not indicative of father involvement and to acknowledge that other non-residential men are sometimes more involved with children (Cheadle, Amato & King, 2010; Guzzo, 2011). Men tend to use their own experiences to formulate their attitudes toward fathering, i.e., their perceptions of how their father participated in their upbringing is used as a hallmark of fathering rather than their father's presence (Guzzo, 2011). Thus it can be seen that a child might perceive a father who works long hours as uninvolved, which could result in adopting a similar withdrawn and detached parenting style during adulthood with his own children. Conversely, a child who experiences their father as regularly taking care of them by helping them with homework, putting them to bed and giving them advice when they encounter problems and to whom they felt a close bond, they might feel naturally inclined to be caring and nurturing toward their own children (Forste, Bartkowski & Jackson, 2009; Guzzo; 2011).

If fathers are withdrawn or disappear from their children's lives, men no longer have a same-sex role model whose behaviour can be emulated. Although a stepfather, male relative or mentor might fulfil a father-figure role and might be present in that child's life (Bzostek, McLanahan & Carlson, 2010), when considering their fathering style, the way in which their biological father was involved during their childhood may play an important role in that decision (Guzzo, 2011). Men who grow up without their biological father or a father-figure present, the uncertainty of what a 'good' father looks like is prominent. As a result, such men may think that the father role is not as important and that they have fewer responsibilities toward their children (Guzzo, 2011).

The alternative is not uncommon. Some men feel that they need to compensate for their biological father's shortcomings, they often choose a different approach to fathering for their own children (Guzzo, 2011). Such men have typically had unpleasant or distant relationships

with their own fathers and therefore want to avoid recreating those experiences for their children. Thus in response to the lack of a perceived role model, many men adopt an attitude toward fatherhood that they perceive to be what an ideal involved father role is, so that they can be a better role model for their own children (Townsend, 2002; Guzzo, 2011).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

3.1. Introduction

This study explored employed fathers' experiences of fatherhood and engagement with parenting practices. The research study aimed to explore how employed, working fathers experienced fatherhood and how these employed, working fathers engaged in practices of care for their children. The objectives of this research study were to gain a new perspective of working fathers' subjective experience of fatherhood and how they engaged in practices of care for their children. Furthermore, it will gain valuable insight into the influence fulltime employment has on fathers' ability to engage in caregiving practices for their children. This study thus contributes to Fatherhood studies within the South African context.

This chapter provides a detailed account of the research process that was employed to conduct this study, this includes the research paradigm, the research design, and the research methods which comprises of the sampling and recruitment of participants, the research setting in which this study was conducted, the data collection instrument, the procedure that was followed and the management of the collected data, and the technique used to analyse the data. The chapter concludes with ethical considerations, a description of how methodological rigour was ensured, the researcher's reflexivity and a description of the sample of fathers that participated in this research study.

3.2. Research paradigm

The interpretive paradigm was selected for this research study, as the primary goal was to interpret participants' subjective understanding as they attempted to assign meaning to their experience of fatherhood based on their personal beliefs and values (Paterson & Higgs, 2005; Thanh & Thanh, 2015). In studying the personal experiences of fathers that are employed fulltime in the South African context, as well as their experience of engaging in caregiving practises with their children; it was necessary to make use of such a paradigm as 'experience' is fundamentally embedded in the social world that exists around them and this research strategy will allow the researcher to address these experiences in rich detail and the correct context (Paterson & Higgs, 2005). The researcher was therefore interested in describing the participants' experiences in the way in which they had experienced it and did not impose a theoretical standpoint (Bevan, 2014).

3.3. Research design

This research study adopted a qualitative research design. This approach to research aims to specifically attempt to discover unique new ways of understanding lived social realities (Jackson, Drummond & Camara, 2007). It answers questions about why and how human behaviour, opinions, and experience occur; information which cannot be obtained through quantitative methods of enquiry (Jackson, Drummond & Camara, 2007). Therefore qualitative research sets out to determine in the specific contexts in which realities are produced (Dilley, 2004). Few studies exist that provide personal experiences from fathers themselves about fatherhood (Eerola & Huttunen, 2011), and the voices of men are often absent from research conducted on fatherhood (Guzzo, 2011). Thus a qualitative approach for this study which endeavoured to understand how employed fathers experience fatherhood, and what their experience of caregiving for their children are, allows the researcher to better appreciate the concept of fatherhood and the ever changing role of fathers.

3.4. Research methods

3.4.1. Sampling and recruitment of participants

A non-probability, purposive snowball sample of eight South African employed, working fathers from the Gauteng region were selected to participate in this study. In non-probability sampling, every member of society is not equally inclined to be included in the study and therefore is selected by the researcher based on subjective judgment and suitability to the aims of the study (Showkat & Parveen, 2017). This sampling technique was well suited to this research study as it aimed to develop an in-depth understanding of fathers' experiences of working in the South African context, as well as their experience of being actively involved in caregiving practices with their children (Alvi, 2016).

The Wits Plus Centre offers professionals the opportunity to combine studying with their working life. Wits Plus offers selected undergraduate degrees and short courses on a part-time and after hour basis to people who are employed full-time but wish to enhance and develop their careers (University of the Witwatersrand, 2019a). Wits Plus was selected as a sampling site as the students enrolled there would have an understanding of the importance of research in the academic field, as well as being employed full-time. With permission from Wits Plus, Call for Participation Posters (see Appendix C) were taken to the evening classes at Wits Plus and the researcher spoke to some of the students around the site before their lecture about the

aims of the study. Prospective participants were requested to indicate their interest in participating in the study by emailing the researcher. Further recruitment of participants through individual researcher networking was facilitated by the researcher posting the Call for Participation Poster in a closed forum for Registered Counsellors in South Africa. Prospective participants from this sampling site were requested to send direct messages to the researcher expressing their interest in the study including their email addresses and additional information was then forwarded to them. Snowball sampling was also utilized for the recruitment of participants through word of mouth (Naderifar, Goli & Ghaljaie, 2017).

Inclusion criteria for the study included that the fathers be married to or unmarried but residing with the mother of their child or children and their children. The fathers may be biological fathers to their child or children, or non-biological fathers to a child or children from the mothers' previous relationship, or foster or adoptive child or children. The child or children have to be under the age of 18. The father must at least have a matric, be formally employed in a full time capacity, and reside in Gauteng.

After receiving emails from the participants who volunteered to be interviewed, the researcher sent them the Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix D), Participant Consent Form (see Appendix E) and Recording Consent Form (See Appendix F). Twelve prospective participants initially responded to the Call for Participation. Three prospective participants were excluded because they did not reside with their children but were involved in practices of care for their children regularly. One prospective participant was excluded because his children were older than the age stipulated and no longer resided with him. Eight prospective participants were finally selected and a time and date was then scheduled with the participants to conduct the interview. After scheduling appointments with the participants, two participants withdrew due to work commitments. Two prospective participants from the initial respondents was then included in the study, although they did not reside with their children on a permanent basis. Printed copies of the aforementioned documents was provided on the day of the interview to be completed and signed by the participants.

Participants were between the ages of 30 and 60. Two of the participants were in their 30's, two in their 40's, and four in their 50's. Three of the participants were White, two Coloured, one Indian and two Black, and all of them were full-time employees. Three of the participants were part-time students. The participants' occupations varied from entry-level positions to managerial positions. One of participants was unmarried and six of the eight participants

cohabited with their child or children and the mother of their child or children. Two of the eight participants were fathers to both their biological children and a non-biological child.

3.4.2. Research setting

This research study was conducted within the Gauteng region, which entails the Johannesburg metropolitan area, as well as surrounding areas such as Midrand, Centurion, and Pretoria. Gauteng is the smallest province in South Africa, but one of the richest and most populated (South African History Online, 2017). Gauteng has a population estimate of 14 717 000 people, 7 434 382 of which are males (Statistics South Africa, 2018). The City of Johannesburg and the City of Pretoria constituting of the most inhabitants, i.e., 4 949 347 and 3 275 152 respectively (Statistics South Africa, 2016). The participants lived in various areas within the Gauteng region. Three participants were from the Pretoria area, one from the Centurion area and four from the Johannesburg area.

3.4.3. Instrument and data collection

The data was collected through the use of semi-structured interviews and the interviewer made use of broad, open-ended questions to engage the participant in a conversation about working fathers' experiences of caregiving practices. This method of collecting data was well suited to the research study as it is non-directive (Edwards & Holland, 2013) and thus participants were able to share their subjective understandings, views, and experiences regarding being both an employed father and an involved father who actively engages in caregiving practices with their children.

For this study, interpretive phenomenological interviewing was used (Bevan, 2014). Interviews are the most commonly used to collect data in phenomenological research; however there is limited instruction on how these should be conducted (Bevan, 2014). Giorgi (1997) said that "questions are generally broad and open ended so that the subject has sufficient opportunity to express his or her view point extensively" (p.245), which can be seen in the general approach to interviewing (Bevan 2014). But Giorgi went on to imply that phenomenological interviewing was two-tiered; initially it aims at obtaining context and follows to elicit meaning from the interview (Giorgi, 1997). Therefore using semi-structured interviews in which the researcher developed an interview schedule that outlined the main themes for discussion during the

interview (see Appendix G) (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). The questions in this interview type are typically broad and open-ended (Bevan, 2014). The interpretive phenomenological interview takes on the form of a conversation and the interview schedule is not developed to be used prescriptively, and thus includes prompts that do not limit the participant's narration of experience (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008; Bevan, 2014).

Audio recording, as typically used in conjunction with interviews, was used to as a tool to make certain that the researcher captured the data accurately and this allowed the researcher to focus on the participants' own words during the interview (Jamshed, 2014; Ryan, Coughlan & Cronin, 2007).

3.4.4. Procedure and data management

The interviews were arranged with the participants at a time and place that was convenient for them. The researcher conducted the interviews in English and the interview was typically between 45 minutes to an hour in length. The participants did not receive any incentives for partaking in the interview, as this was voluntary.

The interview was audiotaped for accuracy and transcription purposes. After each interview, the audio recording was transferred from the audio recorder onto a password-protected computer that was kept on the researcher's person at all times during the period in which the interviews were conducted. The researcher then transcribed the audio recording of the interview verbatim. All written interview transcriptions are stored in a password-protected document on a password-protected computer. Data collection and preliminary analysis took place simultaneously. The data was shared with the supervisor once all identifying information had been removed to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions, while the researcher analyses the data. Thereafter, the data was stored in a password-protected document on a password-protected computer at the University where only the primary researcher and supervisor would have access to them and the written interview transcripts were stored in a locked cabinet with restricted access.

3.4.5. Data analysis

Thematic content analysis was employed to analyse the data. This process was guided by the interpretive phenomenological paradigm. The analysis aimed to explore employed, working

fathers' experience of fatherhood and how they engage in practices of care for their children. This analysis was thus not theory-driven but rather informed by the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

A thematic content analysis looks at identifying patterns or themes generated from qualitative data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The principal objective of thematic analysis is the identification of themes that are of importance or interest to the research study at hand (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). This process includes more than just a summary of the data; rather a good thematic analysis interprets and makes sense of subjective experiences, perceptions or events (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Braun & Clark (2006) differentiate between semantic and latent themes. For this study, the researcher is interested in semantic themes which takes the data at face value and relies heavily on what the participant has said (Braun & Clark, 2006).

Braun and Clark (2006) outline the following stepwise procedure for thematic content analysis. The researcher made considerable attempts to dismiss her presumptions and judgments to focus on what is presented in the written interview transcripts (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). The researcher began by looking for themes in the written interview transcripts, which involved close reading and rereading the transcripts and looking for new insights (Miller et al, 2018; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The researcher made comments on rich pieces of information (Smith & Osborn, 2008) that highlighted similarities, differences, patterns or contradictions in the way in which the participants responded in the interviews (Miller et al, 2018; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). These helped the researcher identify themes that reflect the participants' patterns of thought and thus produced preliminary themes for interpretation (Smith & Osborn, 2008; Miller et al, 2018; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

Next, the researcher related the themes by listing all the preliminary themes and looking for connections between them (Smith & Osborn, 2008; Miller et al, 2018). Here the researcher clustered similar themes together. These clusters were then checked against the participants' responses in the written transcripts to ensure that these commonalities relate together under each theme (Smith & Osborn, 2008; Miller et al, 2018). This step was significant to ensure that the researcher was drawing on the participants' own words during the interpretation of their subjective experience, whilst at the same time confirming the researcher's interpretation with what the participant said (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

The themes were then ordered coherently and named accordingly. Overarching themes emerged when themes that seem to recur often were grouped to produce richer evidence from

the transcripts (Smith & Osborn, 2008; Miller et al, 2018; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The researcher considered each theme individually, and some themes were dropped because they did not fit well with the aims of the research study (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Miller et al, 2018).

Once all the written interview transcripts were analysed, a final list of themes was developed that focused on the aims of the study (Smith & Osborn, 2008; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Miller et al, 2018). Through the analysis, the researcher identified convergence between the individual participants and the overarching themes which then provided theoretical convergence and individual idiosyncrasy within the study (Smith & Osborn, 2008; Miller et al, 2018).

Finally, the researcher wrote up a final statement outlining the interpreted findings based on the participants' experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Presentation of these findings followed a thematic outline and was followed by an interpretation of the meaning of their experience informed by the interpretive phenomenological approach. The write up translated the themes into a narrative account in which the themes are explained and illustrated (Miller et al, 2018). The findings of this analysis will follow in the following chapter. A directory of participants' own words is then used to provide verbatim extracts to support the interpretation (Smith & Osborn, 2008; Miller et al, 2018). The researcher took care when using the participants' phrase and their interpretation thereof and thus provided commentary on them (Smith & Osborn, 2008; Miller et al, 2018).

In addressing the research questions, the subjective experience of the participants were clustered into themes. The first three themes spoke to the participants' experience of being a father, as well as of being fathered; their experience of becoming a father for the first time; and their experience of the fatherhood role. The last two themes are made up of critical aspects pertaining to this study such as how the participants experience engaging in caregiving practices with their children and how their work-related commitments influence their interaction with their children.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

Ethics is concerned with the dynamics of decision making (Fouka & Makau, 2011). Research ethics are a branch of established rules and guidelines that define the conduct of researchers (Akaranga & Makau, 2016). Ethical principles and considerations are of the utmost importance

in research to ensure the protection of the human participants involved (Arifin, 2018). Due to the in-depth nature of qualitative research studies, particularly face-to-face interviews, ethical considerations need to be adhered to strictly (Arifin, 2018; Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018). It is thus the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the participants retain their right to autonomy and that the participants' identities are protected throughout the recruitment, data collection and dissemination processes (Arifin, 2018; Brink, 2018).

3.5.1. Ethics approval

The University of the Witwatersrand insists that all research conducted by their staff or students be conducted following the very highest ethical standards. The ethical approval was sought and granted from the Human Research (Non-Medical) Ethics Committee in the School of Human and Community Development, University of the Witwatersrand, with a clearance certificate protocol number MASPR/19/001 IH.

3.5.2. Informed consent and voluntary participation

Informed consent speaks to a person's ability to knowingly, voluntarily and intelligently give consent (Fouka & Mantzorou, 2011). The researcher implemented the principle of autonomy, in such, participants had the freedom to make their own choices and thus were allowed to make informed decisions that were best for them (Singh & Hylton, 2015). The researcher provided all participants with a Participant Information Sheet that explained the focus of the research study, as well as the aims and rationale. The Participant Information Sheet also provided information about with whom the results would be shared, and how the results would be used, and that they could withdraw from the study at any stage. This was followed by an informed consent form, that indicated that the participant had read all the information provided, that they had asked questions for clarity on any information that may have been ambiguous, and that they voluntarily and without undue influence gave their consent for their interview to be audio recorded and the information obtained to be used in the research study.

3.5.3. Confidentiality

Confidentiality protects the privacy of information received in any professional relationship (Donner, VandeCreek, Gonsiorek & Fisher, 2008). The duty of confidentiality requires for the

researcher to protect the identity of their research participants. Confidentiality means that persons are free to give and withhold as much information as they wish (Akaranga & Makau, 2016). The researcher ensured that the participants' information was kept confidential by making use of pseudonyms and removing any identifying information (Kaiser, 2009); while still presenting rich and detailed accounts of these fathers' experiences of working, and engaging in caregiving practises with their children while co-residing with their children and the mother of their children. Privacy and confidentiality of the interview was managed carefully during the interview session, data analysis and discussion of the findings. The researcher treated all participants fairly and with the utmost respect, and no participant had the probability of benefitting materially or in monetary value from the research study (Owonikoko, 2013).

3.5.4. Risk of Harm

When human participants are involved in the research process, it is important to consider the potential harm to these participants, the researcher, and the wider community (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018). Potential harm could be physical, emotional, reputational, or resource loss (Fleming & Zegwaard, (2018). It was thus not foreseeable that the participants would be exposed to any undue psychological harm; and the researcher ensured that the participants' emotional state was contained before the termination of the interview should any painful memories or experiences have been invoked following the beneficence principle (Owonikoko, 2013). During two interviews, participants revealed experiences of their own fathers that could have been harmful to them. During the interview process, the researcher paused the interview to ensure that the participant was willing to continue with the interview. After the interview took place, the researcher engaged in a debriefing with those participants and information was provided to them about where additional support could be obtained should they deem it necessary. Wits Plus students were informed about the services of the Counselling and Careers Development Unit (CCDU) and Emthonjeni available to them at the university. The Counselling and Career Development Unit provides students with a welcoming and safe space within which they can focus on their personal well-being and their academic success (University of the Witwatersrand, 2019b) and at the Emthonjeni Centre the focus is on providing counselling and psychotherapy (University of the Witwatersrand, 2019c). Other participants were informed about LIFELINE where a counsellor would be able to offer support.

3.6. Ensuring methodological rigour

Trustworthiness within qualitative research studies places emphasis on the way in which the methods, particularly the data analysis, unfolds during the research process (Gunawan, 2015; Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Strategies exist to establish trustworthiness in qualitative research which include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lemon & Hayes, 2020); these strategies are intertwined and interdependent. Credibility poses the question whether the researcher developed and articulated a particular level of confidence in the findings based on the phenomenon under investigation (Lemon & Hayes, 2020; Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Transferability refers to extent to which the findings from the study could apply to other contexts and settings (Lemon & Hayes, 2020; Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Dependability asserts that the findings are distinctive to a specific time and place, and that they are consistent across the data (Lemon & Hayes, 2020).

Accroding to Gunawan (2015), member checking is one of the most credible ways of ensuring the truth value. Therefore the researcher returned the written interview transcript to the interviewees to check that the transcript accurately described their interpretation of their experience of working fatherhood, and how they engage in caregiving practices for their children, through the process of member checking, (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell & Walter, 2016) and any additional information they had not covered during the interview was added in a comment section and was incorporated in the analysis of the data as this was pertinent to the content of the interview.

3.7. Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an important quality criterion as this allows the researcher to acknowledge the importance of self-awareness and being reflexive of their own role in the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting the data, and the pre-conceived assumptions the researcher may bring to the research (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). With this in mind the researcher had actively engaged in reflexivity throughout the research process. This has ensured that the researcher turned attention inward in an attempt to understand how her own attitudes, values, and views of the world could have potentially influenced how the data was analysed (Patnaik, 2013). Therefore the researcher engaged in introspective reflexivity, acknowledging that the researcher's own experiences, attitudes, and emotions may have affected the engagement with participants and consequently the analysis of the data (Patnaik, 2013). The researcher journalised her immediate observations, thoughts, and interpretations after each interview

before the data was analysed (Ortlipp, 2008). This was done in an attempt to maintain the focus of the research and help counteract the biases and attitudes of the researcher that could have influenced the research process (Patnaik, 2013).

The researcher has taken on a realist reflexive stance (Hom & Steele, 2010; Gemignani, 2016) to ensure the distance between the researcher and the study to remain objective. From a realist reflexive view the researcher views the different dimensions and dynamics that are involved with the research process as pre-existing to the act of research (Gemignani, 2016), thus from the researcher's frame of reference as an unmarried female, with no children, I needed to remain impartial through the use of reflexivity to maintain credibility in my study. I, as the researcher, also understood that certain aspects of the participants' experience will be more challenging emotionally and verbally to share than others and that this could have been attributed to both my gender and age. I tried to the best of my ability to guard against this by making it explicitly known that they were free to share only that which was comfortable for them and that if any questions should make them feel uncomfortable, that they may refuse to answer these.

3.8. Sample description

Eight participants aged 34 to 59, residing in the Gauteng region, including Pretoria, Centurion and Johannesburg, participated in this study.

Ryan is a 48 year old, Afrikaans speaking, married, White father. He lives with his wife and their two adolescent daughters, aged 15 and 18. For Ryan, his work as an Asset Verifier, can be demanding during certain periods, and quiet during others. He is required to work from an office and is occasionally required to work overtime on Saturdays.

Rudy is a 50 year old, Afrikaans speaking, married, Coloured father. Rudy lives with his wife and his two adolescent daughters, aged 15 and 19. Rudy is an auditor and his work is extremely demanding as he is required to work from both his office and home in order to meet deadlines. Due to the nature of his work, he is required to work additional hours in the evenings after work and occasionally on weekends as well. Rudy travels regularly for his job; at least one week each month. Rudy is also a part-time student furthering his personal and educational development. This requires him to divide his time between work deadlines, educational deadlines and engaging in practices of care for his children.

Tristan is a 47 year old, Afrikaans speaking, married Coloured father. Tristan resides with his wife and their three children; a son aged five, and two daughters aged 13 and 16 respectively.

For Tristan, his job as an Overt Researcher where he collects information that is overtly available through the media both nationally and internationally that is used to inform and direct projects and policies within his organisation, is situation dependent, but can be quite demanding. He is primarily required to work from his office, except when he is travelling, which would require him to work additional hours and essentially be available 24 hours. Tristan's job entails traveling for work purposes although this occurs infrequently, but when he does travel it is usually a week or two at a time away from home.

Logan is a 56 year old, Afrikaans speaking, White father. Logan is not married and does not live with his child on a permanent basis. His son, aged 14, lives primarily with his mother and Logan has visitation over weekends. He was thus excluded from the findings discussion of the study, because his account is not directly related to the focus of the study and as such does not sufficiently meet the inclusion criteria for this study.

Devin is a 59 year old, English speaking, married, Indian father. Devin lives with his wife and has three children, two of which are his biological children and one non-biological child from his wife's previous marriage. His children are aged 14, 18 and 23. Devin manages his own business and is able to manage his own workload and working hours.

Quinn is a 56 year old, Afrikaans speaking, married, White father. Quinn lives with his wife and two sons. He has a biological son together with his wife aged 12, and a non-biological son from his wife's previous relationship aged 20. Quinn works as an Information Technologist and reports that during crisis periods his work can be very demanding and stressful. He is often required to work additional hours at the office when projects need to be executed. It is also necessary for him to travel away from home for one day to three weeks. Quinn also studies part-time which requires of him to spend much of his free time completing assignments or studying for examinations.

Tebogo is a 34 year old, Tswana speaking, married, Black father. Tebogo does not primarily live with his wife and children due to working in a different province. Although Tebogo does not reside with children on a full-time basis, he does have a marital relation to the mother of his children and resides with them every weekend, which act as mitigating factors for his inclusion in the study. His experience as a working father would be valuable to the study and through reflection he could provide a different perspective of his involvement in the caregiving practices for his children. He has two children, a daughter aged 16 and a son aged 10. He visits with them over weekends. Tebogo does not view his work as challenging because he manages

his time and tasks well. He is required to work from an office and is required to work additional hours at the end of the organisation's financial year.

Zola is a 36 year old, Pedi speaking, married, Black father. Zola lives with his wife and two children. His daughter is 8 years old and his son is 5 years old. Zola is a travel agent and his work is situation dependent and can be demanding when there are important matters that he needs to attend to before leaving the office each day. As such he often spends two additional hours at the end of the day to attend to urgent matters. Zola is a part-time student who is dedicated to advancing his career. He spends nights working on tasks and completing assignments to complete his course.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

This study explored employed fathers' experience of fatherhood and engagement in parenting practices. The aim of this study was to explore employed, working fathers' experience of fatherhood and to explore how employed, working fathers engage in practices of care for their children. The objectives of this study were to gain an understanding of working fathers' subjective experience of fatherhood and how they engage in practices of care for their children. This chapter presents the findings of the study. In this section of the chapter, the findings of the individual participants are presented below. This is followed by a presentation of themes arising from a combined dataset.

The participants' experiences of fatherhood in the interviews appeared to centre on specific core themes. The first theme was centred on the experience of being a father in which the fathers depicted their subjective experience of being a father; coupled with their experiences of being fathered where they describe their own fathers and father figures. The second theme that emerged explored the fathers' experience of becoming a father for the first time. The third theme focused on how these fathers engaged in caregiving practices for their first child; the fourth theme was concerned with how the fathers experienced the fatherhood role; and lastly, the fifth theme that emerged was on the role of the fathers' work-related and educational commitments.

4.1. Ryan

The findings presented here were from an interview with the study participant Ryan.

4.1.1. The experience of being a father

Ryan described his experience of being a working father has been a "positive one", although he admits that having two adolescent daughters is sometimes challenging as they are demanding and often compete with one another. When asked how he experienced hearing that he was going to be a father for the first time, Ryan responded: *"I was there [in the delivery room for the first one]. It was very nice. My wife and I were married for five years before the first one was coming. So it was very nice."*

Ryan states that being a father has been a fulfilling experience for him as he gets to watch his daughters grow into young ladies. He describes them as being quite demanding and "*the give*

me lots of grey hairs", but he enjoys being able to provide them with the things that they want and need. He also acknowledges that because he has two daughters he feels as though he can enjoy spending quality time with each of them in different ways. He describes his eldest daughter as being "*wild and carefree"*, whilst his youngest daughter is "*more ladylike, she's more feminine"*.

According to Ryan, he never thought that his children would become the people that he would turn to for help and support. Ryan's wife is visually impaired and thus requires a lot of assistance to do domestic chores. Ryan thus helps to "*cook supper, assist with homework and housework" and to* ensure "*the uniforms are clean for the girls for the next day".* His daughters also do a lot to help each other with homework and to ensure all the housework gets done such as cooking, cleaning and even gardening.

4.1.2. Perception of the father's role

According to Ryan, fathers should spend more time with their children. Spending quality time with children is more important during this generation particularly because children are increasingly busier with technologies and schoolwork. Ryan therefore spends weekends doing leisurely activities with his daughters:*"…like maybe… I sometimes ride a bicycle with them, other times I take them for a ride, like a 4x4 trip or something like that. So you try to have time with them."*

Ryan spoke of sharing caregiving practices with the mother of his children because when all the responsibility falls on one parent, that parent will become exhausted and overwhelmed thus he considers it imperative that parents rotate caregiving practices, particularly during the early years and during the course of the evening. Ryan describes his involvement with his eldest daughter: *"I spent a lot of time [with her]. I used to change the nappies, I used to bath her. I had spent a lot of time with the older one. Because I was helping my wife, because you know she couldn't see nicely [she is partially blind], so I was doing a lot to help her. The mom can't do everything. You know like if there's a baby at 12 o'clock you must rotate to do the nappy change otherwise the one will be very tired."*

4.2. Rudy

The findings presented here were from an interview with Rudy.

4.2.1. The experience of being a father

Rudy relates the desire to be a father: *"You also feel that in some point in time in your life, when I'm going to get the girl, I'm going to impregnate the girl, and I'm going to take care of my child. Something that I actually, you feel a shortcoming in your own life. I think just as a women would feel a shortcoming in her life, she would like to give birth at a certain time in her life. Men also feels like he'd like someone that he can actually give attention to at some point. That is how I felt."*

Rudy described his experience of being a father as: "*Challenging… In a good way*". He reported that the early stages of his children's lives in which the foundation was laid was wonderful. As he took a moment to remember his children's journey, he expressed that he feels a sense of enjoyment and satisfaction with being a father.

As his daughters get older, Rudy finds himself being able to observe them, interact with them and just enjoy them. He takes pride in knowing that his children feel that they can approach him with any obstacle and that they value his advices and guidance. Therefore for Rudy the fatherhood role it to warn and guide: *"So you try to pre-warn them, you try to make them clever. Think. See. Open your eyes. Listen to what is being said in your groups. So that you can understand what is going on also, you not go blind through life".* He does however note that the biggest challenge he faces with having two adolescent daughters is knowing that they are interacting with the opposite sex and he feels stumped about how to handle this new development.

Being a father also includes being transparent with his children, Rudy feels that it is important for his children to understand that they are responsible for their own futures, for their schoolwork and how they handle the hurdles that come with growing up. Even though he will avail himself to help them when they run into problems, he feels it necessary to instil the understanding that stress is an inevitable part of life and of studying and working, and that they need to learn effective ways to cope with it. Being a father is about preparing his children for the rest of their lives.

Rudy has a busy schedule as a father who has to work: *"unfortunately my work requires planning and execution and reporting. And I think due to the work it's not possible to be there, to be back at home at a 5o'clock close out time for example. So what I do is I rather work late,*

maybe 2 hours at the office and take my stuff and go home and actually continue working at home as well." However, he states that at the moment this works well for him and his daughters as they too have busy school schedules and don't require his constant and immediate attention.

4.2.2. First hearing he was going to be a father

When first hearing that he was going to be a father, the experience was great: ". *I think for any dad that will be a great, is a great experience. For those dad's to come it will be a nice experience also".* His eldest daughter was expected in May, which is also his birth month, so naturally he was excited by the possibility of her coming on his birthday. But nevertheless, he was excited about a baby coming. He reckons that fathers are proud of their first born regardless of gender, so for him he really enjoyed that experience. When his wife went into labour, he was in the delivery room to assist her.

4.2.3. The role of the father

Rudy reports having had short comings in his own previous relationships, nevertheless he wanted to have a child of his own and to take care of that child. He wanted something that he could invest his attention in and could grow. According to Rudy, fathers are there to advise, guide and caution their children so that they don't go through life blindly, fathers try to make their children understand that in life risks are inevitable and that their personal choices may have risks associated with them. He also thinks that having a father actively involved in his children's lives allows them to observe the behaviour between men and women, or a mother and a father in the house. In this way, the child gets an understanding of what to expect in life, the child gets to see what a relationship is like, and the child gets to see different types of people in society, how two parties interact with one another and, ultimately, what love is. The child also gets to see what responsibilities are placed on that role within the household. Rudy describes it in his own words: *"I think every father would like to care for his or her child whether staying with or without him. The father will always be there. I think it's important for a child to have a father in his or her life, for that child to actually see the behaviour between male and female, mother and father in the house".*

4.2.4. Engaging in caregiving practices of young children

Rudy got to spend a lot of time with his first daughter as a young infant as his wife worked shifts as a nurse: "*so there was that night shift work. Those long hours work. Those weekends work. So I had that special time to bond with my first born."* He describes having had a lot of time to bond with his eldest daughter, he assisted the baby, he nurtured her, he played with her,

he took her for walks on the beach, played Christian music for her at night when she was restless, and that would make her feel safe and calm. He expresses being involved as being able to: "*assist with bathing, assist with dressing, combing hair as a little one, feeding, letting her lie in my arms at sleeping time, at times listening to music".* With his second daughter, he wasn't as involved as his wife took over that responsibility by becoming a stay-at-home mother, and Rudy expresses that he feels as though he didn't get that special time to spend with his youngest daughter, to play and grow with her. He does however recall that she felt at peace with him, when she wasn't feeling well she would seek him out and he would be able to pick her up and cuddle with her.

4.2.5. Engaging with his children as they get older

As his children grow and develop, he acknowledges that they are influenced by more factors such as the school environment and new friends. He tries to keep a close relationship with them by enquiring about their day, what they have done, and what they have learnt, especially now that they are adolescents and they are developing their own lives. Peer pressure is a challenge Rudy has identified when it comes to his daughters and their friends. As they have got older, they want to spend more and more time with their friends and there is an expectation that their father would allow these activities. However, Rudy feels that he needs to ensure that his children understand their values and beliefs and not to participate in anything that could harm them, but he still wants them to have fun. For Rudy, it is not enjoyable to be able to advise his daughters about going out with friends, particularly of the opposite sex. He describes this as "*…a little thing that I would have to work on, I could say due to my zero experience in how to actually handle a situation like this."* He advises them to be independent and not to expect or accept anything for anyone else. He also reminds them often that if they ever find themselves in an uncomfortable or dangerous situation, they can always call on him and he will always be there to collect them, to protect them.

4.3. Tristan

The findings presented here were from an interview with the study participant Tristan.

4.3.1. Journey to becoming a father

Tristan did not take the news very well when he first found out that his wife was expecting. He spoke of it as: *"When, when I was told that [wife] was pregnant somehow I didn't take it too nicely at first, because I, for me, I thought that time I didn't want [to have] kids at the age…"*

Many factors contributed to this feeling, the main factors being the fact that he and his wife were not married at the time and they were not living together at the time. The idea that he was going to become a father had to gradually grow on him and with this they put in a lot of effort into preparing for the baby's arrival.

He was not in the delivery room when his eldest daughter was born, but it was exciting for him when the doctor brought the baby out for him to meet her for the first time. He spent a lot of time bonding with his eldest daughter as a young infant; he would bath her and feed her. *"She used to sleep with me, I used to travel with her."* As she got older and started school, he would drop her off in the mornings and pick her up in the afternoons, she was not allowed to walk anywhere by herself. He described himself as being a very strict parent with his first child, however with the birth of his younger children, Tristan has become more relaxed in his parenting style. Tristan talks of his experience of fatherhood as: *"I think my experience of being a father is… I enjoyed it, even though they give me a lot of grey hairs and awkward moments. But I think the experience of being a father is quite good and it's fulfilling for me".*

Watching his children go through different developmental stages has been nice. He recalls a funny memory of telling his son who had recently lost a tooth that he should place it under his pillow: *We told him that the mouse or the tooth fairy will come and get it and give him money and those type of things,"* and his daughters telling him that that was not entirely true. However, with his daughters being adolescents, he has come to realise that they have other challenges. His eldest daughter is very academically inclined and does very well in her sports, but she is at that age where she wants to start interacting with adolescent boys. For him it is important to instil in his daughter that she complete her schooling first so that she can be independent and that she never has to rely on anyone else. He doesn't want anyone to claim that because of them, she does or does not have certain attainments in life.

When his daughters were younger, it was much easier to interact with them as they followed instructions; now that they are older, they tend to reason out every request and try to negotiate why they should or should not be allowed to do certain things. Tristan describes this as interesting and he expresses that he does not *"mind the negotiating part, because I think in essence [eldest daughter] has been in the situation where she starts thinking for herself, in terms of doing things, when she wants to do it and so on."* He has to rely solely on them to be honest and to take all the lessons learnt over the years to help them make good decisions. As a father this can be very intimidating and challenging, he speaks of having to learn new life skills

as well to help him adjust to their new phases and his own, but the journey has also been extremely gratifying.

A central concern about being a father is the safety of his children, particularly when they travel to and from school and when they spend time with friends. Here Tristan acknowledges the ills of society and states that society has changed so much from when he was a child. When he was growing up, one was able to play outside in the street with one's friends, one's neighbours were trusted and they would look out for all the children in the neighbourhood. That is not the case anymore, now one cannot trust anyone to be around one's children, one cannot trust one's neighbours to be honest and one cannot allow one's children to play outside unsupervised in one's own backyard.

4.3.2. Being a father that travels for work

Tristan has experienced that due to his travels for work, albeit infrequently, his children tend to grow closer to the parent who is present. He has found that: "*when there's only one person parenting then kids tend to grow closer to that person for that period when they are not there. Then when you come back you have to now take over the role of the parenting again".* In his experience, if only one parent is present for the majority of the time, it gives children some leeway to be disrespectful or to not respect that parent as much. This does cause friction within the household, naturally within the family dynamic there are disagreements and arguments, but he has found that this is exacerbated when he returns from a trip.

4.3.3. Engaging in caregiving practices

Tristan enjoys helping his children with homework activities and driving them to their extra mural activities, this allows his some extra time to spend with his children. But with school and work obligations, there is only so much time one can spend together during the week before the children have to go to bed; therefore on weekends he enjoys spending more time with them. This typically includes doing "*chores in the morning, sometimes we take the dog for a walk down the street. Sometimes we go out to visit other friends. Otherwise we just chill at home and watch movies and just be there".*

Tristan also expressed that engaging in caregiving practices extend beyond doing things that have a direct effect on his children such as helping them with homework, cooking, doing laundry and driving them around; but also showing up for the things that are important to them, such as sporting events. Tristan's children enjoy athletics, netball and swimming, and he believes in being active in his children's lives, which for him means being present from the

beginning and attending their school and sporting events, and he expresses that his children also love it when he attends their school or sporting events. This can be see here: *"I think for my experience, my eldest daughter loved it when I attended her netball or athletics meetings".*

4.4. Devin

The findings presented here were from an interview with the study participant called Devin.

4.4.1. The experience of being a father

Devin declares that nothing could have every entirely prepare him for fatherhood. This can be seen in Devin's description: "*Nothing prepared me. I thought you know having children was one big joke. Not a joke, but I mean, it wasn't as serious as I've learnt over time".* For Devin teaching his children good morals and values in life was quite interesting as he wants his children to be "outstanding citizens", ultimately good people. He has made it his mission to teach his children the right things in life, such as being humble. Devin asserts that fathers play an integral role in the development of their children because children naturally imitate their parents character, he accentuates this with an old saying "monkey see, monkey do". Thus it was important for Devin to develop the minds of his children by letting them read classic novels, such as Huckleberry Finn and White Fang Call of the Wild, so that they can start thinking more critically. He feels that this was necessary because he finds that the current teaching methodologies in schools are not adequate enough. Thus if he wants to develop "whole people" he should expose them to different things.

According to Devin, his children lack life experience or "street smarts" and although he is to blame for this, he acknowledges that the environment in which children grow up now it is too scary to allow one's children to learn this on his own. For this reason, he and his wife tend to drop their children off at school in the mornings and collect them again in the afternoons, he mentions that his children don't have the option to take public transportation, because they would not know where to even begin. The idea alone of having to use public transportation would be unheard of in their household. Even though he feels that this is for their own safety, he is sadden by the idea that his children are missing out on life. He always wants what is best for his children, and although they do not always see it as such, what he does as their father will ultimately shape who they are as people.

Devin acknowledges that by making the sacrifice to send his children to private schools he was able to give them a 'head start', but in hindsight he surrounded his children with a lot of wealthy

people and they have been easily influenced by that lifestyle. He has learnt that this influences the way in which his children choose to live their life, the people they associate themselves with and the materialistic things are what they view as markers of success. Thus for Devin, his choices irrespective of the intent behind them, teaches him lessons about being a father too.

As a father he often finds himself advising and guiding his children, to encourage them to never lose sight of their goals. Particularly as his children are getting older and their friends are becoming a bigger part of their lives, he wants them to maintain their academic focus. He recalls his mother always demanded academic excellence from him as a young child, and he feels that he is doing the same, but it is only in the best interest of his children. Thus he urges them to attain whatever they set their minds to regardless of any circumstances, and that they should be mindful of how their interactions with others may be regarded as indicators of their character. This can be seen here: "*I said, you have a lot to achieve. But don't lose sight of your goal and don't allow anything to come in between your goal and achieving your goal, simply because a lot of people would not want you to achieve what you set out to achieve".*

4.4.2. Perceptions of the father's role

For Devin the primary role a father plays is prioritizing the interests of their children's academic careers. Father's should serve as a guide and should not be prescriptive. Fathers are not able to teach their children everything, they should learn from his experiences and get information from him, and therefore Devin feels it is imperative to communicate openly with one's children.

According to Devin, fathers are also more influential than mothers as they can play a good psychological role and influence on their children and they can mould them. Fathers have the potential to mould their children into becoming better people and to have good morals by showing them life experiences, by talking to them and by building and maintaining a good relationship with them. Devin believes that a father should interact with their children all the time and spend more time with them.

4.4.3. Biological versus non-biological children

Throughout the interview, there was a marked difference in the way in which Devin spoke when referring to his two biological children and when referring to his non-biological daughter. At the beginning of the interview he started out by stating that "he loves all his children and that there is no distinction between them" but does later go on to explain that there was a subtle difference when it came to his non-biological daughter.

Devin met his non-biological daughter when she was two years old. His wife had been very protective over her, he therefore felt that was not his responsibility to nurture her in a way that a father would. He describes his eldest daughter reaching new developmental milestones as his wife's 'responsibility' as she had been the one responsible for her own daughter. With his middle daughter, his first biological child, her taking her first steps was an exciting time for him, however his children reaching new developmental milestones were not overly important to him. When his eldest daughter started her first day of school his wife was involved with that, whereas when the younger children started school, he would take them to school on their first day. He then used to drop all the children off at school in the mornings.

Although Devin attended all the school events and activities, he was more focused on his children's academic potential. He does however report that he did not have much influence on his eldest daughter, he did not motivate her as much as he did his younger children. He declares having had a big influence on their lives.

4.4.4. Being a working father

Until about five years ago, Devin held a high profile position in a corporate institution and worked extremely long hours and travelled more than he was home. During this time Devin recalls following a mind-set that nothing was more important than his job, not even his family. He was a workaholic. Devin used to drop his children off at school in the morning and more often than not that was the only time he got to spend any quality time with his children. He admits that because of his job he neglected his children, and he knew that they were waiting for him to come home at night. And even when he was home, his mind was always elsewhere. Because of his high profile job, he travelled nationally and internationally almost weekly and would be away from him family for long periods of time. Devin does however believe that it is the mother's duty to care for the children and their needs, while he provided for them financially.

Devin has since left his high profile corporate job and has opened his own company. This venture has allowed him to spend more time with his family and he recognises an improvement in his relationships with his children. He now has time for all the things he was too busy for before such as helping with homework or going for a hike.

4.5. Quinn

The findings presented here were from an interview with the study participant Quinn.

4.5.1. The experience of being a father

Quinn's subjective experience of fatherhood has been wonderful. When he first found out that he was going to be a father to his own son, he was a *"little bit shocked the first time, still but also very happy, because everything was just like I had planned. Right time, right moment. But it was still a shock"*. He was very excited for the arrival of his son and was happy that he could capture the moment on camera. He describes witnessing the C-section as an experience in itself: *"It is amazing what the C-section looks like actually. I did not realize the skin and everything of the mother was so thick. But it's amazing."* But ultimately he was excited about having a new baby in their home.

When going through new developmental milestones, Quinn thought there was a particular magic about it: *"Especially the first one, everything was special. The second one, the talking was special still but after that it doesn't get that much special anymore. It's like done this, been through it. It's not that special anymore."*

Quinn describes traditional fathers as the rule makers and being in charge of discipline within the household, but in his household his wife takes on that responsibility. He has designated himself the "fun dad" and is responsible for ensuring the safety of his family and that all their needs are catered to. He describes it as: *For me it's just to make sure that everyone is safe, looked after, that they have everything that they need. And then be as a family happy together".*

When his son was younger he states that there was a 50 50 distribution of caregiving practices: He was involved particularly in the evenings with the bathing, nappy changing and feeding of the baby *and "especially with the youngest one, when he was very young he had what you call colic. So most nights I would've been the one to pick him up, walk the hallways 2 or 3 hours getting him back to sleep, leaving my wife get a bit of rest in and stuff. So I took a lot of responsibility with that".* Now that his sons are older he is typically in charge of ensuring that the boys do their homework, *"…when I get home I would say I firstly just ask them if their homework is done, if it's not done, they must go and start their homework"* and then he ensures that it is actually done correctly. They bond over a game of Xbox while they talk about their day, especially as the youngest son is very inquisitive. Quinn also insists that everyone has supper together at night so that they can bond and catch up as a family.

4.5.2. Biological versus non-biological children

According to Quinn, men are boys who never grow up, so having two sons makes it more fun for him. He enjoys having sons because they have similar interests and he feels as though he can engage with them better with them through playing video games or going out, they are able to confide in him on a different level as opposed to their mother. He reveals that he had a more relaxed parenting style with his eldest son, allowing him to do things on his own and learn that way; but with his youngest son he has been more nurturing, paying more attention to his emotional needs as well. He describes his eldest son as having gone through an easy transition into adolescence, his personality stayed relatively stable from childhood to his teenage years; whereas his youngest son seems to have changed during his transition into adolescence, he is more rebellious, he likes to negotiate, he talk back and he seems to have an answer for everything. Quinn describes this in his own words: *"The oldest one I was lucky enough that the teenage years, where they rebel and everything, the oldest one luckily I didn't have any of those problems with him. He was not rebelling at all, he was a very good boy. The youngest one is 12, now it seems like I'm going to have a tough time with him, with the rebellions and stuff. Because he's already starting the back-chatting".*

For Quinn there is no apparent difference between his biological son and his non-biological son. He describes having more of a friend-friend relationship with his eldest son; he describes it as a more open relationship because they have more common interests and he thinks this is because he was more disciplined. He describes having a father-son relationship with his youngest son; he describes him as being a lot more playful, immature and he tends to test boundaries often and therefore Quinn needs to be stricter with him at times.

4.6. Tebogo

The findings presented here were from an interview with Tebogo.

4.6.1. Journey to becoming a father

Ultimately the subjective experience of being a father for Tebogo has been both good and challenging. When Tebogo first heard that he was going to be a father the experience was traumatising. "*I didn't expect it that time. 'Coz it was not a planned thing, so it was…. A bit traumatising"*. He was not quite sure how to handle the news and it took him living with his children to warm up to the idea that he is someone's father. The birthing experience of his first child was not a pleasant experience for him: "*because it was like the first time I saw that kind*

of thing, but… you can see the pain the second person is going through and you can't do anything about that." He reports having had to adapt to fatherhood because he understood that there was somebody else that was entirely dependent on him and he needed to care for.

Watching his children reach new developmental milestones Tebogo spoke of it as: *"It's quite interesting. Cause you can realise you're doing a good job".* When they started talking: "*you can realise they are saying the right words, not the wrong words. They are not swearing, those kind of things".* When he watched his children go to school for the first time he was able to learn more about his children because they are growing into their own people and they react differently to different situations and people. It afforded him the opportunity to see if his children were happy and if they required him to change his approach to certain situations. He recalls having an issue with his son who did not want to take the bus to school and he spoke with his son and they agreed that he would drop him off at school each day, that was one interaction that made him realise that children are happier when he is actively participating in their lives, so he was happy to oblige to that.

Tebogo has since moved away from his family to another province to pursue his career. Living apart from his family is hard on him, he discloses that when he lived with his children he was less stressed out as he could see what their needs were and he could assist right away, he also knew that there would be issues pertaining to school, sports and their personal lives; but it is challenging when one doesn't know what is happening in your children's lives as it happens. He relies on telephonic communication to interact with his children on a daily basis, he even assists them with homework over the phone. He returns home on weekends to visit with them and catch up with everything that is happening in their lives, he can also see the progress in their school work and sport. Even though he is emotionally and financially supportive to his children, he feels as though he is missing out on important events in their lives because they live apart.

His biggest fear at the moment is for his adolescent daughter. He feels that because he is not around on a day-to-day basis, his daughter might get hassled by boys in the neighbourhood or at school and he would not be there to address it. Thus he expresses feeling a "gap": *"I can't get to talk to her and see some stuff"* and he feels that she would not talk to him about certain things, so he is concerned she might make poor decisions. He can only trust that she will feel comfortable enough to communicate with him openly. Tebogo describes it as difficult living far away from his family. He wishes he could live with them, so that he could be there to wake

up with them in the mornings, to drop them off at school and then go to work. But he understands that it is his job that necessitates that he lives apart from them.

4.6.2. The experience of being a father

Tebogo speaks openly about wanting to be different from his own father. He depicts his father as a 'father' in is household. In his household, one could not ask his father anything nor could you say anything to him, his father would tell him what to do and that is what he had to do. He says his father become an 'instructor' in their house. He recalls if he ever did anything wrong, his father would not talk to him calmly about the situation, he would just beat him. He expresses that his father never took an involved stance in his life, he did not help with homework, he did not engage with him as a boy, nor did he provide him with any guidance. Tebogo describes this as being the reason why he *"wanted to be different from him. I wanted to there for my kids, talk to my kids, to know what their life is about, to know what they need, and to know their goals".* He wants to be in a position to guide his children so that if they go wrong he would be able to correct them.

His father-in-law on the other hand was a great father-figure in his life. Tebogo describes him as a good father, he was patient, kind and caring. He stated that *"He doesn't instruct, he guides".* When someone did something wrong, his father-in-law would speak about it calmly and discuss why it was wrong to help make that person understand why it was wrong and how they should address it moving forward.

4.6.3. Engaging with his children

Tebogo was not actively involved in caregiving practices with his children when they were younger as his wife tended to them. But because they are older, when he is around them he assists with homework, transporting them to and from school and he feels that having his children do chores around the house, he is instilling a sense of responsibility in them – they live in that home, they should take responsibility to look after it. He feels that by teaching his children responsibilities he can better prepare them for their futures. Similarly he allows them to make some decisions on their own: *"I don't plan for them. I tell them to plan their day. If they want to go out to the zoo, to the park… then it will be, we get there and do some activities. So that they can be open… Go for lunch, you know what they want."*

When his children were younger he was able to tell them what they could and could not do and they would accept it as that and would not talk back; but now that they're older they ask 'why', and he finds himself having to explain the danger and risk involved and reason with them so

that they also understand his point of view. As his children get older, he experiences having to watch what he says and the way in which he says things, because he needs to be sensitive to them. He is also very protective of his children, but feels that he cannot protect them from everything because ultimately they will make their own decisions, and thus he can only guide them in the right direction.

4.7. Zola

The findings presented here were from an interview with the study participant Zola.

4.7.1. Journey to becoming a father

Prior to having children Zola knew that he had a will to have his own children, so when he first heard that he was going to be a father he was extremely excited because he knew that by becoming a father he would be able to showcase that he is a responsible person to both his children and the world. He describes it as: "t*he only way you can showcase to people that you are…or you can showcase to yourself that you're responsible it will only be, you know, binded to your kids, even maybe family, but your kids because they are your sole responsibility."*

There were many things that he needed to learn in preparation for becoming a father, he describes it as having to learn certain behaviour: "*I had to sit down and learn you know, how to be a proper father, not that one that I've envisaged in my mind, you know.*"

He was not present for the birth of his children, however managed to get to the hospital a few short hours after his son was born. He was excited to see how tiny his son was and by the fact that he resembled him very well. "*I was excited looking at him. You know, the way he looks exactly like me*".

As his children are growing up, he finds himself try to impart common sense and knowledge to his daughter already, even though she is only eight years old. He wants to develop her mind in such a way that she starts thinking for herself, so when she does something he was question her about it and try to find out the reason behind it, in an attempt to get her to start thinking about her actions. Zola is trying to make her understand the concept of responsibility and that her actions have responsibility. "*I want to get her to understand so that she can also be aware that no this is wrong, this is right. So I always require answers from her. I always require an explanation from her."*

Zola experiences the fatherhood role as that of a friend: "*A friend is someone you can rely on. A friend is someone who you can talk to. So I'm opening that space actually by playing with them and doing all those things with them. So that when times come, when there's a need for them to say something to me, it will be easy for them to say that because I should have created that environment already with them".* Building a friendship with his children is also a goal for Zola because he wants his children to feel comfortable to discuss any issues with him therefore he tries to create a safe environment for them to talk about anything now during play. He wants his children to feel like he is easy to talk and that it is normal for them to discuss any issues or concerns with him.

Zola was raised by his maternal grandfather as a child. His grandfather was strict such as to try and protect him for the elements of the community in which he grew up. His grandfather always made sure that he always had what he wanted and encouraged him to be an active participant in the church, in sports and academia. But for Zola it is important that he is there for his children. He voices his concerns as: *"I don't want them to go look for father's love somewhere else while I'm around, You know they don't have to look for father's attention somewhere else while I'm here. You know, just I want to give them attention I want to be actually their…. Father and their friend as well… In order for me and them to have a good relationship. When kids are scared of you it's also not good, because sometimes they'll do somethings and be scared you know, to tell".* That is why Zola is trying to build a good relationship with his children so that they are always protected but also so that they will turn to him in times of need.

4.8.2. Subjective experience of being a father

The experience of being a father has been a good one but definitely not without its challenges. Zola expresses that times have changed and life is different than it was back in his generation, so he feels as though his children are growing at such a fast pace. He describes his children as being 'quick', the way in which they reason is not the same as the way he would have reasoned at that age. He observes this as his children being advanced for their age and this requires more mindfulness from him. He explains "*like for instance, for example my eight year old, I have to reason like… with her like a 15 year old, because the way she answers me, she's like 15*."

According to Zola, being a working father is about being able to care for one's family financially. This economy necessitate fathers to work.

4.7.3. Engaging in caregiving practices

Zola expresses that it is important to be actively involved in his children's lives. He is the only father from the sample who has young pre-adolescent children, and he is very much involved in the bathing of the children, feeding the children, playing with toys or little cars and doing homework. He views it as an opportunity to get to know his children better. He acknowledges that even though "*they are my kids, but as they grow they've got their own brains, and own thinking and whatever"* so he is very interested in spending time with them because he gets to see if anything is wrong with them.

Zola experiences homework and extra mural activities as very interesting with his young daughter. These also allows him to see a different side to her, he gets to observe her interests and talents. Zola enjoys taking these as opportunities to know and understand his daughter better. "*You know extra-curricular activities as opposed to curriculum, it's good for the kids. Because that's where you, maybe sometimes where you can identify you know your kids interests… Your kid's maybe talent or you know. So it's a good experience. It's a very good experience. Because I can be able to know my kid better, you know".*

Thematic findings

In this section of the chapter, the results of the analysis are considered highlighting common themes among the participants, as well as marked differences. The participants' experiences of fatherhood in the interviews appeared to focus on five core themes. The first theme was centred on **the experience of being a father** in which the fathers depicted their subjective experience of being a father; together with a sub theme of their experiences of being fathered where they describe their own fathers and father figures. The second theme that emerged was about **the experience of becoming a father for the first time**. The third theme focused on how these **fathers engaged in caregiving practices for their first child**; the fourth theme was concerned with how the **fathers experienced the fatherhood role**; and lastly, the fifth theme that emerged was on the **role of the fathers' work-related and educational commitments**. These combined thematic findings are presented here and will be further discussed in the following chapter.

4.8. The experience of being a father

Being a father is described as both satisfying and challenging. The participants have reported what their overall experience of being a father has been, what some of their challenges are and they learn and develop alongside their children.

All the participants have had positive experiences of being a father, describing it as wonderful, brilliant, fulfilling, and enjoyable. They acknowledged that although it can be challenging and that nothing could ever have fully prepared them for fatherhood, they have enjoyed the journey. They enjoy being able to guide their children, teach them values as well as help them on their journey toward self-discovery and fulfilment. This can be seen in Devin's description: *"Nothing prepared me".*

Rudy talks of his experience of fatherhood as a "*nice*" one: *"I think about two weeks ago I actually looked at my youngest one's baby photos and the memories that come back actually put a smile on a parent's face. Let me say on a dad's face. The enjoyment, the satisfaction at the time".*

Some of the participants have adolescent children and they have spoken about how challenging having an adolescent can be. Tristan describes his experience as: *"I think my experience for being a father is… I enjoyed it, even though they give me a lot of grey hairs and awkward moments. But it think the experience of being a father is quite good and it's fulfilling for me. I think also that having kids keeps you on your toes. Because, especially if you having these teenagers that think they know everything".*

Ryan expresses his experience as: *"They say it's hard to be a parent. You know, two teenage girls… they give you lots of grey hair. Because you know, they want this and they want that".*

Rudy: *"I think the one thing that I do not enjoy…would be… Because I have girls, to see them coming to me and having relationships with the opposite sex for example. I think that's a little thing that I would have to work on, I could say due to my zero experience in how to actually handle a situation like this."*

Some participants have also experienced their children as growing faster than themselves during their own childhood. There is an acknowledgement that their children have minds of their own and are therefore encouraged to be independent thinks, but sometimes they are stumped by their reasoning abilities. This can be seen discussed above for Tristan as he describes how his sixteen year old daughter has started reasoning more like an adult and tries

to negotiate with him about why she should or should not be allowed to do certain things. Tristan experiences this as an interesting phenomenon to him because he is able to observe his daughter's thought process. Zola has a similar experience with his eight year old daughter, he describes her reasoning ability as being superior to his at that age.

Participants related that watching their children reach new developmental milestones was exciting with their first child, they felt as though they got to have all these new experiences with their children and they got to share in the magic of their childhood. They do however acknowledge that this magic seemed to fade away with the younger children.

Tristan said *"It was, it was nice to go with them through those stages, especially when they lose a teeth and they had to put it under their pillows and… We told them that the, the mouse or the tooth fairy will come and get it and give them money and those type of things".*

Quinn experienced a difference in his engagement as more children were born: *"Especially the first one, everything was special. The second one, the talking was special still but after that it doesn't get that much special anymore. It's like done this, been through it. It's not that special anymore".*

Whilst for Tebogo it was an experience of accomplishment: *"It's quite interesting. Cause you can realise you're doing a good job".*

Of all the developmental milestones, for Quinn to hear his child speak for the first time was reported to be the most special moment: *"…the first time you hear "daddy" coming out of their mouths and stuff, you're like "yeah I'm the daddy – that's me. He's talking about me".*

Tebogo experienced this as a marker of his child's development: *"When they start talking, you can realise they are saying the right words, not the wrong words. They are not swearing, those kind of things".*

Tebogo, who lives away from his family due to work, express a desire to be actively involved in his children's lives. He makes use of technology such as phone calls, text, or video calling to develop and maintain relationships and direct communication with his children: *"Basically I communicate with them telephonically every day. Even the older one, the homework and the whole thing we do them telephonically. Even though she's got all the equipment to do it herself, I still help her with it over the phone".*

Similarly, when Quinn travels for work and spends long periods of time away from his family, technology helps keep them connected: *"But I'm lucky enough that we live in the age of WhatsApp and we can do WhatsApp calling. That helps a lot to keep in touch with WhatsApp video calling, we can at least see each other's faces".*

4.8.1. Experiences of being fathered and fathering

Five of the participants grew up in a household with their biological fathers. Ryan attended a boarding school and spent weekdays away from the home, while his siblings were home with his parents. His father did not work every day and was therefore able to spend more time with his siblings than with him: *"He didn't work every day. So he had a lot, he can spend a lot of time with my brothers and my sisters. So it was nice for them, because he was most of the time at the house".*

Devin's father was a factory worker and a self-taught musician. His father worked in the factory from Monday to Friday and on weekends he spent his time at band practice. His father also used to be an alcoholic. Devin recalls that he was very attached to his father and that due to their socioeconomic circumstances was not able to spend much with him, as he was too busy making ends meet: *"There was only four of us, so I was attached to him, but he didn't put that kind of focus on me".*

For Quinn, his father was the only parent who worked in their household and due to this his father was not really around for him. His father worked every day and travelled for work purposes therefor he was away from the home for periods at a time: *"So there was a lot of strain on him, he didn't actually have much time to spend with us, that's why in my family whenever I'm at home I try to spend as much time with the kids as I can, possibly can."* His father was also very strict therefore he tries to be more lenient and more understanding with his own children: *"I'm trying not to be as strict with my kids. Not forcing them to eat all their vegetables and things like that. So I'm a little bit more lenient than he was".*

Zola who was raised by his maternal grandfather reports that his grandfather was strict with him as a child. He states that in hindsight, his grandfather was as strict as he was so that he could protect him from the ills of the community in which he grew up. Zola reports having met his biological father later in life as an adult, and reports that they are very different in many ways, they share a common interest in academia. His biological father was a teacher and later became a lecturer. As such when he spoke to his father over the phone, they primarily discussed

his academic career: *"So every time that he would call me he would ask me how far I was with my studies. I can say I took on his readiness to learn and never to be tired of reading".*

Tebogo had two distinct experiences of being fathered. Tebogo recalls his own father as having been very cold, prescriptive and authoritarian in his household when he was growing up. He describes his father as *"being the 'father' in the house".* With his father, he was unable to openly ask questions and there were occasions where he would get hit for no apparent reason. However, as Tebogo developed a relationship with his father-in-law, his experience of being fathered changed. Although Tebogo was an adult when meeting his father-in-law he acknowledges him as a father-figure in his life and states that his father-in-law is a father whom he wants to emulate. He describes his father-in-law as patient, understanding and compassionate.

Rudy did not know his father and did not have any influential father figure in his life while growing up. He reports that his mother assumed mother and father roles, she provided for him and his siblings ensuring that they were taken care of. She would take them out, buy them clothing, particularly new clothes for Christmas. In response to his experience of father's absence Rudy formed his own idea of fatherhood: *"I actually formed my own dream, and I tried to live out my dream of what a father should be. Of what I would want to be for my child, where I would want to be for my child. So the luxury of learning from a father figure wasn't really there".*

Similarly, Tristan was also raised by a single mother after his father passed away when he was about six years old. His mother raised six children on her own by working more than one job and thus was not available to attend to her children's needs on a daily basis. This was something that Tristan was determined to steer clear from because he did not want his children to go through the same hardships he had to endure as a child: *"I always told myself that when I have kids I would not want my kids to go through the same things. So you tend to be more uh strict because you did not want the, because I don't want my kids to go through the same things that I went through uh when I was their age".*

When first hearing that they were going to be fathers, the news was exciting for most of the fathers while it terrified others. When asked how they experienced hearing they were going to be fathers for the first time, their responses included:

Tristan shares his experience as: *"When, when I was told that [wife] was pregnant somehow I didn't take it too nicely at first, because I, for me, I thought that time I didn't want kids that, at the age… we were not married yet that time…"*

Devin: *"[Wife] was pregnant and she told me hey I'm pregnant and I was like that's fantastic, we're going to have an addition to the family".*

Tebogo: *"It was traumatising… I didn't expect it that time. Coz it was not a planned thing, so it was…. A bit traumatising".*

The fathers gave detailed descriptions of how they experienced becoming fathers for the first time. This was described as exciting, an intention to care for their child, a shock and traumatising.

Four fathers spoke of their experience of the birth of their child and described it as something amazing and something they are not used to seeing, as Ryan recalls: *"I was standing next to my wife and… it was something to see because you not use of something like that".*

Quinn described the experience as: *"It is amazing what the C-section looks like actually. I did not realize the skin and everything was so thick of the mother. But it's amazing".*

Tebogo said the birthing experience was not a good one for him because he emphasized with the fact that his partner was in pain: *"because it was like the first time I saw that kind of thing, but… you can see the pain the second person is going through and you can't do anything about that".*

And although Zola was not present for the birth of his children, he was able to get to the hospital a few hours after the delivery of his son: *"The day that he was born, I think few hours after that I was there. I managed to get to the hospital and see him. He was a tiny baby".*

Tristan struggled to adjust to the idea of becoming a father for the first time and describes it as: *"It wasn't that good news for me, but… it gradually grew on me and then we, we actually put a lot of effort in with regards to [first child], in the planning for her coming".*

4.9. Experiencing the fatherhood role

The fathers have engaged in an open dialogue about how they think fathers should be involved in their children's lives, and this has been able to demonstrate how they are involved in their own children's lives and why this is important to them.

The fathers reported that being an involved father includes being actively involved in all aspects of one's child's life. Be present and emotionally available for one's child and take an active interest in the things that they enjoy doing.

Zola feels "*it's very important to be actively involved with them. You know, they are my kids, but as they grow they've got their own brains, and own thinking and whatever".*

For Devin being actively involved in their academic careers should be a priority: *I can't teach him everything. I want to, for me ideally, I want to make a road map and say you do step 1, step 2, step 3 and you going to get ahead. But it doesn't work like that, they have their own minds".*

Sporting activities are also important, Ryan expresses this by saying: *"Both of them like swimming so I was trying to if they swim in gala, I go to the gala, check how they are swimming. So with the sport, you try to be there for them".*

This is how Tristan experiences his child's sporting events: *"I think for, from my experience my daughters loved it when I attended their… their, their netball or athletics meetings for them".*

For Rudy and for Devin the fatherhood role is to warn and to guide: *"So you try to pre-warn them, you try to make them clever. Think. See. Open your eyes. Listen to what is being said in your groups. So that you can understand what is going on also, you not go blind through life, through your school years, through your friendships from school. So those are the type of things that we are there for. Where I try to participate and make sure that my child understands, possible risk in life, in what is going on".*

Devin: *"She got into my bakkie, and she, I immediately see when someone has had a few drinks. I'm not saying don't drink, you're an adult… stick to wine, just have only two or three glasses of wine. Or two glasses. And the minute you find that you are becoming light headed then stop. And tell them no is no. And I said, you have a lot to achieve. But don't lose sight of your goal and don't allow anything to come in between your goal and achieving your goal, simply because a lot of people would not want you to achieve what you set out to achieve".*

Quinn relates his experience of the fatherhood role as that of the provider: *"Okay I know in a traditional family the father should have all the rule making and he should be the disciplinary guy that, but you know, in our family the mother takes on that responsibility. For me it's just*

to make sure that everyone is safe, looked after, that they have everything that they need. And then be as a family happy together".

Zola experiences the fatherhood role as that of a friend: "*A friend is someone you can rely on. A friend is someone who you can talk to. So I'm opening that space actually by playing with them and doing all those things with them. So that when times come, when there's a need for them to say something to me, it will be easy for them to say that because I should have created that environment already with them. That way I'm their friend. So that it becomes a norm to them".*

Interestingly, it was found that some of the participants refer to the mother when positioning their role as father. Quinn recalls that his youngest son had colic has a baby and he assisted his wife in the evenings: "*So most at nights I would've been the one picking him up, walking the hallways two or three hours getting him to sleep, leaving my wife to get a bit of rest in and stuff. So I took a lot of responsibility with that".*

Whilst for Rudy: *"Now you must also understand [the wife], worked as a nurse, so there was that night shift work. Those long hours work. Those weekend work. So I had that special time to bond with my first born. So that was for me, I can almost say, the cherry. Because I could actually assist my child, and actually care and nurture her".*

Ryan's wife is partially blind, and he also spent a lot of time caring for his first child so that he could assist his wife: *"I had spent a lot of time with the older one because I was helping my wife, because you know she couldn't see nicely, so I was doing a lot".*

The participants have also indicated that their role as father includes teaching their children good values and morals. This can be seen in Devin's description: *"For me the interesting thing was to teach them good values, and morals in life. So they would be outstanding citizens, not famous, but for their own selves. For their self-fulfilment they would be good people".*

Tristan believes that because his daughters are older, he needs to rely on the values and morals he has taught them to guide them when making decisions: *"So now you have to rely on them being honest and having learnt or taken in what you've taught them over the period of years, in order for them to make some decisions".*

4.10. Fathers' engagement with caregiving practices of their first child

With the arrival of their new baby some of the fathers set out to spend as much time with them as possible. It was clear that the fathers welcomed the challenge of having a new baby in their home and engaging in caregiving practices to help nurture and care for them. Some of the fathers gave complete accounts of how they cared for their first child during their early development.

Rudy cared and nurtured for his first child and he recalls it as: "*I would assist with bathing, assist with dressing, combing hair as a little one, feeding, letting them lie in my arms at sleeping time, at times listening to music".*

Ryan spent a lot of time caring for his first child: *"I was spending a lot of time with her, I use to change the nappies, I bathed her".*

Tristan recalls that he spent a lot of time with her as his partner had shift work and was unavailable during certain times, as such he would dress his child and take her to crèche, fetch her in the afternoons, bath her and feed her and he would allow her to fall asleep on his chest. He expresses that *"I even travelled with her"* when he went back to his home city to introduce his young child to his family.

Tebogo and Devin were both not involved in caregiving practices for their children as they believed that this was their duty of their wives to tend to the children. Both fathers expressed that they went to work while the mothers of their children ensured that their children were nurtured and cared for. Devin expresses this as *"I believe it's the wife's responsibility to look after the children, and the husband must go out and provide for their family".* As their children got older, both fathers became more involved in activities such as helping with homework and transporting to and from school and extra-curricular activities.

Zola is very involved with the caregiving practices for his first child. Zola helps his wife to bath his children and to feed them. His daughter will often times ask him to bath her: *"She'll say daddy please come bath me before I [go to] sleep. So I'll say okay and while I'm bathing her I could also observe whether there's any you know marks or something. I'm just looking at her while I'm bathing her to see whether she's fine or not".* He engages in a lot of play with his children in a manner in which they are able to communicate their feelings to him. He uses this as a tool to help better understand his children.

4.11. The role of the fathers' work-related commitments

The participants spoke of the necessity to work and due to the nature of their work environments they are required to put in additional hours of work outside of normal working hours, oftentimes at night and over weekends. This can be seen in Rudy's description: *"Unfortunately my work requires planning and execution and reporting. And I think due to the work it's not possible to be there, to be back at home at a 5o'clock close out time for example. So what I do is I rather work late, maybe 2 hours at the office and take my stuff and go home and actually continue working at home as well. So I think at this moment it works for me. Not to say that I don't give attention at home but my youngest one is in grade 10, she's in high school and with the eldest one also in university they are also quite busy with homework. Schoolwork for that matter."*

Some of the participants travel for their work and may be away from their homes and family for periods ranging from a few days to several weeks.

For Quinn, travelling for long periods of time does take its toll: *"You feel a bit guilty and stuff, so when I do go away especially for long trips like this and stuff, you do tend to bring back some presents, to say sorry for being away for such a long time."*

Tristan however experiences being away for a long period as challenging upon return because there is often a re-engagement period that needs to take place with his children. Tristan expresses it as: *"Even though the fact that I travelled, [wife] used to be the sole parent for that period. And then what I experienced is that when there's only one person parenting the kids tend to grow closer to that person for that period when they are not there. Then when you come back you have to now take over the role of the parenting again. Because if there's one person or parent then it gives the kids that leeway of not respecting the parents as much, as if there were two people".*

4.12. The role of the fathers' educational commitments

Three of the participants are part-time students and speak of the importance of studying for their personal development but also to enhance their career opportunities. Rudy explains this: "*Studying is how I took responsibility for my life, I started in an entry level position but I've been able to work my way through the ranks and I have been afforded opportunities because of it. I have worked at many companies and I have travel both nationally and internationally to see how other people do things, and I think it's important to always work on yourself."*

The importance of educational attainment was emphasized by some of the fathers as the driving force for responsibility, freedom and future success. Zola describes his experience as: "*I love to learn, so I am always reading new things, studying new things. So that I don't fall behind in my field. That was one thing I want my children to understand, that you can always learn new things and it is important to do well at school so that you can achieve everything you want in life."* Similarly, it can be seen in Rudy's description: "*I want my daughters to be responsible for what they do. They must put their all into their work because that will be the way that they market themselves in the world one day when they start looking for jobs. As they get older, I want them to see that education will take them far."*

There was also an acknowledgement amongst the student-fathers that they are required to spend additional time away from their children when fulfilling educational tasks. Quinn expressed that: "*When I'm doing assignments or I have to study for an exam, I must lock myself in the room so that my kids don't come looking for me. It's hard sometimes especially if I was working away for a week or so, then I must come home and I can't spend time with my kids, because I have another deadline."*

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings of this research study revealed interesting aspects in relation to the research questions. This chapter aims to discuss these findings in the context of the South African context and literature. Extensive literature on fathers has focused on the notion that fathers are uninvolved and that they seldom had caring relationships with their children (Eddy, Thomsom-de Boor and Mphaka, 2013); while little information exists about the subjective experiences of South African fathers who are employed full-time and still have close relationships with their children. Thus this research study aimed to explore employed, working fathers subjective experiences of fatherhood and their engagement in caregiving practices with their children. The research study also aimed to explore how being employed full-time influences fathers' engagement in practices of care for their children. The following research questions were posed at the onset of the study:

- How do participants experience fatherhood?
- How do participants engage in parenting practices with their children?
- How do participants perceive their work-related commitments to influence their parenting practices with their children?

In addressing the research questions, the subjective experiences of the participants were clustered into themes as outlined in Chapter Four, namely the experience being a father, becoming a father for the first time, their experience of the fatherhood role, how they engaged in practices of care for their children and the influence of their work-related (and educational) commitments on their engagement with practices of care for their children.

The first three themes are clustered together to answer the first research question: **How do participants experience fatherhood?**

5.1. The experience of being a father

The participants used the words "brilliant", "good", "interesting", "exciting", and "nothing they could have ever expected" as ways in which to describe their overall experience of fatherhood.

Each dyadic relationship within a family system contributes to an individual's development in important ways; particularly in the context of parent-child relationships as these serve as a template for the relationships children will form in the future (Campbell & Winn, 2018).

According to Ali (2018) communication between fathers and their adolescent daughters tends to become more difficult as the girl reaches adulthood. It is suggested that adolescent daughters prefer sharing details about relationships with the opposite sex with their mothers, however there are many times when they turn to their fathers for a perspective on a specific topic (Ali, 2018). A noteworthy finding in this study was that the fathers who have teenage daughters experience fatherhood as challenging, as a little awkward and as stressful. These fathers rely heavily on open and honest communication in order to support and guide their daughters through their teenage years. The biggest challenge that the fathers in this study face is that of their daughters interacting with the opposite sex. For these fathers this seems to be an area that they are not familiar with and therefore find it difficult to navigate between wanting their children to have positive experiences with the opposite sex and wanting to protect them. The participants acknowledged that although their daughters typically spoke to their mothers about the more feminine things, they often turn to their fathers when they need someone to lean on, this supports the idea that actively involved fathers who push beyond their discomfort and allow a developmental change to happen within themselves are more socially connected to their children (Ingudóttir, 2015).

Reaching new developmental milestones has been an interesting experience for the fathers with particular focus on the talking and walking phase. These are the stages in which the fathers saw the most development and which they described as proud achievements. It was during this time that the fathers acknowledged that having a partner to help with attending to the needs of the children ensured that neither parent was overly emotionally and physically fatigued by having to do everything by themselves; and they could improve the quality of their relationship with their children (Le & Impett, 2019). In turn, this has an effect on how the parents decided on their paternal role to maximise their parenting practices in such a way that it would promote their children's overall well-being and growth (Ingudóttir, 2015). Whether it be sitting back and watching their children at the dinner table or listening to their children describe what they learnt at school that day, the fathers indicated a sense of satisfaction, fulfilment and enjoyment from being around their children. They experienced fatherhood as a learning experience and an opportunity to grow both mentally and physically (Bartlett, 2004; Hosegood, Richter & Clarke, 2005). This supports the notion by Franklin et al (2014) that fathers do have a positive attitude toward child-rearing and actively engaging in parenting practices, and they are able to notice and acknowledge that their interaction with their children has improved their own quality of life (Bartlett, 2004).

Dick (2011) states that by understanding the intricacies of a man's relationship with his own father one could possibly understand how men then construct their role as a father. The findings in this study suggest that the participants distanced themselves from the way in which their fathers practiced parenting and the values associated with that; i.e., the participants experienced their own fathers parenting styles to be associated with certain values such as respect, compassion, or patience, or the lack thereof. Six participants felt that their fathers' parenting styles were authoritarian and punitive whilst their own parenting style favours a liberal approach in which they would rather choose to talk to their children and foster close friendships with their children. For many of the participants, their fathers spent much time providing financially for their families to ensure that they had all they required, however their fathers did not engage in any acts of nurturance or care for them. Their fathers were strict, authoritarian and unavailable. This supports Guzzo's (2011) idea that the way men perceive their interaction with their own fathers do indeed have a direct influence on the way in which they choose to develop their fathering style.

A subtheme of being a father is how the participants experienced being fathered and fathering. It seems as though the participants were strongly influenced by the relationship they shared with their fathers, however misidentified themselves from the idea of fatherhood that they experienced by observing their own fathers, thus wanting to perform their own type of fatherhood differently. The participants who grew up without their fathers or a father figure upheld that they created their own idea of what they wanted to be as a father and what that would look like for their children. The participants who grew up in a household with their fathers seemed to have distanced themselves from the experiences that they remember vividly such as being beaten unprovoked or when their father was emotionally unavailable to tend to their needs due to work. Guzzo (2011) suggested that fathers used a combination of compensation and modelling when adapting their own approach to fatherhood. This study supports Guzzo's (2011) theory because common among all the participants was that they wanted to avoid making the same mistakes their fathers made and compensated for their father's absence through being actively involved, nurturing and caring in the lives of their own children.

There are complex relations that need to be considered when analysing the position of a father in the life of their child. A father may be physically present but emotionally unavailable, or a father may be physically absent but emotionally present (Morrell, 2006). This is important to note as the absenteeism trend among South African fathers has raised concerns about possible

negative effects on children (Richter et al., 2010). The participants in this study have expressed how their own fathers' physical absence or emotional unavailability has impacted their own lives, but they have also expressed that their investment in their children's lives compensate for their own experience of being fathered as they embark on the journey of engaged fatherhood (Makusha & Richter, 2018).

For the two participants who were only raised by their mother because they did not have their biological father around nor an influential father figure, the notion of creating what the 'ideal father' would look like has impacted how they parent their children; furthermore it is also implied that these fathers could possibly feel as though they are held to a higher standard because they have nothing to compare their fathering style to. Unlike the other participants in this study who had continuous contact with a father or father-figure throughout their life and have a sense of what type of father they want to be based off their experience with their father or father-figure, these participants have little to no guidance on how to be a 'good' father and thus place a larger emphasis on the importance of their role within their families (Guzzo, 2011).

5.2. The experience of becoming a father for the first time

The transition to first-time fatherhood is identified as the moment when a man is informed that he will become a father for the first-time and the two years that follow subsequently (Carlson, Edleson & Kimball, 2014). According to studies by Gage and Kirk (2002) and Condon, Boyce and Corkindale (2004) that indicate that fathers seek information on how to be a good father and how stressful the transition can be for men. The participants in this study described the experience of hearing that they were going to have a child for the first time as having been a happy or unexpected event, however they did do a lot to prepare for the arrival of their first child. For many of the fathers this included acquiring tangible things in place such as buying baby clothing, setting up the baby room and stocking up on supplies that the baby might need in the first few months. For the others, preparation included a mental shift i.e., understanding that they would be responsible for someone other than themselves and getting accustomed to the idea of having a child around. With preparing for the arrival of their first child there was a lot to be done, and for many of the participants family members assisted in creating a welcoming and peaceful space for the child and the new parents. For these participants, having other members of kin around made the idea of fatherhood a more positive experience as this served as a reminder that they were not alone and that they would have additional support.

Makusha and Richter (2018) identifies that father involvement in the first 1000 days of their child's life is important for their child's critical developmental periods. According to Makusha and Richter (2018) infant-father attachment can happen as soon as during the prenatal period, but early paternal attachment fosters active father involvement and thus reduces male control, increases emotional availability to their infant and increases their involvement in the family and the domestic spheres of their lives. A finding from this study relates to the idea that the participants have a stronger bond with their first child as opposed to their other children. According to Hauari and Hollingworth (2009) when a man's first child is born he becomes a father, and this impression could possibly explain this finding. The fathers engaged in caregiving practices with their first child as an attempt to bond with their child. There seemed to have been a trend among the fathers to be less involved with their other children because they forged such a strong bond with their first child who seemed to favour them over their mothers, the fathers wanted their partners to share that bond with a subsequent child as well. The participants experienced caregiving as an activity that they engage in with their children from a young age. Eerola (2015) supports this notion by reiterating that the relationship between a father and their child should be fostered from a young age by asserting that "psychological and emotional presence and care of the father from the very beginning was emphasised as the essence of paternal responsibility" (p.40).

Helman (2015) says that fathers who engage with their first born child have described the experience as allowing them the opportunity to demonstrate love and care for their children by engaging in their emotional expressions of love and openness; this study also found that the participants enjoyed engaging in caregiving practices with their children because it allowed them the opportunity to demonstrate love and care for them. There has been an acknowledgement of their central paternal role of being a role model for their children, particularly early in their children's lives. They have learned to alter the way in which they interact with their partners, children and other members of their family as children tend to model the behaviour they see in their household (Fogarty & Evans, 2009; Tladi, 2017). For the participants in this study, being a role model starts early as they want to demonstrate to their children how adults interact with each other in a healthy manner. They want to exhibit to their children what relationships look like between a male and a female, a mother and a father, and parents and their children. They want their children to be able to identify what is normal, what is accepted and what can be compromised upon. Having a father in the household is beneficial to their children because it lays the foundation for how they should navigate all the relationships

they will forge in their lives, particularly with regards to how they should treat others and how they should be treated by others (Langa, 2014; Richter & Morrell, 2006; Makusha & Richter, 2014).

5.3. Experiencing the fatherhood role

The fatherhood role refers to the unique ways in which fathers are involved and contribute to their families and their children (Yogman & Garfield, 2016). The participants actively engage in different dimensions of fatherhood that is, being the leader, economic provider, protector, educator, playmate and friend as proposed by Arifin et al (2017). For most of the participants these dimensions take place at different stages of their children's lives.

5.3.1. The provider

Being the leader, economic provider, protector and educator are dimensions that stay fixed throughout the course of their life; however, the participants found that these were dynamic and changed as their children developed and the social demands increase (Arifin et al., 2017). Being the leader, or role model, fathers are perceived to be the hero in their child's life, unfailing and without fault, but as their children grow and develop the reality of being a father inches closer to being human, constantly learning new things and capable of making mistakes (Enderstein & Boonzaier, 2016). The father as the provider has continuously been cited in literature because engaging in paid work is the traditional notion of masculinity and of what a father's primary role is (Enderstein & Boonzaier, 2016). A father-provider discourse has emerged to legitimise a new masculine identity, one which includes caring and emotional investments of men; nonetheless, the 'father as provider' role is still reiterated to demonstrate the enormous pressure men feel to provide, which in most cases causes men to change their financial and employment priorities when they become fathers (Bhana, 2009; Lemay, Cashman, Elfenbein & Felice, 2010; Enderstein & Boonzaier, 2016). The economic provider dimension encompasses the participants providing for the basic needs of their children, including food, nappies, clothing and shelter. As they get older society places different demands on the economic provider dimension to include sponsoring luxurious items such as branded clothing, the latest technological devices and allowances to spend time with friends.

5.3.2. The protector

The protector dimension begins again as a way of providing protection for their children's basic needs, primarily safety; and as their children become older the protection still includes

protecting them from physical harm, but it also includes protecting them from making poor decisions (Arifin et al., 2017). The educator dimension is probably the largest dimension as the participants teach their young children how to do small tasks (Arifin et al., 2017) such as brush their teeth or make their bed, but they also teach them values and manners in the effort to groom well-rounded children; as their children get older the fathers educate their children to be responsible, hard-working, self-reliant, and realistic (Helman, 2015). Maqubela (2013) suggests that implicit in the discourse of the father as the moral guide and protector of his children, the father occupies an authoritative position within the household. For Devin, nothing could have prepared him for the experience of fatherhood, he has learnt much about children and himself in the process, and although his children are adolescents now, he realises that all that he has done across their lifespan has had an impact. He sees it in the way his children perform at school, their mannerisms and the way in which they carry themselves. He acknowledges that the role he played in his children's lives may have been very absent while they were growing up due to work but he sees the values it has imparted on his children, i.e., to be hard-working, to be humble and to be strong, independent people.

5.3.3. The playmate and the friend

The last two dimensions, the playmate and the friend, work together – therefore when young children start crèche and school, fathers engage in more play with them. The playmate dimension is a way for fathers to engage with their children on sensitive or challenging topics, and teach life skills through the use of play (Zosh et al., 2017). Using play is a non-directive way in which to elicit information from young children that does not feel threating (Ostrosky, Hemmeter, Murry & Cheatham, 2005). As children age and progress into their adolescent years, the playmate dimension falls away and is replaced with the friend dimension. Here it is desired and important to fathers to create close friendships with their children so that their communication remains open and is based on mutual respect, honesty and trustworthiness (Arifin et al., 2017). The participants have indicated that this is one of the more difficult dimensions of fatherhood.

Zola experiences this aspect as enjoyable because his children are young and quite playful, in this way he is able to identify any possible problem areas that they may might have. He feels that it is important that he foster a close friendship with his children for two reasons; firstly, so that they trust him and feel secure to confide in him without fear of negative consequences, and secondly, so that he can model effective communication skills to them by expressing his own frustrations so that they learn that it is a normal part of life, and that by sharing their frustrations

their emotional needs are met and possible solutions can be found. This suggests that trust is fundamentally important to Zola's relationship with his children as he speaks of "*I don't want them to go look for father's love somewhere else while I'm around, You know they don't have to look for father's attention somewhere else while I'm here. You know, just I want to give them attention I want to be actually their…. Father and their friend as well… In order for me and them to have a good relationship. When kids are scared of you it's also not good, because sometimes they'll do somethings and be scared you know, to tell".*

Similarly, Quinn had a favourable experience in his friend-friend relationship with his sons built on trust and genuine communication. As children grow they gain more independence and they require less guidance from their fathers. Their friend-friend relationship centres on similar interests and a safe environment in which they can talk. Quinn described playing video games with his sons as a way of aiding communication; it appears that during the time they spend playing video games, they are able to speak about the day and about what is going on in their children's lives at that moment.

5.3.4. The engaged father

Being an engaged or involved father has been seen to be important in the lives of their children (Makusha & Richter, 2018). A multidimensional view of father involvement as proposed by Lamb, Pleck, Charnov and Levine (1985) includes three specific components, namely interaction, availability and responsibility. According to this view involved fathers interact with their children through specific acts of care and play, involved fathers are emotionally available for their children, and involved fathers are responsible for making provisions for their children that ensure that they receive adequate childcare throughout their lives (Carrillo, Bermúdez, Suárez, Gutiérrez & Delgado, 2016). The consensus from the participants was that being an engaged or involved father was more advantageous to their children as it allows them to be involved in the family life, through a process of teaching and learning. The fathers set out to teach their children right from wrong, to make responsible choices and focus on following their dreams; and in turn they learn about their children's likes, interests and talents. This finding is similar to a finding in Henwood and Procter's (2003) study where the "interviewees showed such a clear preference for new involved fatherhood because it contrasts with the previous, prevailing model of a bread winner, disciplinarian and authority figure. This model was seen as having prevented their own fathers from developing relationships with other family members, thus losing out on family life" (Henwood & Procter, 2003, p.314).

The shift from the provider role to a more supportive one may be due to economic and social factors. All of the participants in this study were employed in full-time positions at the time of the interview. For many men, the father's role to be the provider over the role of the family man is emphasized (Edwards et al., 2001; Eddy et al., 2013; Allen & Daly, 2007). In South Africa, father absenteeism is highly correlated to social, economic and cultural factors; however, the financial pressure that rests on the participants are somewhat mitigated by their current employment status, allowing them the opportunity to be involved in their families (Richter, Chikovore & Makusha, 2010). Zola describes it as *"the difference between working and not working… sometimes it becomes a matter of if you're working, you're getting paid, you can afford. And a father that's not working, sometimes it's a challenge because you cannot afford. So for a working father I think the advantage is being there financially for your kids, being able to provide for their needs".* It could be because the participants were employed that they were comfortable to open up about the role they play within their children's lives other than that of solely the provider (Marcisz, 2013). Having relative economic freedom could be a factor that helps fathers facilitate their engagement with their children (Marcisz, 2013).

5.3.5. Helping their female partners

A study on fathers' and mothers' perceptions of father involvement in families with young children with a disability conducted in America by Simmerman, Blancher and Baker (2001) revealed that fathers perceived their involvement as a contribution to their female partner as it was directly associated with their appraisal of their family's functioning with regards to nurturance, facilitation of personal growth and the ability to maintain the family structure. It is further noted that fathers who help with caregiving practices for their children influences the way both parents experience the burden of care; whereby higher paternal involvement in caregiving practices for his children leads to an increase in the functionality of the family unit, i.e., there is an increase in positive coping and marital adjustment for both parents with a new infant (Simmerman et al., 2001). With maternal employment increasing in recent years and their participation in the workforce has not in any significant way reduced the time they spend caring for their children and household duties (Sayer & Gornik, 2011; Craig & Mullan, 2011). This a noteworthy finding from this study however, was the idea that the participants engaged in caregiving practices for their children to help ease their partner's load as mentioned previously. Although the participants seem to have increased involvement in caregiving practices of their children, it is acknowledged that it is not to the same extent of the contribution of their partners. This sharing of the caregiving responsibility highlights a change in the role

of fathers, that is, fathers ultimately are still the protectors and providers of their families but they are also nurturing and involved highlighting their interest in the physical and emotional dimensions of their children as proposed by McGinley (2011) and Morrell, Jewkes and Lindegger (2012). This finding challenges Eddy, Thoson-deBoor and Mphaka's (2013) idea that fathers do not engage in caring relationships with their children and are uninvolved.

5.3.6. The role model

There is an expectation that fathers are supposed to provide leadership and guidance on topics related to family values and social customs; offering advice about education, friendships and relationships (Fogarty & Evans, 2009; Pleck, 2012). The practice of fatherhood goes beyond being physically present for one's child or children, it also involves guiding, taking physical care of one's child, and providing emotional support and reassurance (Enderstein & Boonzaier, 2016). According to Enderstein and Boonzaier (2016) offering guidance is a central role of fatherhood as it is indicative of a father's desire for his children to make their own choices with regards to academics and sports. It was thus proposed that offering guidance to one's child is to provide them with a positive point of view on their current situation (Wilkes, Mannix & Jackson, 2011). Devin spoke of this when discussing how he was helping his son choose academic subjects for the next academic year: *"So now he has to choose subjects at school, and I said look you're good at maths, you're good at physics, I don't know about biology because you seem to be an average student, so consider accounting instead".* It can give the impression at times that fathers tend to dictate or prescribe to their children about what it is that they should do, however, the participants in this study acknowledge the value in allowing their children to think for themselves, for them to make their own decisions and to help them navigate through the consequences thereof.

Tladi (2017) and Murray & Hwany, 2015) state that being a role model is one of the central roles fathers play in their children's lives, and that they have an influence on the behaviour and thought process of their children. Rudy thus acknowledges that fathers play a crucial role in modelling favourable behaviour to their children. And although he has two daughters, he has the understanding that having a father in the household is beneficial to his daughters because they are able to see healthy heteronormative relationships and how mothers and fathers should interact with each other.

The following section of the discussion aims to answer the second research question: **How do participants engage in parenting practices with their children?**

5.4. Fathers' engagement with caregiving practices of their first child

According to Cabrera et al. (2018) a father can influence children's development through direct interactions with them such as providing nurturance, care and educational materials and support. It has been said that fathers' social class is associated with paternal sensitivity during interacting with children and that their desire to interact with their children has positive outcomes for the father such as satisfaction with caregiving and a sense of fulfilment in providing for their children's needs (Cabrera et al., 2018; Kocayoruk, 2016). The participants in this study willingly assumed a nurturing role for their children and found pleasure in caregiving practices such as feeding their children, assisting them with homework and projects and attending extra-curricular activities, which were previously traditionally assigned to the mothers as was found by Chideya and Williams (2013). When the participants' children were infants and toddlers, these fathers had actively participated in engaging in caregiving practices such as nappy changing, feeding, bathing, dressing, combing of hair and playing. They felt that they wanted to be involved with their children on this level because it gave them a sense of enjoyment and satisfaction. By engaging in these practices of caregiving the fathers indicated that they were able to gain insight into how their children were growing up and how they were developing their own personalities. This supports the findings in the South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) (Human Sciences Research Council, 2012) which found that men described having close, loving relationships with their children was something that they desired and was extremely important to them (Franklin et al., 2014).

5.4.1. Parenting strategy

Parenting practices in respect of discipline, indulgence in regards to allowing one's child to do as they see fit for themselves, and promoting a child's overall well-being is related to a father's beliefs, attitudes, motivations and ultimately their parenting strategy (Ingudóttir, 2015). From the findings of this study it is evident that the majority of the participants subscribe to an authoritative parenting style in which they allow their children to speak their minds and voice their concerns and opinions, but where they retain the authority to make the final decision. One participant however subscribes to a gendered understanding of the parenting role. His role as father is to be the protector and provider whilst his wife is the nurturer and the disciplinarian. This authoritative parenting strategy supports the notion that parents are currently promoting independence, individualism and self-reliance in their children (Amos, 2013). Another

participant on the other hand, has a more authoritarian parenting style. He expressed that because his children are adolescents he cannot prescribe to or plan for them. Rather he allows them to plan their own days and holidays and as a family they decide which activities to participate in. It was found in this study that because their children are older and are a lot more independent, the engagement between the fathers and their children has decreased as their children are capable of performing simple tasks for themselves, such as cleaning themselves, dressing themselves and eating on their own. School, however, has become the largest influence in their children's lives and they tend to dedicate a lot more time to attaining academic goals and participating in extra-curricular activities, but fathers still like to show their support. They tend to provide assistance with homework, transport to and from extra-curricular activities, and attending their sporting events. There is also a large part of being a father that relates to providing encouragement and support to their children to attain their goals. This includes having conversations geared towards identifying long- and short-term goals and helping their children devise plans to achieve these goals.

This section of the discussion pertains to the work-related commitments of the fathers and the educational engagements of the fathers who are part-time students. This section answers the third research question: **How do participants perceive their work-related commitments to influence their parenting practices with their children?**

5.5. The role of the fathers' work-related commitments

According to Harrington et al (2017) fathers employed in full-time occupations experience high levels of conflict when they would like to engage more actively in caregiving practices with their children. According to Gaunt and Scott (2014) fathers who dedicate time to being both the financial provider and being an involved father experience role-conflict with regards to having dual career-caregiving roles. They report that maintaining a balance between these roles is difficult at times. Thus there is sometimes conflict between the two roles when one role tends to dominate over the other. According to research by Roeters et al (2012) when fathers are more involved in work-related activities there is less active involvement or engagement with their children, and inversely when they spend more time being involved or engaging with their children they are less involved in work-related activities (Roeters et al., 2012). In this study this finding is supported as the fathers who work away from home for a period of time spend

more time involved in work-related activities that take them away from their homes and their families therefore they are less involved in daily engagements with their children.

For one participant in particular, Tebogo, who works away in a different province to where his family resides because it is imperative that he be a financial provider for his children; has expressed that this can be challenging as he does not feel as close to his children and feels as though he is missing out on important aspects of his children's lives. The relationship that parents maintain with their children is crucial for their growth and development, and technology has made maintaining close relationships easier for family members who are far from each other by proximity (Moawad & Ebrahem, 2016). Adolescence is a developmental stage that requires special attention and care from parents as it has been found that connectedness between a parent and child during adolescence can improve the child's life satisfaction and mental well-being (Moawad &Ebrahem, 2016; Toombs, 2014). Hence Tebogo makes use of telephone calls and WhatsApp messages to keep in connect with his children during the week while he is at work, or over periods when he is travelling for work. He does, however, explain how this does not measure up to being there physically with his children. He travels home on weekends to spend as much time as he can with his family, so that he can maintain a close relationship with them. This could imply that proximity has a large influence in the relationship fathers have with their children.

The nature of employment also has an influence on fathers' ability to spend time with their children. It is proposed that fathers who work in private and public sectors have different experiences in terms of flexibility in accommodating their children's needs (Coles et al, 2015). According to Cole et al (2015) fathers in the private sector believe that if they make adjustments to their working schedule to accommodate engaging the caregiving practices for their children that there might be a reduction in their pay, there might be less opportunities for promotion in their job and they might be stigmatised for engaging in caregiving practices and thus being less masculine. Thus a 'caregiving dilemma' was explored after fathers in a previous study reported that work-related demands were in conflict with their beliefs and practices of caregiving (Harrington et al., 2015). Three types of fathers were thus proposed, namely egalitarian, conflicted and traditional. Egalitarian fathers had equal aspirational levels and realities of caregiving between themselves and their partners; conflicted fathers aspired to be equal with their partner in engaging in caregiving but in reality engaged in less caregiving than their partner; and traditional fathers believe that their female partners are to engage in more caregiving than themselves (Harrington et al., 2015). All the fathers in this study are employed

on a full-time basis and thus have limited time to spend with their children. The fathers who reside with their children experience having very limited time for quality time with their children after a day at work. During this time, the participants describe the time they get to spend with their children here as routine and includes activities such as completing homework, preparing dinner, and catching up on the day. On weekends the participants have more time to spend quality time with their children doing activities that they all enjoy and the whole family can participate in.

5.5.1. Working guilt

The 'caregiving dilemma' can also result in guilt. With some of the participants in this study working additional hours to their standard working hours, their time to spend with their children is more limited. They acknowledge that feelings of guilt arises. Guilt can thus be defined as a self-evaluation emotion that arises after people feel that a societal or moral standard was violated (Borelli, Nelson-Coffey, Birken & Moss-Racusin, 2016). Guilt typically occurs within the context of a close personal relationship and has cognitive, affective and motivational components. The cognitive component allows the person to recognise the possible harm that was caused, the affective component causes the person to experience unpleasant feelings, and the motivational component causes the person a desire to want to reverse the harm that was caused (Borelli et al., 2016). Korabik (2015) expanded on this by differentiating between the types of guilt that could arise from the work-family conflict. Work-interfering-with-family guilt is characterised when work-related commitments cause the parent not to be home on time or have to travel away from their home, preventing the parent from spending quality time with their children. Family-interfering-with-work guilt on the other hand could be characterised as attending to family crises or having to take care of a child, preventing the parent from meeting work-related commitments (Korabik, 2015). This is evident for Quinn who travels for weeks at a time, the feeling of guilt for being away from his children seems to motivate him to buy his sons small gifts for when he returns home.

5.5.2. Re-engagement period after being away from their children

Rosenbloom (2007) suggests that parents who engage primarily in caregiving practices such as chauffeuring children to and from school and extra-curricular activities had a far more impactful absence when travelling for work than the parent who remains. According to the study conducted by Rosenbloom (2007), mothers tend to be more involved in caregiving practices such as ensuring their children have eaten, the transporting of children and helping with homework. However for Tristan the opposite is true; i.e., he is the primary parent who

ensures that his children are transported to and from school and extra-curricular activities, as well as assisted with the completion of homework and projects for school. Therefore when he travels for long periods of time, there seems to be a period of estrangement with his children and the whole family seems to undergo a period of re-engagement upon his return. He experiences his children as having a closer relationship to his wife when he is away, and when he returns it seems as though he has to regain his status as the father in the household. This could also be explained by Guzzo's (2011) idea that when a child experiences their father as absent, albeit for a short period, it can be perceived as the father being withdrawn and uncaring. Therefore, upon Tristan's return, his children have to adjust to having him present in the household again, and thus alter their perception of his presence and involvement again.

5.5.3. Gendered parental roles

Gender roles are both socially and culturally created that influence the way in which men and women are expected to behave and think. The earliest form of this division between men and women can be seen in the family structure. Gender roles ascribes characteristics and reflections of what it means to be a male and masculine to men, and what it means to be female and feminine to women. Thus it is evident throughout literature that women are expected to assume the domestic care role which includes tending to the household, supporting men as well as being caregivers to children, whilst men were allocated the role of the natural leader, the provider and the decision maker (Kilroe, 2009). According to Khewu and Adu (2015) and Makusha (2013) traditional fathers are the financial providers that provide economic support to their families, as well as has authority over them. Devin is a traditional father by definition and subscribes to gendered parental roles as he strongly believed that the care of his children were solely his wife's responsibility and that his duty was to provide for them. This was highlighted earlier in the literature by Harrington et al. (2015), there is an emphasis on that fact that he was not involved in the physical caregiving of his children during their early development making him a traditional father, whilst the other participants seem to fit the egalitarian father type more as they all describe being involved in the caregiving practices for their children at some point during their early development. However, as their children age, the participants acknowledge that their independence in requiring less assistance with tasks such feeding and bathing themselves, they recognize that their children will need them for advice and support, and that still provides them with satisfaction.

5.6. The influence of the fathers' educational engagement

Due to the lack of information pertaining to student-parents in South Africa, it is not clearly defined how fathers in South Africa have experienced re-engaging with education at a mature age. Due to this not being a main focus of the study, limited data was collected that directly aligns to the participants' experiences of their educational engagement and the implications of that on their engagement with their children. For the participants who are part-time students however, their educational engagement did seem to have bearing on their engagement in practices of care for their children. These participants expressed that they are required to attend contact classes for their respective courses, and have to actively engage with the learning material in order for them to complete tasks or assignments required for their degree. This thus has implications for the amount of time they get to spend with their children and how effectively they can attend to the needs of their children, which could result in them feeling guilt as suggested by McCourt (2018). It is thus suggested from the findings on educational engagement, the participants deem educational attainment as important and that they want their children to become aware of this importance too. The participants therefore serve as role models for their children's educational careers.

6. Conclusion

In South Africa, a few studies on fatherhood exists that seeks to capture the voice of fathers themselves. A considerable amount of research is still to be done on fathers and their portrayal of fatherhood in the South African context (Smith, 2006). The aim of this research study was to explore employed fathers experience of fatherhood and their engagement with caregiving practices. The study made use of individual semi-structured interviews to explore the unique subjective experiences of the seven participants.

The findings unpacked the fathers' experiences of and challenges with fatherhood, their bond with their children and their need to provide for and protect their children from harm. From the findings it is suggested that the participants desire to be involved in the lives of their children as well as how contribute to the nurturing and caring for their children through the different stages of their lives.

Therefore through the exploration of the contemporary understanding of fatherhood from the perspective of the seven participants an understanding of how fathers experience fatherhood and engaging in practices of caregiving for their children has emerged.

This research study revealed that fathers appreciate spending time with their children and being actively involved in practices of care for them. From the participants' experiences of being a father it is evident that although the subjective experience of fatherhood is brilliant, exciting and interesting, it can pose many challenges. These challenges may, however, bring them discomfort; the participants found that as their children reached new developmental milestones, they too developed and expressed that they were socially more connected to their children. The participants were able to acknowledge that their interaction with their children made their lives better and more enjoyable.

For some participants, their experience with their own father resulted in negative perceptions of fatherhood that they were committed to change in their own lives when they entered fatherhood. For the participants with absent fathers, their response was to create an idea of the type of father they would want their children to experience and this idea is constantly adapted to align with their own values and morals but also the ever-changing dynamics of society. Regardless of the type of father the participants are to their children, there is a constant working toward giving their children the lives and experiences they never had.

The initial experience of becoming a father focused on how the participants experienced hearing that they were going to be fathers for the first time and how they prepared for their new arrival. A noteworthy finding here was that the participants seemed to have a closer relationship with their first born child as opposed to their other children. The participants also engaged in more caregiving practices with their first born child and this presented them the opportunity to demonstrate their love and care by engaging in emotional expressions and openness to and for their child.

In the remembrance of their experiences of the fatherhood role, the participants experienced their fatherhood role as that of the provider, protector, educator, leader, playmate and friend. There is an overall consensus that engaged fatherhood is most advantageous to children as they benefit from having a father present in their home to model favourable male behaviour, to guide and support them, and overall to ensure their children grow up to have the best skill set to live an independent life with strong morals and values. The participants also engaged in caregiving practices for their children to assist their female partners rather than expect she do it on her own. This finding highlights the shift in roles of the father from solely being the provider to being supportive and empathetic as well.

The ways in which the participants engaged in practices of care for their first born child, highlighted that the participants willingly assumed the nurturing role to their children and that they found pleasure in engaging in caregiving practices. The participants engaged in activities such as bathing, feeding, dressing, combing of hair and changing of nappies for young children; and assisting with homework and engaging in extra-curricular activities with their adolescent children. This is highly associated with the finding that men desire having close, loving relationships with their children and that this was of significant importance to them as found in the South African Social Attitudes Survey (2012).

The role of the father's work-related commitments and educational engagement in the last theme identify that working full-time is a necessity as social, economic and cultural factors contribute to many financial pressures. For the participants however, it is suggested that having relative economic freedom helps them facilitate their engagement with their children. It was discovered here that working long hours and/or travelling away from home can cause fathers to feel guilty and estranged from their families. The participants thus place a large emphasis on proximity in their ability to engage in caregiving practices for their children.

6.1. Limitations of the current study

The small sample size of the data collected and analysed is aligned with qualitative research as smaller samples allows for greater emphasis on the participants' unique subjective experiences. Although eight participants were initially interviewed during the data collection process, only seven participants' responses were analysed for this study. A limitation could have been that it was difficult to find participants that fit the inclusion criteria perfectly during the time that sampling was done. Nevertheless, the researcher is of the opinion that the information collected was in-depth enough to provide a unique and valuable understanding of the experience of fatherhood and how fathers engage in caregiving practices for their children.

All the participants were employed full-time at the time of data collection which could have an influence on the transferability of the interpretations of the data to people in other contexts. Being employed full-time could have had an impact on the participants' perception of fatherhood.

Not all the participants were part-time students although one of the sampling sites was Wits Plus. Therefore there was limited information collected pertaining to the participants' educational engagement and how this directly relates to their engagement with their children, as well as engaging with practices of care for them.

The interviews for this research study were conducted in a language that was not the participants' first language. This could imply that some of the subtleties or nuances of the way in which the participants described their experience may have been overlooked due to their difficulty with communicating in a second or third language. It is also important to note that it is possible that the researcher was unable to capture the full experiences of the participants due to them having had to translate their experience into English before voicing them.

6.2. Recommendations for future study

Fatherhood studies requires more attention and expansion in the research field particularly within the South African context. Limited research exits on the subjective experiences of fatherhood within the South African context and therefore a range of qualitative and quantitative, or mixed methods studies can be employed to explore the experience of fathers on some of the concepts that were highlighted in this study. The sample group was quite small for this study, future study could benefit from a larger sample size and in that way the generalisability and inference of the results can be increased.

Future research into South African fathers from different racial, social, economic and geographical backgrounds could increase the knowledge and understanding of fatherhood in South Africa. A future study on how employment and unemployment shape and influence fatherhood in South Africa would be beneficial to acknowledging and understanding the diverse and unique lived experiences of fathers. Future research into South African fathers' experiences of being full-time or part-time students, and what support is available to them by their institutions in this regard could provide higher education institutions better insight into the needs of some of their student population.

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APPENDIX A: Ethical Clearance Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: MASPR/19/001 IH**
PROJECT TITLE:	Employed fathers' experience of fatherhood and engagement in parenting practices
INVESTIGATORS	Damonze Stacey
DEPARTMENT	Psychology
DATE CONSIDERED	12/06/19
DECISION OF COMMITTEE*	Approved

This ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application

DATE: 12 June 2019

CHAIRPERSON _____
(Prof. Tanya Graham)

cc Supervisor: Ms Leonie Human
Psychology

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR (S)

To be completed in duplicate and **one copy** returned to the Secretary, Room 100015, 10th floor, Senate House, University.

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

This ethical clearance will expire on 31 December 2021

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES

APPENDIX B: Letter of Permission

PSYCHOLOGY
THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SHCD)

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050 • Tel: 011 717 4541 • Fax: 011 717 4559 • E-mail: psych.SHCD@wits.ac.za

To whom it may concern,

My name is Stacey Damonze. I am currently completing my Masters degree in Social and Psychological Research at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am conducting this study for the purposes of obtaining my Masters degree.

In South Africa, traditional parental gender roles enforce fathers as protectors and providers, while women are the home-makers and caregivers. However, considerable research has been done that aim to change the impressions around absent fatherhood and bring forth positive impressions of fathers, i.e., fathers who are involved. Therefore this study aims to explore the nature of working fatherhood and how they experience caregiving for their children within the South African context. The research study will specifically explore the subjective experiences of working fathers who co-reside with their child or children and the mother of their child or children.

The research study aims to explore employed, working fathers' experience of fatherhood, and how they engage in practices of care for their children.

There is a gap in research in the following areas, there is no research on or very little is known about the ways in which fathers are involved in their families, and there is no research on or little is known about the ways in which employed fathers experience caregiving. Thus the study will contribute to the topic of Fatherhood studies that is currently gaining ground within the South African context.

With this letter I request permission to approach your students by placing a call for participation posters on notice boards within your building, as well as to potentially distribute these in your lecture halls.

For more information or queries pertaining to the research study feel free to contact:

Stacey Damonze

063 683 1245

staceydamonze@gmail.com

Ms Leonie Human

+27 11 717 4508

Leonie.Human@wits.ac.za

APPENDIX C: Call for Participation Poster

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH STUDY

I need participants for a research study titled **'Employed fathers' experience of fatherhood and engagement in parenting practices'**.

***Description of study*:**

I am researching the experiences of fathers who are formally employed full-time and co-reside with their children and the mother of their children.

Is this study a good fit for me?

This study might be a good fit for you if you are:

> Male 25 years old or older;
> Living in the Gauteng region;
> Formally employed in a full-time job;
> Have a child or children under the age of 18;
> Co-reside with your child or children and the mother of your child or children.

What would happen if I took part in this study?

If you decide to take part in the research study, you would be required to share your experiences of fatherhood and how you engage in parenting practices with your children in a one-to-one interview with the researcher.

To take part in this research study or for more information, please contact Stacey Damonze at staceydamonze@gmail.com.

The principle researcher for this study is Stacey Damonze at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.



APPENDIX D: Participant Information Sheet

PSYCHOLOGY
THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SHCD)

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050 • Tel: 011 717 4541 • Fax: 011 717 4559 • E-mail: psych.SHCD@wits.ac.za

Employed fathers' experience of fatherhood and engagement in parenting practices.

Good day. My name is Stacey Damonze. I am currently completing my Masters degree in Social and Psychological Research at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am conducting this study for the purposes of obtaining my Masters degree.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You should read the information below and ask questions about anything should you not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate.

Description of the proposed study:

In South Africa, traditional parental gender roles enforce fathers as protectors and providers, while women are the home-makers and caregivers. However, considerable research has been done that aim to change the impressions around absent fatherhood and bring forth positive impressions of fathers, i.e., fathers who are involved. Therefore this study aims to explore the nature of working fatherhood and how they experience caregiving for their children within the South African context. The research study will specifically explore the subjective experiences of working fathers who co-reside with their child or children and the mother of their child or children.

The research study aims to explore employed, working fathers' experience of fatherhood, and how they engage in practices of care for their children.

There is a gap in research in the following areas, there is no research on or very little is known about the ways in which fathers are involved in their families, and there is no research on or

little is known about the ways in which employed fathers experience caregiving. Thus the study will contribute to the topic of Fatherhood studies that is currently gaining ground within the South African context.

Invitation to participate and explanation of what participation entails:

You have been invited to take part in the above mentioned study. Participation in this study is voluntary in nature and participants are free to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. Should a participant wish to withdraw from the study, the data provided by that participant will be removed from the final report and destroyed.

Interviews will be used to collect the data from participants. The interview will be 45 minutes to an hour in length and will be audio recorded for the purpose of accuracy and transcription at a later stage. The study will require the participant to look back on their experiences at different stages of their fatherhood journey in order to provide a subjective account of their experiences at different times.

Should you seek further clarification you are welcome to direct any questions to myself (see contact details below).

Potential risks and discomforts:

There are no foreseeable risks, discomforts, or inconveniences associated with participating in this study. However, should any discussions cause you any discomfort, you may discontinue your participation immediately.

Reward/reimbursement/expenses:

There will be no reward in material or monetary value for taking part in this study. The participants will be contacted to arrange a time and place at which to meet to conduct the interview, this will thus require the participant to travel to the agreed upon location.

Confidentiality/anonymity and data security:

For the purpose of this study, anonymity cannot be guaranteed during the data collection process as the researcher can identify the participants, however in the final report the participants will remain anonymous through the use of pseudonyms and any identifying information will be distorted. The researcher works under the supervision of another researcher, Ms Leonie Human. Any information obtained through the data collection process will be handled as confidential, but will be shared with the supervisor.

The interview will be audio recorded for the purpose of accuracy and transcription. The data will be transferred from the audio recorder after the interview onto a password protected computer that will be held on the researcher's person during the process of transcription. The written interview transcriptions will be used during the analysis process of the study and thereafter will be stored in a locked cabinet at the University of the Witwatersrand, school of Human and Community Development.

Results of the study:

After the interviews are completed, the data will be analysed, and the findings will be discussed in a research report. The names of participants and any other identifying information will not be included in the report, or will otherwise be distorted in such a way that the participant cannot be identified.

Participation and withdrawal:

You can choose whether or not to participate in this study. If you do decide to volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any stage without any consequences whatsoever. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to answer.

If you do choose to participate, could you please fill out the consent forms attached and give them back to the interviewer (the one is consent to participate and the other is consent for the audio recording).

Contact details:

For more information or queries pertaining to the research study feel free to contact:

Stacey Damonze	Ms Leonie Human
063 683 1245	+27 11 717 4508
staceydamonze@gmail.com	Leonie.Human@wits.ac.za

Counselling services:

We do not expect that the interview will harm you in any way, but should you feel that you are having difficulties after having participated in the study, you can access free counselling services through LIFELINE on 0861 322 322.

APPENDIX E: Participant Consent Form

PSYCHOLOGY
THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SHCD)

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050 • Tel: 011 717 4541 • Fax: 011 717 4559 • E-mail: psych.SHCD@wits.ac.za

In order for you to participate in this research study on employed fathers' experience of fatherhood and engagement in parenting practices, it is necessary for you to give your consent.

By signing this consent form you are indicating that you have read and understood the attached information sheet; that you are agreeing to participate; and that you are consenting to the following:

I understand that, and give consent to the following:

(Please tick the boxes below)

My name will not appear anywhere in the report; will not be linked to my data; all the information I provide will remain confidential; and all data will be password protected and securely stored by the University.	
The results may include the use of direct quotes from my answers but they will remain confidential and will not be linked to my data.	
I may decline to answer any question without penalty.	
Participation in this research is not mandatory, but is voluntary and that, at any time in the research process (before, during or after), I may refuse to participate further without penalty.	
There are no risks or benefits attached to my participation in this research.	

I _____ hereby consent to participate in this research project.

Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX F: Recording Consent Form

PSYCHOLOGY
THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SHCD)

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050 • Tel: 011 717 4541 • Fax: 011 717 4559 • E-mail: psych.SHCD@wits.ac.za

I require that our interview be recorded for the purpose of transcription at a later stage. As such you will need to consent to your interview to be audio recorded.

I understand that:

- I will not be asked to provide any personal or identifying information. For tracking purposes pseudonyms will be assigned. No identifying information will be used in the transcripts of interview.
- Access to the recording is restricted.
- The recordings and transcripts will be kept in safe storage at the university.
- Direct quotes may be used in the research report.

Please tick the box and sign below to give your consent:

I consent to the audio recording of my interview. □

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX G: Interview Schedule

Good morning/afternoon. I would like to start by thanking you for taking part in my research. I would like to discuss with you your experiences of being an employed, working father and how you experience fatherhood, and also how you experience engaging in caregiving practices with your children.

1. Are you married?
   Prompt: How long have you been married?
2. Do you and your partner live together?
3. How many children do you have?
4. How old are you children?
5. Are they your biological children?
   Prompt: Are they adoptive or foster children?

6. What type of work do you do?
   Prompt: What is your experience at work?
7. Are you required to work from an office or from your home?
8. Are you required to work additional hours?
9. Are you required to travel for your work?
   Prompt: How long could you typically be away for at a time?

10. Could you tell me what it is like to be a father?
11. Could you share with me how you experienced first hearing that you were going to be a father?
12. Could you tell me about the birth of your child(ren)?
    Regardless of whether or not you were present.
13. How do you think fathers should be involved in their families?
    Prompt: How are you involved?
14. Tell me a story about your father.
    Prompt: What was he like as a father?
    Prompt: How are you the same or different as your father?

15. Could you tell me how you engage with your children?
16. Could you share with me how you felt about your child(ren) reaching new developmental milestones, such as teething, walking, talking, starting school?
17. How do you feel about caregiving practices as a father? (These include activities such as bathing children, helping with homework, preparing meals, involvement in extra-curricular activities)

    Prompt: How do you engage in these practices?
18. Could you share with me how you engage with your younger child(ren) as opposed to your older child(ren)?
19. How do you experience engaging with your child(ren) at different ages?

    Prompt: Is it easier or harder at different ages?
20. Could you share with me how you engage in caregiving practices with your children after a day at work?

Is there anything you would like to add to what I have covered in the interview?

Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study.