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University of the Witwatersrand

School of Human and Community Development

Discipline of Psychology

MASTERS RESEARCH DISSERTATION

Experiences of father absence: The subjective accounts of young women who grew up without a father

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Community Based-Counselling Masters

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters in Community Based-Counselling Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand.

2015

DECLARATION

The author hereby declares that this whole thesis or dissertation, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, is her own original work.

_____

Kgothatso Rachel Molongoana

Masters in Community-Based Counselling Psychology

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Making this research project a reality has been a long and difficult journey, one I could not have completed without God and the love, support and encouragement of my family, especially my mother, friends and, of course, my supervisor.

Dr Malose Langa, thank you for challenging me to think critically, analyse in depth and motivating me to rise to the challenge of achieve high standards in my project work.

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My dear brother Romeo, your craziness and zest for life kept me sane, and looking forward to better times!

To my family and friends, your words of encouragement and support were monumental throughout this journey.

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Romans 8:37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

ABSTRACT

This study explored how young women experience father absence. Semi structured open-ended interviews were conducted with seven young women from the University of Witwatersrand to explore their experiences of growing up without their biological fathers. The interviews were recorded and then analysed utilising thematic analysis. Various themes, reasons for father absence, roles of fathers, the roles of fathers in sons and daughter's lives as well as father figures were explored. The research found that fathers are absent due to a multitude of reasons. The research findings furthermore showed that many of the participants' conceptions of the role of mothers and fathers were consistent with traditional views of fathers as providers, disciplinarians and protectors, whereas mothers were perceived as nurturers. Despite the absence of fathers, the participants' mothers as well as extended family were able to provide positive, stable and happy childhood experiences for them. The participants, however, perceived themselves to be disadvantaged with regards to having the capacity to build healthy romantic relationships. This highlighted the need and importance of social fathers and the need for young women to be supported in this regard. Key recommendations are made in the conclusion of this research report as well as recommendations for future research projects.

Key words: family, father, absent fathers; single mothers; daughters

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Although there is an increasing awareness in literature that a father's physical presence alone is not necessarily a positive outcome in itself (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013), father absence is understood to have unfavourable consequences for children (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013; Mather, 2010). In fact, it has been proposed that it is the root of many social problems such as teen pregnancy, drug use amongst adolescent boys and juvenile delinquency (Clowes, Ratele, & Shefer, 2013; Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013; Leonard, & Hood-Williams, 1992; Silverstein, & Auerbach, 1999). Other researchers have similarly proposed that poor school performance, behaviour challenges and psychological disturbances can be traced to father absence in children's lives (Silverstein, & Auerbach, 1999).

Levels of paternal absence in South Africa are high. In 2006, the South African absent father rate was estimated at 56% for children who live with women of reproductive age. This is the second highest absent father rate in Africa (after Namibia, which is estimated at 57.8% for the same demographic) (Posel, & Devey, 2006, as cited in, Richter, Chikovore, & Makusha, 2010).

According to literature, the rate of absent fathers in the country can be attributed to a variation of reasons and should be considered within historical, social, economic and cultural contexts (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013), which will be discussed in more in-depth in the report.

1.1 RESEARCH AIM

The research aim of the current study was to explore the experiences of young women who grew up without their fathers.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the experiences of young women who grew up without their fathers?

1.3 RESEARCH RATIONALE

An extensive number of studies focusing on the effects of father absence on children growing

up without fathers have been conducted. Reference is made hereunder to a few of those studies:

Berns (2007); Ceballo and McLoyd, (2002); Franz, Lensche, and Schmitz (2003); Olson, Ceballo, and Park, (2002) in addition to Whitehead and Holland, (2003) as cited in Roman (2011), explain that children growing up in single parent homes are deprived of a live-in gender role model and financial security. Other researchers have further contended that they are at a disadvantage academically and emotionally (Holborn, & Eddy, 2011; Chapman, 1977; Perdeson et al., 1980, as cited in, Mboya, & Nesengani, 1999). Given these findings and the fact that single mother homes are on the rise (Holborn, & Eddy, 2011) and that children continue to long for their fathers (Richter & Smith, 2006), the matter is important for consideration.

While the studies presented above may highlight important societal issues, most of these do not explore the subjective accounts of girl children's experiences on father absence. Although some discuss issues relating to children, some approach the study from the point of the fathers (Eggebeen, Dew, & Knoester, 2009; Morell, Posel, & Devey, 2003) while others broadly study the effects on children with no special focus on daughters (Berns, 2007; Hollborn, & Eddy, 2011) or focus on a specific area of development or experience. For instance, Mboya and Nesengani (1999) focus mainly on how children are affected academically. Still other research focuses on how sons are affected (Booth, 1996; Clowes, Ratele, & Shefer, 2013; Langa, 2010).

Furthermore, the studies cited above highlight a patriarchal view of society and families. That implies that a society without men is one that is at a disadvantage (Morrell, 2006) and further indicates perceptions that only a father is able to provide financially, emotionally and socially to the extent that any family without him would suffer. This points to the influence of biological fathers being overestimated while the influence of other forces on a child's life are underplayed. These perceptions are, in the researcher's opinion, limited and project an idealised fantasy of a father as described by Richter and Smith (2006). This clearly indicates a need for a deeper understanding of the topic.

The current study contributes to an understanding of the role of fathers in young women's lives from the young woman's subjective experience therefore filling a gap in the existing

literature. Although the research also used a specific type of sample population, i.e., young women students from The University of the Witwatersrand, the research uncovered some unknown facts, raises some questions and suggests factors to be explored in future studies. The current research gave daughters a platform to voice their experiences on absent fathers and can thus also make a contribution to existing literature on childhood, father absence and father and daughter studies.

By underlining the support single parents may need, such as help in terms of financial aid, assistance from the educational systems and from other family members or the community to which they belong, the research potentially contributes to highlighting the importance of potential risk prevention and health promotion as described by Duncan et al. (2007) who also explain that risk prevention has to be addressed at the level of the family and community, thus the study makes a contribution to the field of Community Based Psychology.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report has been divided into five chapters. Chapter Two provides a detailed account of the literature on the topic of father absence. Although the literature covers a variety of

theories explaining father absence, the discussion has focused on major themes that emerged repeatedly in the literature reviewed.

Chapter Three details the research methodology of the study. This includes an outline of the research design and procedures utilised, as well as an account of the method of analysis and ethical considerations. This chapter also provides an explanation of the researcher's reflections regarding the research process. Chapter Four provides a detailed description and discussion of the findings of the thematic analysis. Finally, Chapter Five discusses the limitations of the study and implications for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Single mother homes are on the increase worldwide (Mather, 2010). In the United States, 24% of the 75 million children under the age of eighteen are raised in homes where there is an absent father and 18.1% of that number are below the age of nine (Mather, 2010). In South Africa, recent data suggests that there has been an increase in the number of absent fathers since the end of apartheid (Clowes, Ratele, & Shefer, 2013; Holborn, & Eddy, 2011). The proportion of children below the age of fifteen with absent living fathers increased from 45% to 52% between 1996 and 2009 (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013). 50% of South African men aged 15-49 are fathers, however, approximately 50% of these fathers do not have daily contact with their children (Morell, & Richter, 2006). The section below explores themes and trends from international as well as South African literature on the topic of father absence.

Existing literature on the topic of father absence covers a wide variation of theories to explain these trends. This review focuses on the major themes that seemed to occur repeatedly in the literature reviewed.

Firstly, the delineation of family is explored. In this exploration, the role of the family in socialising and facilitating the development of children is discussed. Thereafter, special consideration is given to South African families. The impact of colonialism and apartheid as well as other socioeconomic changes on the structure, function, and role of families and what these changes have meant for the involvement of fathers in children's lives, is explored. This highlights the fact that human beings do not grow up isolation and parents do not parent in seclusion, but in multiple contexts (Bornstein, & Cheah, 2006) and contributes to a better understanding of transitions that, at times, result in family instability (Cooper, McLanahan, Meadows, & Brooks-Gunn, 2009).

Using this as a backdrop, the reasons proposed in literature for father absence are discussed. The effects of father absence is then reported on and the involvement of father figures is discussed.

The literature review chapter is thus structured as follows:

2.2 The family

2.3 Fathering in South Africa

2.4 Father absence

2.5 Reasons for father absence

2.6 Effects of father absence

2.7 The involvement of father figures

Within these broad themes there are furthermore subthemes that are covered.

Prior to getting into this discussion there is a need to note that although some children who grow up without fathers experience emotional problems, some children do not experience them despite the lack of fathers in their lives. Many studies tend to focus on the negative effects that the lack of fathers have on children's lives. Some of the studies include the work of Berns, Ceballo, and McLoyd (2002), Chapman (1977), Perdeson et al. (1980, in Mboya, & Nesengani, 1999), Franz, Lensche, & Schmitz (2003), Olson, Ceballo and Park (2002), and Whitehead and Holland (2003, as cited in Roman, 2011). The dominant view in the existing literature on this topic is that children growing up without their fathers may have difficulties transitioning into adulthood due to a lack of positive male role models (Mather, 2010). Children growing up within absent father homes are furthermore, by and large, reported to be deprived financially as well as in other spheres of life such as in their physical and emotional health (Coley, 1998; Clowes, Ratele, & Shefer, 2013; Peackock et al., 2008, as cited in Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013). As a result of these deficits in development, it is proposed that these children struggle to perform well academically (Berns, 2007; Holborn, & Eddy, 2011; Mboya, & Nesengani, 1999), a view echoed by many authors including Mather (2010) who proposes that growing up in single mother homes increases the risk of children dropping out of school, becoming teen parents as well as disconnecting from the labour force.

These views have, however, been contested by Langa (2010) and others, including Andersen (1991) and Clowes, Ratele and Shefer (2013) who contend that theories that propose that

single mother homes are at a disadvantage are developed out of showing partiality towards the nuclear family model comprising biological mother, father and children. Silverstein and Auerbach (1999) suggest that neoconservative social scientists have replaced the earlier "essentialising" of mothers with a claim of the essential necessity of fathers.

According to Silverstein and Auerbach (1999), principles that propose a father's presence to be essential overlook and oversimplify the complexities of associations between the presence of a father and social problems. In other words, there are many interacting factors that together exert influence on the development of children, not merely the presence or absence of a father. Furthermore, the significance of good mothering for the development of children is undermined and the roles of other family members and other adults in children's lives are disregarded and overlooked (Coley, 1998; Langa, 2010). These influences are important for consideration especially within the South African context where extended family members play significant roles in child rearing. A view that classifies either parental role as indispensable takes these factors for granted and moreover seems to overlook the resilience of children (Bernard, 1991).

2.2 THE FAMILY

The family is an institution that has been much under discussion and the cause of much concern in the past (Leonard, & Hood-Williams, 1992) and continues to be at the centre of discussion in a variety of settings and across disciplines. Although the family is regarded as a private institution, it has a high public profile (Leonard, & Hood-Williams, 1992). This is because the family is not only affected by systems that are external to the family, such as political trends, societal values, and events within the community, but the family, in turn, has an effect on these systems as well (Bornstein, & Cheah, 2006; Haralambos, & Holborn, 2000). Amongst widely held conceptions that support this view is the functionalist's theory of family. According to the functionalist perspective, the family is a basic unit or institution that encourages maintenance, order and stability in society and, in this way, further maintains the significance of the family to its individual members (Haralambos, & Holborn, 2000). The reproductive function of the family relates to the family's responsibility for providing society with new members and assuming the responsibility of nurturing them (Haralambos, & Holborn, 2000).

Functionalists further argue that the family is an economic unit with a division of labour along gender lines which is rewarding for spouses and strengthens the bond between them as they are perceived to be performing distinct, however complementary, functions (Haralambos, & Holborn, 2000). This theory rationalises that mothers and fathers have distinct roles within the home and with child rearing. Feminist perspectives, however, contend that, within these functions and roles, women tend to occupy subordinate positions in the family and are exploited in a variety of ways. Delphy and Leonard (1992, as cited in Haralambos, & Holborn, 2000) propose that, amongst the reasons for the inequalities between partners in the home, is the fact that men are regarded as the heads of most households.

In the past, women and children were defined according to their relationship to the kinship system, whereas men were defined according to their place in the occupational system (Andersen, 1991; Gittins, 1985). Until the eighteenth century, the original meaning of family referred to "paterfamilias", denoting paternal power and authority over all in the house: "the father and the ruler of a family and tribe" (Gittins, 1985 p. 35). Thus, historically, most analyses and interpretations of the family have been inundated with bias favouring men and have been patriarchal in nature (Gittins, 1985; Popenoe, 1988). This was especially true in pre-industrial societies (Haralambos, & Holborn, 2000) however also beyond. It is thus not unanticipated that the absence of fathers would be perceived as problematic.

As a result of the continuous interaction with forces within the socio-political and socioeconomic spheres, as well as shifts in culture (Berns, 2007; Haralambos, & Holborn, 2004; Hosegood, Busza, & Timaeus, 2006; Madhaven, Townsend, & Garey, 2008), families globally have undergone significant changes (Moletsane, 2007). These alterations have resulted in significant changes in the ways in which families are composed, the manner in which they function and how they are understood (Moletsane, 2007). Contemporary families are varied in structure and functionality (Berns, 2007; Moletsane, 2007; Popenoe, Cunningham, & Boult, 1998) thus a single definition of what a family is would do an injustice to the variety of families across cultures and times (Walsh, 2012). Former definitions and theories of family have been significantly challenged. Although there are variations in definitions and across cultural groups (Walsh, 2012), it seems to remain universally accepted that the family is one of society's basic social systems responsible for

carrying out key functions such as the socialising of children (Haralambos, & Holborn, 2004, Leonard, & Hood-Williamson, 1992). Socialisation is the educational function of the family and the process by which children learn the accepted norms and values of their society from elder members of the family or the community in which they are raised (Haralambos, & Holborn, 2004). According to Maree (2003) the role of the family in the process of socialisation cannot be overemphasised. Some have argued that it forms the foundation of society and civilisation itself (Gittins, 1985).

This view is echoed by the functionalist perspective which proposes that socialisation is an important function because without culture, society cannot survive because too much of a deviation from the norms would result in the disruption of the stability of society (Murdock, 1949, as cited in Haralambos, & Holborn, 2000). Parsons (1956, cited in Leonard, & Hood-Williamson 1992) describes the child as the "tabula rasa" on which society places its mark and argues that the family and the process of socialisation stands between the child and the society that pre-exists it. According to Parsons (1959, as cited in Haralambos, & Holborn, 2000), primary socialisation occurs in early childhood and the family plays an integral role in this regard. As alluded to briefly, traditionally, the allocation of differential socialisation responsibilities was often motivated by the gendered role of the parent and these roles were traditionally distinct, however, complementary. The definition of socialisation, as proposed by Haralambos and Holborn (2004), recommends that this process is not an exclusively parental responsibility. Rather, the responsibility also falls on the shoulders of other elder members of the family and the elder members of the community in which children are raised.

Furthermore, functionalism has, to a large extent, been criticised. Amongst the chief criticisms of the theory is its failure to consider alternative institutions that can perform and fulfil the functions fulfilled by the family. Functionalists have been reproached for supporting a picture of the family that is too optimistic. Critics have argued that the type of family proposed by functionalists is not an accurate depiction of reality as it fails to acknowledge that the family could be dysfunctional for individual members as well as for society (Haralambos, & Holborn, 2000).

The changes in the compositions of families highlight the numerous ecological contexts in which children develop (Bornstein, & Cheah, 2006). Regardless of this awareness, however,

it remains widely held that father absence is a significant disadvantage. As a result of this, it seems reasonable to question the extent to which historical biases of patriarchy inform our understanding of the current topic.

2.3 FATHERING IN SOUTH AFRICA

The preceding section explained that ecological shifts affect the family thus looking into these transitions within the South African context will provide a richer understanding of the compositions of families within the country as well as father absence in these contexts.

South Africa is continuously undergoing significant social and political changes (Schatz, 2007). Historically, as a result of the powers of Colonialism, people in southern Africa were forced into paid work by levying taxes that made it necessary for them to earn money. Apartheid was a system of racial segregation through which race and class were manipulated by the state in a manner that profoundly affected gender identity (Morrell, 2001). According to Du Pisani (2001, as cited in Spjeldnaes, Moland, Harris, & Sam, 2011) "black masculinity" was silenced and ostracised by the "Afrikaner (white) masculinity" through social and political power in a way that emasculated black men. Black men were commonly called "boys", were generally treated as subordinates and were denied respect (Morrell, 2005). In response to this, black men gained prestige and power by contributing to the militant anti-apartheid action (Morell, 2006). In contrast, being a white man meant being employed and financially secure (Swart, 2001). These differences meant that men had very different experiences and models for manhood and fatherhood (Morrell, & Richter, 2005, as cited in Spjeldnaes et al., 2011). During apartheid, the black man's recognition and acceptance of the father role meant seeking work away from his family and, in doing so, enduring many hardships and privations.

Post-apartheid, in the era of the democratic South Africa (1994) and constitutional equal rights for people across race and gender, the fluidity of masculinity has become more palpable as new and diversified masculine identities have emerged (Morrell, 1998). While there is no cohesive Afrikaner or unified black response to the shaping of masculine identities in post-apartheid South Africa, it is proposed that white men do not epitomise hegemonic masculinity any more, although class and race remain significant factors (Morrell, 1998). Men have reacted in various ways to these changes and their responses have not only had an

impact on an individual level but on the familial level as well as on the societal level (Morrell, 1998). In the 1990s, South Africa experienced unprecedented levels of violence against women and children which called for men and women to mobilise and galvanise each other towards redefining manhood, masculinity and fatherhood (Peacock, & Botha, 2006). The connection between masculinity and fatherhood is generally close cross-culturally (Brandt, & Kvande, 1998; Edley, & Wetherell, 1999) and the changes in the proportion of absent fathers in relation to changes in the concepts of masculinity since apartheid is testament of this.

According to recent data, numbers indicate an increase in father absence since apartheid. Estimates indicate that 54% of men aged between 15 and 49 in the country are fathers, however, approximately 1 in 2 of those men did not have daily contact with their children in 2004 (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013). The magnitude of the problem differs according to racial groups. The proportion of African children under the age of fifteen living with their fathers is only 30%. The proportion of coloured children within the same age bracket who have present living fathers is 53%, 83 % for white children and the highest proportion is 85% for Indian children (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013). Over all, these numbers also represent an increase in absent father rates since apartheid.

Between 1996 and 2009 the proportion of African children under the age of 15 with absent living fathers increased from 45% to 52%. There has also been an increase for Coloured and White children from 34% to 41% and 13% to 15% respectively. The proportion of absent living fathers decreased solely within the Indian community, from 17% to 12% (Holborn, & Eddy, 2011 as cited in Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013). The phenomenon of father absence additionally differs from urban to rural areas. 43% of African children under the age of 15 in urban areas have absent fathers compared to 55% of children in rural areas, thus indicating a higher prevalence of father absence in rural areas (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013).

Further differences are found within provinces. A study conducted by Richter, Panday, Swart and Norris (2009) reported that over 24% of children in the Gauteng Province had no contact with their fathers. Spjeldnaes et al. (2011) further report that up to 60% of fathers in Limpopo are absent for more than half the year. This is, in part, a result of increasing rural

impoverishment combined with an increasing dependence on migrant remittances that leave rural fathers with no alternative than to leave home to work for money (Morrell, 2006). It may additionally be as a result of unemployment, and the resultant inability to provide for their families as well as cultural practices (such as the payment of damages) that complicate the fathers' ability to participate in their children's lives (Hunter, 2006). African men, particularly those who live in socio-economically disadvantaged environments, often intertwine race, ethnicity and kinship with their masculine identity in a manner that is different to non-African men or urban middle-income men (Spjeldnaes et al., 2011). The theory of family change, according to Kagitcibasi (2007, as cited in Spjeldnaes et al., 2011) suggests that socio-economic development forms a major underlying dimension of variability in family values across cultures and these differences seem to be testament to this. In resource-poor settings where opportunities for education and work are limited, the aspiration of fatherhood is a particularly important communication of willingness to take on responsibility (Spjeldnaes et al., 2011).

In addition to the variation between rural and urban areas, the racial differences in absent father rates reflects the extent to which compositions of South African homes is intricately connected to history as well as social, economic and cultural contexts (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013). Furthermore, these trends highlight the complexities of relations between presence and social difficulties (Silverstein, & Auerbach, 1999). The question remains however, what the modifications mean for fatherhood in the country. It is of importance to understand the contexts in which the father becomes absent in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the implications his absence may have because

> [i]n this sense, fatherhood cannot be understood independently of social, moral, economic, political, cultural, and other processes, by means of which men come to an understanding of who they are and their place in society (Richter, Chikovore, & Makusha, 2010, p. 361).

2.4 FATHER ABSENCE

Research of paternal influence has progressed beyond the effects of absence and divorce and has explored how fathers ultimately influence their children (Lamb, 2004). Various researchers have framed their research on paternal involvement in three areas, i.e.,

engagement, accessibility and responsibility (Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, & Levine, 1987, as cited in Lamb, 2004). It is for this reason that it is imperative to clarify what is meant by "father absence". For the purposes of this study, "father absence" is defined as the physical, social, financial and psychological absenteeism of a biological father. In other words, the study looks at daughters whose biological fathers are not physically present (do not reside in the same residential area or home as the daughter) or not psychologically supportive (providing no contact or emotional support) and they do not offer any financial support or play any social role in the daughters' lives.

The definition, although perhaps not exhaustive, alludes to different roles that fathers fulfil and therefore the variations of ways that they can be absent.

2.5 REASONS FOR FATHER ABSENCE

Although father absence has persistently been indicated as an issue of concern, little remains identified about the reasons behind the disengagement of fathers from their children's lives (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013). The UNESCO report of 1991 indicated that, in the family system of each human society, incomplete families occur for a variety of reasons (Mkhize, 2006). Thus, the causes for single-parent families have changed over time worldwide. In the mid-twentieth century, most single-parent families occurred as a result of the death of a spouse. In the 1970s and 1980s, the majority of single-parent families were as the result of divorce. In the early 2000s, there are increasing numbers of single parents who never married (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013; Mkhize, 2006).

Research has found that pervasive father absence in South Africa is convolutedly connected to historical, social, economic and cultural contexts (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013). The reasons behind father absence thus include, however, are not limited to the inability to be a financial provider for the family (Mkhize, 2006) and divorce which can lead to custody battles that are frequently resolved in favour of the mother (Khunou, 2006). Fathers can also be absent due to undisclosed or denied paternity (Nduna, & Jewkes, 2010) as it is not the desire of every man to be a father (Morell, & Richter, 2006). Other reported reasons for absence include illness and death (Holborn, & Eddy, 2011; Mkhize, 2006) as well as incarceration (Maree, 2003). Father absence is thus not an isolated phenomenon and through understanding the reasons behind father absence, a light may also shed some on

interventions that can be put in place to preclude the disengagement of fathers from their children's lives.

Although literature covers a variety of theories explaining the reasons behind father absence, the discussion has focused on major themes that appeared repeatedly in the literature reviewed. Based on these major themes the discussion has been divided into 8 themes;

2.5.1 The migrant labour system

2.5.2 Inability to provide financially

2.5.3 Parental separation and divorce

2.5.4 Death

2.5.5 Incarceration

2.5.6 Denied and unknown paternity

2.5.7 Maternal gatekeeping

2.5.8 Father's own experience of being fathered

2.5.1 The migrant labour system

Colonialism and apartheid entrenched migrant labour for the black majority of the country (Schatz, 2007). Migrant labour is still a highly common form of labour in South Africa (Mboya, & Nesengani, 1999; Schatz, 2007) and over 50% of all workers from rural areas are in migrant work (Mboya, & Nesengani, 1999). Migrant work thus significantly influenced and continues to influence parental involvement. Fathers and, at times, mothers, are away from their homes for the purpose of earning a living in order to provide for their families (Maree, 2003; Ramphele, & Richter, 2010). The migrant labour system does not only result in fathers having to live separate from their families for long periods of time, it also influences the decline of marriage rates, increases father absence as a result of abandonment, infidelity and encourages multiple partnering (Montgomery et al., 2006). In most cases, for eleven months out of the year, husbands and wives live apart (Ramphele, & Richter, 2006). As a result of the extended separation period, many men end up with two families, one with an urban woman who satisfies immediate sexual needs and the rural wife who keeps the rural home stable (Ramphele, & Richter, 2006). As a result of the low wages that the men receive, they often neglect their rural families (Ramphele, & Richter, 2006). Furthermore, the work is frequently physically challenging and the environment cruel which produces men accustomed to pain, hardship and violence (Breckenridge, 1998, as cited in Morell, & Richter, 2006),

which may affect their ability to show affection. As many of these relationships may be unstable, this causes maternal stress (Cooper et al., 2009) which has the potential to diminish a mother's capability for warm, involved and consistent parenting (Cooper et al., 2009).

Multiple sexual partners also increase the possibility for HIV infection (Ramphele, & Richter, 2006) and therefore the HIV/AIDS pandemic is consequently a substantial factor affecting parental involvement. The structure of the family, its financial security and the availability of extended family members to care for the children as well as others, such as the elderly, is significantly affected as a result of the pandemic (Montgomery et al., 2006). In cases where parents are absent or unable to fulfil their parental duties due migrant work, the involvement of extended family members is imperative in providing food security, shelter, education and access to health care for children (Montgomery et al., 2006). Extended family members furthermore fill the roles of absent parents through an informal adoption (Montgomery et al., 2006; Potgieter, 2003). South African families are thus often multigenerational (Schatz, 2007) and often include extended family members and guardians (Holborn, & Eddy, 2011; Potgieter, 2003).

Extended family may include elder brothers and sisters who may have their own families but take in younger siblings as part of their households (Potgieter, 2003). At times, it is uncles and aunts who assume the responsibility of caring for the home and children should illness occur in the family or when certain members of the family are in distant cities earning a living. It is grandparents, however, who often take on the responsibility of caring for the children while parents are away earning a living (Richter, Panday, Swart, & Norris, 2009; Schatz, 2007). Migration, morbidity, mortality, the reorganisation of household members between households, in addition to a high rate of non-marital births, frequently result in children being left with maternal grandparents (Nyirenda, McGrath, & Newell, 2010; Schatz, 2007). If the mother of the children marries again, household arrangements leave the elderly with the responsibility of caring for the children (Nyirenda, McGrath, & Newell, 2010; Schatz, 2007).

Consistent with the functionalist perspective, age and gender play an important role in determining the burden of care within the African context. Typically, mothers, wives and sisters are left bearing the burden and are more likely than men to assume caregiving

activities relating to both the sick and those left behind (Montgomery et al., 2006; Schatz, 2007). Elderly women, in particular, are frequently faced with the duty of taking on the responsibilities for sick adults and children, in addition to fostering orphaned young children (Schatz, 2007). Caring for grandchildren may thus start even before the death of the children's parents particularly if they have chronic illnesses (Hosegood, McGrath, Herbst, & Timaeus, 2004, as cited in Nyirenda, McGrath, & Newell, 2010; Ramphele, & Richter, 2010), are engaged in migrant work or are unemployed (Ramphele, & Richter, 2010). Elderly women frequently contribute to their households through financial, emotional and physical means (Schatz, 2007). These contributions may be a continuance of duties that were always perceived to be the older women's responsibility or may represent new commitments that they had shed when their own children were grown and must once again assume (Schatz, 2007). It stands to reason that these cultural practices may further encourage or enable a lack of involvement from fathers or father figures.

Naturally the HIV/AIDS pandemic aggravates the level of responsibility the elderly are left with (Montgomery et al., 2006; Richter, Norris, Pettifor, Yach, & Cameron, 2007; Schatz, 2007). Most poor elderly South Africans receive a small means-tested non-contributory government pension for which women become eligible at age 60 and men at age 65. Prime-age adult morbidity and mortality thus have economic consequences by decreasing income and increasing expenditures of households. When an income earner is lost by a household, the elderly are often left with the debts incurred from illnesses. The costs of morbidity are further compounded when a death occurs resulting in substantial funeral-related expenditures (Schatz, 2007). As a result of changing family structure, the emotional and financial burdens that the elderly are faced with often result in stress and a deterioration in their health, increased loneliness and seclusion (Schatz, 2007). The HIV/AIDS pandemic thus results in the elderly losing their caregivers while making them into caregivers (Montgomery et al., 2006; Schatz, 2007). These circumstances may also affect the quality of childcare as elderly family members may be too old or sickly to adequately care for children left in their custody during parental absence. These are factors that must be considered when child deprivation is deliberated as it makes reference to there being a complexity of relations parental absence social problems (Silverstein, & Auerbach, 1999).

Even in cases where adult children are alive, the elderly household member's pension as well

as access to government assistance such as child support grants (Muhwava, 2008) may be the most stable and reliable income for many households (Schatz, 2007) as a result of poverty and the exceptionally high rates of unemployment. In South Africa, access to government foster care, care dependency and child support grants plays an important role in alleviating poverty in the households that foster children with absent parents. However, this is frequently not sufficient even when supplemented by the elderly family members' pension fund (Muhwava, 2008; Nyirenda, McGrath, & Newell, 2010).

It should be noted that caring for grandchildren is not always a burden as, at times, the grandchildren serve to take care of the elderly as well. Furthermore, the elderly residing within multi-generational homes may be supported financially and receive remittances from their adult children who have migrated outside the area for the assistance they offer in terms of child minding (Schatz, 2007).

An increase in HIV infections and deaths resulting from AIDS, poverty and increasing unemployment, also threatens the role of the extended family. With increased urbanisation resulting from the socio-economic changes of post-apartheid South Africa, more families are moving closer to the nuclear type structures which has resulted in less involvement and assistance from extended family members (Long, & Zietkiewicz, 2006, as cited in Mamabolo, Langa, & Kiguwa, 2009; United Nations, 1998, as cited in Richter et al., 2007; Wittenberg, & Collinson, 2007). It is therefore possible that if one parent becomes absent, there is not always the possibility of the role being filled or supported by a member of the extended family. This is further evident in the increasing numbers of child-headed homes and the increasing number of street children (Vice, 2010). Furthermore, although the involvement of extended family can be significantly beneficial in terms of financial and social support, children may also be ill-treated and neglected in these arrangements (Nduna, & Jewkes, 2012).

2.5.2 Inability to provide financially

In South Africa, the inability of fathers to provide financially is amongst the most common and significant reasons associated with father absence. Once again, this can, in part, be attributed to the secondary effects of the country's apartheid history which heavily influenced the experiences of manhood and fatherhood (Morell, & Richter, 2006). Through the migrant

labour system, black men were generally employed in unskilled, seasonal and poorly paid positions which resulted in insecure ways of securing a livelihood as well as significant time spent without any form of paid work (Jewkes, & Morell, 2010). This made it difficult for most black African men to vest their masculinity in material or professional achievement (Jewkes, & Morell, 2010). In efforts to attain respectability, some of these men have historically explored alternatives to the good provider role, by maintaining contact, spending time with children, as well as offering in-kind materials such as food or diapers, and connecting children to paternal relatives who can act as resources (Roy, 2004; Stier, & Tienda, 1993).

According to Mkhize (2006), however, within the South African context, the provider role still takes precedence. Fathers, more so black fathers, associate fatherhood with being able to provide financially for their families contrary to the Western concept of fatherhood which considers emotional support as well. Some fathers have described the pain they experience when they leave home to take up work in distant places in order to earn enough money to support their families (Mkhize, 2006). Rabe (2006, as cited in Richter, Chikovore, & Makusha, 2010) interviewed mine workers, most of whom are only able to go home to their rural families once a year. All considered financially supporting their children at the heart of being a good father, and stated that they only undertake the dangerous work underground so they can support their children, because they feel responsible for them (Richter, Chikovore, & Makusha, 2010). The inability to provide adequately for the family may thus cause some men to feel inadequate as fathers and thus abandon their families to avoid embarrassment and shame (Khunou, 2006; Mkhize, 2006; Ramphele, & Richter, 2006; Richter, Chikovore, & Makusha, 2010). This may be because the social value of fathering and fatherhood has changed and has become increasingly attached to a man's position as provider (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013; Langa, 2010). This role has, however, been subject to negative stereotyping equally by women and fathers, who explore new cultural models for nurturing fathering (Daly, 1995; LaRossa, 1997, as cited in Roy, 2004).

The result of the fathers' inability to provide for their families has been an increased likelihood of finding masculine affirmation in relations with black women. Historically, most black African women were without the means to be economically independent and thus had to depend on black African men. This, together with cultural practices of respect, has

promoted obedience and passivity as the hallmarks of African femininity. This sadly remains true in many contexts (Hamer, 2001; Sullivan, 1992, 1993, as cited in Roy, 2004). The economic position of many black African women therefore remains precarious and results in continued dependency and abuse as is evident in the rates of violence against women (Mather, 2010).

Black men may also affirm their masculinity by engaging in criminal activity (Jewkes, & Morell, 2010; Roy 2004) as indicated in the high rates of incarceration amongst black men (Mather, 2010). This issue is returned to the section discussing father absence in relation to incarceration.

Over the past half century, economic forces have continued to have wreak havoc on labour markets (Morrell, 2002). The dearth or nonexistence of job networks, information about changing technologies and educational opportunities has resulted in numerous fathers still having difficulties in finding legitimate full-time wage labour (Roy, 2004).

Roy (2004) highlighted the link between provider expectations and father involvement. Although observing that specific contexts may result in different expectations of economic provision, Roy (2004) observes that expectations for fathers to be providers have the potential to discourage as well as encourage involved fathering. Cazenave (1984 as cited in Roy, 2004) supports this view by giving prominence to the fact that the provider role is socially constructed through negotiation of various contexts. He proposes that

> [o]nly by placing masculine role perceptions within the appropriate social context will it be possible to fully comprehend why men act the way they do and under what conditions they might be expected to change (Roy, 2004 p. 655).

Although this is indeed true, most societies believe that "good" fathers choose to and succeed in providing for their children whereas "bad", "deadbeat", or absent fathers do not choose or are incompetent to fulfil these expectations (Furstenberg, 1988 as cited in Roy, 2004).

The concept of fathers as providers is further evident in the manner in which it has influenced social policies and laws (Khunou, 2006). In South Africa, the introduction of the child welfare principle introduced in the 1800's, which legally necessitated for fathers to pay maintenance for their children, is a good example of this (Khunou, 2006). Khunou (2006),

however, proposes that the effective side of fathering has also increasingly been acknowledged in developed countries (Khunou, 2006). According to Madhavan, Townsend, & Garey (2008), discussions in South Africa about fathers are affected by a lack of information about what men actually do for children. Assumptions are made that men who do not live with their children do not support them (Madhavan, Townsend, Garey, 2008). Correspondingly, the assumption is also made that men who do live with their children do support them (Madhavan, Townsend, Garey, & 2008), even though this is not always true.

2.5.3 Parental separation and divorce

In the 1970 and 80s there was a significant increase in the number of single parent homes which led to a variety of national policy initiatives in the United States aimed at strengthening the institution of marriage and to encourage the establishment as well as the maintenance of two parent homes as it was believed that this would improve the outcomes for children (Mather, 2010). Divorce has, since then, continued to increase worldwide. Divorce has been noted as a significant reason for father absence (Harper, & Fine, 2006; Khunou, 2006). Various studies propose that divorced fathers, as a group, have little contact with their biological children (Fagan, & Barnett, 2003). Furthermore, children of divorced parents are inclined to see their non-residential fathers less frequently as time progresses (Amato, & Keith, 1991; Maccoby, & Mnookin, 1992, as cited in Fagan, & Barnett, 2003).

The past 30 years has however shown an increasing percentage of single mothers who have never been married and a decrease in single motherhood as a result of divorce (Mather, 2010). In 2008, 7% of children in the United States lived in homes headed by cohabiting domestic partners (Mather, 2010). This does not encourage father involvement as unmarried, non-residential fathers may have infrequent contact with their children over time. Moreover, these fathers are proposed to be lower on all dimensions of involvement than noncustodial fathers with children born in intact marriages (Fagan, & Barnett, 2003). Mather (2010) contends that although cohabiting partner families can be beneficial as there are shared financial and social responsibilities, the partnerships are often less stable than those of married couples.

According to Statistics South Africa, in 2009, 56% of divorced couples had children under the age of 18. As noted in the section which explored the role of fathers as providers, divorce

occurring in families where minors are involved frequently results in custody battles that are often settled in favour of the mother rather than the father (Khunou, 2006) which may affect the level of father involvement. Harper and Fine (2006) explain that the majority of separated or divorced fathers may have difficulty in establishing their role as non-residential fathers. It is suggested by Harper and Fine (2006) that the identity of the divorced fathers is often connected to the relationship they had previously with the former spouse and children, thus causing challenges in forming a new identity as a non-residential parent and honouring their responsibilities.

Although living apart from children unquestionably decreases the potential for involvement with their children, lack of paternal involvement may also be associated with parental conflict which often precedes and follows divorce (Fagan, & Barnett, 2003). High levels of parental conflict in addition to low levels of support may have a negative impact on the divorced parents' relationship which may, in the long run, lead to reduced contact with the non-residential father (Braver, & Griffin, 2000; Braver, & O'Connell, 1998, as cited in Fagan, & Barnett, 2003). Furthermore, mothers can obstruct fathers' access to children because they are angry with their former spouse or partner or because they feel that the father has neglected his responsibilities towards his children (Fagan, & Barnett, 2003). This behaviour has been described as "maternal gatekeeping" (Fagan, & Barnett, 2003). Maternal gatekeeping is discussed in more detail in a subsequent section (see section 2.5.7).

Significant concern has been raised around the psychological impact of divorce on children; however, divorce is often preceded by lengthy periods of marital strife (Leonard, & Hood-Williams, 1992) which also has a negative impact on the psychological wellbeing of children. Although Leonard and Hood-Williams (1992) note the importance of harmonious and cooperative divorce and custody procedures in the interest of children's wellbeing, the problems accredited to divorce are essentially present prior to the divorce (Silverstein, & Auerbach, 1999). Hetherington et al. (1998, as cited in Silverstein, & Auerbach, 1999) have pointed out that divorce is not a single event rather it is a cycle of negative events which begins with marital conflict, followed by the termination of the current family structure and culminating in separate households. A significant reduction in living standards, including the loss of socioeconomic, social and health resources, may often succeed divorce (Cooper et al., 2009; Leonard, & Hood-Williams, 1992). Furthermore, divorce may bring about changes in

the lives of mothers that can cause stress and reduce their capability for warm, involved and consistent parenting (Cooper et al., 2009). This may be as a result of the loss of financial resources including the non-residential fathers' failure to pay adequate child support and of lowered health and functioning problems (Cooper et al., 2009).

According to Meadows, McLanahan, and Brooks-Gunn (2008, as cited in, Cooper et al., 2009), most divorced individuals report poorer mental health as well as poorer functional and self-rated health than their married counterparts. As expected, the commencement of health problems or the worsening of pre-existing health conditions may impact mothers' acuities of parenting demands (Cooper et al., 2009). Researchers contend that the characteristics of parents who eventually make the decision to separate differ considerably from those who remain together (Cooper et al., 2009). It is proposed that it is in these differences, rather than the divorce itself, that the source of poor parent and poor child outcomes may be found (Cooper et al., 2009). Parents with mental health problems, for instance, are more likely to divorce than "healthy" parents (Gotlib, & McCabe, 1990, as cited in Cooper et al., 2009). Dissimilarities in child well-being subsequent to a divorce may thus be the result of mental health problems that predate the divorce (Cooper et al., 2009).

A loss of economic resources, irrespective of a mother's prior financial situation, could potentially further generate parenting stress should she feel less capable to provide material and social goods for her children (Cooper et al., 2009). Divorce or separation is associated with modifications in maternal employment such as entering the workforce or increasing work hours (Cooper et al., 2009) which may further result in reduced capability for involved, consistent and personal parenting time. This is further exacerbated by a loss of social resources frequently associated with divorce (Cooper et al., 2009). After a divorce or separation, divorced mothers are frequently forced to move as a result of a lowered socioeconomic situation which may result in less social support as a result of being further away from family and friends in addition to fewer community resources (Cooper et al., 2009). This is especially problematic as mothers may take on an extensive range of parenting responsibilities once shared with their husbands (Cooper et al., 2009). It is thus argued by Leonard and Hood-Williams (1992) and many others (Amato, 2006; Gotlib & McCabe, 1990; Sigle-Rushton & McLanahan, 2002, as cited in Cooper et al., 2009) that it is not as a result of the separation or the loss of one parent that causes psychological disturbances, rather, it is

due to poorer qualities of childcare resulting from psychosocial adversities that frequently follow divorce (Cooper et al., 2009; Hood-Williams, 1992).

On average, children from divorced families are at risk of developing a variation of problems compared to children from non-divorced families (Mather, 2010) however, it is also true that some exhibit no negative effects (Silverstein & Auerbach, 1999). Silverstein and Auerbach (1999) suggest that divorce does not irretrievably harm the majority of children especially if, preceding the divorce, there is a consideration of the adjustment of children. Another emotional impact on children after divorce can happen when a parent remarries into another family. Considering the divorce rates in the country, it is estimated that approximately one third of all children will experience a married or cohabiting family before they are eighteen (White & Gilbreth, 2001).

2.5.4 Death

HIV/AIDS rates have continued to escalate in South Africa leaving in their wake a generation of children who have lost their parents, caregivers and other loved ones to illness and death (Case & Ardington, 2006). In 2004, 48% of all adult deaths were due to AIDS which was the leading cause for adult mortality in South Africa that year (Hosegood, Vanneste & Timaeus, 2004). In 2007, fifteen million children worldwide were orphaned as a result of death related to HIV/AIDS, with 1.4 million of those children being in South Africa (UNAIDS, 2008, as cited in Cluver & Orkin, 2009). According to the South African Census (2001), an estimated 2.3 million children, representing 13.3% of all South African children, have lost one or both of their parents to AIDS by their eighteenth birthdays (South African Census, 2001).

Literature on the South African family and its response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic is rife with accounts of men who reflect a deficit model of male involvement (Montgomery et al., 2006). Lack or absence of parental involvement can be due to abandonment motivated by fears associated with the course of the disease (Denis & Ntsimane, 2006; Montgomery et al., 2006) or due to death resulting from the disease. This may also be the case in terms of other terminal diseases such as cancer.

Death has a significant effect on families. It may result in material loss and a loss of other forms of support (Nduna & Jewkes, 2012). For many, especially in South Africa and the

African continent, poverty has compounded the impact of the loss (Nduna & Jewkes, 2012).

Recent research in sub-Saharan Africa has proposed that children who have lost their parents are at risk for adverse schooling outcomes. Furthermore, children whose fathers have passed away have been found to live in significantly poorer households (Case & Ardington, 2006). Case and Ardington (2006) argue that although numerous researchers have presented an association between children's well-being and parental death, estimating whether the loss of a parent has a causal effect on children's outcomes is challenging because the relative wealth of a child's household or the child's school attainment prior to the parent death is often unknown (Case & Ardington, 2006). I return to the effect of father absence and schooling outcomes in a subsequent section (see section 2.6.2).

Although the experience of loss is unique and the grieving process individualised, the age at which the loss occurs, personality, previous experiences with death, the relationship with the deceased, the cause of the death and the communication within the family unit can affect the manner in which the child responds to the death (Corr, Nabe & Corr, 1997). Other factors that may affect the grieving process for the child are the opportunities available to share and express feelings and memories of the deceased, parenting styles, the remaining parents' ability to cope with stress and grief and the availability of stable and consistent relationships with other adults (Corr et al., 1997). There are various theories that explain the grieving and mourning processes. For instance, traditional psychoanalysts contend that pre-adolescent children are not capable of overcoming primitive defences such as denial and repression to tolerate the pain resulting from the separation process (Tremblay & Israel, 1998). Similarly, attachment theorists propose that children are in danger of processing death in a superficial manner which may magnify the possibility of persistent distress (Tremblay & Israel, 1998). Conclusively determining the possible effects of parental death on children is thus difficult because the issue is multifaceted. Furthermore, death cannot be viewed in isolation from other factors that affect child development as death occurs in context.

2.5.5 Incarceration

There has been an increasing interest in studying families where fathers' absence occurs as a result of imprisonment. This is because incarceration is understood to have a unique effect on the family (Fritsch & Burkhead, 1981). As Blackwell (1959, as cited in Fritsch, & Burkhead,

1981, p. 22) explains:

> There appears to be a demoralization connected with imprisonment which is not to be found in other forms of involuntary separation other than, perhaps, desertion. Imprisonment carries with it a stigma that is difficult for families to eradicate, especially if children are involved in the family relationship and structure.

In South Africa, incarceration is a significant issue that contributes to the absence of fathers. Fathers are found to make up 93% of all incarcerations, meaning that many South African homes have fathers who are engaged in crime (Maree, 2003). According to Fritsch and Burkhead (1981), loss of a family member as a result of incarceration rarely elicits a sympathetic response from significant others, neither is it the kind of crisis that serves to draw members of the immediate family closer together (Fritsch, & Burkhead, 1981). Accordingly, incarceration has calamitous consequences for all family members especially for children. Empirical research has recognised multiple detrimental effects that parental incarceration has on children. Children with imprisoned fathers frequently manifest problematic behaviour such as theft, school truancy, aggression and violence in addition to running away from home (Sack, 1977; Robins, West & Herjanic, 1976, as cited in Fritsch, & Burkhead, 1981).

Fritsch and Burkhead (1981) found that parental incarceration and the consequent absence of the parent does not necessarily result in negative behaviour in children but rather the parental absence results in pre-existing behavioural problems becoming more pronounced. They found that the absence of a father as a result of incarceration correlated with "acting-out" behaviour whereas absence of the mother correlated positively with "acting-in" behaviour (Fritsch, & Burkhead, 1981). The predisposition of children of absent fathers to act-out and of absent mothers to act-in was associated with whether their children were aware that the separation was as a result of incarceration. This, once again, suggests that parental absence is a multi-dimensional variable. It takes on additional meaning depending on whether the child believes the parent to be absent for socially acceptable reasons or for reasons which may result humiliation (Fritsch, & Burkhead, 1981).

Maree (2003) indicates a correlation between father absence and community disintegration and incidences of crime committed by youth. This is, however, a complex and

multidimensional issue. Crime is one of the most difficult of the numerous challenges facing South Africa in the post-apartheid period (Demombynes & Özler, 2005). Economic and sociological theories have linked the distribution of economic welfare to criminal activity (Demombynes, & Özler, 2005). Incarceration is concentrated among young, poorly educated men (Western, & McClanahan, 2000) because it is associated with inequality, a lack of social capital, a lack of upward mobility, or social disorganisation (Demombynes, & Özler, 2005). The proposal made by Maree (2003) overlooks and oversimplifies the complexities of relations between father presence and social problems (Silverstein, & Auerbach, 1999) especially within the South African contexts.

2.5.6 Denied and unknown paternity

Other reasons for which fathers may be absent is as a result of denied or unknown paternity. There are numerous reports in the South African literature on undisclosed paternity and subsequent absent fathers (Holborn, 2011; Hunter, 2006; Madhavan, Townsend, Garey, 2008; Morrell, Posel, & Devey, 2003; Nduna, & Jewkes, 2011, as cited in Nduna et al., 2011). At times however the father may know the paternity, however deny it because he may not wish to take on the responsibility of a family and children (Morell, 2006; Richter, Chikovore, & Makusha, 2010). Undisclosed paternal identity denies children their right to know both their biological parents while also affecting their legal status (Nduna et al., 2011). Resolving paternal identity is important to avert negative family relationships (Nduna et al., 2011).

There are several additional reasons why fathers may deny the paternity of children (Richter, Chikovore, & Makusha, 2010). Men may believe that the prevention of pregnancy is the woman's responsibility and may perceive the pregnancy as the mother's attempt to deceive them, coerce them into a more committed relationship or extort money from them. Thus, paternity is most frequently denied when the father feels he cannot trust the mother of the child (Nduna, et al., 2011). The denial is as a result of fear for the father's own family (Hunter, 2006). This is especially true in the case of young fathers who might have to leave school in order to care for the child (Hunter, 2006).

In the Zulu tradition, when a man impregnates a woman out of wedlock, he is required to pay *inhlawulo* which is an amount paid to the family for the damage of impregnating the woman (Mkhize, 2006). Thus, a father may deny paternity if he cannot afford to the damages or

lobola (bride wealth) (Mkhize, 2006; Nduna et al., 2011; Richter, Chikovore, & Makusha, 2010).

2.5.7 Maternal gatekeeping

Maternal attitudes towards the father as well as the quality of the co-parenting relationship may also affect the degree of father involvement. In addition to parents' having direct influences over their children, researchers identify that they also have an indirect influence by way of their relationships to other adults in the childrearing network (Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2000, as cited in Fagan, & Barnett, 2003). Parents may fail to acknowledge, respect and value the parenting roles and responsibilities of the other parent. As noted in a preceding section (section 2.5.3), this is especially true in instances of divorce. This is evident in custody battles and other child-related disagreements between parents, and in the role that maternal gatekeeping plays in the relationship between mothers and fathers (Khunou, 2006). Based on the work of scholars such as Allen and Hawkins (1999) and Leonard (2000), Fagan and Barnett (2003) define gatekeeping as "mothers' preferences and attempts to restrict and exclude fathers from child care and involvement with children" (Fagan & Barnett, 2003 p. 1021). Regarding the structural hypothesis, gatekeeping is particularly pertinent in families where the father does not reside with his children (Fagan & Barnett, 2003).

Several family researchers (Arendell, 1996; Deutsch, Lussier, & Servis, 1993; Marsiglio, 1995) explain that mothers play a fundamental role in facilitating the father-child relationship. Even in instances of divorce, the mothers' support is a significant factor in the degree to which fathers contribute to co-parenting (Fagan & Barnett, 2003). This view is echoed by Khunou (2006) who contends that there are fathers who express a desire to spend time and play more significant roles in the lives of their children but are unable to fulfil these desires because of restrictions placed on the father by the mother. Children may also be used as leverage and as a means of settling scores (Fagan & Barnett, 2003; Khunou, 2006).

Mothers can exercise considerable influence over fathers by limiting their involvement with their children (Fagan, & Barnett, 2003). This may be because they see little significance in the father's continued role but it may also be because the mother feels that the father does not make sufficient financial contributions (Fagan & Barnett, 2003). Non-residential fathers' lack of financial contributions is often a significant source of conflict between parents (Amato,

2000, as cited in Fagan, & Barnett, 2003). If the father is in arrears with paying maintenance or child support, the mother may prevent visitation with children (Fagan & Barnett, 2003). This unquestionably results in a wedge being driven between fathers and their children, and Khunou (2006, p. 271) says that "without exception such disputes have a detrimental effect on the relationship between children and their fathers".

Other factors associated with maternal gatekeeping are mothers' perceptions of father competence. Numerous studies revealed positive correlations between mothers' philosophies about the significance of the fathers' role in the lives of their children and the level of paternal involvement with children (Fagan & Barnett, 2003). As a result of the traditional role of mothers as primary caregivers to children, it stands to reason that mothers who perceive fathers as less competent parents are also likely to restrict fathers' access to children (Fagan, & Barnett, 2003). Maternal gatekeeping is therefore viewed as a significant negotiator of the relationship between mothers' perceptions of fathers' competence and fathers' actual involvement with their children. Although perceptions of a father's lack of competence are not always correct, these views are not entirely unfounded. Fathers were found to be the more probable perpetrators of child maltreatment and serious physical abuse (Fagan, & Barnett, 2003). The father's perception of his own competence also affects father involvement. Several researchers (Beitel, & Parke, 1998; Lamb, 1986, 1997, as cited in Fagan, & Barnett, 2003) advise that fathers who perceive themselves to have high parenting competence may feel more inspired to spend time and be involved with their children (Fagan, & Barnett, 2003).

Fagan and Barnett (2006) have observed a co-varying relationship between fathers' financial contributions and mothers' views of paternal competence. They found that mothers tended to view fathers who make low financial contributions as being less skilled parents. It is also contended that relationships between financial contributions, maternal gatekeeping, and father involvement may be highly multifaceted and require further study (Fagan, & Barnett, 2006).

Within the South African context, tradition is also a factor affecting gatekeeping behaviours. As discussed in the preceding section (see section 2.5.6), within some traditions (such as the Zulu tradition) when a man impregnates a woman to whom he is not married, he is required

"damages" to the family for the pregnancy. This is problematic as fathers subjected to these practices are typically fathers who are poor. Families may use contact with the child as leverage to motivate for the payment (Mkhize, 2006, Nduna & Jewkes, 2011; Richter, Chikovore, & Makusha, 2010). Abandonment also has to be considered within these contexts (Mkhize, 2006).

2.5.8 Father's own experience of being fathered

Adults' (both men and women's) experiences and expectations of fathering are influenced by their relationships and experiences with their own fathers (Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 1998; Guzzo, 2011; Lamb, 2010; Pleck, 2010, as cited in Makusha, Richter, Knight, Van Rooyen, Bhana, 2013). Many of today's young fathers admit with despondency that they did not know their own fathers and are aware of their lack of experience and guidance regarding the roles and responsibilities of fathers (Swartz, & Bhana, 2009). This is especially true in instances where the father is not married to the child's mother.

The modelling hypothesis maintains that men who experience involved fathers when they grow up have a tendency to perceive involvement in their children's lives as both important and natural whereas men who had less involved fathers typically have less favourable attitudes towards fatherhood (Elliot, 2010). This view has however been challenged. The compensatory hypothesis, in contrast, suggests that men who had adverse experiences with their fathers are careful to avoid recreating that experience for their own children by behaving differently to their own fathers (Daly, 1993; Townsend, 2002, as cited in Elliot, 2010). The compensatory hypothesis emphasises that numerous men feel the need to function as role models to their children in response to their own lack of a fathering role model when they were growing up (Guzzo, 2011, as cited in Elliot, 2010).

An acknowledgement of both the modelling and the compensatory hypotheses is equally important in gaining an understanding of how men's experiences with their own fathers influences their approach and behaviours toward fathering (Beaton, & Doherty, 2007, as cited in Elliot, 2010). In addition, it is contended that women's attitudes towards their partners' fathering roles are similarly influenced by their experiences with their own fathers (Krampe, & Newton, 2012 as cited in Elliot, 2010). Therefore, women's expectations of their children's fathers as well as their views towards fathering, have an effect on the father-child relationship

(Tamis-Le-Monda, & Cabrera, 1999, as cited in Elliot, 2010) in addition to gatekeeping behaviours (Fagan, & Barnett, 2003).

The multiple reasons behind father absence act as a starting point for an understanding of how families and young women, in particular, respond to father absence (Balcom, 1998; Denis, & Ntsimane, 2006). Existing research seems to generalise the effects without giving sufficient consideration of the circumstances under which fathers become absent. A father's physical presence alone is not necessarily a positive outcome in itself (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013; Harris, 2008).

2.6 EFFECTS OF FATHER ABSENCE ON CHILDREN

As briefly indicated above, studies focusing on father absence have proposed various ways in which father absence is detrimental to children (Booth, 1996; Berns, 2007; Mather, 2010). As Leonard and Hood-Williams (1992, p. 38) explain:

> A continuing note in the noise of crisis surrounding the family is the theme that broken homes breed juvenile delinquency: that single parenting is inadequate and produces problems for society.

Although some authors suggest that daughters and sons experience father absence differently, the preponderance of research reports on the general effects of father absence on children and do not focus on the gender of the child. The following section will thus explore the proposed effects of father absence on children as a whole, however, special mention will be made of the effects of father absence on girls, where applicable. Although there is a wide range of literature covering the effects of father absence, this review will focus on major themes which appeared repeatedly in the literature reviewed. These themes are:

2.6.1 Gender identity
2.6.2 Academic performance
2.6.3 Financial deprivation
2.6.4 Premature age of menarche in girls
2.6.5 Psychological disturbances
2.6.6 Influence on girls' relationships with romantic partners

As an adjunct to this section, the role of father figures in children's lives will be explored.

2.6.1 Gender identity

The manner in which fathers influence gender identity formation is explored from various theoretical perspectives. It has been found that children raised by single parents have negatively impacted gender identities (Corey, 2013; Lamb, 2004). This is as a result of the traditional acceptance that it is the same sex parent within the family whose task it is to facilitate the process of gender identity formation of the child (Corey, 2013; Lamb, 2004). This is especially true for studies conducted between the 1940s and the 1970s in which focus was placed on the father role as a sex-role model (Lamb, 2004). As the father was the most commonly absent parental figure, these studies focused primarily on the effect that a lack of sex-role models meant for sons.

If the absence of a father negatively influences gender identity, similar concerns can be raised regarding children raised in lesbian households. These families are similar to single heterosexual mother families in that there is often no father present (MacCallum, & Golombok, 2004). This perception has, however, been challenged. Research has indicated that children from lesbian households are as likely as children in two parent heterosexual households to achieve a heterosexual gender orientation (Patterson, 1995; Patterson, & Chan, 1997, as cited in Silverstein, & Auerbach, 1999). Furthermore, results by Wainright and Patterson (2008) indicate that young adults from lesbian headed households were not any more likely than those raised by heterosexual parents to have gender identity problems (Wainright, & Patterson, 2008). This incompatibility suggests that gender identity development can be understood from various standpoints.

From a Freudian perspective, what was described as the Oedipus complex and Electra complex for boys and girls respectively meant that children between the ages of three and six are in the phallic stage where they develop incestuous sexual desires for the parent of the opposite sex. According to this theory, children at that age manage the anxiety caused by these desires by internalising the sexual role as well as the moral standards of the same sex parent (Shaffer, 2002) thus establishing a gender identity. According to Freudian theory, if the same sex parent is not present during this process, it may result in arrested development and the process being incomplete or “arrested” (Shaffer, 2002).

Kohlberg (1966, as cited in Martin, Ruble, & Szkrybalo, 2002) argues that gender is developed through an understanding of gender categories and learned behaviour. Gender is thus not only determined by sexual orientation, it includes cultural beliefs and characteristics associated with a certain sex (Corey, 2013). Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental model departed from the psychoanalytic and learning theory through the accentuation of the significance of children's own increasing understanding of gender categories and their own permanent assignment into one of them. He argues that cognitions or understanding preceded and motivated what is regarded as gender-appropriate behaviour (Martin, Ruble, & Szkrybalo, 2002). It was furthermore concluded that same-sex modelling is unlikely to account for sex differences in behaviour (Maccoby, & Jacklin, 1974, as cited in Martin, Ruble, & Szkrybalo, 2002). Kohlberg's view is echoed by Mischel (1966, as cited in Martin, Ruble, & Szkrybalo, 2002) who emphasises the significance of environmental determinants for gender development such as modelling gender-appropriate behaviour as well as rewarding behaviour.

2.6.2 Academic performance

Academic achievement or lack thereof has major implications for the future of children. The higher the extent of academic problems that children display, the more likely they are to be engaged in criminal behaviour (Booyens, 2003). Furthermore, a lack of education has significant implications for the sexual behaviour of youths.

Young women whose prospects for education and employment are severely restricted may use transactional sex in order to secure financial or emotional support (Dunkle, Jewkes, Brown, Gray, McIntyre, & Harlow, 2004). According to Dunkle et al. (2004) transactional sex is often motivated by basic survival and subsistence needs, which are exaggerated by a lack of education. Understanding sexual decision-making behaviour amongst youths is particularly important as teenage pregnancy is a significant social problem in South Africa (Chohan, & Langa, 2011; Nduna, & Jewkes, 2012). This is especially true for black women as 50% of all black women have had a child by the age of 21, mostly outside marriage (Jewkes, & Morell, 2010). Unplanned pregnancies may result in early school exit, absent fathers (illuminating on a problematic cycle) and HIV infection (Hosegood, Vanneste, & Timaeus, 2004; Nduna, & Jewkes, 2012). South Africa has one of the world's most rapidly progressing HIV epidemics (Hosegood, Vanneste, & Timaeus, 2004; Varga, 1997) and black

women are the most vulnerable group. This issue is returned to in a subsequent section (see section 2.6.3).

Recently, Mboya and Nesengani (1999) as well as Holborn and Eddy (2011) have argued that children raised in single parent households perform less successfully academically than those raised by both parents. Mboya and Nesengani (1999) used the Human Sciences Research Council's Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) as a measuring tool to examine whether there is a difference between the academic performance of high school students who have their fathers present in the home and those whose fathers were absent due to migrant work in South Africa. A significant difference in performance was evident; adolescents with their fathers present scored higher than students with fathers away due to migrant work. Furthermore, a literature review conducted by Kiernan (2006, as cited in Elliot, 2010) found that involved fathers positively influence their infants' cognitive as well as their social development during preschool. Fathers were found to encourage their children's attainment of intellectual, social and language skills:

> School-age children tended to be more successful in their academic, athletic, and social pursuits; have better adjusted personalities; and greater self-esteem when their fathers were supportive and nurturing (Elliot 2010 p. 38).

Mather (2010) agrees with Kiernan (2006, as cited in Elliot, 2010) and argues that children in the low income bracket single parent homes experience the most challenges in education which frequently significantly impedes success in the workforce.

The above argument raises significant points. Firstly, Elliot (2010) proposes that children whose fathers are nurturing and supportive experience the positive effects of his presence. This means that it is a certain kind of father, one who is involved and engaged, that positively affect children's academic performance. It seems however also important to question whether it is the behaviour in itself that children benefit from or from the father's presence. In other words, does the nurturance have to come from a father in order to be beneficial?

Secondly, Mather (2010) contends that it is children in the low income bracket single homes that experience academic challenges. This argument seems to suggest that it is not all single parent homes that children's academic achievement is negatively impacted however a

distinctive type of single family; one that has been struck by poverty. Poverty is an extensive and complex issue which deeply affects various aspects of live. Its relationship to academic attainment is not linear however complex.

Various theories have been proposed as explanation for the correlation between two parent household and academic achievement. In two parent households, functions are assumed to be divided (Bauserman, 2002, as cited in Roman, 2011; Booth, 1996). The argument is thus that children raised by both parents are likely to be provided with more practical and emotional support:

> When two parents live in the same household, they can assist one another in their roles as parents by sharing childrearing responsibilities and providing emotional support (Cooper et al., 2009).

Monitoring children and maintaining parental control is thus easier in two-parent families (Coleman, 1988; McLanahan, & Sandefur, 1994, as cited in Cooper et al., 2009) however this is only true when both parents are actively involved in parenting. There are two parent households where both parents may work long hours and may, as a result, fail to provide consistent monitoring and support to children. The argument that children growing up in single mother homes are at a disadvantage academically may thus be overgeneralised. This is highlighted when considering the extent to which the gendered roles of parents have become less segregated in the 21st century (Leonard, & Hood-Williamson, 1992).

Parenting styles are similarly proposed to be a factor affecting children's academic success. Simons and Conger (2007) propose that children of authoritative parents, parents who combine warmth and support with the enforcement of rules and the use of sanctions when required, are more likely to have high scholastic achievements, regardless of their age. This view echoes Elliot's (2010) argument which proposes that children whose fathers are nurturing and supportive benefit from their fathers' support. Although this argument seems credible, I question whether it is not merely the behaviour that is beneficial. It stands to reason that children would benefit from warm, supportive, nurturing and sanctioning behaviour regardless of the gender of the caregiver. Past research that has focused on mothers supports this hypothesis, suggesting that children have a tendency to benefit from being reared by an authoritative parent (Marsiglio, Amato, Day & Lamb, 2000, as cited in Simons,

& Conger, 2007).

According to Simons and Conger (2007), researchers frequently focus on the parenting styles of mothers and operate under the assumption that fathers employ the same parenting style in two parent homes. There is, however, limited information regarding the extent to which this assumption is accurate. In studies where the parenting styles of both parents have been categorised, there has been little focus on the manner in which the parenting styles of mothers and fathers coexist and the impact the difference in patterns may have on child development.

An additional factor proposed to affect academic performance is literacy or the educational levels of mothers in single parent homes, also described by Booth (1996) as human capital. Human capital describes the extent to which a parent is able to provide an environment for the child that encourages learning (Booth, 1996). Research advises that maternal education also has the potential to reduce the damaging effects of union transitions (Cooper et al., 2009). The level of education that the mother has affects parental stress. Education is reported to have a buffering effect on parental stress as mothers who are more educated are more likely to be equipped to negotiate changes in terms of finding satisfactory employment and quality child care compared to mothers with less education (Cooper et al., 2009). An additional reason proposed for this correlation is that educated mothers are expected to have a better response to changes in the relationships and, as a result, be more equipped in terms of providing appropriate parental support which, in turn, may benefit children's educational achievement. Furthermore, they may have more control over the timing and circumstances under which transitions (whether divorce, separation or the beginning of a new relationship) occur for the reason that they may be in a better position to pursue child support from nonresident fathers, and they may be better able to delay forming new partnerships until they find a suitable partner (Cooper et al., 2009).

Case and Ardington (2006) found that the loss of a child's mother has a causal effect on children's educational outcomes. They found that maternal death is a strong predictor of poor schooling outcomes and that maternal orphans were significantly less likely to be to be enrolled in school and had completed considerably fewer years of schooling than children whose mothers are alive. Several reasons have been offered as explanation for this. Amongst these is that maternal orphans may have fallen behind in school as a result of having to care

for the ill mother (Case & Ardington, 2006). This reason, however, seems to only account for cases where the mother fell ill prior to her death and does not account for cases of sudden death. Another reason is that emotional scarring and grief may have an effect on functioning causing the children to be less "school ready" than they would have previously been (Case & Ardington, 2006). A corresponding explanation is that mothers are gatekeepers for their children's education and, when mothers have passed on, there may be no other caregiver ensuring school attendance or that money for school fees and uniforms is available (Case & Ardington, 2006). Although the correlation was also found to be true for paternal death, it was established that this correlation arises as a result of the household's economic standing (Case & Ardington, 2006).

Education is a key socioeconomic resource for mothers. Individuals holding high socioeconomic status may possibly be less emotionally affected by stressful life experiences such as shifts in family structure (McLeod, & Kessler, 1990, as cited in Cooper et al., 2009). Mothers may recognise parenting as less stressful when they have adequate economic resources to manage the loss of household income frequently associated with divorce (Wang, & Amato, 2000), separation and single motherhood (Holborn & Eddy, 2011).

It was earlier discussed how the post-apartheid period had brought about increased opportunities for women (Long & Zietkiewicz, 2006, as cited in Mamabolo, Langa, & Kiguwa, 2009; Walker, 2005). There is thus increased possibility that single mothers in South Africa are more equipped to provide better quality education than they could previously. A good indication of this is the targeted sample of the current study, i.e., students from the University of the Witwatersrand which is indicative of single mothers' abilities to provide an environment that fosters a high level of educational competency.

Based on these findings, it seems reasonable to question whether it is not merely the death of a caregiver that affects schooling outcomes. If mothers are indeed educational gatekeepers, it may stand to reason that children from single mother households, whether sons or daughters, are, contrary to widespread belief, academically advantaged compared to their counterparts with present fathers.

There is a variety of factors affecting scholastic achievement. It is thus unreasonable to assume that children growing up in single mother homes are academically inferior to those

raised by both parents without a variety of factors being taken into consideration (Booth, 1996). As noted in the section exploring reasons behind father absence (section 2.5) preceding section, the reasons for father absence have to be considered in order to fully understand the effect his absence may have on a child. In addition, there is extensive literature explaining the experiences of children living with biological parents but a deficit in literature about children living with unmarried parents or those with cohabiting partners, grandparents and other extended family members (Mather, 2010). Mather argues that all types of family structures should be explored in terms of the day-to-day as well as the long term effects on education and the overall wellbeing of children (2010).

2.6.3 Financial deprivation

Father absence is proposed to be a significant predictor of household socioeconomic status (Case & Ardington, 2006; Holborn & Eddy, 2011; Mather, 2010). This is especially true in the case of paternal death. Children whose fathers have died, are believed to live in significantly poorer households (Case & Ardington, 2006). This is problematic as evidence suggests that optimal parenting can be compromised in contexts of poverty (Nduna & Jewkes, 2012) and economic support appears to be a consistent predictor of positive outcomes for children (e.g., King, 1994; Selzter, 1991, as cited in White, & Gilbreth, 2001). Single mother households are twice as likely to live in poverty in comparison to two parent households as indicated by a study conducted in the London-based Social Policy Justice Group (Holborn & Eddy 2011). Results found in the United States agree that the majority of single mother homes in the United States have limited financial resources and have been found to make up 54% of low income families (Mather, 2010). Although, in the United States, 75% of all single mothers are employed, they occupy primarily low wage jobs owing to the fact that single mothers with young children often have a low level of education (Mather, 2010). Although the end of the apartheid regime has increased employment opportunities for women, this is also true for South Africa.

Ramphele and Richter (2006) argue that there is an assumption that children who live with their fathers are supported financially. This, according to Robert Griswold (1993, as cited in Pruette, 2000), is as a result of certain characteristics of fathers that are consistent across cultures such as “breadwinning”. This perception is further highlighted in perceptions amongst youths that their lives would be improved financially if their fathers were not absent

from their lives. Nduna and Jewkes (2011) found that one of the leading reasons children wanted to know their fathers was due to the financial hardships they encountered; it was believed that the presence of a father would alleviate their financial difficulties.

This perception is not always true, however. Owing to the rising unemployment rates as well as low paying jobs, there is an increasing number of married couple families living in poverty (Mather, 2010). Job scarcity is a significant challenge in South Africa (Clowes, Ratele & Shefer, 2013) thus there are households where both parents are living in poverty due to unemployment. In 2008, only 34% of South African children under age 18 were living in a house with an employed parent (Holborn, & Eddy, 2011). Furthermore, there are households where both parents are unable to provide as a result of illness or addiction. Although poverty is not limited to any one group, it is concentrated amongst blacks in South Africa owing primarily to the history of the country. Black, in this context, refers to Asians, Coloureds and Africans (Woodlard, 2002).

Maree (2003) highlights the challenges of poverty as a result of parent absence. Incomplete families (described as the absence of a mother or father) along with living in poverty were found to be the two chief reasons youths alleged contributed to their decision to commit crimes (Maree, 2003). Prevention as described by Duncan et al. (2007) or intervention strategies are imperative for the preclusion of future challenges as the costs to the individuals, their families and to society as well can be monumental. McLoyd (1998, as cited in Silverstein, & Auerbach, 1999) points out that the overrepresentation of single-mother families among poor families differentiates the effects of father absence from the effects of low income. Furthermore, modern living arrangements are redefining the concept of single mother homes (Mather, 2010).

This issue of financial deprivation is also considered in its relationship to sexual behaviour, especially amongst girls. Gender inequalities in South Africa give men significant relational power over young women especially in conditions of poverty (Jewkes, & Morrell, 2012; Nduna, & Jewkes, 2012). Transactional sex appears to be increasingly culturally acceptable considering its relationship to financial deprivation amongst young South African women especially in the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Transactional sex is frequently motivated by basic survival and subsistence needs, however, young women whose opportunities for education

and employment are restricted, may also make use of transactional sex in the hopes of achieving higher status in youth cultures. This makes sexual success and conspicuous consumption a priority (Dunkle et al., 2004; Nduna, & Jewkes 2012).

Although transactional sex occurs in different types of sexual relationships, research conducted in South Africa has found that gifts received by young women in exchange for sex are, in some instances, primarily from dating partners (Dunkle et al., 2004). Although these gifts are not always the only motivation, they eschew condom use when young women engage in sexual activity in instances of financial need (Dunkle et al., 2004). Financial need introduces a power imbalance into sexual relations, and women in qualitative studies often report that they are less likely to request condom use when material gain is at stake. It is also true that transactional sex can be engaged with non-primary partners. An increasingly common practice in South Africa is for a secret sexual partner kept concurrent with, and concealed from, the primary partner, known in Sesotho as *Nyatsi* and in IsiZulu as *makwapheni* (Dunkle et al., 2004).

In South Africa, 21% of the women in Soweto attending antenatal clinics reported engaging in sex in exchange for material gain with a man other than a primary partner (Dunkle et al., 2004). This was consistent with reports by women in Cape Town which found that 21.1% of pregnant and 18.8% of non-pregnant teenagers reported having sex for money and other gifts (Jewkes et al., 2001). The additional partner may be an older man, commonly known as a "sugar daddy" who provides financial resources (Hunter, 2002, as cited in Dunkle et al., 2004) or may be the father of one or more of a woman's children with whom she continues a sexual relationship in exchange for financial support, or any other man who provides some form of financial or emotional support (Dunkle et al., 2004). This may be a once-off arrangement or on-going support (Dunkle et al., 2004). Studies in other parts of Africa have indicated similar results where the estimates of the exchange of sex by young women for money or gifts ranges from 5% to 78% (Nyanzi et al., 2001; Dunkle et al., 2004). In many cultures, gifts may form an integral part of a sexual relationship even though they are not the motivation behind the engagement in sexual activity (Dunkle at al., 2007).

Several authors (Dunkle et al., 2004; Nduna & Jewkes, 2012) have noted associations between transactional sex and gender-based violence. Women who have experienced some

forms of gender-based violence, principally child sexual assault, have been found to be more likely to subsequently trade sex for money or drugs (Dunkle et al., 2004). Several explanations have been offered for this correlation. Abused women are more likely to suffer from depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and other psychiatric problems (Campbell, 2002; Danielson et al., 1998; Roberts et al., 1998) and may, as a result, abuse alcohol or other substances (Kalichman, Ramachandran & Ostrow, 1998). Transactional sex may then be used to sustain the alcohol or drug habit. Abusive relationships can leave women impoverished (Lloyd, & Taluc, 1999; Morrison, & Orlando, 1999, as cited in Dunkle et al., 2004) and thus increase the potential of transactional sex outside of the primary relationship (Dunkle et al., 2004). A cycle is therefore evident.

Trading sex has been found to be connected to the increased risk of rape and physical violence from men who expect that their financial expenditure would be reciprocated by sex (Dunkle et al., 2004). Research has furthermore indicated that men who have been violent towards their partners are more likely to have HIV (Jewkes & Morrel, 2010) which increases the chances of HIV infection for women (Dunkle et al., 2004; Jewkes & Morell, 2010). Although it is beyond the scope of this report to delve into this issue in more detail, these challenges have an impact on the involvement of fathers in children's lives and highlight the complexity of interconnected issues affecting the wellbeing of children and women in the country.

Financial deprivation is amongst the chief reasons proposed for father absence in South Africa and therefore it is important to note briefly what father absence may mean for future father involvement. This may appear to be a slight deviation as the focus in the current research is on how daughters experience father absence, but it relates to the topic at hand. The decisions by many poor men to shed the family responsibility have left many young men without role models of successful males (Ramphele, & Richter, 2006). This creates conflict as the father, as patriarch and provider, has long been a respected ideal in southern African society (Lesejane, 2006; Ramphele, & Richter, 2006).

The harsh realities of life such as a lack of education, lack of skills, high unemployment rates and general demoralisation make it increasingly difficult for men to live up to these ideals (Ramphele, & Richter, 2006). There is thus a potential lack of a gender role model which is a

father who shows children how to take on the responsibility of being a male in a patriarchal society (Ramphele, & Richter, 2006) even though this view is not consistent throughout (Langa, 2010). These perceptions further highlight the significant role father figures may play in the lives of both boys and girls.

2.6.4 Premature age of menarche in girls

Numerous correlational studies have identified biological family disruption/father absence (i.e., separation or divorce of the birth parents followed by the absence of the birth father) as a risk factor for early pubertal development in daughters in comparison to their peers (Tither, & Ellis, 2008). Although the age at menarche differs considerably across and within populations, it tends to occur earlier in Western countries, which could be an indication of better nutrition (Tither & Ellis, 2008). This variation has substantial social and biological implications. An extensive body of research in Western societies now points to early pubertal maturation in girls (relative to same-age peers) being associated with a variation of undesirable health and psychosocial outcomes, including substance abuse, mood disorders, adolescent pregnancy, in addition to a variety of cancers of the reproductive system (Tither & Ellis, 2008). As a result of these associations, it is critical to understand the life experiences that place girls at an increased risk of early pubertal maturation.

An increasing body of evidence indicates the complexity of sexual behaviour (Eaton, Flisher, & Aarø, 2003). Risky sexual behaviour amongst girls, especially within the South African context, may be critical for HIV prevention because HIV is highly prevalent amongst teen girls (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012). The prevalence of HIV in women escalates considerably in the late teens which is five years before it occurs in men (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). A significantly greater proportion of the South African adult female population become infected with HIV (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). This is especially true for young black African women. Even though there are biological differences that make women more vulnerable to HIV infection, the patterns of prevalence have more complex roots (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Gender differences in sexual socialisation appear to influence sexual behaviour amongst both men and women (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010).

Although premarital penetrative sex was historically prohibited, it is now the norm (Jewkes & Morell, 2010). Within the modern frame of sexual openness, African women are constructed

as sexual beings and sex is not only perceived as normal in relationships, but as essential for relationship success (Jewkes & Morell, 2010). As a result of sex being viewed as a need, predominantly of men, women are often persuaded with gifts, money or other services in exchange for sex (Jewkes & Morell, 2010). In poor resource settings, girls meet with boyfriends hoping to provide transactional sex which is described as the exchange of sex for material gain such as money or gifts (Dunkle et al., 2004). This appears to be an increasingly culturally acceptable practice (Jewkes & Morell, 2010). As noted, this is particularly problematic as transactional sex carries a higher HIV transmission risk for women than non-transactional sex. It is proposed that the differential risk could be explained by the reduced likelihood of condom use.

2.6.5 Psychological disturbances

Researchers in South Africa and worldwide regard father absence as a potential source of psychological distress (Nduna, & Jewkes 2011; Nduna, & Jewkes, 2012; Berns, 2007; Harris 2008). Berns (2007), Harris (2008) as well as Holborn and Eddy (2011) argue that girl children raised in the absence of their fathers' involvement have a low sense of self-worth and are more likely to develop anxiety and depression as well as anorexia nervosa which is associated with diminishing physical health and interpersonal adjustment. Related to the issues of low self-esteem is risky sexual behaviour which could result in sexually transmitted diseases as well as unwanted or unplanned pregnancies (Holborn, & Eddy, 2011). These important factors have the potential to affect the quality of these young women's adult lives as well as their prospects for the future.

Cohn and Campbell (1992) similarly found a link between parental negativity and rejection and childhood depression, anger, low self-esteem and a lack of self-control. Lastoria (1990) found that low parental support is a strong predictor of adolescent depression and that paternal involvement is associated with positive social and psychological outcomes.

Psychological challenges arise as a result of a spectrum of factors. Etiology is multidimensional and various pathologies can often be explained by a range of interacting factors; biological, psychological, neurological, social forces and even learnt behaviour may contribute to the occurrence of pathology (Barlow, & Durand, 2009; Cavanaugh, & Blanchard-Fields, 2011; Elliot, 2010; Roman, 2011, Sadock, & Sadock, 2007). Depression,

for instance, is twice more prevalent in females than it is in males, suggesting a biological predisposition (Mash, & Wolfe, 2010). Furthermore, extreme or continuation of poverty, measured by food insecurity, is associated with increased psychological distress (Cluver, & Orkin, 2009).

Parental wellbeing must be considered in terms of child wellbeing. Bilszta et al. (2008) found that women who lacked support during pregnancy and following childbirth perceived the support of husbands as inadequate and deficient in providing practical as well as emotional support even though the absence of a father may not be the only factor considered in the occurrence of depression or any other psychological disorder. In the instance of pathology occurring, academic and social functioning could be affected. Individuals who battle with depression, for instance, may have reduced levels of concentration and motivation which leads to low academic performance. Although this is noted in children with absent fathers, it may also be related to the presence of psychological disturbances.

2.6.6 Influence on girls' relationships with romantic partners

Developing the capacity to form a stable and fulfilling romantic relationship is amongst the key developmental tasks of adolescence and young adulthood (Furman, Brown, & Feiring, 1999). This process involves the ability to balance intimacy and closeness with individuality and separateness and develops in several relationship contexts, principally, within adolescents' relationships with their parents (Collins, & Repinski, 1994; Connolly, & Goldberg, 1999; Furman, & Buhrmester, 1992; Gray, & Steinberg, 1999b, as cited in Scharf, & Mayseless, 2008).

Parent-child relationships are regarded as a principal context in which the capacity to form and maintain a romantic relationship is learned (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1980; Collins, & Sroufe, 1999; Hazan, & Shaver, 1987; Sroufe, & Fleeson, 1986, as cited in Scharf, & Mayseless, 2008). It is within these relationships that children develop expectations and schemas of their relationship with each parent and internalise a general model of close relationships. Although other skills and capacities which can be applied in romantic relationships such as conflict resolution strategies, communication as well as emotion regulation, are also learnt through relationships with parents, the two chief aspects of the parent-child relationship proposed to influence the quality of peer and romantic relationships

is relatedness and autonomy as Scharf and Mayseless (2008, p. 838) state:

> Relatedness refers to a sense of warmth, acceptance and open communication experienced within the relationships. Autonomy and individuation have been described as involving the promotion of independence in instrumental functioning, decision-making and emotional self-reliance.

Aspects of relatedness and autonomy are considered mutually important in facilitating children's processes of internalising a sense of security and a capacity for intimacy and individuation which contribute to a good quality of romantic relationships (Scharf, & Mayseless, 2008). The effects of the parent–child relationships on romantic relationships is different for boys and girls (Scharf, & Mayseless, 2008). It is proposed that adolescent girls are, at times, more impacted than boys by their relationships with their parents. It is for this reason that gender differences call for a special focus on developmental processes unique to each gender (Russell, & Saebel, 1997; Scharf, & Mayseless, 2008).

2.6.7 The involvement of father figures

While research increasingly emphasises non-resident biological fathers as a result of high rates of divorce and non-marital childbearing, little attention has been given to the role of other men in children's lives (Ayakody & Kalil, 2002). This may be because empirical literature has concluded that stepfathers have little or no effect on child outcomes (White, & Gilbreth, 2001) but it is not only stepfathers who may take on a fatherly role in children's lives. Many children born to unwed mothers live with their biological mothers and their mothers' partners (Bzostek, 2008) however they may also reside in a multigenerational home where there are potential male role models. The changing marital structure, the increasingly complex and fluid marital and living arrangements that children experience necessitates a broader examination of the individual perception of the role of the father (Coley, 1998, as cited in Ayakody & Kalil, 2002) and of adults who influence children's lives in single-mother families (Ayakody & Kalil, 2002).

As a result of separation, divorce, in addition to death, men frequently form marital relationships with women who are parenting children from previous unions with other men (Hewlett 1991b; Hill, & Hurtado 1996; Lancaster, 1997, as cited in Anderson, Kaplan, Lam, & Lancaster, 1999) who offer assistance in the provision of care for those children (Anderson

et al., 1999). The investment of time and resources, or parental care, in children is thus not always restricted to the genetic offspring of men or even to genetically related individuals (Anderson et al., 1999; Makusha et al., 2013). It has been suggested that this is because it is understood to be a form of a mating ritual (Anderson et al., 1999) as men think that providing care for the children of their partners, whether it be their genetic or step offspring, can influence the quality as well as the duration of their relationships with their partners (Anderson et al., 1999). This does not account for the men who may take on the roles of caregivers without being romantically involved with the children's mothers.

Children may have relationships with important men who are not their biological fathers but who play the role of a father to them (Ayakody & Kalil, 2002). These men may be the biological mother's partner, or a social father. A social father or father- figure may be a male relative such as patrilineal and matrilineal grandfathers, uncles, brothers or family associates who demonstrate parental behaviours towards them (Tamis-LeMonda & Cabrera, 1999, as cited in Ayakody & Kalil, 2002; Makusha et al., 2013). Many men are both social and biological fathers, as Richter, Chikovore and Makusha (2010, p. 361) describe:

> A man may be supporting his sister's children who live in the same household as he does, because that is what is required of him as her older brother; he also may pay maintenance for a child of a former partner with whom he has regular contact.

Extra-familial, father-figures or social fathers may be family friends, religious leaders, community leaders in addition to teachers (Mkhize, 2006). The inability to go to school may thus also deprive children of the opportunity to get a support system as some teachers may be the main source of care for children in trouble (Ramphele & Richter, 2006).

Although social fathers do not repudiate the importance of non-resident biological fathers, their presence and involvement may also be significant (Ayakody & Kalil, 2002). Ramphele and Richter (2006), for instance, reported on a study conducted in South Africa in which many young people described the care and protection they received from men in their communities and explained how that was a critical lifeline for them in terms of their development. This is common practice in many southern African cultures. In the Zulu culture, for instance, the spirit of communalism (Ubuntu) is characterised by the connectedness of people as well as their commitment to the common good (Chikovore,

Makusha, & Richter, 2013; Roy, 2008, as cited in Makusha et al., 2013). In this regard, men may possibly take on childrearing roles, activities, duties and responsibilities that fathers are expected to perform and fulfil notwithstanding their biological connection to a child (Mkhize, 2004, as cited in Makusha et al., 2013).

Former research (Amato, 1994; Brown, 2004; Coleman, Ganong, & Fine, 2000; Hetherington, & Jodl, 1994; Hofferth, 2006; Manning, & Lamb, 2003; Thomson, Hanson, & McLanahan, 1994, as cited in Bzostek, 2008), for instance, proposed that children and adolescents living with a biological parent and a step-parent, typically a stepfather, fare less well in general than children living with two biological parents. Other researchers have proposed that children living in families with a stepfather are often no better off compared to children living with single mothers, notwithstanding the potential for greater access to financial and parental resources (Bzostek, 2008). This is based on the discovery that disengagement is the most common parenting style among stepfathers (White & Gilbreth, 2001). This view is, however, not consistent throughout. Hetherington (1988, as cited in White & Gilbreth, 2001), for instance, showed that when stepfathers of elementary school-age children are engaged and parent authoritatively, stepsons have fewer behavioural challenges. No positive effects were found for girls even in the comparatively occasional cases in which stepfathers provided apt and supportive parenting. These findings have been echoed in other studies. Simons (1996, as cited in White, & Gilbreth, 2001), for instance, found that when non-resident biological fathers maintained parenting behaviours typical of the residential family such as providing financial and emotional support to children, children reacted positively to post-divorce adjustment (White & Gilbreth, 2001). Coleman et al. (2000) are often cited in explanations for lower levels of child well-being in stepparent families. It is proposed that stepparents frequently invest less in children than do biological parents (Coleman et al., 2000; White & Gilbreth, 2001).

More recently, research about young children born to unwed parents recommends that, when mothers find a new partner subsequent to an unwed birth, they often form partnerships with men who play an active role in their children's lives (Berger, Carlson, Bzostek, & Osborne, 2008, as cited in Bzostek, 2008).

Exploring the significance of social fathers is particularly relevant for South African children

as rates of single parenthood are high and on the increase. It is furthermore important to explore as a potential intervention because many studies hypothesise that children growing up in single-mother homes do less well, on average, than children in two-parent families because they lack a male role model (Biblarz, & Raftery, 1999; McLanahan, & Sandefur, 1994, as cited in Ayakody, & Kalil, 2002). It remains unclear whether involvement by these men is as beneficial for children's wellbeing as involvement by a resident biological father (Bzostek, 2008).

The quality of the relationship between the child and the social father is significant. The level of bonding and attachment between children and resident social fathers shows the extent to which the relationship will be beneficial to the child. Factors affecting bonding between a child and a social father can be both by the duration of the social father-child relationship as well as the child's age when the relationship begins (Bzostek, 2008). The establishment of a meaningful relationship may be more difficult with older children particularly adolescents who are in the process of establishing their own independence (Bzostek, 2008). According to Bzostek (2008), adolescents are more likely to recognise and resist the entry of a new authority figure into the household. Furthermore, many children living with stepfathers or their mothers' partners may also continue to have relationships with their non-resident biological fathers which could further undermine the benefits of a social father (Bzostek, 2008).

Although popular and academic theory suggest that the involvement of a biological father is better for children than social father involvement, other findings, such as Bzostek (2000), suggest that higher levels of younger children's engagement with resident social fathers are associated with less behavioural problems in addition to better overall health for children.

This is, however, not only true for residential social fathers. Non-residential social fathers can also be beneficial for the wellbeing of children. Focusing mainly on the North American context, current studies on intergenerational linkages between men and women and their fathers have fundamentally overlooked the potential influence of social fathers (father-figures) on men's present involvements as fathers in addition to women's expectations of fathering (Guzzo, 2011).

2.7 Conclusion

From the preceding discussion and the variety of reasons fathers become absent, it can be deduced that father absence is a complex, multifaceted issue. Having a father who shares a residence with a child does not always mean that they are emotionally present or as Lamb (2004) explains, engaging or accessible. A father may be abusive towards his children or his partner and therefore his presence may not be beneficial (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013). Pruette highlights the quality of fathering by making a distinction between fathering and involved fathering (Pruette, 2000). According to Pruette (2000), whose views are further echoed by Coley (2008), involved fathering involves offering financial support, participation in infant care, disciplining, assisting with homework, catering to the medical and social needs of children, to the extent of knowing their friends (Pruette, 2000).

Although the rates of direct father contact are higher in two parent homes where the mother is employed (Lamb, 2004), it stands to reason that children raised by both parents may be similarly deprived of certain experiences and experience challenges similar to those raised in single parent households when the extent of father involvement is considered.

Father absence cannot be understood as an isolated or one-dimensional phenomenon. Rather, it is a complex phenomenon frequently influenced by ideological factors such as materialist constructions of fatherhood and masculinity, socio-economic factors such as poverty and unemployment of fathers as well as cultural factors. It may furthermore be influenced by relationship issues of various kinds. Thus the effects thereof cannot be understood without taking these into consideration.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This section serves to outline the theoretical foundations of the research methods and principles utilised in the current research. The section discusses the research design, giving consideration to the concepts and theories which underlie the design. Furthermore, the recruitment of participants and the processes of collecting data is discussed. Processes of data analysis will then be presented followed by a discussion of ethics.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Babbie, Mouton, Vorster, and Prozesky (2008), qualitative studies aim at constructing social reality and meaning and gaining an understanding of respondents' experiences and views in their own words, and in their own contexts. By employing a qualitative approach, the primary focus is placed on how reality is created through one's own interpretation of it, and how individuals gain understanding and attach meaning to their experiences (Babbie et al., 2008; Braun, & Clarke, 2006; Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006). A qualitative approach is further advantageous in that it allows for a deep and detailed exploration of the particular problem or issue by the researcher (Durrheim, 2006).

The aim of this research was to generate insights into the manner in which daughters experience father absence by collecting detailed accounts of their experiences, perceptions and feelings on the topic in the hopes that this knowledge would contribute to future research and interventions where necessary. A qualitative approach was selected as the most suitable for achieving these aims.

In order to achieve these aims, the research incorporated exploratory-descriptive research design and was located within an interpretive qualitative paradigm. According to this approach, what we know is located within our culture, context, social setting and our relationships with others (Mackenzie, & Knipe, 2006). This means that the reality that we construct is fluid and not rigid or static (Angen, 2000; Mackenzie, & Knipe, 2006). The interpretivist researcher therefore relies upon the participants' understandings of the situation being studied and draws upon these views to generate or inductively develop a theory or pattern of meanings during the course of the research (Creswell, 2003, as cited in Mackenzie, & Knipe, 2006). This approach was understood to be advantageous and suitable for the

research given that the aim of the study was to explore the experiences of daughters pertaining to father absence. This approach was further considered to be suitable given the scarcity of knowledge on the topic. According to Angen (2000), the interpretivist approach allows social inquiry that will broaden and deepen our understanding of what it means to be human in this more-than-human realm.

3.2 THE SAMPLING METHOD

The sampling technique used in this research was purposive in its orientation. This means that the sample was targeted to provide the most rich data possible (Morrow, 2005) and, in so doing, fulfil the purpose of the study and the goals of the research (Babbie et al., 2008). This technique is also used when one wants to research a division of a larger population, where the participants are easily identified and accessed, but studying all of them would be an unmanageable task (Babbie et al., 2008).

The study aimed to target young women between the ages of 18 and 21, however, as a result of challenges encountered in recruiting the original sample, the age was extended to include young women up to the age of 23 whose biological fathers were absent from their lives. The following terms where employed to define father absence: biological father is not physically present (does not reside in the same residential area or home as the daughter) or is not psychologically supportive (providing no contact or emotional support) or does not offer any financial support or play any social role in the daughter's life. It was considered acceptable if this criteria was not met entirely as it was understood that it would be beneficial to the study to explore various definitions and understandings of father absence. This is consistent with the interpretive paradigm which states that reality is constructed in the mind of the individual, rather than being an externally singular entity and assumes multiple realities as equally valid (Schwandt, 1994; Ponterotto, 2005).

One of the participants (Tshego) did not meet the criteria for the original definition of father absence as defined in the current research for the reason that her father was present at the time of her interview. However, her father had been absent due to migrant work when she was younger. The interview thus focused on her experiences during her father's absence.

In order for the aims of the research to be met, a sample of seven young women registered as

students at the University of the Witwatersrand and studying within the Humanities faculty were selected through the process of voluntary participation. This sample was chosen as a result of convenience.

The sample was recruited through various methods including through the distribution of flyers (see Appendix D) within the hallways of the School of Human and Community Development, Umthombo Building, East Campus. A brief description of the proposed research was included in the flyer as well as the researcher's contact information. This location was assessed to be ideal as many of the Humanities lecture rooms and lecturer offices are located there. During the distribution of the flyers, prospective participants were encouraged to contact the researcher. During the distribution, one of the participants informed the researcher of her interest in participating in the research and further informed that her friend may also be interested in participating in the research. Aside from the interest expressed by the said participant, the dissemination of flyers did not generate much interest. As a result of this challenge, the research further employed snowballing as a method of recruitment.

Snowballing refers to a method whereby the researcher seeks to take advantage of the social networks of identified respondents by requesting that the respondents recommend potential candidates for the study (Atkinson & Flint, 2001; Marshall, 1996). According to Berg (1988, as cited in Atkinson, & Flint, 2001), the process is based on the assumption that a relationship or "link" exists between the initial sample and others in the same target population, permitting a series of referrals to be made within a circle of acquaintance. In this manner, one participant gives the researcher the name of another subject, who may in turn provide the name of a third, and so on (Vogt, 1999, as cited in Atkinson & Flint, 2001).

According to Atkinson and Flint (2001), the snowballing technique can be carried out in a variation of ways. Firstly it can be utilised "informally", as a method to reach a target population. This is especially suitable if the aim of a study is primarily explorative, qualitative and descriptive, (Hendricks, Blanken, & Adriaans, 1992, as cited in Atkinson, & Flint, 2001). Secondly, the technique may be applied as a more formal methodology for making interpretations about a population of individuals who have been challenged to enumerate through the use of descending methods such as household surveys. The technique

method implemented in the current study was the former. The technique was implemented after the interviews by requesting that participants refer fellow students, friends and family who may be interested in participating in the study. Although the participants knew young women without fathers who would be interested in participating, the predominance of the individuals referred could not participate in the study because they were not students at the university and the researcher considered it important to maintain some homogeneity in the study.

Due to time pressures in the final stages of participant recruitment, the researcher arranged with her research supervisor at the time, to make an announcement in one of her lectures. Announcements at Social Work lectures were thus incorporated in order to advance the recruitment process. This technique served to recruit two more participants.

3.3 PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

A total of 7 women, registered within the Humanities faculty in varying fields of study and at different levels, were recruited and interviewed. One of the participants was registered within the School of Literature, Language and Media and the other six within the School of Human and Community Development. The population of the study included two Social Work students, four Psychology students, and one Journalism student. The ages of the participants ranged from 19 to 23 and they were also of diverse cultural groups and ethnicity, i.e., four African participants, two Indian, and one White (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Demographics of participants

Pseudonym	**Age**	**Race**	**Year of study**
Priya	19	Indian	1st year
Nazima	19	Indian	1st year
Tshego	19	Black	1st year
Palesa	22	Black	2nd year
Kamogelo	22	Black	2nd year
Stacey	23	White	3rd year
Anotida	21	Black	3rd year

The research population included Stacey, a talkative and friendly journalism student completing her third year of studies. Lebo and Priya were the youngest participants of the study and both were 19 years old at the time of their respective interviews and both were in the first year of their Psychology studies. Nazima an Industrial Psychology student, was also 19 years at the time of her interview and was in the process of completing the 1st year of her undergraduate studies. Palesa was 22 years old at the time of the interview and in the process of completing the third year of her Psychology and Anthropology studies. In addition to these, the sample population also included two Social work students. At the time of the interview Anotida was in the third year of her Social Work studies and Kamogelo was in her second year.

The participants of the research lived in a variety of household situations where the biological father was absent. Stacey lived with her mother, sister, step-father and younger brother at the time the interview was conducted. Priya reported that she lives in a multigenerational household with her mother and grandparents. Her parents separated when she was two years old. Priya's father resided in Durban at the time of the interview and contact with him was characterised by discontinuity.

Another participant, Anotida, lived with her elder sister, her brother-in-law and their children. Anotida, originally from Zimbabwe, joined this household when she was 10 years old as her grandmother was becoming too old to take care of her. Nazima also lives in a multigenerational home with her grandfather and mother. She reported that her father was never a part of her life as her mother and father had never been married.

Kamogelo also lived in a multigenerational household with her grandmother, uncles, aunts and siblings at the time her interview was conducted. She moved to live with her grandmother when her father remarried. Tshego lived with her mother and father at the time of the interview.

The final participant was Palesa. Although Palesa spent most of the year on campus as a resident at Jubilee Hall of Residence**,** she went home to her mother over the holidays**.** Jubilee Hall of Residence is a female residence housing 350 students located East Campus Cluster on the University's original campus.

The variation of compositions of families presented in the study results are consistent with the variation of compositions modern urban South African families reported by other sources (Jones 1993; Niehaus 1994; Simkins 1986, as cited in Anderson et al., 1999).

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

The research employed one method for data collection, namely, semi-structured and open-ended interviews. This method was understood to be advantageous in terms of establishing rapport with participants (Leedy, & Ormod, 2010) through personal contact. Semi structured interviews consisted of standard questions while leaving room for follow up questions that were designed for probing or gaining clarity on given answers (Babbie et al., 2008; Leedy, & Ormod, 2010). Open-ended questions are advantageous as they do not limit the answers of participants, rather they allow for respondents to answer freely.

Questions were devised to explore the experiences of each participant who grew up without the active involvement and presence of a biological father. Morrow (2005) stipulates that understanding participant constructions of meaning depends on numerous factors including context, culture, and rapport. As a method of building rapport, the respondents were asked to describe personal childhood experiences and to share issues that they regard as most salient about their childhood. This question build a solid foundation on which other questions could follow including whether or not the father is known, what she understands as the reasons behind the absence of her father and her perceptions of whether fathers have unique roles in comparison to their perceptions of the roles of mothers. Each participant was asked what she recognises to be the role of fathers in the lives of daughters and in the lives of sons and whether she perceives not having a father to have influenced her personal views in any way. Further questions explored how they felt that their life would have been different should the father have been present and the roles of father figures.

The interviews were recorded and lasted 15 to 35 minutes. Although the interviews were relatively short, the researcher found that it was sufficient to acquire the information required. All the interviews were arranged at a time that was convenient for both the researcher and participant. This, however, proved to be a challenge due to the busy academic schedules of both the participants and the researcher. The participants, at times, had to reschedule the interview and, in some instances, potential participants withdrew their decision to participate prior to the interview. It was found that the primary reason reported for withdrawal was time constraints.

All interviews were conducted at the University of the Witwatersrand, Emthonjeni Centre

(EC). This was a venue suggested by the interviewer as it was considered to be quiet and private. Furthermore, this venue was familiar to some of the participants as some of the lectures are located in the back part of the centre. Although this venue was suggested by the interviewer, it was a venue agreed upon by the interviewer and the interviewees to ensure that the participants felt safe and comfortable. In the event that a participant could not meet at the proposed venue, an alternative venue was arranged. One of the interviews was conducted at Jubilee Hall of Residence where one of the participants (Palesa) was residing. The venue was recommended by the participant as it was the most suitable for her at the time she was available for the interview (on a Sunday afternoon when the EC was not available for use).

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

3.5.1 Transcription of interviews

The recordings of the interviews were transcribed. Some of the recordings were transcribed by the researcher, however, due to time constraints, the services of a professional transcriber were sourced by the researcher to transcribe the remaining four of the seven audio-recorded interviews. The process of transcription transformed the data into a form which allowed the research to commence analysis.

3.5.2 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis was employed by the researcher for the purpose of data analysis. Thematic analysis is the process through which data is unearthed and the most salient themes at different levels are described, structured and organised in rich detail (Attride-Stirling 2001; Braun, & Clarke, 2006). According to Attride-Stirling (2001), this method is based on Toulmin's *Argumentation theory* (1958) which aims to provide a structured method for analysing negotiation processes. The Argumentation theory aims at defining and elaborating the characteristic, formal elements of arguments as a means of exploring the connections between the explicit statements and the implicit meanings in people's discourse (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Attride-Stirling (2001) stipulates that within this framework, Toulmin describes argumentation as the advancement from accepted *data* through a *warrant* to a *claim.* According to this construction, a *claim* is the conclusion to an argument, the merits of which are to be established (Attride-Stirling, 2001). *Data* comprises evidence provided to support a conclusion or claim employed for pattern identification, analyses and reporting

patterns and themes within that data (Attride-Stirling, 2001). *Warrants* are principles and premises that the arguments are based on in support of the claims that are constructed (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Toulmin's (1958, as cited in Attride-Stirling, 2001) *Argument theory* further contends that claims do not essentially follow logically from the data and the warrants at hand however, for this reason, there are supportive arguments for warrants, which Toulmin referred to as *backings*, *qualifiers* (elements of doubt in claims) and *rebuttals* (conditions which falsify the claim). Furthermore *alternative claims* (Attride-Stirling, 2001) can also be made when data does not seem to cogently flow from *warrants*.

Various authors propose various methods for conducting thematic content analysis. The processes followed by the researcher are adapted from Attride-Stirling (2001) as based on Toulmin's (1958) principles. The process also drew from recommendations and stipulations made by Hayes (2000) and Morrow (2005).

The process of thematic analysis frequently requires that one familiarise oneself with the topic of research during the process of data collection. The process of becoming familiar with the data was achieved through using the literature review as a backdrop in order to understand the manner in which the topic being researched was socially constructed. Hayes (2000) described this process as deductive thematic analysis. This is the process by which predetermined themes are developed based on the knowledge of existing literature (Hayes, 2000). While engaging with existing literature on the topic of father absence, the researcher found that, amongst the prevalent issues highlighted, is that fathers are often perceived as people who have the means to provide for their children. This was thus identified by the researcher as a possible theme (predetermined theme) that may arise during data collection (Hayes, 2000). During the process of data collection, the researcher thus paid attention to any answers and predetermined themes that were arising during exploration of the topic. Although this process was useful, it was also imperative that the researcher remained open to all information including information contradictory to the predetermined theme. This was especially important as this is an area of research that has not been investigated much.

Part of getting familiarised with the data collected, required that the data was studied and read multiple times (Morrow, 2005). According to Morrow (2005), repeatedly delving into the data ultimately leads the investigator to a deep understanding of all that comprises the *data*

corpus (body of data) and the manner in which various parts interrelate. The transcribed interviews were thus read multiple times as it allowed for more in-depth knowledge of data which aided analysis.

During the reading/re-reading process, quotes were highlighted and comments were written in the margins of the interviews. Strauss and Corbin, (1990, as cited in Morrow, 2005) contend that analytic memos which include hunches, interpretations, queries made by the researcher during analysis are indispensable tools for enhancing the analytic process. The comments and notes were thus aimed at assisting the researcher in identifying similarities and correlations in the data and further highlighted concepts to be further researched in order to aid an in-depth understanding. Once this was done, the data collected was then grouped into meaningful categories.

The researcher employed the method of grouping the data through a process of coding. According to Attride-Stirling (2001), this is the first step in a thematic networks analysis. Coding is the procedure by which the data domain is divided into smaller parts and data with similar information is gathered together into sections. There are various coding frameworks (Attride-Stirling, 2001) making use of colours to group data that falls under a certain category by a specific colour or by cutting and pasting.

This procedure facilitated the abstraction and the identification of emerging themes through once again rereading the text segments within the context of the codes under which they were classified, as stipulated by Attride-Stirling (2001). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), a theme recapitulates important pieces of the data in relation to the research question and, to some extent, reflects shared and/or common meaning across the collected data. After the initial themes were abstracted, the selected themes were refined into themes that were specific enough to be non-repetitive but comprehensive enough to encapsulate a set of ideas contained in numerous text segments (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Succeeding the process of coding and the initial steps taken to identify themes, the construction of thematic networks commenced (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

The themes were grouped as follows as stipulated by Attride-Stirling (2001):

1. Basic themes/Lowest-order premises: Lowest order premises that are evident in the

text.

2. Organizing Themes: Organising themes emerged when the basic themes were grouped into clusters of similar issues and when the principal assumptions of a group was summarised in a manner that made what is going on in the texts more apparent.

   Organising themes are the principles on which super-ordinate claims are based and they serve as warrants for them. The organising themes thus allowed the researcher to assemble the basic themes into clusters that were more significant while also creating a foundation from which Global themes could be derived.

3. Super-ordinate themes/Global themes which encapsulated the principal metaphors in the text as a whole which were derived from the organising themes.

Once the data analysis process was completed to the satisfaction of the researcher, the findings could be discussed and the writing could commence. This process of writing involved using the existing body of literature on the topic of father absence as a foundation to report from in order to provide rich insights into the findings. This process also assisted the researcher in drawing conclusions constructed from the analysed data (Zhang, 2006).

3.5.3 Ensuring validity, relevance and trustworthiness

According to Morrow (2005), many factors can interfere with the fair collection as well as the interpretation of data. These factors include: the researcher's own emotional involvement and level of investment in the topic; the researcher's presumptions about the topic; and opinions that develop from reading existing literature as well as interaction with participants that can obstruct impartial data collection and interpretation (Morrow, 2005). According to Mackenzie and Knipe (2006), this is especially true for research that is located within the interpetivist paradigm. The researcher whose study is located within this paradigm thus has to be cognisant of the impact of his/her own background and experiences on the research (Mackenzie, & Knipe, 2006). It was as a result imperative that the researcher remained mindful of the subjective nature of qualitative analysis throughout the process of data collection and analysis (Malterud, 2001) in order to insure validity, relevance and trustworthiness (Malterud, 2001; Morrow, 2005).

Although validity and relevance are processes that are not easy to assess, Malterud, (2001)

stipulates that the researcher must be prepared to use approaches for questioning findings and interpretations, rather than taking them for granted and assessing their internal and external validity as an alternative to judging them as apparent or universal. Malterud (2001) further contends that researchers should be prepared to think about the effect of context and bias without believing that knowledge is untouched by the human mind. Finally, researchers also have to be prepared to display and discuss the processes of analysis, instead of believing that manuals grant trustworthiness (Malterud, 2001). These views correspond with the recommendations of Morrow (2005).

3.5.4 Researcher reflexivity

With these stipulations in mind, the researcher made an attempt to adhere to the principles of reflexivity. This involved the researcher firstly acknowledging that her own background has motivated the topic of investigation. The researcher further recognised that her context as a black, middle class woman living in Johannesburg and her experiences influenced the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most applicable, in addition to the framing and communication of conclusions. This further meant that she had to remain mindful that her perceptions could affect what is understood during the interviews and what themes are generated and developed throughout the process of data collection and analysis. In this manner, the researcher made a rigorous attempt to be objective and open while also embracing her positioning as a co-constructor of meaning.

These principles were observed by following various recommendations as stipulated in Mackenzie and Knipe (2006), Malterud (2001), Morrow (2005), Krefting (1991), Hsieh and Shannon (2005), amongst others. The researcher attempted to make her implicit assumptions and biases overt to herself. Consistent with Morrow's (2005) observations, this was a difficult process as this method assumes that it is possible to fully know oneself and one's presumptions. Being a psychology student was advantageous in this regard as we are continuously encouraged to reflect.

Reflexivity, or self-reflection, can be carried out in a number of ways. Researchers can keep self-reflective journals from the commencement to the conclusion of the investigation in order to keep a record of feelings and reactions, emerging biases that may arise as well as the experiences gained during the research (Morrow, 2005). In so doing, emerging self-

understandings can then be examined and set aside, to a certain extent, or consciously incorporated into the analysis, depending on the frame of the researcher (Morrow, 2005). Although the researcher did not keep a journal, reflective notes were made on the copies of the transcribed interviews during the data gathering and analysis processes.

During the interviews, the researcher noted that she tended to agree with participants who perceived mothers to be solely fully proficient in fulfilling all parental roles. Conversely, perceptions that daughters or children who grow up without their fathers are disadvantaged at some level, elicited difficult emotions for the researcher. These opinions were difficult for the researcher to accept as true and valid for the reason that they made the researcher question what they meant for her own development as a young, woman, who grew up without a father. Correspondingly, the researcher had to consistently be aware that participants of a similar context and profile to her in terms of age, class and race could over-identify with her and she with them, in order to protect the truthfulness of the data collected**.**

Related to this, the researcher furthermore considered subjectivity as a concept of representation (Morrow, 2005). According to Morrow (2005), the "crisis" of representation pertains to questions regarding whose reality is represented in the research. This process involves fairly representing the experiences of participants and of seeing participants, rather than researchers, as the authorities on participants' lives (Morrow, 2005). The researcher accepted participants as experts of their own lives and fully considered and remained open to perceptions, experiences and realities contradictory to her own despite the feelings brought about by some of these views. Clarity was sought in moments of uncertainty during the interviews. This is particularly important when the interviewer is an "insider" with respect to being very familiar with the phenomenon of inquiry (Morrow, 2005). The process of self-reflection aided these processes.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The protection of human subjects in any research study is imperative (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001). It was thus deemed of crucial importance by the researcher that all ethical guidelines were adhered to.

In order to abide by the guidelines that aim to protect the dignity, rights, safety, and wellbeing of all human participants as stipulated by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC:NON-MEDICAL) and the National Health Research Ethics Council (NHREC), an

ethical clearance certificate was obtained from the HREC (NON-MEDICAL) prior to the commencement of the research.

In line with the guiding principles of the ethics committee, the aim of the research was disclosed to the respondents prior to the interview, allowing the respondents to ask questions and raise concerns prior to the commencement of the interview. During this process, the participants were further informed that participation in the interview was voluntary and that they had the freedom to withdraw from participation at any point during the interview. This was done verbally, at first, for the reason that the researcher deemed it important to ascertain that the respondents understood the information in the consent form prior to giving them the written form. According to the guidelines of the HREC (NON-MEDICAL), *Informed Consent Forms* have to be provided in the language(s) appropriate to the potential research participants. Providing the information verbally first also assisted the researcher in establishing that the language used (English) in the Participant Information sheet (Appendix B) as well as the *Consent Form*: *For audio recorded interview* (Appendix C) would be appropriate for each participant.

All participants were provided with the *Participant Information Sheet* (Appendix B) which was attached to the Consent form for the audio recorded interview. According to ethical guidelines, the *Participant Information Sheet* included the researcher's information, information regarding the topic of the research, as well as what participation in the research would entail. Further information, regarding ensuring the safety of research data and a description of what will happen to the data after completion of the research, was provided.

The participants were then requested to sign a consent form prior to the commencement of the interview. The desire of the participant to participate in the research depends on their willingness to share their experiences (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001) thus the consent form affirmed that participation in the study was voluntary and further asserted the freedom to withdraw consent and stop the interview at any moment with no penalty for their decision. The consent form signed by participants further stipulated the terms of confidentiality. Additionally, it confirmed that the participants were giving consent for the interview to be recorded and for the transcribed interview to be used for the purposes of the research.

In addition to adhering to the above-mentioned ethical guidelines, the researcher had to

remain cognisant of the fact that the nature of ethical problems in qualitative research studies is, at times, understated (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001). Ethical conflict may exist with regards to the impact that the topic of the research may have on participants (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001). As the research topic required introspection and self-analysis, as well as the exploration of matters that the participant had potentially not fully considered, the topic was understood to be potentially sensitive. As a result of this, free counselling resource information was made available to all participants. This information was provided on the *Participant Information Sheet*. During the interviews, it was noticed by the researcher that there were instances where the participants showed emotions of disappointment or anger. This was especially true for participants who felt that their fathers chose not to be a part of their lives. As noted, the offer was made in the *Participant Information Sheet* (Appendix B) for them to consider going for free counselling at the *South African Depression and Anxiety Group.* The availability of these services were also highlighted at the end of the interviews, however, none of the participants showed any interest in this regard. The findings of the research may also be made available to the research participants upon request (Appendix B).

As noted in the preceding section, throughout the process of analysis, it was important that the researcher remained cognisant of the subjective nature of the qualitative research (Malterud, 2001). This was important in order to present the voices of the participants in an ethical manner and ensure credibility and trustworthiness. This was achieved through a variation of methods as stipulated in a preceding sections (See section 3.5.3 and 3.5.4) to insure the trustworthiness of the research (Angen, 2000; Mackenzie, & Knipe, 2006; Malterud, 2001; Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001).

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In order for a rich account of the qualitative data collected to be presented, the analysis and the discussion of the research have been joined. As highlighted in the literature review, there is a growing interest in the topic of father absence and a large body of literature has investigated the impact of father absence on children, however, many have put specific focus on boy children while others have focused on the experience of fathers. As I navigate through my discussion on the findings and themes, this existing literature on the topic of father absence is drawn upon, however, it will be interpreted in order to relate it to the experiences of girls. Where applicable, the findings will be used to challenge or question the existing body of literature on the topic.

It should be noted that, although there is growing interest in how daughters experience the absence of fathers, there is a gap in the literature on this subject, particularly in South Africa. This research report addresses the existing gap in the literature by investigating the perceptions of daughters on the subject of father absence. Thus, the discussion will be informed by the objectives of the research.

The discussion has been divided into four main sections, namely:

1. The narratives of childhood:
   - During the process of analysis, it emerged that many of the participants considered themselves to have had standard and happy childhoods in spite of having absent fathers. The section focuses on reporting findings in this regard.
   - This section looks at the reasons that were cited by the daughters for the absence of their fathers.
   - Within an African context, the practice of child-rearing is understood as the collective responsibility of extended family (Langa, 2010). This was also true for the daughters in the current study, thus the involvement of grandparents and other extended family members in caring for children in the absence of fathers will also be presented. In relation to this, the role of fathers in the daughters' lives is explored.

2. The roles of mother and fathers:
   - This discussion firstly looks at the role of fathers and then
   - The role of mothers.
3. The roles of fathers in daughters' and sons' lives according to the participants is discussed.
4. Finally, the effects of father absence as understood by the participants of the current study is presented.

4.2 NARRATIVES OF CHILDHOOD AND REASONS FOR FATHER ABSENCE

The participants were firstly asked to describe their childhoods. This method of enquiry served as an icebreaker while also creating a platform for the respondents to speak freely about what was significant for them with regards to their childhood. This enquiry additionally left room for probing. As the participants were already aware of the topic of the research, it was found that they largely focused on details of their childhood linked to their relationships with their fathers as well as issues related to father absence. The exploration nonetheless served its purpose by providing the opportunity for further exploration and by additionally highlighting the diverse reasons for father absence. It also underlined the variations of familial compositions found in South Africa.

During this initial inquiry, it was evident that the participants wanted to portray the image of having had a happy and "normal" childhood despite the absence of their fathers. Many of them described positive images of childhood and stipulated that their mothers made adequate provision for their needs to the extent that it made no difference that their fathers were absent. It was evident during the interviews that they felt that their mothers, as well as extended family members who took part in raising them, played significant roles in shaping positive childhood experiences. Many of them described their mothers and significant others as hardworking people who managed to support them and provide for their needs throughout their lives.

> **Priya:** I was two so ... I don't remember ... I don't remember my dad. I don't remember any of that (the separation) ... I think only when I started school, I seen that okay, I don't have that or ... I don't have a dad or a relationship with my father. Then that was the

time when I actually started understanding that ... But it like never made a difference, cause I still had what I needed and had the people I needed around me ... so to me it did not make a difference at all.

Palesa: She [my mother] works for Shoprite on the staff ... She doesn't get a lot of money, but like she will make sure that I have everything that I need ... like with school, with everything. You wouldn't even tell that I don't have a father, because she's around.

Nazima: Well my mother had to play both roles. She had to be the working mom, she had to be the breadwinner and she was open minded so that made me open minded. So it didn't ... It didn't affect me in any way ... And my mother always used to explain to me that your father isn't here but ... she will do everything she can for me type of thing.

From these extracts, it is evident that the mothers of many of the participants were able to provide for their children to the best of their abilities. Palesa, for instance, communicates that her mother did not earn a lot of money but managed to provide "all that (she) needed". This was also evident in Priya's quote when she said that she had all that was needed. It was in conversation with other children at school that she became cognisant of her family composition being different. In relation to this, Priya contends that it made no difference as she had the people and things that she needed. The extracts above are indicative of the single mothers' ability to make emotional as well as financial provision. Nazima's extract further echoes these sentiments. According to Nazima, her mother successfully played both roles.

Palesa spoke of people not being able to see that she does not have a father as if to communicate that there is a way in which children who do not have fathers are marked. From her excerpt, it seems reasonable to argue that she perceives children with absent fathers to be at a disadvantage in comparison with those who have present fathers. The disadvantage that Palesa is referring to seems to be related to financial provision. This is indicative in the fact that the participant stated that, although her mother does not earn a substantial amount of money, she was able to provide for her to the extent that the fact that she does not have a father went unnoticed. It is evident when reading the participant quote that her perception was coloured by discourses of the economic position of single mothers. As noted in the literature review, there are numerous challenges that single mother homes face. Various researchers have proposed that principal amongst these challenges is in the area of financial provision (Case & Ardington, 2006; Holborn & Eddy, 2011; Mather, 2010). It is therefore

reasonable to argue that dual income homes are more affluent, particularly when both parents within the home receive a steady and competitive income and are contributing towards the household and childcare expenses together. The findings of the current study offer evidence that it is also reasonable to argue that a single mother earning a steady income is similarly able to provide adequately. This finding suggests that theories that propose that all single mother homes are financially deprived is an oversimplification. This is especially true considering that there are changes in female labour supply and employment (Casale & Posel, 2002).

According to Casale (2004), there has been a dramatic increase the number of South Africa women participating in the labour force. Male participation has also increased but at a considerably slower rate (Casale, 2004). This means that there was a continuous feminisation of the labour force in South Africa between 1995 and 2001 (Casale & Posel, 2002; Casale, 2004). During the interviews, it emerged that many of the participants' mothers worked and thus represented some of the women who are in the labour market. For this reason, they were able to provide for the participants' material needs.

It also needs to be acknowledged that women are still in a disadvantaged position in the labour market compared to men (Casale, 2004). This is especially true for African women (Casale, 2004) as is also evident in Palesa's excerpt in which she stated that her mother does not earn a substantial amount of money. In spite of this, she was able to provide adequately indicating a level of resourcefulness. Furthermore, it cannot be overlooked that unemployment rates for both women and men have increased (Casale & Posel, 2002) which points to a potential oversimplification of theories that suggest that two parent homes are at a financial advantage whereas single-mother homes are not.

Evident in Nazima's excerpt, some of the participants spoke about mothers filling "both roles". These interpretations of dual roles being filled seemed to make reference the existence of distinct and diverse roles for mothers and fathers. The perceptions thus seemed to point to the daughters' constructions of parental roles as dichotomised. It thus emerged as important early on in the interviews to investigate these perceptions more closely. During the interview, the participants' perceptions of the roles of mothers and fathers were revisited and will be discussed in a subsequent section (See section 4.5).

It also emerged in the interviews that it takes a special kind of mother to be able to "fill both roles".

> **Stacey:** A lot of my friends, well not a lot, a few of my friends have lost their fathers as well and I see how their mothers have dealt with it and their mothers have not been able to step up and take over the father's roles. I think that in my situation my mom was able to and very well. But that's her character as well I suppose.

Stacey's quote seems to suggest that the kind of woman who would be able to fill the role of a father while engaged in her role as a mother would have to be a woman of distinct character. She indicates that many of her friends have also lost their fathers and that their mothers seemed to have difficulties successfully taking over their roles in the family.

During the interview, Stacey spoke with great admiration of her mother and commended her strength. She affectionately described her mother as a hardworking and strong woman:

> **Stacey:** I think ... my mom ... well now that I am older I realise what a big job my mom did, she is very strong, she is a very, very, strong woman ....

This perception of a woman with a distinguishable type of character was further echoed by Nazima. She described her mother as open-minded: "she had to be the breadwinner and she was open minded". Nazima's description of her mother as being receptive to new ideas seems to propose that her mother's status as a working mother goes against traditional notions of the role of mothers. This, once again, highlighted that the perceptions of mothers and fathers are rooted in traditional gender roles. Traditionally, the fathers are perceived as breadwinners and disciplinarians, and their place is perceived to be in the public space of work. Conversely, a mother's place is seen in the home and in the active participation of childcare. The perceptions of the participants clearly depict these views.

Anotida also spoke of having a normal childhood, despite lack of a father in her upbringing:

> **Anotida:** So I want to believe I had a normal childhood. You know you get to, you go out with your friends.

From the extract above one gets the impression of Anotida being raised in a home where she had the freedom to play and engage with her peers. These are naturally both important

aspects of a child's physical and cognitive development and an important aspect of learning (Isenberg, & Quisenberry, 2002). As a third year Social Work student, these are concepts that Anotida may be aware of and, as a result, is able identify them. It seemed to go beyond that for this participant however. It seemed to evoke feelings of happiness. When asked to elaborate on what she meant by "normal", Anotida explained that, to her, a normal childhood is free from abuse and violence, where children's material needs are provided for and they are happy and have emotional support.

> **Anotida:** What I would define as a normal childhood is a childhood free from abuse ... like sexual abuse and maybe violence. Where I wake up in a normal environment, where I don't wake up and wish I had a mother cause then that would mean something is not right, that would mean that something is not okay with me. So for me, waking up happy and having food and having that emotional support that I need, is growing up in a normal environment.

It is evident from the above extract that Anotida had a positive childhood experience. From the description above, it is apparent that she was raised in a home where her emotional and physical needs were considered and provided. She also describes her childhood as "happy" which gives the image of gratification and contentment and which further affirms that she had all that she needed. Anotida seems to raise a significant point which is that there are other factors (such as abuse) which could be detrimental to children's childhood experiences. These are often overlooked when the damaging effects of father absence are presented as if to suggest that all fathers are good fathers. Garbarino (1999, as cited in Langa, 2010) proposes that it cannot be assumed that the absence of the biological father will inevitably result in maladjustment because it has been found that some fathers play destructive roles in the lives of their children. Both mothers and fathers can have a negative influence on the development of children if they are abusive or neglectful.

The researcher found the use of the term "normal" thought-provoking and almost appropriate for the reason that father absence in this country is far from being an isolated issue. Based on the statistics presented in the literature (Madhavan, Townsend, & Garey, 2008; Posel, & Devey, 2006; Morrell, & Richter, 2006), there are more homes without fathers in the country than there are homes with present fathers. In other words, there are so many homes where the biological father is absent that growing up without a father seems to be the norm in South

Africa. From the extracts above, it can be argued that the participants' expressed that having an absent father did not make them feel like their childhood was irregular or deprived in any way for the reason that father absence is widespread. As noted in the literature review, this is especially true in the homes of Black Africans but the trend of father absence is increasingly visible across other racial groups (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2006). Stacey's extract (presented earlier) seems to further support this argument. She reported that there were many others in her social circles who did not have fathers. It is however unknown what racial group(s) Stacey's friends belong to.

During the description of their childhoods, the participants also indicated multiple factors which may have contributed to the absence of their biological fathers. These factors can be listed under four categories: death, migrant work and parental separation, and abandonment. These are discussed in the following section.

4.2.1 Death

Three of the participants, Palesa, Stacey and Anotida reported that their fathers were absent because they had passed away. Death is among the chief reasons in South Africa for father absence and this was reflected in the population of the study. According to Cluver and Orkin (2009), Denis and Ntsimane (2006), Hosegood, Vanneste and Timaeus (2004), as well as Montgomery et al. (2006), HIV/AIDS is the primary cause of death in South Africa. Death however can also occur as a result of other terminal illnesses and can also take place suddenly.

The following section discusses the manner in which the daughters coped with the loss of their fathers and negotiated changes and adjustments within the context of their families after the loss. Firstly, the financial impact of loss is discussed. During the interviews, it was noted that the participants experienced the loss in this regard as most salient. Although it was evident that the participants missed their fathers, there seemed to be an emphasis placed on the financial losses the families experienced more than the emotional.

The manner in which the participants' families negotiated the impact of death will then be considered. In relation to this, the factors which appeared to impact these processes of adjustment for the participants will be explored.

Although these segments have been divided for the purposes of discussion, it needs to be noted that loss, especially through death is understood to be a multifaceted and intricate process with each process affecting the other.

4.2.1.1 Financial impact of death

Death has a momentous effect on families especially if it is the death of a parent. Not only does it commonly result in emotional distress resulting from feelings of loss and a structural and emotional void (Bowlby-West, 1983) but it may also result in a loss of resources (Nduna, & Jewkes, 2012). Loss thus takes place on various levels. This was evident in Palesa's account of how her life changed after her father's passing:

> **Palesa:** ... now my Mom had to like even financially, because my Dad earned more than my Mom, obviously ... and he had a lot of things, you know, like medical aid and stuff. Not ... like little things in the house ... So now my Mom had to like take over that. But because, it's so funny, she'd be straining, she had to let go of other things. So there are other luxuries that were taken away, you know, like a medical aid. Now when you're at varsity, when I'm here, if I'm sick, I won't be admitted to a good hospital because I don't have a medical aid.

In the excerpt above, the participant notes that her life changed "drastically" to emphasise the extreme and radical change her family experienced following her father's death. The quote above seems to suggest that the financial loss was most salient for the family. Palesa notes that her mother had to shoulder the financial responsibilities previously carried by her father. Although her mother made steady efforts to maintain their lifestyle, as noted in her use of the word "strain", Palesa indicates that her family had to scale down and do without some benefits that were previously enjoyed such as medical aid. Nduna and Jewkes (2012) report that children whose fathers have died live in economically poorer households for the reason that poverty is frequently compounded by the impact of loss for many families in the country. This is especially true when it is a father who dies (Nduna, & Jewkes, 2012) as was evident in Palesa's case and for Stacey's family.

> **Stacey:** ... my dad was the breadwinner and we were quite well-off before he died and my mom was a house wife and she had to start working when he passed away...

It is evident in the quote above that Stacey's family suffered considerable financial loss after the passing of her father. The participant notes that her family was affluent before her father passed away. Stacey's mother was unemployed at the time, thus her family was left without an income until her mother found employment.

Both of the participants' fathers were employed prior to their passing. In Palesa's case, her father earned more than her mother. Her family thus not only had to make financial adjustments from two to one salary, but they also lost the principal breadwinner. It is therefore not unexpected that the family was at the lower end of the economic scale after the father's death. Congruently, Stacey's family also lost the only breadwinner when her father died. The participants' emphasis on financial loss was significantly influenced by traditional perceptions of the fathers' role as provider. It could also be true that the participants' fathers primarily played this role and thus their loss in this regard was most salient.

Although it was true for Palesa and Stacey, the researcher questions whether a family will always suffer financial loss when a father passes away. Job scarcity is a significant challenge in South Africa (Casale, 2004; Clowes, Ratele, & Shefer, 2013) thus there are households where both parents are living in poverty due to unemployment. Although it is true that the costs accompanying death can compound poverty (Nduna, & Jewkes, 2012), death can also alleviate some expenses especially in instances where there may be enduring illnesses in the family which require expensive medical attention. Furthermore, there can be long-term benefits when a member dies in terms of expenditures in instances where both parents are unemployed. Parents may also make investments that ensure the provision of their family's needs after their death. For instance, Anotida's father passed away when she was in grade one. At the time of her biological father's death, she was too young to know whether or not he was making a financial contribution. As she grew older, she found out that he was doing so. The participant also found that her father had provided for some of her needs in advance. Thus, for Anotida, there was not an immediate adjustment with regards to financial provision.

> **Anotida:** ... even though he played the absent dad ... They say he used to send money home and food and stuff and always used to buy me clothes. But to me, that is like, okay. Because there are certain clothes that he bought me, he used to buy stuff like four years in advance. Stuff that I actually started wearing four years after he died because he used to buy in advance.

The excerpt also highlights a significant point, and that is that migrant fathers are not essentially "absent" in terms of the financial support that they offer their families while they are away engaged in migrant work. Mboya and Nesengani (1999) contend that the common assumption that only fathers who live with their children provide support for them substantially undervalues fathers' financial contributions to their children. Anotida's father sent money so that food and clothes could be provided in the family. Not only did Anotida's father make provision for her immediate needs at the time he was alive, he also, to some extent, considered her future needs. For this reason, Anotida did not experience an immediate and drastic financial loss or adjustment when her father died. From the findings of the current study, it seems reasonable to argue that a family's financial position is not essentially negatively affected by death. The researcher also considered the possibility that Anotida's family may have experienced a loss financially that she may not be aware of. This would certainly be the case if her father was making other financial contributions towards the provision of her needs which suddenly stopped. She could, however, not confirm this.

The above extract further suggests that the financial support provided by her father, offered Anotida some consolation for his absence. This is evident as Anotida notes that "even though he played the absent dad... he used to send money home and food and stuff and always used to buy me clothes".

4.2.1.2 The family's adjustment to loss through death

Aside from the concrete challenges such as a loss of financial resources that families experience after the death of the father, there is also an emotional void. In fact, some have proposed that the death of a loved one is amongst the most stressful events to be experienced (Koocher, 1986). As a result of the emotional void and the concrete challenges accompanying the emptiness which results from a death, a family is required to make homeostatic adjustments (Bowlby-West, 1983). This means that the family system has to find ways of functioning beyond the loss (Jackson, 1968, as cited in Bowlby-West, 1983). Bowlby-West (1983) proposes that the modification to the void is in part determined by the bereaved persons and is conditional on the phase of grieving they are experiencing, and the manner in which the bereavement is perceived by the family members.

Although the adjustment is often challenging and granted that it can be pathological (e.g.

when the change destroys existing relationships and personal effectiveness), at other times, the family finds new ways of functioning effectively without the deceased. According to Kushner (1981, as cited in Bowlby-West, 1983) homeostasis can be reached and phases of transformation and actualisation in the grieving process may be possible if the family can view their loss in a larger context.

From the participants' accounts of their losses and how their families recovered and functioned after the loss, it appears that all three of their families managed to negotiate to some extent for homeostatic adjustments.

> **Palesa:** ... and then after that, I became close to my Mom. So like the closeness that I had with my Dad, it shifted to my Mom. So my relationship with my mother, is like, it's good.

> **Stacey:** ... a few of my friends have lost their fathers as well and I see how their mothers have dealt with it and their mothers have not been able to step up and take over the father's roles. I think that in my situation my mom was able to and very well.

The excerpt from Palesa shows that she adjusted to the void left behind by the loss of her father by forming a closer bond with her mother and thus reached a new homeostasis and a way of being in the world as proposed by Bowlby-West (1983). Similarly, Stacey contends that her mother was able to "step up" and pick up the pieces after her father's passing. This suggests that the family managed to reach a level of homeostatis after its loss.

4.2.1.3 Factors affecting adjustment

Although the experience of death is unique and individualised, research has found that there are factors that affect the manner in which one processes and adjusts to loss through death. According to Corr et al. (1997), factors that may affect children's process of adjusting to loss include the child's former experiences of loss, communication within the family and the age at which the loss occurs.

It became clear that the participants processed and adjusted to the deaths of their fathers in different ways. Further analysis revealed that age may be a factor affecting adjustment in this regard. Anotida, for instance, lost her father when she was in grade one:

> **Anotida:** Okay firstly he passed away when I was in grade one, okay, no I don't want to lie to you, between grade one and two in ninety eight I was in grade one. So he passed away when I was in grade one

The excerpt shows that Anotida was uncertain at first how old she was when her father's death occurred. It was notable in the interview that Anotida spoke about her father's passing casually and that there was no evidence of emotion when she spoke about it. This seems to allude to her having processed the loss to a large extent. Later on in the interview, when she was asked whether she ever misses or longs for her father, she responded by saying that she could not miss having a father as she never had a one:

> **Anotida:** You can't miss what you never had.

This was, however, not the case for Palesa. As indicated previously, Palesa's excerpts indicated that her family managed to adjust after her father's death but that she continues to long for and miss her father. It seems that, for her, the emotional void remains to some extent:

> **Palesa:** ... And like a role of a father, you know, like when you see a child with their dad, you're like "Oh wow, if my Dad was actually around, he would have done this", you know ...

In the excerpt above, Palesa imagines how her life would be if her father was still alive. It is evident that the participant misses her father and she was noticeably sad when speaking about this. Palesa's father passed away when she was in grade 8. The age difference between Palesa and Anotida and the manner in which they processed and adjusted to their fathers' deaths suggests that age plays a role in the manner in which the participants adjusted to the loss. While Palesa reported having a "close relationship" with her father prior to his death, Anotida, on the other hand, only saw her father on three occasions throughout her life thus the relationship should also be recognised as a factor, adjunct to age, which affects adjustment to loss.

Numerous studies on parental absence (Holborn, & Eddy, 2011; Mboya, & Nesengani, 1999) as well as parental death (Nduna, & Jewkes, 2012) have found that children whose fathers have died are academically at a disadvantage. The participants of the current study seemed to offer conflicting evidence in this regard. The sample population of the current study

comprised students from the University of the Witwatersrand which is indicative of some level of academic success. Based on the reports of participants, their families adjusted well after the loss of the father. The finding of the current study as well as the characteristics of the population used for the current research suggest that these arguments are excessively simplistic or overgeneralised because they do not consider the relative wealth of the child's household or the child's school attainment prior to the parental death or paternal absence (Case, & Ardington, 2006). These studies furthermore seem to overlook the level of support available to the child. Evidence in their childhood narratives showed that the participants had adequate support in the absence of their fathers

Many studies also do not take the initial psychological wellbeing of the individual family members as well as the wellbeing of the family as a unit prior to the death of the father, into consideration. According to Corr et al. (1997), the experience of loss is affected by the age at which the loss takes place, personality, prior experiences with death, the cause of the death, the relationship with the deceased, and communication within the family unit. These factors are important for consideration when investigating the manner in which children respond to and are affected by death (Corr et al., 1997).

Kushner (1981, as cited in Bowlby-West, 1983) as well as Case and Ardington (2006) explain that loss takes place within the context of the family and in the context of a community. As Bloom (1969, as cited in Bowlby-West, 1983, p. 293) noted:

> We must remember that people are capable of greatness, of courage, but not in isolation … They need the conditions of a solidly linked human unit in which everyone is prepared to bear the burden of others.

Although great strides have been made in the investigation of bereavement and the resulting impact on the structure and the functionality of families as well as the resultant wellbeing of children, it seems that there is still a dearth in our understanding of how families and children in South Africa adjust to death. This dearth indicates that this is an area deserving attention especially in view of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the country. The need for the training of bereavement counsellors and community care networks deserve attention in order to assist healthy grieving in families as it affects the grieving of children and their level of adjustment.

4.2.2 Migrant work and parental separation

As noted in the literature review, the locations for earning a living and for maintaining a family, of production and reproduction, remain geographically separated for many South Africans (Madhavan, Townsend, & Garey, 2008). This was evident in the findings of the current study as three of the participants' fathers were absent due to migrant work which remains a significant factor restricting and disrupting parental involvement. It frequently results in fathers having to live separate from their families for long periods of time.

Anotida stated that, prior to his passing, her father worked in South Africa (when she was in grade one as discussed previously) while she resided in Zimbabwe with her grandmother:

> **Anotida:** My father was here in South Africa and I am from Zimbabwe ... and I only saw him like three times in my life ... and why I say I only met him three times is that he only came for three Christmases, in fact, two Christmases and one like some public holiday in between the year, like in August type of thing....
>
> **Tshego:** I would see my dad like maybe once in three months.

It is evident in the extracts above that migrant work results in fathers being away from home for long periods of time. During the times of absence, children in South Africa and the larger African continent are left with their mothers or in the care of their relatives if their mothers are also engaged in migrant work (Ramphele, & Richter, 2006). The latter was true for Tshego who was left in her grandmother's care as both her parents were engaged in migrant work:

> **Tshego:** I can say that the one person that was there, was my grandmother.

During the interview, Anotida explained that her grandmother was her primary caregiver in the early developmental years of her life. This is also because Anotida's mother passed away shortly after she was born. Thus, she had no parent to care for her while her father was engaged in migrant work:

> **Anotida:** Alright childhood, I actually grew up with my grandmother when my mother passed away at eight months, so they say. So I actually don't know my mother but I grew up with my grandmother, so basically, she was like my mother and father.

In some instances, women also choose to follow their husbands in their area of employment for the reason that migrant work may also increase the likelihood of infidelity and multiple partnering (Montgomery et al., 2006). This disruption of the parental dyad was evident in one participant's report:

> **Priya:** Well from what I know and from what my mother has told me and my mother's family has told me, it was because my father ... he graduated after studying and he actually moved to Escourt because he worked for SASOL and ... he only used to come home like on weekends or every second weekend. And apparently ... I don't know if it is true, I wasn't there to experience it myself ... he ... had an affair with a white lady ... and my mom's oldest brother actually like actually caught it ... so that is why he was not a part of my life. And I think ... my mom like tried to make him be a part of my life, but ... he just ... it never worked.

In the above extract, it is evident that the participant's father moved to Escourt to work for SASOL after the completion of his studies. The extended separation period, however, frequently results in many men seeking out partners to satisfy immediate sexual needs (Ramphele, & Richter, 2006). According to what Priya was told, this was potentially true for her father. In instances where there is infidelity, relationships frequently became tumultuous (Ramphele, & Richter, 2006). The conflict frequently results in a desire for retaliation and settling scores may contribute to fathers having restricted access to their children (Fagan, & Barnett, 2003; Khunou, 2006). According to literature on maternal gatekeeping, mothers often play a fundamental role in facilitating the father-child relationship. This process can be either be facilitated through encouraging involvement as well as enabling a conducive co-parenting relationship (Fagan, & Barnett, 2003) or it can be restricted by the failure to acknowledge, respect, and value the parenting role of the father (Fagan, & Barnett, 2003). In the case of Priya, it was the former as was evident in the extract from Priya's interview above. Her mother encouraged a relationship between her and her father in spite of the difficulties between them. According to the participant, this did not succeed. Priya explained that there were logistical reasons behind this. Morell and Richter (2006) state that some fathers may not have the desire to partake in a child's life despite encouragement from mothers. Priya's relationship with her father was characterised by uncertainty and spasmodic presence rather than enduring absence at the time of the interview.

> **Priya:** ... so when I met him when I was about eight, my mother wanted me ... to meet with my father and wanted my father to see me ... the next time I met him was when I was eleven and my mother's mom had passed away so he came down ... and when I was thirteen, his dad actually wanted to come and see me and wanted to bring him to see me.

This was also true for Tshego:

> **Tshego:** ... he has been a part of my life since I have been growing up ... I think ... he has always been a part of my life since the day I was born ... he has been there ... like I said until ... primary school. Primary school he was on and off. But from my understanding and from the situation at home ... we were not financially stable. So they say mostly my dad would not be there because he was so wrapped up into trying to find other jobs so that we are okay ... So I think that he basically just focused more on making sure that the finances are there, so because of that he was never home ... He was never there to attend school meeting or take me to sports tournaments or attend ... the award ceremonies at the school ... so because of that he was just ... an absent father.

During the interview, Tshego explained that her father was a part of her life until she was in primary school. His presence in her life subsequently became sporadic and Tshego revealed later on in the interview that she would see her father only once in three months.

These extracts indicate that, across the different race groups, migrant work is still a significant factor affecting the involvement of fathers. The findings show that these prolonged absences frequently result in the relationship between fathers and children being coloured by unpredictability and sporadic contact. This may affect the ability of the parent-child dyad to form strong relational bonds.

4.2.3 Abandonment

Another reason for father absence for the current participants included abandonment. Kamogelo was the only participant who had been abandoned by her father.

> **Kamogelo:** Actually, my mother passed away when I was grade one ... and then that's where the problem started ... I mean he got another wife and she was like the typical stepmother and then she persuaded my father to take us to my grandmother's place where I actually grew up, so like I just grew up with my grandmother, my aunts and cousins and siblings ...

As is shown in the excerpt above, parents may lose their spouses through death and enter into new relationships. Fathers may then have difficulty negotiating access to and contact with their children due to new relationships that may have developed (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013). If the new partner rejects children from former relationships, this can result in a lack of involvement by the father (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013). As is evident in the extract above, this was true for Kamogelo.

While it may at times be difficult to negotiate, the decision to establish a new relationship at the expense of the relationship with one's own children seems to point to poor judgment. In this case, there appears to be a need for the father to practice autonomy and choose to put his children's needs first.

The findings of the current study are congruent with what is put forward in the existing body of literature on similar subjects. There are various reasons attributed to father absence in South African homes as was evident in the reasons communicated by the participants. The reports of the participants furthermore exemplified the diverse nature of South African families as well as the importance of extended family in assuming caregiving responsibilities in instances when the parents are unavailable or unwilling to assume continued parenting relationships.

4.3 INVOLVEMENT OF EXTENDED FAMILY

In the absence of parents, extended family members may be involved in assuming caregiving responsibilities for children. During the interviews, it emerged that various extended family members were involved in caring for many of the participants when their parents could no longer care for them or when parents chose not to be a part of their lives. It became evident that the grandparents were mostly involved in assuming caregiving responsibilities and the participants therefore seemed to have special relationships and bonds with their grandparents.

> **Nazima:** Well, my childhood was more about my grandfather because we were like super close. So that was a major thing for me. We used to play hide and seek and I used to hide in the same place, but he would pretend that he does not see me … so that used to stand out a lot. So we were like super close.

As noted in the excerpt above, Nazima formed a close bond with her grandfather. Her

narratives of playing hide and seek with her grandfather evoked feelings of happiness. Her affection for her grandfather was visible during the interview. This pointed to the benefits of the involvement of extended family for the development of the children.

For three of the participants, namely, Anotida, Kamogelo and Tshego, it was primarily their grandmothers who assumed caregiving responsibilities:

> **Kamogelo:** My childhood is, I could say I grew up with my grandmother, my maternal grandmother...
>
> **Tshego:** I can say that the one person that was there, was my grandmother ... I saw her as a mother and as a father.

During her interview, Tshego also said that her grandmother played an important role in motivating her to strive towards academic success:

> **Tshego:** But my granny was able to do that and that's the thing, at the same time I would work so hard to please her, but not my parents ... because she would say, "you know what, Kagi, you are going well" ... and that would just motivate me to work even harder.

The findings of the current study in this regard are congruent with the findings of Schatz (2007) who proposes that elderly women frequently face the duty of taking on the responsibilities for fostered and orphaned young children which may often start even before death of the children's parents.

The participant's reports emphasised the fact that South African families characteristically consist of a multigenerational family structure and frequently include grandmothers as the primary caregivers. These extracts additionally indicate that these elderly women contribute to their households through financial, emotional and physical means (Schatz, 2007). One participant, Anotida, affectionately said that, for her, her grandmother was "everything":

> **Anotida:** So I had that mother and father support structure from my grandmother. Ja, and she was my everything.

The sentiments of the participant indicate the positive role that extended family members can play. These sentiments were also true for Tshego as noted in the extracts above. From the excerpts of the participants, it is evident that the involvement of extended family can be significantly beneficial. These households also tend to experience financial difficulties as they often have rely on the elderly person's retirement income fund to support the family. Schatz (2007) found that households headed by elderly women still experience substantially higher rates of poverty than do other households. This was true for one of the participants:

> **Kamogelo:** At my grandmother's place no one was working so like we relied on my grandmother and grandfather's pension money for all of us to survive and like we were really struggling at some point, you know.... the aunts were there but ... sometimes the needs couldn't really be met because of the shortage ... of financial resources.

Children may also be ill-treated and neglected when living with extended family members (Nduna, & Jewkes, 2012):

> **Kamogelo:** Ja, it's been more than a decade so I haven't seen him. But the weird thing is ... he kept my baby sister and he ... did a lot of like very stupid things, like he took my baby sister and he left her at her in-laws, ... so the stepmother's kids they moved in with him so they were a family now and then my baby sister, she was taken to the stepmother's home in KZN where she lived there. And she lived with the uncles, like the stepmother was the only woman in the family, like all her siblings were guys, so she [was] left there and she was abused in a lot of ways, physically, sexually and a lot of other ways. So like my grandmother would lobby, would like call my father ... where's the other child? Because ... you've brought these, why don't you just bring all of them? And then he'd be like no, she's with her grandmother ...

As noted in the excerpt of Kamogelo's interview, her younger sister was sexually abused after being sent to live with her stepmother's relatives some time after her father remarried. Kamogelo's report is unfortunately not uncommon. Despite South Africa being regarded as having an exemplary child rights environment, the rates of abuse and maltreatment of children are shockingly high (Bird, & Spurr, 2004; Richter, 2004, as cited in Richter, &

Dawes, 2008). This finding suggests that, although the involvement of extended family members may be beneficial, this is not always the case. This issue, however, is complex and beyond the scope of the current study.

4.4 EMOTIONAL REACTIONS TO REASONS BEHIND FATHER ABSENCE

It also emerged that some of the participants expressed sad and angry feelings about their absent fathers. This was especially true in cases where the daughters perceived their fathers to have chosen not to be a part of their lives. Some felt rejected and abandoned by their fathers and therefore their emotions towards their fathers reflected congruent sentiments. Priya, for instance, conveyed her contentment with the lack of relationship with her father:

> **Priya:** I guess I was pretty content not having a connection with him because I had never had one ... the next time I met him was when I was eleven and my mother's mom had passed away so he came down, but I didn't, I was very like hostile cause I didn't like want him to be there in a way ... I can go weeks; I can go a year without speaking to him. Its fine, it does not make a difference to me because I've never had like that relationship with him.

> **Nazima:** ... I might have been close with my dad also ... but I know that from what my dad is like, the relationship wouldn't have lasted so ... it probably would have had a bad effect on me ...

The tone in both Nazima and Priya's interviews revealed some level of anger and disappointment towards their fathers. Both of the participants stated that now their fathers are alive and their fathers also know about them and know where they live but choose not to have a relationship with them. For both of them, the relationship with their fathers was characterised by disappointment and uncertainty.

The sense of disappointment was also notable in Kamogelo's case:

> **Kamogelo:** ... because knowing that your father is there and the fact that you know your father, especially like in my case since I know my father is alive, he's working, he's well but he's not in my life, that kind of affects me in a way because ... you'd find my friends talking about ah my dad, mom and dad, and like I think, oh my goodness, my father is there, like he's not doing anything for me or about me and he knows ... you know.

The tones in the interviews revealed that the participants were sad, although the emotion was evidently mixed with some level of resentment. This was especially true in Kamogelo's case. In the excerpt above, Kamogelo stated that her father does not do anything for her. She point outs that her father works but makes no financial provision for her. He is also not engaged in any part of her life. Kamogelo reported during the interview that her father's lack of involvement affects her. It seems that her pain is particularly exacerbated when her friends speak about what their fathers do for them. This seemed to point to a deep longing for her father to be engaged in her life. Kamogelo's pain caused by her father's lack of financial provision, was salient:

> **Kamogelo:** ... And to think that my father is there, like he's earning, he's fine but he doesn't really, you know ... gets you thinking like oh well, if my father would be here like I'd have this ... I need things, like things I really need. Like maybe my grandmother, obviously, she won't afford those things, I mean she's a pensioner and there's still other kids in the family to like use for her money. Like things like a laptop ... but like I have a father, you know, you think about things like that and think that this is not fair ... I hope you get my point.

The above extract indicates that Kamogelo's disappointment in her father's failure to be engaged in her life and to provide for her was obvious throughout the interview. There is also a sense of defeat in her statement evident in how she says "oh well" and "but anyways" to communicate that she has come to live with the circumstance and that there is nothing that she can do about her father's lack of involvement. Although the participant's statement can also be perceived to mean that she has accepted her father's absence, it is notable that Kamogelo longs for her father to be an active participant in her life.

The findings of the current study are consistent with the findings of Langa (2010) who shows that adolescent boys expressed sad and angry feelings about their absent fathers.

Research on hostility towards one parent post-parental separation has primarily been derived from an investigation of how children are affected by divorce (Kelly, & Johnston, 2001). There is a lack of research exploring the topic of hostility towards parents. In this regard, it appears that there is an intricate connection between psychological disturbances as an effect of paternal absence. It can be argued that if children have unexpressed anger or hostility

towards parents, this could result in psychopathology.

4.5 MOTHERS AND FATHERS ARE MADE DIFFERENT

One of the key themes that emerged from the interviews was that of mothers and fathers having distinct and differentiated roles. The participants described mothers as being loving and nurturing and who primarily provide emotional support, whereas fathers were regarded as playing the role of giving counsel and guidance and seeing to the material provision and the protection of children.

In this section, the perceptions of the roles of mothers and fathers will be explored. Firstly, the findings on the roles of fathers will be presented after which the opinions on the role of mothers will be discussed.

4.5.1 The roles of fathers

When enquiring about the participants' notions of fatherhood, there was a clear vacillation between a discourse reflecting progressive ideas and a discourse of more conservative notions reflecting the pre-eminence of traditionally prescribed gender norms. Related to the latter, most of the participants regarded the responsibility of financial provision as one of the fundamental responsibilities of fathers.

> **Priya:** I think for fathers, it is that physical taking care of your child ... I mean in terms of ... actually making sure that your child has everything. Sending your child to school, in material stuff in a way, cause the father is basically the provider of everything in the home.

> **Palesa:** I feel like they're supposed to be there and provide everything like you need ... Like either with finances ... either with food, either with anything that you will need.

The perceptions of the participants emphasised their conceptions of the roles and responsibilities of fathers as consistent with the traditional notions of the father as the provider. It became clear that the term "provider" is broad and has extensive meaning (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013) as the excerpts above point out the different needs a father is expected to make provision for. This can be seen in the participants use of the word "everything". For these participants, the provider role clearly also comprises the provision of

financial means and material needs.

It also emerged in the participants' descriptions that the primacy of the construction of the traditional role of the father as provider was also destabilised by participants who acknowledged other roles played by fathers. They contended that the roles of fathers are not only limited to the provision of material needs. Instead, they communicated an understanding of fathers fulfilling a variation of roles including the role of an emotional support system, protector and advisor. This perception is evident in the following excerpt:

> **Anotida:** Definitely financially, you know. Pay my school fees, buy me clothes, buy me food, that type of thing. So there is the financial responsibility then there is the emotional responsibility. I need to feel like you are there for me ... like more than just the finances. Because later on with this, with my brother-in-law now, my sister's husband, like he got to a point when I was in high school now where he became more of a financial provider for us than he was there emotionally, like when we were younger. I don't know maybe because of age. So I feel like fathers have to have that emotional support that they must give to their children, to feel like, okay I am here for you, come we can still play. Okay you've got problems, let's work on this. You've got homework, oh let me just check it out, even if I am not going to help you. But to show that I am there for you. So it is financially, emotionally and also just their physical presence, I think, that also contributes to normal upbringing.

Despite this acknowledgment, it is evident that the fathers' provider role emerged as a recurring theme. Consistent with the perceptions of Priya and Palesa, Anotida's use of the words "pay" and "buy" in the extract above clearly highlights the responsibility of fathers in monetary provision. The use of the word "definitely" in Anotida's statement implies that fathers can, under no circumstances, be excused from this responsibility or that the role of financial provision cannot be separated from fatherhood. These perceptions presented the word "father" as being synonymous with "provider". These perceptions further point to the supremacy of the social representation of fathers as people who work and therefore have the capacity to provide.

These perceptions were accentuated in the participants' perceptions that their lives would have been improved had their fathers been present and involved. Several of the participants believed that their lives would be enhanced (especially in the financial sense) if their fathers

were a part of their lives. As one daughter put it:

> **Nazima:** Ja, it obviously would have been different ... I mean financially it would have been better.
>
> **Stacey:** I think we would be more financially stable because my dad was the breadwinner and we were quite well-off before he died and my mom was a housewife and she had to start working when he passed away ... so I think the benefit would have been financial and I don't think I would have gone to the schools I would have gone to ... but I think I would still have the same values and things like that so ... the benefit would have been financial.

From the excerpt above, it is clear that Nazima believes, with unquestionable conviction, that her life would have been comparatively better financially if her father was present in her life. The use of the word "obviously" communicates her lack of doubt in this regard.

Despite the participants' academic backgrounds as students registered in the School of Human and Community Development, they failed to consider the possibility that their fathers were not working despite the rates of unemployment in the country. The highest level of unemployment was observed in South Africa in 2013 (the year the interviews were conducted) with the rate pegged at 4.7 million by Statistics South Africa (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013). This challenge affected all South Africans, including fathers. Despite this context, however, the participants could not imagine their fathers as people who would be unable to provide for their economic needs. Despite the rates of unemployment being on the increase (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013), it is clear that the societal pressures that accompany the position of fathers as material providers are resistant to change. The role of fathers as providers prominently emerged as non-negotiable for most of the participants.

Stacey drew on past experiences to express the belief that her family would have had an improved financial status had her father not passed away. This was also true for Palesa whose father was the primary breadwinner in her family prior to his passing. This perception also endured for participants whose fathers made no financial provisions for them at any point in their lives. This can be noted in Priya's statement above. Consistent with studies (Langa, 2010; Waite, & Nielsen, 2001) conducted with boys and men about their wishes and fantasies

of absent fathers, the findings of the current study indicate that, despite the lack of fathers in their lives, the participants still had views that fathers were expected to be breadwinners and providers.

There is also advocacy for fathers fulfilling emotional duties towards their children:

> **Priya:** Physically, emotionally, in every way possible. In every way possible, every way that you can be there for your child, should ... that is what a father should do. Just like a mother.
>
> **Kamogelo:** Not just of a financial provider, that's just another part of it, like the emotional part, like having a father, it's like how things should be, I don't know.
>
> **Tshego:** I feel that fathers should actually take on the same responsibility that mothers actually take on. Whether it's looking after a child emotionally or financially or what not, but I think that with fathers, they kind of lose it a bit and focus on the finances ... I think that's what I got when I was growing up, that my father focused more on making sure that the finances are good. But then sometimes he will not be there if I am sick, but he will make sure that I have money to go to the doctor, but he will not check up on you ... he'll think, ag, I gave you money to go to the doctor so you should be fine cause now you got the medication, so now you should be fine. But I think that it should be balanced. I think that the roles of fathers should actually balance the roles that mothers take on in terms of raising their children ... They should be more nurturing, they should be there whenever you need to talk.

As noted in Priya's and Tshego's excerpt as well as Anotida's views presented above, fathers are expected to fulfil economic, emotional and social roles in the lives of their children and should be involved in providing for their emotional as well as their physical wellbeing. Thus, both demands for financial provision as well as demands for emotional provision are made on male fathers (Waite, & Nielsen, 2001). This expectation seems to stand true, irrespective of whether the father is present or absent (Waite, & Nielsen, 2001).

One daughter's statements seem to echo this view:

> **Nazima:** Well, obviously society thinks that the role of fathers are the breadwinners and stuff, but I believe that women have an equal share in that, so I think they share the same role.

Nazima's perception also seems to destabilise the primacy of the father's role as provider as well as the traditional dichotomy of the roles of mothers and fathers. Related to this, Morell (2005) proposes that all around us there is evidence that men are trying to change and that the motivations behind the changes are numerous. This is however not novel, rather, change has continuously taken place over time. As Clowes (2006, p. 108) states:

> Images of fatherhood have differed over time. The wide variety of ways in which fathers have been presented in differing media and at different times serve to remind us that the content of fatherhood is contested rather than fixed.

The research cited by Langa (2010), Krige (1936, cited in Hunter, 2005) and Morrell and Richter (2006), contends that the social value of fathering and fatherhood has changed due to social, economic and political factors. Other research (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013) echoes these views and proposes that South Africans are ready and are making accommodation for changes. Based on the findings of previous research (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013; Clowes, 2006; Morell, 2005), as well as the finding of the current research, it is the position of the researcher that these perceptions will continue to change over time. This may, however, only happen through deliberate action. It appears that it is both the responsibility of mothers and the duty of fathers (present as well as future mothers and fathers) to encourage active parenting despite the inability to provide financially.

4.5.2 The role of mothers

Consistent with the findings on the roles of fathers, when focusing specifically on the roles of mothers it was once again evident that there were both liberal and progressive notions of motherhood. However, these were contrasted by a dependence on traditional conceptions of the roles of mothers and gender stereotyping.

The voices of the daughters in the current study were indicative of the widely held belief that it is natural for women to raise children and that all women are born with an innate ability to mother or to nurture:

> **Anotida:** A mother's role, for me, it is mostly emotional, it is all about the care you know. I want to feel like that, to feel enveloped by a woman you know, that care to me mostly, that is the role that a mother plays. And the household responsibilities, like when

> you come home and it is mostly ... the mother's duty to make sure my lunchbox is sorted for school ... To make sure my uniforms are fine for school, they are not looking old and stuff like that. And to make sure that I have done my homework, if it has been signed. To me, that is the mother's role. So it is mainly more emotional than financial.

It is evident when reading reading Anotida's statement above that she has traditional ideas about the roles of mothers. Anotida casts mothers in a conventional gender role that is largely confined to the home and is characterised by domestic duties consisting of responsibilities for food preparation and the grooming of children. The participant further expresses that a mother has a role that relates to children's emotions. She contends that role of mothers is first and foremost emotional. This can be seen in her use of the statements such as "mostly" and "all about" as though to emphasise the importance of this role. The participant further emphasises this role by conveying her desire to be completely covered or enclosed by a mother's ability to provide for children's emotional needs. This use of the word "enveloped" gives the impression of mothers as overflowing with this capacity, as if it was an innate and instinctively ability. This opinion was echoed in other participants' statements:

> **Stacey:** Ja, I think that women play a role in the caring. I think that it is just a natural thing that the mother will always be the caring parent, even if they want to be equals and the fathers will always be the advice givers, the wise, the wiser ones. So, I think the within the two parent homes, each parent plays a part whereas in a one parent home, you do [it] all.

> **Priya:** I think that the responsibilities of a mother is basically is to nurture and basically taking care of her child.

The excerpts above clearly depict mothers as nurturers. Caregiving responsibilities are often perceived to be more appropriate to mothers or females (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013).

When enquiring about the roles of mothers, the participants largely neglected to mention a mother's role as including work in the public space even though there has been a dramatic growth in the number of mothers in the workforce (Waite, & Nielsen, 2001) and that all the participants' mothers, who were alive, were employed.

The sections above clearly indicate that the participants' perceptions of the roles of mothers and fathers, to a large extent, highlighted constructions of complementary gender differentiation. Competence, assertiveness, independence, as well as achievement-orientation and success are generally part of society's construct of masculinity. It is generally less so for femininity. Women are, conversely, generally stereotyped as warm, compliant, sociable, interdependent and relationship-oriented, while men are generally not (Deaux, & Lewis, 1984; Eagly, & Steffen, 1984; Langford, & MacKinnon, 2000; Williams, & Best, 1982, as cited in Jost, & Kay, 2005; Theodore, & Basow, 2000). Furthermore, it is evident in the descriptions above as well as in the excerpts of the participants, that masculine and feminine stereotypes frequently counterpart one another. They are generally bipolar and, as a result, each gender group is understood to possess a set of strengths that balances out its own weaknesses and further supplements the assumed strengths of the other group (Kay, & Jost, 2003, as cited in Jost, & Kay, 2005; Theodore, & Basow, 2000). These perceptions give the impression that such stereotypes are tolerable and even necessary as the other gender cannot fully supplement for their own weaknesses. This was evident in Palesa's statements below:

> **Palesa:** They deal with things differently from a woman, you know ...
>
> **Palesa:** ... So if like you don't have a father, like if your mother assumes the role of father, it's good. But she can only go to an extent, like she doesn't, I don't think she will fill in for a dad ... But she is like, mothers are ... God built them in their own way and I feel like God built fathers in their own way.

In the statement above, the participant argues that her mother can only fill her father's role to a certain extent and that there are certain traits that her father possesses that her mother does not. This argument shows that the participant believes that men and women, mothers and fathers, have distinct roles that their counterpart does not possess. The perceptions above also point to the dichotomy between a man's place in the public sphere and a woman's place in the household (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013).

According to Theodore and Basow (2000), a differentiated heterosexual masculinity often refers to the cultural doctrine that supports the belief that a clear polarisation of masculinity and femininity ought to consist of two bipolar sets of behaviours and traits as well as their corresponding social roles for the continuance of a "normal" and functional society. Nature

and religion is utilised to make appeals for the separation of the roles of mothers and fathers (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013). Men are presented as incapable of caring for children whereas women possess this ability innately (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka, 2013). Palesa referred to religious doctrine as a foundation for her perceptions. In her statement, the participant contends that God made mothers and fathers differently to emphasise the innateness and inherentness of each role.

The dichotomisation of mothers and fathers' roles were, however, not consistent throughout as was evident in Kamogelo's excerpt below:

> **Kamogelo:** Well it's changed my perception of gender ... Oh well, not quite because I think like all genders are like capable of doing things whether you're male or female and that like, you know, a mother can bring up kids on her own, a father can do that as well, I think it's just the same ...

Kamogelo begins be saying that her perceptions of gender have not changed. This was in response to the question of whether or not having a relationship with her biological father has changed her perceptions of gender in any way. She communicates that her perception has always been that all genders are "equal" and equally capable of caring for children. Sewpaul (2013) warns that an ideological stance of the roles of men and women, and mothers and fathers, seems to be continuously reproduced by adults and children, males and females alike. Kamogelo's views seem to weaken this perception, however.

Although the researcher did not think of the question at the time, it would have perhaps been useful to enquire from Kamogelo how she was socialised to these perceptions of "equality" or sameness. It is the perception of the researcher, in retrospect, that this enquiry would have been useful because gender identity researchers have established that polarisation of masculinity and femininity commences at birth and continues throughout a person's life-span (Theodore, & Basow, 2000). These constructions are passed on through primary and secondary socialisation practices (Theodore, & Basow, 2000). Thus, rather than children being socialised to understand gender traits as existing on a continuum, they are socialised to dichotomise behaviours and characteristics into categories appropriate for boys or girls (Barron et al., 2008). This is evident in the perceptions of the participants as they had definite philosophies about the roles of mothers and fathers despite the absence of their fathers.

It is further evident from the excerpts that gender is layered and shows distinguishable social statuses and predictable ways of dividing labour and assigning responsibilities (Lorber, & Farrell, 1991). Throughout our lives, and through everyday social interaction, these responsibilities and standards are enforced. We learn and see what is expected of us and others make an attempt to react and act in line with the expectations (Lorber, & Farrell, 1991). These daily gendered interactions build gender into families (Lorber, & Farrell, 1991). This is true even in homes where there may not necessarily be a representation of all traditional gendered parental roles. This is because these gendered interactions are within other institutions where we interact. They work their way into work processes and organisations (such as schools and universities) and enforce gender expectations (Lorber, & Farrell, 1991).

While diverse ideas of the family are unmistakeably finding wider acceptance than they did in the past, the roles of families, mothers and fathers are evidently generally still thought about in fairly stereotypical ways.

4.5.3 The roles of fathers in sons and daughters' lives

Related to the overall roles of fathers, the participants were asked whether they thought that fathers played different roles in the lives of daughters and sons. Some of the participants perceived fathers to play divergent roles in the development of daughters and sons. According to Blos (1985), Morrell (2006), Swartz and Bhana (2009, as cited in Langa, 2010), existing mainstream literature indicates that children, particularly boys, require a father's love and care. Consistent with popular and academic views, some participants perceived sons to require the care of fathers more than daughters:

> **Stacey:** I think definitely, boys need their fathers more than girls do.
>
> **Nazima:** ... think that they (boys) would need their father more. Because I think they would relate to their fathers more ... so I think that they would be emotionally scarred. I think. I don't know I'm an only child.

The participants' perceptions seem to be grounded in the dichotomisation of the roles of mothers and fathers. This dichotomy evidently extends to the role parents play in the development of children of different genders. In other words, a father is perceived to play a

different role in his son's life to the role he plays in his daughter's life. Evident in Nazima's excerpt, for boys, a father is perceived to be someone to relate to and a gender role model whereas for a girl child, he may play a different role. This is consistent with what is presented in literature as it is argued, that an absent father results in a lack of a good male role model for many boys and contributes to a "crisis" of masculine development (Morrell, & Richter, 2006).

> **Stacey:** I think that boys must really know how to deal with a woman. I think that it is important that they have a father figure to say that this is how you should treat her, your future wife, girlfriend or woman that you come into contact with. And I think that there's certain things, well I saw with my brother, is that he became very aggressive, and very sort of angry when having to deal with us and I think if he had that male figure to sort of say calm down, you'll get through this, you know, then maybe ... he would not try to assert himself as the male role, male figure within the family. My mom tried to like play both roles and he was like I should be the man now. So, I think with the girls they still have their mothers who show them which gender roles to follow.

Stacey explained that she believed that fathers show boys how to behave appropriately towards women and model appropriate gender roles for boys. Consistent with the findings of Morrell and Richter (2006), it is evident from both the excerpts of Stacey and Nazima's interviews that fathers teach boys how to be men. Stacey states that this process is facilitated by fathers, underlining how women ought to be treated and by modelling this behaviour for their sons. According to Stacey, fathers are also perceived to be enforcers of discipline and serve as a tool for emotional regulation for boys. Stacey's contends that if her father was alive, he would calm her brother down and she has observed that the lack of a father figure and a role model may result in boys displaying aggressive behaviour. Stacey's perception in this regard is thus consistent with the findings of Harris and Morgan (1991). Langa (2010), however, contends that it cannot be assumed that the absence of the real father will unavoidably result in maladjustment as it has been found that some fathers play destructive roles in raising their boy children.

Furthermore, Langa (2010, p. 519) states that

> identifying the absence of fathers or significant male role models as causative of risk-taking behaviours, and delinquency there is an implication that the remaining parent, the

mother, is failing in her task in some way.

Stacey, however, points out that her mother was unsuccessful in regulating her brother's behaviour. This is evident in that Stacy contended that "mom tried to like play both roles and he was like I should be the man now". This highlights the significance of social father figures in the absence of biological fathers.

The role that fathers play for daughters emerged differently. For daughters, fathers were cast in the role of protector and carer:

> **Palesa:** I feel like it's very different. Like the relationship a father has with the daughter, it's very different from a son. You know, like, because he has to teach him some boy stuff, you know ... And he will treat his daughter in a ... way that a king would treat a princess.

A father's role in his daughter's life seemed to be closely aligned with gender stereotypes and influenced by notions of protective paternalism. This can be seen in how Palesa states that a father "will treat his daughter, in a way that a king would treat a princess". The participant's perceptions alluded to daughters needing to be cherished and protected. Another participant echoed this view:

> **Kamogelo:** I think their roles are very important hey, because you know the thing of daddy's little girls, that's like a nice idea of like what fathers should be like, you know. They should be there so that the child know ... if you have your father around, it's really nice because like "I'm going to tell dad" and the dad is always protective of his kids and stuff like that, like the dad is always the one you run to, you know, even though some dads are strict like, you know, but the father is just like ... I think the presence of fathers in a girl's upbringing is very important, like it kind of shapes her ...

Corresponding with Palesa's views, Kamogelo's quote highlights the role of fathers as protectors. This is particularly salient in her description of a scenario where a daughter calls for her father's attention in a situation where she feels she requires his protection or intervention. The narrative elicits images of a father swooping in to the rescue. These perceptions stem from the complementary gender stereotypes as discussed previously. Men are depicted as strong and women are weak and in need of protection.

Evident in Kamogelo's and Palesa's excerpts was a powerful influence of the benevolent aspect of paternalistic ideology in daughters' lives as described by Glick and Fiske (1997). This philosophy states that because of their greater authority, power and physical strength, men have a duty to serve as protectors and providers for women (Sarlet, Dumont, Delacollette, & Dardenne, 2012). This protection is especially strong towards women on whom men feel dyadically dependent or over whom they feel a sense of "ownership" such as wives, mothers and daughters (Sarlet et al., 2012). By highlighting this role, the participants cast themselves into roles of people in need of this protection, in need of care and needing to be cherished. Furthermore, by aligning themselves with qualities such as "little girl" and "princess", the participants ascribed to stereotypical feminine conceptions. This highlights the significant influence of traditional concepts of gender on the participants' perceptions.

Kamogelo regards her own perceptions, to some extent, as a fantasy because she has a "nice idea" of what a father should be. This statement alludes to the fact that fathers are not that way in reality.

Some participants regarded the father's role as the same for both girls and boys. This indicates a vacillation between progressive and traditional perceptions of gender roles:

> **Priya:** I don't think it's different, I think the basic things you need from a father is protection, guidance, love, advice and the material stuff that comes with it and I don't think that it differs from girls and boys because the basic things that boys and girls need from a father or their parents is those things, so I don't think that it differs.

Consistent with the findings presented in other sections, the traditional conception of gender roles seemed to influence the participants' perceptions of the role of fathers in son's and daughters' lives. Although there is evidence of progressive ideologies in this regard (particularly in Nazima's excerpt), the traditional notions still persist.

4.5.4 Father figures

Parental care is not always limited to the genetic offspring of men or even to genetically related individuals. Due to separation, divorce and death, men frequently form marital relationships with women who are parenting children from previous relationships and they assist in providing care for those children (Anderson et al., 1999). At other times, it is male

relatives who assume the role of caring for children. This is especially true in African societies which are grounded on the philosophy that every child needs to be loved and supported by all members of the community (Lesejane, 2006, as cited in Langa, 2010; Morrell, & Richter, 2006). As noted in the literature review, within the African context, child-rearing is generally perceived as the collective responsibility of the extended family as a whole (Langa; 2010). This is particularly evident in the manner in which elder members of the family are also referred to as mothers and fathers. For example, Zulu terms such as *ubaba omkhulu* (bigger/elder father) or *ubaba omncane* (smaller/younger father) are used to refer to any older man who partakes in the role of caring for, protecting and providing for children (Hunter, 2005; Lesejane, 2006; Mkhize, 2006 as cited in Langa, 2010; Morrell, & Richter, 2006).

During the interviews it emerged that the daughters in the current study were able to identify men, *abu baba omkhulu* and *baba omcane* in their lives who, as social rather than biological fathers, fulfilled significant roles in their lives.

For Nazima, it was her stepfather who assumed this role:

> **Nazima:** My step-dad, he has been in the picture for about thirteen years **...** and **...** he played a great role. I mean with my projects and stuff when my mother could not help me, he was always there **...** He always gives me advice, even though it is irritating at times you wanna be like oh shut up (laughs), ja, he gives me advice. Especially when it comes to guys, he is worried ... you know, like a dad would be, so it's not like I have had no father in my life.

Nazima's step-father had been in her life for thirteen years at the time of the interview. Consistent with the daughters' in the current study's perceptions of the role of fathers, Nazima's stepfather guided her, especially in issues pertaining to men. Nazima further highlights that her stepfather engaged in assisting her with her school work, noteworthy, however, is that this assistance was offered when her mother could not assist her. In the literature (Berns 2007; Holborn, & Eddy 2011; Mboya, & Nesengani, 1999) suggest that father absence may have a negative effect on children's academic achievement. Amongst the explanations offered for this correlation is that, in two parent households, functions are assumed to be divided more effectively and, as a result, children in these homes are likely to

be provided with more practical and emotional support (Bauserman, 2002, as cited in Roman, 2011; Booth, 1996). Nazima offers evidence for these findings. The participants of the current study are, however, all students at the University of the Witwatersrand, which speaks volumes for their levels of scholastic achievement. These daughters achieved their level of academic success in the absence of a father figure who shared the home with them.

For some of the other participants, the father figure was a male relative or someone from their communities:

> **Anotida:** And her (sister's) husband, now moving into a home with a male figure well that didn't really affect me, because he is a very gentle kind man. So it felt like okay this is what it feels like to have a mother and a father in the house.

> **Stacey:** ... my friends fathers, they always like, the sort of took me in. So like all throughout my life I've had like six adopted fathers (laughs) and all my friends' fathers would be like, okay we've adopted you now, today you're my child. Especially my best friend ... her father has always been the main like father figure. So it was like, many fathers ...

> **Priya:** I have always had a male figure around. It was never my biological father or anything neither was it a step dad or anything in that way ... my mother's youngest brother, he used to stay with us ... he is married and has kids, but he was always like a dad. He would always ... like if you needed guidance or you needed someone to speak to or maybe (laughs) discipline in a way, he was always there ... ja, he basically took me as his first child, so I have had a male figure in my life. And I think that, in relation to gender roles, men should like be like him.

The participants further demonstrated that a man does not need to be the biological father to accept the fatherhood role (Langa, 2010). As noted in the excerpts above, in the absence of biological fathers, other men such as maternal or paternal uncles, grandfathers, neighbours, teachers and preachers often serve to fill the roles of biological fathers:

> **Anotida:** Okay to me he treated me like one of his own children, you know what, if he bought them clothes I also got clothes. If we went out, every Saturday we went out for breakfast then from there we go to the park then from the park we go for ice cream, like that type of thing. Then come Sunday, we go to another park and, like, to me it was

normal I didn't sort of feel different, to feel like okay but he has done this for his kids and not me. And if we ever did something wrong, I never had a case where he shouted at me and not his kids, type of thing. If anything, it actually felt like there was a point when he looked out for me more than my own sister you know. Because I think females, we tend to be a bit on the very emotional side. And he is very calm and you know man, she is still a child you know, children make mistakes all the time. So that is the kind gentle nature I am speaking about.

Stacey: I think that they were very protective of me from the time when, especially my best friend's father. He is the one that I always went to for advice. He is a pastor, so he is very important when I made the decision to go into ministry during my gap year and things like that. He actually knew the guy that ran the program that I do so ..., well that I did (laughs) so he was very instrumental in that decision and I went to him multiple times ... and I was like is this a good idea? What do you think? And he gave his advice, and guiding through that.

From the excerpts above, it is evident that caregiving abilities are not limited to men's biological offspring. The participants' perceptions echoed the earlier perception of fathers having more than just the provider role to fill. From the above excerpts, the father's role as a protector and guide is once again evident.

4.6 THE EFFECTS OF FATHER ABSENCE FOR YOUNG WOMEN

Existing literature on the topic of father absence has proposed that the absence of a father impacts the development of children in a variety of ways. As noted in the literature review, children in absent father homes are proposed to be more likely to experience emotional disturbances (Langa, 2010). Studies exploring how boys experience father absence have suggested that the lack of good male role models may result in a "crisis" of masculine development (Richter, 2006, as cited in Langa, 2010). Other studies (Florsheitn, Tolan, & Gorman- Smith, 1998; Garbarino, 2001; Ramphele, 2002, as cited in Langa, 2010) have also found that boys who grew up without father figures were more vulnerable to drug abuse, violence in addition to gang activities.

The current study found that the chief challenge cited by the participants was in the area of relationships. There was a recurring conception amongst the participants of the current study that the absence of a father may affect the capacity of a girl to select a suitable life partner

and to form a stable and healthy relationship. These perceptions reflected the powerful influence of popular culture's understandings of what has come to be known as having "daddy issues". In popular dialogue, girls or women with "daddy issues" are defined as those who did not receive attention or validation from their fathers while growing up, as result of absence, negligence or turbulence. Consequently, these girls constantly seek validation from other men and this hinders their ability to establish healthy relationships later in life (Setiawan & Yuwono, 2011).

These views highlighted the manner in which young women develop the capacity to form relationships and that good and healthy relationships are also socially constructed. The participants believed that girls without their fathers would be at a disadvantage in romantic relationships, however, they separated themselves from this as if to infer that this is something that happens to "other people".

4.6.1 "Daddy Issues"

> **Priya:** I think that, not having a father or a biological father with you, makes you vulnerable in a way because ... to me it seems, your father is not in your life, you just going to accept the next male that will love you, or take care of you or look after you in a way. Which isn't right cause you will just accept the things that he says ... or what he does. If he hits you or abuses you, you just going to accept it, you gonna be like, oh no that is part of love, how a man should act. Cause you haven't had a male figure in a way, to tell you: no this is how it should be done and it shouldn't be this. So I think ... for girls ... its important to have fathers.

The excerpt above elicits images of a young woman waiting to be loved and cared for by a man as if there were an emptiness or a void waiting to be filled. This stems from the way that Priya believes that the lack of a father figure will result in a daughter accepting the "next male that will love her" as though to communicate a sense of urgency or a hunger waiting to be filled. The challenge, according to Priya, is that the daughter does not know how to recognise what she is waiting for and cannot discern what love looks like because she did not have a father from whom she learnt to model a healthy relationship with a man. Priya further suggests that this lack of ability to discern healthy romantic relationships results in girls being vulnerable to accepting abusive relationships as customary and satisfactory.

This view was echoed by Palesa:

> **Palesa:** ... because I stay in the township, and most of the ... families, they don't have fathers ... And we resort to other males, like sometimes you make mistakes when you resort to boyfriends, and people that don't care about you. But because you want that, you want that love from a man ... Because I feel like a woman gives a different kind of love, to a man, you know ... So you want to feel appreciated, because your dad is the one who makes you feel appreciated ... and then you go outside and look for it in the wrong places ... it is important that you find that person who will reassure you, that you know what, you are beautiful and you don't need ... certain things from other people.

Consistent with the Priya's views, Palesa states that the absence of a father figure results in girls looking to fill the roles of their absent fathers with other men. She states that girls "want love from a man" which highlights a sense of longing. This makes reference to an emptiness that is created by the absence of a father in a daughter's life. Palesa contends that the love that of a woman is different to the kind of love that is provided by a man to emphasise that this is not a deficiency that can be filled by a woman. By making this argument, Palesa seems to suggest that this is a space that cannot be filled by mothers. This is, however, consistent with Palesa's beliefs. In a preceding section (section 4.5), Palesa said that she believes that God created mothers and fathers to fill divergent but complementary roles. If it is true that fathers provide a distinctive type of love, it is not surprising that the lack of this love would result in feelings of emptiness. Further highlighting the distinctness of this love, Palesa also contends that daughters make the mistake of thinking that the emptiness they feel can be filled by other men such as boyfriends.

Based on the understanding in popular dialogue of what "daddy issues" are, it is evident that both Palesa's and Priya's views reflect these ideas. According to Setiawan and Yuwono (2011), what popular media often calls "daddy issues" is Freud's theory of the the female Oedipus complex (also known as the Electra complex). According to the psychoanalytic theory, this developmental stage takes place in the phallic stage when a girl becomes sexually attached to her father and tries to seduce him, while, at the same time, becoming more hostile towards her mother (Setiawan, & Yuwono, 2011). From a psychoanalytic perspective, these processes take place on the level of the unconscious and form a normal part of development. When a father is negligent, abusive or absent however, this process may be arrested and can

result in an unsuccessful resolution of the sexual desire towards the father (Setiawan, & Yuwono, 2011).

From this perspective, it is proposed that the relational void resulting from giving up the mother as love object may lead to a girl's internal self-representation as that of a "hole" to be filled, essentially, much like the mouth sucks the pacifier in the absence of the nipple (Elise, 1998). As a result of this self-representation, a girl looks to her father to fill relational space opened up by the loss of the mother but may find that she lacks a relationship with him (Elise, 1998). In this manner, the penis is symbolically withheld from her in the father's relational absence or distance (Elise, 1998). It is proposed that this lack of sexual and relational gratification may be schematised by a female as her body being empty of something (Elise, 1998). This may explain why daughters experience emotions of a void waiting to be filled.

Palesa further highlights other roles filled by fathers that are used to build young women's self-esteem by stating that fathers make daughters feel appreciated and beautiful. This is consistent with what is proposed by Berns (2007), Harris (2008) and Holborn and Eddy (2011) who propose that girl children raised in the absence of their father's involvement have a low sense of self-worth. From the psychoanalytic perspective, it stands to reason that the experience of having a void that seems insatiable may indeed result in a low self-esteem. A healthy self-esteem is an important part of healthy relationships. For instance, various studies (e.g. Bowling, & Werner-Wilson, 2000) have found a positive correlation between low esteem and risky sexual behaviour whereas healthy self-esteem has conversely been associated with responsible sexual attitudes and behaviours. From this understanding, a lack of self-esteem would indeed negatively affect the potential development of a healthy relationship and may further result in girls "making mistakes".

Miller and Fox (1987, as cited in Bowling, & Werner-Wilson, 2000) also found that adolescent sexual attitudes and behaviours are influenced by other factors. Based on their findings, Miller and Fox (1987, as cited in Bowling, & Werner-Wilson, 2000) listed these influences under three general categories: (a) biological and psychological factors within an individual; (b) proximal relationships in family and peer groups; and (c) social cultural contexts such as race, religion, school, and media (Bowling, & Werner-Wilson, 2000).

Taking these factors and the absence of a father into consideration, it is evident that they interact with each other to exert an influence on the daughter's ability to establish healthy relationships. For this reason, a deeper understanding is required in this regard.

Corresponding to Priya's and Palesa's views, Stacey also said that the lack of a father figure negatively affects a girl child's capacity to develop and maintain a healthy relationship:

> **Stacey:** I think that there needs to be some father figure otherwise there will be some problems in relationships especially. In how a girl sees men and how she relates to men.

This is evident in that she states that there will be "problems" within the relationship. From the excerpt, it is clear that these challenges stem from the manner in which the girl perceives and relates to men. According to Stacy, the absence of a father results in a girl having difficulty understanding how to relate to men. When Stacey was asked to elaborate on this point, she explained that daughters are inclined to select partners who bear a resemblance to their fathers:

> **Stacey:** There is tendency to like men that are like your father ... And if you do bring someone dodgy home, your father would be like ah ah, get out, you not good enough for my daughter, kind of thing. So things like that, seeing how a couple, how a stable married couple relate to each other, mother and father deal with problems within their relationship and still have the family and I think that makes a difference.

Stacey's argument does indeed seem to pose a challenge for girls who grow up without fathers because they have no exemplar to use as a basis or standard from which to select a suitable partner. However, if daughters select partners who are like their fathers, it stands to reason that a healthy relationship with her father can model a healthy relationship with other men and, similarly, an unhealthy relationship may cause her to have the same with other men. Stacey believes that her parental dyad serves as model for her to have healthy relationships.

As noted in the literature review, parent-child relationships are proposed to be the principal context in which children develop the capability to form a stable and fulfilling romantic relationship (Scharf, & Mayseless, 2008). It is within the relationship with the parent that a child develops expectations and schemas of their relationship with each parent and internalises a general model of close relationships (Scharf, & Mayseless, 2008). It is also

within the parent-child dyad that various capabilities considered to be essential for healthy relationships, such as communication, conflict resolution and emotion regulation is learned by children (Scharf, & Mayseless, 2008). These as well as the internalised models/schemas can then be applied within romantic relationships.

Scharf and Mayseless (2008) propose that both mothers and fathers are able to foster the capacity in children to develop and maintain healthy relationships for both girls and boys. They found that this was true even when they considered the development of daughters specifically. According to Scharf and Mayseless (2008), both the relationships with the mother and the father affect daughters' socialisation into romantic relationships. Girls acquire the skills to negotiate issues of intimacy and closeness in both relationships and both relationships can foster the development of an internalised model that later shapes future close relationships, including romantic relationships (Furman et al., 2002, as cited in Scharf, & Mayseless, 2008). Congruently, Cooper and Grotevant (1987, as cited in Scharf, & Mayseless, 2008) found that daughters' dating identity can be developed in both relationships on condition that the relationship encourages autonomy and separateness. These findings suggest that the capacity for a daughter to form healthy and stable relationships does not only develop within the relationship with a father.

Consistent with their perceptions of the distinct roles of mothers and fathers, it is evident that the participants in the current study suggest that the roles that mothers and fathers play in facilitating these processes are correspondingly dichotomised. The role of the father as protector, once again, emerged in Stacey's statement. Stacey proposed that in the event of an unsuitable partner being selected, the father can serve as protector that inhibits and prevents the "dodgy" partner from being part of his daughter's life. This places girls with absent fathers in a vulnerable position for the reason that they do not have a protector who weeds out the princes from the villains.

It is evident when reading the participants' statements above that there were definite opinions about the lack of a father figure affecting girls' capacity to establish healthy romantic relationships. It is apparent from the interviews that the vulnerabilities that develop in the area of romantic relationships are three-fold. Firstly, there is no model that the daughter can use as a standard from which to select a partner. This makes it difficult for girls without

fathers to relate to men. Secondly, there is no mother-father relationship to model healthy relationships on. The final disadvantage, according to the participants of the current study, is that there is no protector to hinder or prevent unsuitable partners from being part of the daughter's life. Existing literature of how children develop the capacity to build healthy relationships, however, suggests that there are various ways in which children develop in this regard. Furthermore, these perceptions were not consistent throughout. Nazima offered an opposite view to these vulnerabilities:

> **Nazima:** People may think that girls have some emotional damage due to their fathers not being there, like no father figure or no father support and they think that these girls are, let's say, loose. I think, I don't know, but ... if you have a good family system at home, just your mom, you should be okay. And you shouldn't just rely on just that one person to dictate whether you are going to turn out in some way, in one way or the other.

Nazima negates the popular conception of girls having emotional damage as a result of the absence of a father when she states that "people think that girls have some emotional damage due to their fathers not being there". Nazima understands this view while seemingly trying to separate herself from it. Instead, she offers a contradictory outlook by arguing that if a girl has a good family system, even if it comprises just a mother, the system should safeguard her against emotional harm. Although Nazima has a different opinion, she shows uncertainty by saying "I don't know".

She takes this argument further by minimalising the role of fathers. She asserts that one should not just rely on an individual (in this instance, a father) to "dictate how you going to turn out". There seems to be several tensions in the participant's perceptions. Firstly, she is uncertain whether daughters with absent fathers are emotionally damaged or not. Furthermore, Nazima argues that an individual parent is not enough to dictate how one's life pans out but she also argues for the sufficiency of the mother's role for the same purpose.

When Nazima was asked to elaborate on what she meant by the use of the word "loose" she referred to a recent incident on a television show:

> **Nazima:** I don't know ... I think in terms of gender-wise. Because we were watching idols and this girl, she wanted Gareth Cliff, and she came in a bikini ... and Gareth Cliff was like where is her father ... I mean I think it plays a great role ... I mean what kind of

> father would let ... his daughter out and on TV and Just show everything to the world ... you know type of thing. And I have had past experiences with my stepdad ... like I mean I have had to ask him, like is this outfit like okay, is this like appropriate and he would be like, yes no I would tell you if it wasn't.

The excerpts above seemed to further highlight Nazima's uncertainty with regards to how she was potentially affected by the absence of her father. Although in her earlier statement she contends that a healthy family environment is sufficient for the well-adjusted development of a daughter, she highlights the need for fathers in their daughters' lives. It is evident that "loose" girls behave and dress certain way; they wear clothing such as a bikini and expose their bodies on television shows in order to get the attention of the men they "want".

Nazima's perceptions seem to be grounded in gender stereotyping as briefly discussed in a preceding section (section 4.5). In the excerpt above it is evident that gender stereotypes are highly prescriptive and outline the acceptable behaviour for men and women (Prentice, & Carranza, 2002). From Nazima's excerpt it can be deduced that a girl with a father is required to dress modestly covering up her body therefore a girl who deviates from these standards must have an absent father. As is evident in the excerpt above, violations of or deviations from gender stereotypes are often met with various forms of punishment and devaluation (Prentice, & Carranza, 2002). This is evident in the way that the young woman on Idols has been perceived as "loose".

Furthermore, Nazima's the excerpt implies that "loose" girls do not typically have fathers present because she believes that fathers serve as authority figures who ensure that such behaviour does not occur. In this manner, Nazima indicates that the father's role is that of disciplinarian. When she questions the type of father who would allow such behaviour, she indicates her disbelief of a father being present. This rhetorical question also indicates her disapproval of the girl's behaviour and further indicates condemnation towards fathers who may not be able to exercise authority to prevent such behaviour. Thus, the daughter's failure to behave in a way that is deemed acceptable by the participant and the father's (if present) failure to prevent this behaviour, results in both roles being condemned and devalued. This indicates the influence of protective paternalism shown by Nazima who states that she consults her stepfather regarding her outfits and dress code. From this behaviour, it is evident that Nazima seeks and appreciates protective restrictions (restriction aimed at protecting her

reputation lest she also be labelled or perceived as “loose”) coming from her stepfather.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The current study found that fathers have significant roles in families and within their daughters' lives. It was found that this is especially true in the area of financial provision and in the daughters' capacity to develop healthy romantic relationships. Consistent with the findings of other research, the findings of this study suggest that daughters in single mother homes live in poorer households than in homes where there is a dual income. In terms of relationships, it emerged that daughters with absent father figures find it difficult to relate to men. This makes it difficult for them to establish healthy romantic relationships.

It also emerged that the roles of fathers cannot be viewed as more important than the role of mothers and significant others such as extended family members (Morrell, 2006) and social father figures (Langa, 2010). It was evident that views that present father absence as damaging to children, underplay the roles of extended family members in children's lives and present the patriarchal notions of traditional family systems where the father is regarded as the provider and protector (Berns, 2007; Ceballo, & McLoyd, 2002; Franz, Lensche, & Schmitz, 2003; Olson, Ceballo, & Park, 2002; Whitehead, & Holland, 2003, as cited in Roman, 2011). The findings furthermore present a romanticised image of a father (Morrell, 2006) because many children, sons and daughters alike, have unsatisfactory relationships with their fathers.

According to the findings of the current study, mothers play a significant role in providing for their children and creating stable and happy homes. To suggest that children require their fathers more than their mothers, is an under appreciation of *imbokoto* or the grinding stone, i.e., mothers and women in the community who care for children (Richter, Manegold, Pather, & Mason, 2004).

5.1 LIMITATIONS OF THE CURRENT STUDY

Amongst the strengths of working with a small sample when conducting qualitative research and analysis is the rich and detailed data that it provides (Durrheim, 2006). However the limitation of this method is that it restricts the generalisation of the findings. Due to the research only being conducted with seven participants of a specific sample population, i.e., young women students from the University of the Witwatersrand, the findings cannot be

taken as a general representation of the experience of all young women in South Africa with absent fathers.

Another limitation frequently experienced in qualitative research is with recorded interviews. Participants may experience anxiety because they feel that their views are going to be on a permanent record. Although the researcher tried to prevent possible feelings of anxiety by building rapport with participants and by reiterating confidentiality and the safekeeping of records, it needs to be acknowledged that this awareness may have prevented some from expressing themselves openly.

Although the researcher drew on a semi-structured interview guide (Appendix B) during the interview process, spontaneous probing and the researcher's use of different wording may have negatively affected the uniformity of the findings across interviews. The use of open-ended questions may also be seen to have prompted participants into providing ambiguous answers. Additionally, the participants may not have all understood the questions the researcher asked in the same way.

An additional limitation of qualitative research is the subjectivity of the researcher. In this regard, the researcher took steps to ensure the trustworthiness and the validity of the research by acknowledging and embracing subjectivity, while also reducing the influence of subjective views and personal discourse, making use of reflective notes. Repeated re-reading of the transcripts and being open to and honouring constructions contradicting her own correspondingly helped to limit the researcher's subjective views in the analysis stage of the research. Despite these measures however, the analysis and organisation of the results cannot be regarded as empirically definitive. Consequently, the discussion is acknowledged as offering only one of many potential sets of interpretations.

5.2 RECOMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

During the analysis of data, the researcher became aware of follow up questions that could have been asked during the interviews to give the data collected more depth and to deepen the understanding of the topic at hand. It was evident during analysis and the writing up of the discussion that the researcher had merely scratched the surface on various emergent themes. This was especially true in terms of understanding the implications of the death of a father in

the young women's lives. Another area which could have been explored in greater depth is the participants' understandings of the implications that father absence has for the establishment and maintenance of healthy romantic relationships, especially considering that this was such a prominent theme. It would therefore be of benefit for future research to explore these concepts in greater depth.

This will especially be beneficial considering that the current research found that the participants alluded to potential risky sexual behaviour resulting from an inability to form healthy romantic relationships. This seems to stem from a need or void that the participants seem to experience. The challenges that may occur as a result of this need are unwanted; unplanned pregnancy, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. These challenges do not only affect the individuals but they affect communities as well. Trickett (2009), for instance, argues that these issues affect multiple sectors of the community and cut across various ecological levels of the community such as individuals, families, school policies and programs, as well as health departments. If indeed absent father homes contribute to these challenges, interventions in this regard should be considered at multiple levels.

As a result of the small size of the sample, it is advised that it would be more effective to conduct further research that explores how young women of different races and cultural backgrounds present multiple voices on the topic of father absence in post-apartheid South Africa. It may perhaps also be beneficial to conduct research in which same-race and mixed-race groups are utilised. It is believed that this will broaden the understanding on the extent to which race and culture influence young women's experiences of father absence.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: MACC/13/012 IH**
PROJECT TITLE:	Experiences of father absence: The subjective accounts of young women who grow up without their fathers.
INVESTIGATORS	Molongoana K.R
DEPARTMENT	Psychology
DATE CONSIDERED	08/04/13
DECISION OF COMMITTEE*	Approved

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

DATE: 06 May 2013

CHAIRPERSON
(Professor Andrew Thatcher)

cc Supervisor:

Dr. G Khunou
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 2015

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE GUIDE

1. What do you think are the responsibilities of fathers?
2. Do you know your father?
3. How long has he not been a part of your life?
4. Why has he not been a part of your life?
5. What have your experiences been growing up without your father?
6. Do you think fathers have unique responsibilities to mothers?
7. Do you think growing up without a father has affected your personal views in any way?
8. How do you feel your life would have been different if your father was involved?

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

Department of Psychology
School of Human & Community Development
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. Fax: +27-11-717-4559.

15 March 2013

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Participant,

Hello, my name is Rachel Molongoana. I am a psychology student currently completing my Masters degree at the University of Witwatersrand. As a part of my coursework, I am required conduct a research study and submit a research report on my findings. To meet the requirement, I am conducting a study exploring how women experience growing up without their fathers. The aim is to explore personal experiences of young women who grow up without their fathers. I would like to extend an invitation to you to participate as your input will be invaluable to the study.

Participation will involve that you partake in an individual interview conducted by me. The interview will be audio recorded; upon you giving consent to it being recorded. The duration of the interview will be an hour to an hour and a half. The interview will be conducted at a time and place convenient for you. This recording will be used to ensure that your experiences and responses are accurately captured. All recordings will be kept safe in a secure room on the university premises, to which only my supervisor and I will have access.

Audio files and transcripts will be destroyed after two years should publications arise or after 6 years should no publications arise. Confidentiality of all responses will be ensured. Should a direct quote be used, your identity will be protected by the use of a pseudonym.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary; therefore, you will in no way be advantaged or disadvantaged by choosing to participate or not participate in this study. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, and will not be penalised for your decision by the researcher, the supervisor or the university in any way. You may get feedback on the group trends found in this study; a summary will be made available to you, upon request. This will be available approximately a year after the date of interview. You may request the summary by contacting me via email address provided.

The results of this study will be included in a research report which will be submitted to my supervisor, the Faculty of Humanities and external supervisors at the University of Witwatersrand. The report may in addition be used for publication, psycho-education seminars and conference presentations.

Should any emotional discomfort be experienced during or following the interview, for which you desire counselling, you will be referred for counselling at:

The South African Depression and Anxiety Group: 0800 567 567

Lifeline: 0861 322 322

Emthonjeni Centre (University of the Witwatersrand): (011) 717-4513.

Should you have any questions or concerns pertaining to the research or the interview, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor on the contact information provided below.

Thank you for taking the time to read the information provided. I look forward to your participation.

Kind Regards,

Ms R. Molongoana
rachelmolongoana@yahoo.com

Dr Grace Khunou (Supervisor)
Grace.Khunou@wits.ac.za

APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM: AUDIO RECORDED INTERVIEW

Department of Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. Fax: +27-11717-4559.

I, _____, have read the information provided about this study and confirm that I understand what is expected of me as a volunteer participant. I agree to participate in the interview conducted by Rachel Molongoana for her research exploring the experiences of girls who grow up without their fathers. **I also give my consent for the interview to be recorded**. I understand that all information including tapes and transcripts will be kept securely and will only be accessed by researcher (Rachel Molongoana) and her supervisor. I am aware of my right not to answer any questions that I do not feel comfortable answering. I acknowledge that, I have been informed of my right to withdraw from the interview and participation in the study at any time without any penalties. I understand that my identity will be kept confidential, and no information identifying me will be used in transcripts or in the report.

I consent for my experiences to be included in the research report which will be presented at various academic levels.

Signature _____ Date

APPENDIX E: ADVERTISEMENT PUT UP ON NOTICE BOARDS AROUND CAMPUS AT UTHOMBO BUILDING

Research Participation

Experiences of father absence: The subjective accounts of young women who grew up without a father

What:

- The aim is to explore personal experiences of young women who grow up without their fathers.
- Participation involves a face to face audio recorded interview conducted by the researcher
- Duration: 1-1.5 hours

Who:

- Female Wits students
- Age: 18-21
- Registered under the School of Human and Community development
- Raised without a father

When:

- Beginning May - July 2013
- At a time most convenient for you

Where:

- Wits Campus: 1 Jan Smuts Avenue, Johannesburg, 2001
- Anywhere on the Wits campus most convenient for you (East and West Campus)

Interested? Your participation will be invaluable!! Please contact us!!

Ms. R. Molongoana (Researcher)
rachelmolongoana@yahoo.com
060 452 4538

Dr. Grace Khunou(Supervisor)
Grace.Khunou@wits.ac.za

Looking forward to your participation