

**FATHERS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN
UNDER SIX YEARS: A SOCIAL CAPITAL PERSPECTIVE AND IMPLICATIONS
FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN THE EAST LONDON EDUCATION
DISTRICT**

BY

CLYDE GLENITH GRAHAM ADAMS

200508817

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY OF THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE**

SUPERVISOR

PROFESSOR CHINEDU OKEKE

2016

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, Clyde, Glenith, Graham, Adams, hereby solemnly declare that to the best of my knowledge and understanding, this thesis titled “Fathers’ experiences with involvement in the social development of their 0-6 year olds: a Social Capital perspective” is my original work. Information derived from other sources has been acknowledged through quotations and referencing.

SIGNATURE.....

STUDENT NO: 200508817

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

- My wife, Georgenia;
- My children, Chirwyn, Joni, Vaughan, Geanaine, Ashante and Chezhaan;
- Brenda, Cherrol and Lee-Roy for your support;
- My late parents, Sebarney, Maureen, Adam and Johanna as well as my late brothers, Hadley, Roy, Peter and late sister Marlene;
- All my in-laws for your assistance and support;
- The staff of Aspiranza Primary School for their on-going support; and
- My extended family and friends who wished me well in all my endeavours.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To our Almighty God, who cared and guided me through all the challenges I faced until the completion of this thesis. All the honour and glory belongs to Him.

An expression of gratitude goes to my supervisor, Professor C. I. O. Okeke, for his unwavering support, guidance and advice even whilst he went through personal challenges. I do not think I could have completed this thesis if it was not for his patience, tolerance and motivation.

Thanks to all participants, as well as the East London district, for allowing me to collect the data that made this thesis possible.

ABSTRACT

The experiences of twenty fathers were explored to understand the involvement in the social development of children under six years. The main research question that guided the study was: what are fathers' experiences with involvement in the social development of their children under the age of six years and what implications do these have for early childhood development? A social capital perspective was followed. The qualitative data was collected through the use of semi-structured interviews. The data was then analysed qualitatively. Results show that although most of the respondents could not give a definition of the concept of social development, they, however, understood the importance of parents playing a role in the development of a child. Fathers understood their role as supportive, nurturing and being there for their children. Fathers also understood their basic role as being the provider and protector. They also perceived their role as being authoritative and see themselves as the main disciplinarians. Results reveal that most schools do not offer programs specifically designed to encourage fathers to participate. Most importantly, results indicate that fathers' interest in a variety of sporting activities, information sharing and talking about challenges both the schools as well as fathers face, are some of the ways fathers would like to be involved. Findings also indicate that although fathers acknowledged the role of the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) as mainly that of financial contributor in order to facilitate the skills development as well as that of information dissemination. However, fathers who took part in the study did not understand how the DoBE skills development agenda is envisaged for fathers. Notwithstanding, the respondents were quite clear that a father has an influential role to play in their children's development. It also emerged that the greater the involvement, the more positive the influence on the child's development. This study concludes that the presence of fathers in children's lives is known to contribute significantly to their chances of experiencing positive developmental outcomes. Although the father-child relationship's influences on children's social competence have received increased attention in general, research on fathers' understanding of their roles, involvement with their children as well as challenges confronting them with their involvement is scant. Based this the above, a number of recommendations have been made.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|---------------|
| DECLARATION..... | ii |
| DEDICATION..... | iii |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... | iv |
| ABSTRACT..... | v |
| CHAPTER 1..... | 1 |
| INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| 1.0 The research context..... | 1 |
| 1.1 Background of the study..... | 4 |
| 1.2 Statement of the problem..... | 10 |
| 1.3 Rationale for the study..... | 11 |
| 1.4 Main research question..... | 12 |
| 1.4.1 Sub-research questions..... | 12 |
| 1.5 Purposes of the study..... | 12 |
| 1.6 Scope of the study..... | 13 |
| 1.7 Significance of the study..... | 13 |
| 1.8 Definition of terms..... | 15 |
| 1.9 Organisation of the Report..... | 16 |
| CHAPTER 2..... | 27 |
| LITERATURE REVIEW..... | 27 |
| 2.1 Introduction..... | 27 |
| 2.2 Theoretical Framework: Social Capital Theory..... | 27 |
| 2.3 Review of Empirical Studies..... | 32 |
| 2.3.1 Early Childhood Development (ECD) in the South African context..... | 32 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| 2.3.2 Social development of children..... | 39 |
| 2.3.3 Parental involvement: A generalist approach..... | 45 |
| 2.3.4 Fatherhood and fathers' involvement in early childhood development in South Africa..... | 64 |
| 2.3.5 Constraints to fathers' involvement in early childhood development..... | 77 |
| 2.3.6 Strategies for active fathers' involvement in early childhood development..... | 89 |
| 2.3.7 Summary of literature review..... | 105 |
| CHAPTER 3..... | 107 |
| RESEARCH METHODOLOGY..... | 107 |
| 3.0 Introduction..... | 107 |
| 3.1 Research paradigm..... | 107 |
| 3.2 Research approach..... | 109 |
| 3.3 Design of the study..... | 111 |
| 3.4 Location of the Study..... | 112 |
| 3.5 Population of the study..... | 115 |
| 3.6 Sample size..... | 115 |
| 3.7 Sampling procedure..... | 115 |
| 3.8 Instrument for data collection..... | 115 |
| 3.9 Instruments' trustworthiness..... | 118 |
| 3.10 Data collection procedures..... | 119 |
| 3.11 Data analysis procedures..... | 120 |
| 3.12 Ethical considerations and requirements..... | 122 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| CHAPTER 4..... | 126 |
| DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION..... | 126 |
| 4.1 Introduction..... | 126 |
| 4.1.1 Approach followed..... | 127 |
| 4.1.2 Description of the study sample..... | 128 |
| 4.2 Fathers' experiences with the involvement in the social development of their children..... | 128 |
| 4.2.1 Understanding of the concept of social development..... | 129 |
| 4.2.2 Fathers' description of their roles in the social development of their children..... | 134 |
| 4.2.3 The availability of programs at schools targeting fathers' involvement..... | 138 |
| 4.2.4 Personal involvement of fathers in school programs..... | 142 |
| 4.2.5 The role of mother involvement versus father involvement..... | 145 |
| 4.2.6 Factors inhibiting father involvement..... | 147 |
| 4.2.7 Strategies schools could use to involve fathers more in their programs..... | 150 |
| 4.2.8 Strategies the Department of Basic Education could put in place to encourage involvement of fathers in early education of the child..... | 153 |
| 4.2.9 Any other thoughts participants might have on fathers' involvement..... | 154 |
| 4.2.10 Chapter summary..... | 157 |
| CHAPTER 5..... | 158 |
| DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... | 158 |
| 5.1 Introduction..... | 158 |
| 5.2 Objectives and methodology of the study..... | 159 |
| 5.3 Summary of the main findings of the study..... | 159 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| 5.4 Discussion of the findings of the study..... | 161 |
| 5.4.1 Understanding of the concept of social development..... | 161 |
| 5.4.2 Fathers' description of their roles in the social development of their children..... | 162 |
| 5.4.3 The availability of programs at schools targeting fathers' involvement..... | 163 |
| 5.4.4 Personal involvement of fathers in school programs..... | 165 |
| 5.4.5 The role of mother involvement versus father involvement..... | 166 |
| 5.4.6 Factors inhibiting father involvement..... | 168 |
| 5.4.7 Strategies schools could use to involve fathers more in their programs..... | 169 |
| 5.4.8 Strategies that the Department of Basic Education could promote to encourage involvement of fathers in early childhood education..... | 170 |
| 5.5 Conclusions..... | 171 |
| 5.6 Implications of the study..... | 173 |
| 5.7 Limitations of the study..... | 174 |
| 5.8 Recommendations..... | 175 |
| 5.9 Areas for further studies..... | 175 |
| REFERENCES..... | 176 |
| LIST OF APPENDIXES. | 191 |
| APPENDIX A..... | 191 |
| APPENDIX B..... | 193 |
| APPENDIX C..... | 194 |
| APPENDIX D..... | 196 |
| APPENDIX E..... | 199 |

| | |
|------------------------|------------|
| APPENDIX F..... | 200 |
| APPENDIX G..... | 201 |

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 The research context

Social capital has been an indispensable research tool for researchers investigating relationships within families and their impact on the human capital development of children (Akcomak, 2011; Razmi & Bazzazan, 2012). This approach argues that individuals within the family are rooted in interpersonal relationships (Coleman, 1988). Increasing evidence shows that social cohesion within the family is critical for children's social development to prosper. A plethora of literature suggests that the availability and the quality of social capital within the family can have a direct impact on the human capital that children acquire that enables them to make meaningful social development in life (Edwards, Franklin & Holland, 2003; Akcomak, 2011; Razmi & Bazzazan, 2012; Hasan & Bagde, 2013; Tzanakis, 2013). Social capital of the family refers to the relationships and norms that shape the quality and quantity of social interactions within the family. It refers to the glue that holds families together; the shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within the family (Edwards et al. 2003).

Coleman (1988) places families on centre-stage as a primordial organisation that has its origins in the relationships established at childbirth. He identifies social capital as a resource within the family that inheres in the structure of intergenerational relationships, especially among parents as well as between parents and their children. According to Coleman (1988), Edwards et al. (2003) and Tzanakis (2013), parents invest in their children, as the next generation of the family who will, in turn, support them in later life, by being physically present, giving them attention and developing an

intense relationship with them that involves meaningful talks about personal matters and expectations of their educational achievement. Edwards et al. (2003) argue that the more children parents may have, the more likelihood that this attention will experience dilution, which means parents will begin to have divided attention for their numerous children.

Nevertheless, Tzanakis (2013) argues that this resource, in the form of attention from parents to their children, enables children to positively increase their human capital, notably, educational achievement, which then enables them to gain greater social development in future. According to Edwards et al. (2003), this process of social capital generation within families integrally links to social capital as a resource outside the family, where parents and children are embedded in close, local relationships.

This notion of social capital was applied by this researcher in the investigation of the experiences of fathers with involvement in the social development of their children under the age of six years through a social capital perspective as well as citing possible implications for early childhood development. Mishra (2012) argues that the first six years of a child's life have been recognized as the most critical ones for optimal development. Mishra deduces that since the process of human development is essentially cumulative in nature, investment in the programmes for young children (0-6 years) has begun to be accepted as the very foundation for basic education and lifelong learning and development. Bhise and Sonawat (2013) affirm the importance of early childhood education in laying a firm foundation for personality development of our young generation. They argue that qualitatively rich early childhood education is the urgent need of the day as it determines the outcome of children in terms of productive and happy individuals.

Earlier, Bar-On (2004) states that formal childhood care and education has gradually become accepted as a sound private and public investment in helping children to optimize their potential. Early advances in the lives of young children enhance their developmental outcomes and improve their life chances, thereby significantly contributing to national development in the long run. Early childhood development services play a critical role in mitigating the effects of poverty and giving South Africa's children the best start in life (Berry, Dawes, Labantwana & Biersteker, 2013). Many governments also realized the importance of investing more in early childhood development. According to South Africa's Basic Education Minister, Angie Motshekga, early childhood is a critical period in an individual's development as this is when the foundations for physical, cognitive and emotional development are laid. The Minister also stated that it is now commonly held that earlier educational interventions can be expected to have greater returns than later remedial interventions (Berry *et al.*, 2013).

An important component of early childhood development is the home environment. In order to reach the desired outcomes for the growing child, the holistic development of the child as well as achieving school readiness, support from the families and parental involvement, in particular, becomes paramount. In an earlier study, Brent, McBride and Rane (1996) argue that an important, yet overlooked strategy in the effort to increase parents' involvement in early childhood programs is involving fathers or other significant male role figures. Brent *et al.* (1996) further argue that the notion that all fathers of children from low-income and high-risk backgrounds absent themselves from child-rearing is a myth that permeates program developments in this area. According to Brent *et al.* (1996), policies identify parents as targets for their outreach initiatives but discourage the participation of men in their implementation. Further, Brent *et al.* (1996) note that the lack of initiatives designed to encourage male

involvement in pre-kindergarten programs for children who are at risk for later school failure does not build upon the strengths that many of these men can bring to the parenting situation. Lamb (1990), cited in Brent *et al.* (1996), argues that when men become actively involved, they can have a positive impact on many aspects of children's development.

Although the importance of parental involvement in the education and social development of their children is well documented, it is doubtful how and what roles fathers play during this period of the developmental stage of the child. Within the South African context, fathers may be perceived as not being very involved in the early social development of their child. It is this perceived lack of fathers' active presence and involvement in the social development of their 0-6 year old children and its implications for early childhood development that this study investigated through a social capital perspective.

1.1 Background of the study

Social development involves learning the values, knowledge and skills that enable children to relate to others effectively and to contribute in positive ways to family, school and the community at large. This kind of learning is passed on to children directly by those who care for and teach them, as well as indirectly through social relationships within the family or with friends, and through children's participation in the cultures around them. Through their relationships with others and their growing awareness of social values and expectations, children build a sense of who they are and of the social roles available to them.

As children develop socially, they both respond to the influences around them and play an active part in shaping their relationships. While parents and caregivers are the first

and most important influencers on children's social development, there are many other influential aspects of the social environment. Children's development is influenced by wider networks of social support such as their communities, cultural or social groups. These networks provide opportunities for children to develop their social awareness and skills as they relate with different people and experience a range of roles and expectations.

According to Martin (2013) cited in Biersteker (2013), the pre-1994 policy terrain in South Africa was marked by racially-biased social and economic programmes, which impacted negatively on the well-being of the majority of South Africa's children, especially African children. This impact was felt from conception and had devastating consequences for the survival, health, well-being and development of children in their early years. Martin (2013) further notes that 1994 marked a turning point in the political trajectory as well as the lives of children in South Africa. In the ensuing years of policy and programmatic development, the prioritisation of infants and young children was not initially an express priority of the incoming democratic government; instead, children (as holistic group) were prioritised. However, as the policy terrain progressed and science and law called for the prioritisation of young children, there emerged a clear and marked progression in the development of more focussed early childhood development (ECD) policies targeting the realization of holistic ECD services for children aged 0-9, with a specific focus on those aged 0-4 living in poverty (Martin, 2013).

Berry *et al.* (2013) state that young children in South Africa grow up in a profoundly unequal society wherein poverty threatens the early development of the majority of these children. Berry *et al.* (2013) equally state that early childhood is a vulnerable period; a supportive living environment and an enabling social and political context are

fundamental to ensure children's sound development. South Africa sits on the cusp of a new dispensation such as the National Development Plan (NDP). Berry *et al.* (2013) recognise investment in early childhood development (ECD) and education as central in building a more developed and productive society by 2030. The prioritisation of ECD in the NDP provides an opportunity to fashion the next generation of South Africa's citizens and improves the nation's economic, social and political environment (Berry *et al.*, 2013).

However, according to Richter (2013), the scientific pendulum on ECD has swung several times from a predominantly deterministic to a predominantly dynamic standpoint. Richter (2013) points out that this was challenged by scientists who argued that invariance in environments, particularly the fact that adverse environments seldom improved, made early experiences appear to be more influential than they actually were. Nevertheless, Richter (2013) argues that regardless of which way the pendulum swings, no scholar of child development has ever suggested that early experiences are not important.

Richter (2013) notes that recent scientific advances in neuroscience and genetics, as well as results of lifespan studies, have tipped the balance decisively towards asserting with confidence that early life development has a strong determining effect on a broad range of adolescent and adult outcomes. She further argues that long-term outcomes attributable to early life experience can be examined under three broad headings namely: health, education and productivity, and psycho-social adjustment. In motivating the above, Richter (2013) argues that poor growth and exposure to adverse environmental events during foetal development and early infancy are associated with chronic diseases in adulthood. She also argues that stunted growth and low levels of home stimulation are associated with poor cognitive development,

low levels of schooling and reduce adult income. Poor growth and exposure to toxic stress during foetal development and early infancy are associated with mental illness and social and psychological adjustment in adulthood (Richter, 2013).

There is sufficient evidence to indicate that early childhood represents the best opportunity for breaking the inter-generational cycle of multiple disadvantages including chronic under-nutrition, poor health, gender discrimination and low socio-economic status (Mishra, 2012). Mishra (2012) further notes that family and community-based holistic interventions in early childhood to promote and protect psychosocial and cognitive development have multiplicative benefits throughout the life cycle. The Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency (DPME) of South Africa and the inter-Departmental Steering Committee on Early Childhood Development commissioned a Diagnostic Review of the ECD sector in October 2011. Its purpose was the evaluation of the current South African ECD paradigm and policy. The report focused on the role of the state as well as the implementation of ECD services and programmes. The report defines early child development (ECD) services as all services that promote or support the development of young children (Berry *et al.*, 2013).

Significantly, Berry *et al.* (2013) point out the gaps between policy and practice, disjuncture across age groups, and inequity. The report further points out that although the White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education and the Children's Act sketch a broad vision of comprehensive ECD, the different sectors in the provision of ECD services act largely in isolation from one another without shared vision, goals and accountability. Richter, Desmond, Hosegood, Madhavan, Makiwane, Makusha, Morell and Swartz (2012) allude to the fact that South Africa has one of the highest rates of father absence in the world. Only about a third of South African preschool children live

in the same homes with their fathers and their mothers (Richter *et al.*, 2012). Maternal uncles and grandfathers, as well as older brothers assume the role of social fathers. Richter *et al.* (2012) argue that fathers' absence is associated with adverse consequences for children, women, families and men.

Earlier, Wardle (2004) argues that the inclusion of men in early childhood programs has garnered considerable attention over the years. This development was attributed by Wardle (1991) to three related trends including: lack of men in the lives of many of our young children, the dearth of men in the early childhood field and an increased interest in father involvement in early childhood programs. Wardle (2004) further argues that while almost everyone agrees with the need to get men involved in the lives of young children, solutions to the dilemma are few and far between; the field of early childhood is an overwhelmingly female one. Rosenberg, Jeffrey, Wilcox and Bradford (2006) also argue that fathers are far more than just second adults in the home. They also argue that involved fathers bring positive benefits to their children that another person would bring. Rosenberg *et al.* (2006) further argue that fathers have a direct impact on the well-being of their children and that professionals working with fathers in the emotionally charged arena of child protective services must have a working understanding of the literature that addresses this impact.

Rosenberg *et al.* (2006) lay out the connection between fathers and child outcomes, including cognitive ability, educational achievement, psychological well-being, and social behaviour. According to Rosenberg *et al.* (2006), one of the most important influences a father can have on his child is the quality of the relationship with the mother of his child, that is, the wife. Rosenberg *et al.* (2006) argue that if there is a good relationship between the father and mother, the father will be more likely to be involved with the children, and children will psychological and emotional be more

healthier. International research and some studies from South Africa indicate that children whose fathers are present achieve better at school, have higher self-esteem and are more secure in their relationships with partners of the opposite sex (Flouri & Buchanan, 2002). These authors also argue that men not only contribute to women's well-being and happiness, but also buffer children against neglectful or harsh parenting by a distant, demoralized or overburdened mothers.

According to Brent *et al.* (1996), the lack of initiatives designed to encourage male involvement in pre-kindergarten programs for children who are at risk for later school failure does not build on the strengths that men can bring to the parenting situation. Brent *et al.* (1996) stress the fact that when men become actively involved, they can have positive impacts on many aspects of a child's development. Mishra (2012) who did a study on parental involvement in early childhood care and education concludes that parental educational exposure is very crucial in the positive development of children. Unfortunately, the views and impact of the male figure in the study did not take centre stage. Moreover, Graves and Wright (2011) examined the scope of parental involvement at school entry to determine if parental involvement was related to academic achievement at school entry. They conclude that even if men were interested in involving themselves, available programs were not father-friendly. Richter *et al.* (2012) conclude that children benefit from the financial support, care and protection by men and argue that a man can make all the difference to a child's life by preventing or stopping abuse perpetrated by other men.

Despite the above revelations on the importance of men in the early social development of their children, empirical evidence on men's involvement remains scanty. Against this background, the present study undertook an investigation of the experiences of fathers with involvement in the social development of their children who

were under the age of six years and attempted to establish its implications for early childhood development policies and practices for South Africa. A social capital perspective was followed.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Although there is a plethora of literature that shows how increased involvement by the fathers can contribute to better social development for their children (WHO, 2007; Koenig-Visagie & van Eeden, 2013; Izugbara, Tikkanen & Barron, 2014; Seward, 2014), early childhood development sectors in South Africa still have difficulty in attracting and increasing the participation of fathers. Studies have shown the irreplaceable benefits to children, women and even men themselves when they are involved in the education of their children (Richter, 2006; Ball & Wahedi, 2010; Koenig-Visagie & van Eeden, 2013; Izugbara *et al.* 2014). Notwithstanding, the involvement of fathers in the early social development of their children in the rural communities of South Africa remains very scanty. Despite various governmental initiatives aimed at supporting effective parental participation in the early education of their children, the early childhood development sector in South Africa still struggles to attract fathers and male figures into the sector. Studies show that having an involved father in a child's household can make huge difference in the life of that child (Richter, Chikovore & Makusha, 2010). However, not too many children within the South African society are fortunate enough to have an involved father in their lives.

Although numerous studies have been carried out with a focus on 'fathers in the education and lives' of their children in South Africa (Koenig-Visagie *et al.* 2013; Marcisz, 2013; Mhongo & Budlender, 2013), these studies and many more appear to focus more on what fathers should (but have failed to) do in the lives of their children.

Although numerous studies have suggested constraints or challenges confronting fathers, which may affect their commitment to their children, studies specifically targeting fathers in order to understand their perspectives are rare in South Africa. Without investigating fathers' experiences from the fathers own perspectives and how their involvement impacts on the transition of their children to positive adulthood, discussions on how such phenomena could impact transformative intervention within the family and the larger society would remain speculative. It is, therefore, necessary to investigate the experiences of fathers in their involvement in the social development of children under six years; doing so was aimed to implicate the provision of early childhood development services in the East London Education District.

1.3 Rationale for the study

Many studies have shown that parental involvement in the positive development of children is critical. Notwithstanding the fact that mothers are the ones usually associated with parental involvement, numerous studies, as have been indicated above, show that fathers' involvement has definite benefits for not only the children but for the whole family. International research and studies from South Africa indicate that children whose fathers are present achieve better at school, have higher self-esteem and are more secure in their relationships with partners of the opposite sex (Flouri & Buchanan, 2002; Carlson, 2006; Schacht *et al.*, 2009; Richter *et al.*, 2011; Mishra, 2012; Berry *et al.*, 2013). In spite of this, it would appear that little or nothing is known about the involvement of fathers in the social development of their children. Investigating fathers' involvement in the early education of their 0-6 year old children through a social capital perspective, as well as citing possible implications for early childhood development, offered the researcher firsthand opportunity to learn and

understand their views on their involvement in the early social development of their children. This current study became imperative because although the importance of parental involvement in the education and social development of their children is well documented, it was doubtful how and what roles fathers play during this period of the developmental stage of the child.

1.4 Main research question

The main research question this study addressed was: what are fathers' experiences with involvement in the social development of their children under the age of six years and what implications do these have for early childhood development?

1.4.1 Sub-research questions

The following were the sub-research questions that guided the actual fieldwork:

1.4.1.1 How do fathers understand their roles in the social development of their 0-6 year old children?

1.4.1.2 How do fathers get involved in the social development of their 0-6 year old children?

1.4.1.3 What are the challenges confronting fathers towards their involvement in the social development of their 0-6 year old children?

1.4.1.4 What are the implications of these for early childhood education policies and practices?

1.5 Purposes of the study

Generally, this study investigated the experiences of fathers' involvement in the social development of their children under the age of six years in an attempt to obtain data

that may positively implicate the policies and practices of early childhood development. Specifically, the purposes of the study were to:

- 1.5.1 Establish fathers' understanding of their roles in the social development of 0-6 year old children;
- 1.5.2 Understand how fathers get involved in the social development of their 0-6 year old children;
- 1.5.3 Find out the challenges confronting fathers towards their involvement in the social development of their 0-6 year old children.
- 1.5.4 Establish the implications of these for early childhood education policies and practices.

1.6 Scope of the study

This study focused on the experiences of fathers regarding their involvement in the social development of their 0-6 year old children through a social capital perspective. In terms of content, discussions centred on fatherhood and the involvement of father-figures in early childhood education of their children aged 0-6 years in order to understand its social implications. In addition, factors impacting on social development of children and possible implications for early childhood development were also investigated. As already severally mentioned, the study was theoretically informed by the social capital perspective. Culturally diverse fathers from a variety of early childhood settings were targeted in the study. Geographically, the study took place at rural and urban preschools located in one of the Education Districts in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa.

1.7 Significance of the study

The researcher contends that empirical data contained in this study will have far-reaching significance in many ways as follows:

The findings of this study will be of utmost importance in the way fathers see their roles. Hopefully, the outcome of the present study (when taken back to the fathers) will help instill in them a desire to become more actively involved in their children's lives. This can be a valuable guide for men to teach their children that they are loved and respected, and it can help ensure that children, especially boys, do not feel the necessity to act out to get their fathers' attention. Involved fathers are likely to be more confident to see their interactions with their children positively.

The researcher equally contends that when adequately publicised, the findings reported in this thesis will impact further developments in terms of the District, Provincial and National level ECD policies. The various levels of governments will then aim to develop policies that may assist the fathers in taking active roles in the early beginning of their children.

Knowledge derived from this study may change the way preschools set-up their childcare and development activities and programs which, which are currently empirically supported to favour women than men. This is because knowledge of the positive influence fathers' involvement may have on their children might focus the ECD sector planning to target male figures to be more involved in the education of their children.

In terms of recruitment of educators, the findings reported in this study (when adequately publicised) may assist preschool centres' principals to be more readily susceptible to include male educators in their schools for 0-6 year old children. The involvement of a father figure in the life of a child can open up many exciting opportunities which can assist in facilitating children's learning as well as designing a curriculum to help children achieve developmental and learning goals. Therefore,

there could be far-reaching possible implications of the findings of this study for early childhood development.

Moreover, this study will equally make very important contribution to existing literature on men's involvement in the early development of their children. Such important contribution to knowledge will continue to enrich the professional development of educators themselves. This is because educators will understand better, various ways to deal with fathers themselves in order to continue to attract their involvement in the early education of their children.

1.8 Definition of terms

Throughout the body of this thesis, certain terms have been used by this researcher in the following context:

1.8.1 Social capital

Social capital entails the healthy network of relationships that individuals require to enable them to function and perform effectively well within a given social setting.

1.8.2 A Father

A father is a male figure that provides the protection, structure, moral values, vision and purpose on which a family coheres.

1.8.3 Involvement

Parental involvement ranges from involvement at school as a governor, helping in the classroom or during lunch breaks, reading to the child at home, teaching songs or nursery rhymes, and assisting with homework (Adams, Forsyth & Mitchell, 2009). The authors define involved parents as those “who actively share in the responsibility for student and school performance by working in synchrony with teachers, administrators and other parents to shape and reinforce an educational vision that fosters student learning and growth”. Parental involvement also connotes the quality of time, energy

and goodwill that parents invest in their children. It is in the above sense that the term *involvement* was used throughout this thesis.

1.8.4 Social Development

This concept entails learning how to behave and to get on well with others within the society. It entails acquisition of social skills that enable the individual to interact with others in ways that is acceptable to the generality of the citizenry.

1.8.5 Early Childhood Development

Early childhood development emphasizes a healthy development for all children the world over. This is a phase in which all human beings experience the most rapid stage of human development in every human life course. Researchers have noted that the majority of children develop at their own pace. However, every child irrespective of race, economic and social background or place of origin goes through similar recognisable progression of physical, cognitive, and emotional growth and change until he or she reaches adulthood. It is during this stage of human progression that the irreplaceable importance of both parents is emphasized by many experts. It is in the above sense that the term *early childhood development* was used throughout this thesis.

1.9 Organisation of the Report

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Theoretical framework: Coleman's social capital theory

The research study leading to this thesis has been theoretically aligned to Coleman's social capital theory. Coleman (1988) argues that there are two broad intellectual streams in the description and explanation of social action. One, according to the

author, characteristic of the work of most sociologists, sees the actor as socialized and action governed by social norms, rules, and obligations. Coleman (1988) further argues that the principle of this intellectual stream lies in its ability to describe action in social context and to explain the way action is shaped, constrained, and redirected by the social context. Coleman also argues that the other intellectual stream, characteristic of the work of most economists, sees the actor as having goals independently arrived at, as acting independently and as wholly self-interested. According to Haghighatian (2010), social capital is the totality of valuable resources which can potentially benefit the members of a group is a concept that has gained widespread acceptability in recent decades and includes positive social phenomena like honesty, cooperation, trust, and solidarity.

Social capital consists of some aspects of social structure and facilitates certain actions of actors-whether persons or corporate actors-within the structure (Tzanakis, 2013). For Coleman (1988), social capital is productive, thus enabling the achievement of particular ends that would have been impossible without it. Tzanakis (2013) further notes that social capital is a collective resource utilizable by actors who are goal-orientated. For Coleman (1988), social capital requires an element of embeddedness in social structure essentially residing in the social structure of relationships among people, as a bonding mechanism which adds to the integration of social structure.

In Coleman's (1988) terms, there is a level of connectedness between the child and his or her family, friends, community and school. This connectedness, which is a product of social relationships and social involvement, generates social capital. Coleman further suggests that social capital serves as a mechanism for transmitting the effects of family human capital from parents to children. It is this connectedness, as well as the social interaction assets such as trust, mutual understanding,

collaboration between fathers and their children that this study explored within the frame of early childhood education. The current study followed this perspective to illuminate the involvement of parents in the social development of their children under the age of six from the perspectives of fathers themselves.

Social capital has been influencing research over a long period (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000; Roulmeliotou & Rontos, 2009). Roulmeliotou and Rontos (2009) argue that social capital has been recognized as an important factor for the development of local communities resulting in high levels of trust with economic and local development. Roulmeliotou and Rontos (2009) explored one of the two basic dimensions of social capital, that is, social trust (the other being civic participation) and its association with demographic variables, such as gender, age, educational level and income as predictors of development. Roulmeliotou and Rontos (2009) study, measured social trust levels and revealed that educational level and income are strong predictors of social trust, with better educated and better paid individuals showing higher probabilities of trusting towards other people.

In addition, policy makers increasingly rely on social capital theory to fashion development interventions that mobilize local social networks in the alleviation of poverty (Rankin, 2002). The potential of this theory, according to Rankin (2002), lies in its recognition of the social dimensions of economic growth. This recognition has inspired some innovative approaches to development, such as the now-popular microfinance model. In assessing the implications of these recent developments for feminist objectives of social transformation, Rankin's (2002) study evaluated prevailing ideas about social capital, and concluded by bringing these critical insights to bear on possibilities for designing micro-finance programs.

Social capital has been an indispensable research tool for researchers investigating the relationships within families and their impact on the human capital development of children (Akcomak, 2011; Razmi & Bazzazan, 2012). This approach argues that individuals within the family are rooted in interpersonal relationships (Coleman, 1988). Increasing evidence shows that social cohesion within the family is critical for children's social development to prosper. Social capital of the family refers to the relationships and norms that shape the quality and quantity of social interactions within the family. Social capital is the glue that holds families together - the shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within the family (Edwards *et al.* 2003). According to Edwards *et al.* (2003), this process of social capital generation within families integrally links to social capital as a resource outside the family, where parents and children are embedded in close, local relationships. Coleman (1988) places families' centre-stage as a primordial organisation that has its origins in the relationships established by childbirth. He identifies social capital as a resource within the family that inheres in the structure of inter-generational relationships, especially among parents as well as between parents and their children.

This notion of social capital was applied by this researcher in the investigation of fathers' experiences with involvement in the social development of their children under six years. The concept of social capital draws attention to the effects and consequences of human sociability and connectedness and their relations to the individual and social structure. Meier (1999) also draws attention to the fact that theoretical and empirical work on social capital offers a useful contribution to the way researchers view the influence of relationships and the assistance they provide on the educational achievement of children. The current researcher, therefore, drew from this important theoretical perspective in order to offer explanations to the fathers'

experiences with involvement in the social development of their children under the age of six in one Education District in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa.

Review of empirical studies

The development of various subsections in Chapter 2 of this thesis have been developed in the following structure:

Early Childhood Development (ECD) in the South African context

An evaluation of the current ECD paradigm and policy is presented in a manner that showed that ECD services in South Africa require strong and coordinated inter-sectoral vision, commitment and action. Mainly, research from Biersteker *et al.* (2012) and many others were used to develop this section of Chapter 2 of this thesis.

Social development of children

This section explored various theories on early childhood development and attempted to address pertinent questions whether parents and fathers in particular are an active force in their development. It further explored whether development continuous or not as well as whether development is the product of nature or nurture. The arguments of Bennet and Palaiologou (2013), Davison *et al.* and Krantz (1994) and others experts were followed in this section.

Parental involvement: A generalist approach

In this section, the role of parents in children development was presented using findings from various authors to show how influential parental involvement can be. Findings from Mishra (2012), Loomis and Akkari (2012) and Swick (2009), amongst others, were referred to.

Fatherhood and fathers' involvement in early childhood development in South Africa

Fatherhood and fathers' involvement in early childhood development forms part of the discussions in chapter 2 of thesis.

Constraints to fathers' involvement in early childhood development

This section presents perspectives on some of the constraints that fathers are faced with and the social and historical factors which contributed to this from a South African and other contexts. The works of Hosegood and Madhavan (2010), Pattnaik and Sriram (2010), Ball and Wahedi (2010) and others were consulted.

Strategies for active fathers' involvement in early childhood development

The significance of father involvement is addressed, and various strategies for father involvement are also presented in this section of chapter 2.

CHAPTER 3 Research Methodology

This section presents the research approach, paradigm and research design. It also presents the location, population, sample and sampling procedure. The instrument and procedures for data collection and data analysis are also explained hereunder. The ethical considerations also form part of the explanations that conflate into chapter 3 of this thesis.

Research paradigm

This study followed an interpretivist paradigm as this allowed the researcher to focus on contextual meaning. Generally, this study investigated fathers' experiences with involvement in the social development of their 0-6 year old children and specifically,

the purpose of the study was to understand how fathers become involved in the social development of their children and to establish the possible implications of these to early childhood development. In this paradigm, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences – meanings directed toward certain objects or things (Creswell, 2014). Proponents of the interpretivist paradigm share the goal of understanding the complex world of lived experiences from the point of view of those who live it (Schwandt, 1994). Interpretivists argue that the goal is variously spoken of as an abiding concern for the life world, for understanding meaning, for grasping the actor's definition of a situation (Schwandt, 1994). Furthermore, the author argues that the world of lived reality and situation-specific meanings that constitute the general object of investigation is thought to be constructed by social actors. Interpretivists suggest, to understand the world, one must interpret it (Schwandt, 1994; Durrheim, 2006; Creswell, 2014).

Research approach

This study followed a qualitative research approach. Creswell (2014) argues that qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. This process involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participants' setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative researchers tend to collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study. This up-close information gathered by actually talking directly to people and seeing them behave and act within their context is a major characteristic of qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). In the entire process, the researcher needs to keep a focus on learning the meaning that the participants

hold about the problem or issue, not the meaning that the researcher brings to the research. Therefore, the key idea behind qualitative research is to learn about the problem or issue from the participants and to address the research to obtain that information (Creswell, 2014). In addition to the afore-mentioned, the inquirer also needs to reflect on how his or her role in the study as well as his or her personal background, culture and experiences hold potential for shaping the meaning he/she ascribes to the data.

Design of the study

In line with the research paradigm and approach, this study followed a case study design. According to Creswell (2014), case studies are a design in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process or one or more individuals. Creswell (2014) further points out that using a case study design, the researcher will collect detailed information by means of a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time. It was these potentials that the case study design holds, which informed the study investigated of fathers' experiences with involvement in the social development of their 0-6 year old children.

Location of the Study

This study took place within the rural and urban communities in one of the Education Districts in the Eastern Cape Province. A comprehensive discourse on the dynamics of the study site and its impact on parental and specifically fathers' involvement in the social and educational development of their children have been made in chapter 3 of this thesis.

Population of the study

The target population of this study was all fathers whose 0-6 year old children attended preschool centres communities in the Education District where the study took place.

Sample size

The sample size comprised 20 fathers whose 0-6 year old children attended preschool centres communities in the Education District where the study took place.

Sampling procedures

The researcher purposefully selected 20 father-participants whom he thought would best help the researcher understand the problem (Creswell, 2014). The choice of respondents was, therefore, guided by the judgement of the researcher on what information respondents can offer. The important criterion of choice was the knowledge and expertise of the respondents, hence their suitability for the study.

Instrument for data collection

Data was obtained through the use of semi-structured face-to-face interviews. This approach centred on the sub-research questions and discussions were open-ended to allow for the understanding and exploration of the issues being raised. Probing questions were, however, adopted for the purpose of understanding the feelings, thoughts and intentions of the participants, their recollection of past experiences, as well as the meaning they attached to the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2014).

Instruments' trustworthiness

Qualitative validity entails achieving the truthfulness, correctness or accuracy of research data (Bartlet & Burton, 2007). Qualitative validity speaks to the demonstration

of objectivity on the part of the researcher. In this study, issues of qualitative validity and reliability were addressed through instrument credibility and dependability. In qualitative research, issues of trustworthiness suggest that the research is credible when those familiar with the topic of the study recognise the findings to be true. It was essential to address trustworthiness measures in this research.

This particular requirement was achieved by this researcher through the careful drafting of the semi-structured interview guide based on the objectives and research questions that guided the study in order to maintain focus. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) note that the adequate selection of participants will contribute to the validity of the qualitative study. By using the actual words of the participants, the researcher was able to guard against the problem whereby data collected seemed to be the product of the research method used rather than that of what has been studied (Creswell, 2014). To maintain reliability or dependability in qualitative research, this researcher endeavoured to carefully document various stages leading to this research report such that it would be easily understandable to the external auditors including the examiners and other readers of this thesis.

It must be noted that issues of trustworthiness in qualitative research suggest that the research is credible when those familiar with the topic of the study recognise the findings to be accurate, and therefore valid. To ensure this, the interview guides that were used during the interview sections were face-validated by a panel of experts in the Faculty of Education of one of the Universities in the Eastern Cape Province. The supervisor of this thesis was also part of this process. The members of this panel carefully checked the content of the interview guides in the context of the research questions and objectives of the study and whether they covered enough grounds to enable valid data to be obtained.

Data collection procedures

The researcher was personally involved in the collection of data leading to this thesis. Other aspects of this process have been fully explained in the relevant section of chapter 3 of thesis.

Data analysis procedures

Data analysis followed the qualitative data analysis steps, as recommended by Creswell (2014). These steps, as well as detailed explanations of how they were followed, are presented in relevant section of chapter 3 of this thesis. However, a general overview of the results of the coding process for all the individual cases was presented. Selected cases were then repeatedly read and interpreted precisely with reference to a particular question asked and answered by the participants during the interview. The results of the interpretation are descriptively reported in chapter 4 of this thesis.

Ethical considerations and requirements

The following ethical issues: gaining entry, participants' right, informed consent, confidentiality, protection from harm, achieving anonymity, maintaining professionalism, and participants' vulnerability have been fully explained in the relevant section of Chapter 3 of this thesis.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This study investigated fathers' experiences with involvement in the social development of their 0-6 year old children from a social capital perspective. A brief introduction of the study has been made in Chapter 1. The first part of this chapter discusses the theoretical framework that informed the study as highlighted in 7.1 of chapter 1 of thesis. The second part of this chapter then presents discussions on various empirical studies related to the subject of this thesis as highlighted in 7.2 of chapter 1 of thesis. There is also a chapter summary.

2.2 Theoretical Framework: Social Capital Theory

The research study leading to this thesis has been theoretically aligned to Coleman's social capital theory. Gudmundsson and Mickiewicz (2012) note that the concept of social capital has probably been the most widely used concept in international sociology as well as on the intersection of sociology and educational studies. Social capital is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities and is defined by its function. It has two elements in common in that it consists of some aspects of social structures that facilitate certain actions of actors, whether persons or corporate actors within the structure (Coleman, 1988). Coleman argues that social capital, like other forms of capital, is productive, thus making possible the achievement of certain ends that, in its absence, would not be possible. Social capital comes through changes in the relations among persons that facilitate action.

Furthermore, Coleman (1988) argues that if physical capital is wholly tangible, being embodied in observable material form and human capital is less tangible, being embodied in the skills and knowledge acquired by an individual, social capital is less tangible yet, for it exists in the relations among persons. Therefore, just as physical capital and human capital facilitate productive activity, social capital does as well. The author points out that a group within which there is extensive trustworthiness and extensive trust is able to accomplish much more than a comparable group without that trustworthiness and trust.

According to Gamarnikow (2003), social capital and human capital are terms used in social sciences to discuss analogous concepts with regards to social resources derived from social interactions (social capital) and individual development (human capital). The author is of the opinion that most would agree that strong supportive parent-child relations in the family and parent-school relations in the community (social capital) contribute significantly to children's learning outcomes (human capital). Interest in social capital, according to Gamarnikow (2003), originates in the work of James Coleman, Francis Fukuyama, Robert Putnam and Pierre Bourdieu. Gamarnikow (2003) points out that although these four differ in disciplinary base and emphasis, they share a focus on aspects of social relations, namely, norms, values, and networks or social capital and the role they play in social cohesion. Gamarnikow (2003) further points out that social capital is concerned with specific types of social bonds that sustain a sense of connection among individuals. What these theorists have in common is the strong link they propose between different forms of community networks and positive social outcomes in a wide range of arenas such as education (Coleman), the economy (Fukuyama) and governance and social cohesion (Putnam).

Bourdieu's ideas can be read as an explanation of how social cohesion is sustained in spite of continuing social inequalities.

Families are often regarded as a wellspring of social capital generation or destruction. Coleman acknowledges families as a key source of social capital and is concerned with the link between individuals and families (Edwards *et al.*, 2003). As previously mentioned (in chapter 1), Coleman identifies social capital as a resource within the family that inheres in the structure of intergenerational relationships, especially among parents, as well as between parents and their children. In other words, parents and children in a local school community who see each other every day have expectations toward each other, and develop internally held and externally imposed norms that enable a guiding consensus about appropriate behaviour standards and stigmatising sanctions.

According to Coleman (1988), the existence of inter-generational closure provides a quantity of social capital available to each parent in raising his or her child. In like manner, this process of social capital generation through supportive and constraining social control is enhanced where parents are involved in multiplex relations, such as being neighbours, "fellow" workers, and "fellow" parents (Edwards *et al.*, 2003).

Coleman (1988) accentuates the importance of social capital within the family for a child's development. He argues that children are strongly affected by the human capital possessed by their parents. However, this human capital may be irrelevant to the outcomes for children if parents are not part of their children's lives, in other words, if their human capital is employed exclusively elsewhere outside home. The social capital of the family entails relations between children and parents and relations with other family members as well. The author further argues that if the human capital

possessed by parents is not complimented by social capital embodied in family relations, it is irrelevant to the child's educational growth that the parent has a great deal, or a small amount of human capital (Coleman, 1988).

Social capital has been in use by many researchers for decades. Edwards *et al.* (2003) undertook a five-year programme of research on the inter-relationship between the dynamics of family life and processes of social capital. Their study sought to address key debates that have developed around the extent to which social capital is constituted in families or communities with relation to the individuals or groups. It investigated how far it was rooted in family structures and whether it was a positive or negative feature of family life. Morgan (2008) considered the concepts of social capital and of citizenship, and to identify connections with continuing education, and lifelong learning. The author concluded that the successful unification of active citizenship with a culture of lifelong learning, and with a social capital formation that is inclusive rather than exclusive, is a key challenge of the coming decades. Morgan (2008) points out that a continuing lack of clarity and unity of purpose, on the part of citizens as policymakers, together with the increasing dominance of a post-modern cultural relativism, will aggravate the task.

According to Coleman (1988), there are different elements in life that undermine social capital both within and outside the family. Changing family structures lead to a deficit of social capital, especially in terms of increase in lone mothers, absent fathers, mothers working outside the home and decrease in extended family households. Another feature of contemporary life that negatively influences social capital is single-parent families. Not to mention, nuclear families, in which one or both parents work outside the home, also lack the social capital that comes with the presence of parents

during the day, as they are seen as structurally deficient (Coleman, 1988; Edwards *et al.*, 2003).

Despite its usefulness in understanding the dynamics of parental involvement, social capital and the development of human capital, Coleman's (1988) social capital thesis has come under considerable criticism. For instance, Tzanakis (2013) notes that when social capital shifts from an individual-level relationship to a feature of a community, its function becomes conceptually fuzzy or unclear. Secondly, social capital seems to exist only if and when it is positively evident at community-level outputs. Thus, causes and effects are never adequately delineated or explained. Thirdly, Coleman's theory is faulted for paying little attention to structural inequalities and relations of power in general. Fourthly, Coleman has been targeted in feminist critiques for his inattentiveness to power relations relevant to the allocation of women's roles in families. Feminists react against Coleman's line of thinking which assumes that women, by being mothers in the traditional understanding of mothering, are naturally predisposed to their families or communities.

Despite these controversies and debates, the seminal research by Coleman (1988) on education, social capital and the family has, nonetheless, provided inspiration for a large bulk of the current works in areas such as families and youth behaviour, schooling and education, community life, work and organizations, democracy and governance, collective action, public health and environment, crime and violence and economic development (Gisladdottir, 2013). The author points out that social capital remains an intuitively appealing concept even when masked by conceptual obscurity because it draws attention to the positive aspects of social relationships and how it can improve the child's outcomes.

Coleman (1988) suggested a broader theoretical perspective within which to view the effects of family and other relationships on child well-being. He suggested that a connectedness between a child, her/his family, friends, community, and school could translate into higher academic achievement. This connectedness, a product of social relationships and social involvement, generates social capital (Meier, 1999). Coleman (1988) extended the concept of social capital even further by asserting that it serves as a mechanism to transmit the effects of family human capital from parents to children. Parents with high levels of human capital but low levels of interaction with their children (a source of social capital within families) have fewer opportunities to transmit their human capital to their child than families who have high levels of interaction between parent and their children. This is because human capital is transferred, at least in part, through interaction.

Thus, in Coleman's conception, the transmission of human capital from parents to children is contingent upon the level of social capital available within the family. By applying this very important theoretical framework, the current researcher drew from this theoretical perspective in order to offer explanations to the fathers' experiences with involvement in the social development of their children under the age of six in one Education District in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa.

2.3 Review of Empirical Studies

Empirical studies that supported this thesis were reviewed in the following order:

2.3.1 Early Childhood Development (ECD) in the South African context

Berry *et al.* (2013) points out that recent research reaffirms the significance of ECD in determining future health, behaviour and learning. According to the authors, the first 1000 days of life (from conception to two years old) constitute a particularly sensitive and rapid period of development. Healthy brain development largely depends on the

quality of the environment before birth and in the first 24 months. Infants and young children develop best when caring adults respond with love, warmth and consistency, thereby providing opportunities for interaction and learning.

The majority of young children in South Africa have been negatively impacted by a range of social and economic inequalities. Apartheid and the resultant socio-economic inequalities have created a childhood of adversity for most African children including inadequate access to health care, education, social services and quality nutrition. This has undermined the development of our young children (Atmore, van Niekerk & Ashley-Cooper, 2012). There are a range of challenges and obstacles facing children and their families, teachers, communities and government. One of the major challenges is that of poverty (UNICEF, 2009). In South Africa, the majority of children do not have access to an early education programme as many parents and/or families cannot afford to pay for school fees. UNICEF (2009) suggests that it is, therefore, important for various and relevant government departments to collaborate to enhance the accessibility of early childhood development programmes for young children.

Despite the fact that the Government has established programmes aimed at reducing hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity, child hunger remains a challenge with approximately 16% of children living in households where child hunger has been reported. This figure indicates a substantial decrease in reported child hunger from 30% in 2002 and 18% in 2007 (Kibbel, Lake, Pendlebury & Smith, 2010). Hunger is highest among Black African children, with 17% of the total Black African child population living in households that reported child hunger compared to 13% of Coloured children, 2% Indian and only 1% of White children. In 2015, these statistics changed significantly, and more research is required to ascertain the above figures.

Biersteker, Burns, Desmond, Feza and Harrison *et al.* (2012) note that suitably qualified staff is critical for service, but there is no data on numbers or training levels of ECD practitioners. The lack of articulation of ECD qualifications at levels 4 and 5 with those offered by Higher Education Institutions needs addressing. According to the Biersteker *et al.* (2012), large numbers of practitioners being trained are being absorbed by Grade R classes, and no subsidies have been made available to ECD outreach workers. The authors also note that other human resources issues affecting the quality of service delivery are limited support and monitoring of implementation by appropriately trained departmental officials, as well as poor wages, service conditions and opportunities for career progression in the sector.

Berry *et al.* (2013) recommend that a human resource development strategy should be developed to improve staff qualifications and retention for ECD. Government should continue with provision of subsidised training opportunities and expand these to all categories of ECD practitioners. The authors are of the opinion that if the demand is created, the training supply will increase. A core package of ECD messages for inclusion in the training of home-and community-based workers employed in different sectors who reach young children, such as Community Development Workers, Community Health Workers and Community Caregivers would have been ideal. Berry *et al.* (2013) argue that these people comprise a significant human resource, and all interface with children, especially young children in the home and community.

Meanwhile, the South African government has put in place a number of laws, policies and programmes across a range of government departments to improve the lives of young children. However, a recent review indicates that current services are not sufficient to prevent many of the risks faced by children, or to promote their optimal development. Government is exploring new strategies to respond to these challenges.

As previously noted in Chapter 1, the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency (DPME) of South Africa and the inter-Departmental Steering Committee on Early Childhood Development commissioned a Diagnostic Review of the ECD sector in October 2011 (Biersteker *et al.*, 2012). ECD services are defined in the report as all services that promote or support the development of young children.

Some of the key policy findings from the Diagnostic review included a broader definition of ECD programmes than as currently in the Children's Act which is needed to cover all aspects of children's development from conception to the foundation phase of schooling. Many elements of comprehensive ECD support and services are already in place, and some are performing well and include some aspects of: basic services provision, birth registration, social security, health care and preparation for formal schooling. The report also noted important gaps in the area of support for parenting, prevention of stunting among young children, safe and affordable care for very young children and other families needing assistance (Biersteker *et al.*, 2012).

Biersteker *et al.* (2012) also recommended some key ECD strategies. They note that comprehensive services should be delivered to young children, using all opportunities of contact with families, extending Early Child Care and Education (ECCE) through home and community based programmes, beginning with the poorest communities not reached by current services. Food security and adequate daily nutrition for the youngest children need to be ensured to avert the life-long damaging effects of stunting.

Well-designed high profile parent support programmes need to be launched through media campaigns, community activities and services that acknowledge and reinforce

the importance of positive parenting for young children. ECCE, a very important aspect of ECD, is defined as services and programmes that provide care and developmentally appropriate educational stimulation for groups of young children in centres and or in community-or home-based programmes. The report suggests a high-level authorization and legitimacy of a well-resourced central agency or mechanism is needed to drive forward key strategies for ECD (Biersteker *et al.*, 2012).

Martin (2012) cited in Biersteker *et al.* (2012) provided an annotated overview of policy progression in South Africa between 1994 and 2011, documenting key policy developments that have shaped the ECD and ECCE environment for infants and young children in South Africa. Martin (2012) identifies some key developments as relevant to the rights of young children. The reconstruction and development programme of 1994 recognized the link between the transformation of South Africa and meeting basic needs, with a focus on children. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), ratified by South Africa in 1995, committed member states to protect a range of rights of all children 0-17 years of age (Martin, 2012).

These rights included: rights to health, education, social security, parental care, protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation. According to (Martin, 2012), the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) ratified by South Africa in 2005 committed member states to take all necessary steps to support women to be able to fulfil parenting and work responsibilities. The White Paper on Education and Training (1995, as cited in Martin, 2012) described government's recognition of the importance of child well-being in the early years and the consequent need for providing adequate nutrition, good health, early childhood stimulation and a secure environment. Therefore, the White Paper

formalises, standardises and subsidises the reception programme for children aged five (Biersteker *et al.*, 2012).

Amongst the other key developments was when South Africa committed to UNESCO's Education for All in 2000 ensuring equal enjoyment of the right to education for all, especially the most marginalised of children. Martin (2012) cited in (Biersteker *et al.*, 2012), points out that the White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Development of 2001 commits to addressing inequitable provisioning of ECD programmes, access to ECD services and the variable quality of ECD programmes. White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education (2001, as cited in Martin, 2012) sought to establish procedures for early identification and interventions, as well as for addressing barriers to learning in the foundation phase (Grades R to 3). The Expanded Public Works programme in 2004 was to increase the number of registered ECD centres as well as the number of children subsidised by the government.

In its Vision 2030, South Africa spells out the interventions necessary to ensure equitable and secure access to quality ECD services for all young children, with a focus on those living in poverty and with a disability (Biersteker *et al.* 2012). The authors point out that whilst South Africa has signed and ratified numerous international and regional instruments, there are two key ones which could further compel the realisation of core ECD rights. Biersteker *et al.* (2012) argue that the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (1996) which obliges member states to protect and promote the right to work and family. The ICESCR also obliges member states to provide and protect the right of every person and their family to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing and housing.

According to Biersteker *et al.* (2012), huge strides have been made in provisions to benefit young children from the pre-1994 racially exclusive policies and programmes of apartheid South Africa. However, the current paradigm has gaps between policy and practice, disjuncture across age groups, and inequity. Biersteker *et al.* (2012) are of the view that whilst the White Paper 5 on ECD and the Children's Act sketch a broad vision of comprehensive ECD services spanning early childhood, in practice, different sectors act largely in isolation from one another without shared vision, goals and accountability. Biersteker *et al.* (2012) also argue that services and resources need to be balanced across the age range, with State assistance support for all parents and families across the ECD age range. The authors further argue that the State should put in place laws, funding, infrastructure and programmes to bridge the access and quality gaps for the most marginalized, including the 6 percent of children estimated to have special needs (Biersteker *et al.*, 2012).

Berry *et al.* (2013) recommend that a human resource development strategy should be put in place to improve staff qualifications and retention for ECD. Government should continue with provision of subsidised training opportunities and expand these to all categories of ECD practitioners. Berry *et al.* (2013) are of the opinion if the demand is created the training supply will increase. A core package of ECD messages for inclusion in the training of home-and community-based workers employed in different sectors who reach young children, such as Community Development Workers, Community Health Workers and Community Caregivers. The authors argue that these people comprise a significant human resource and all interface with children, especially young children in the home and community. Having looked at ECD from the South African context, the next section will focus on the explanation of the concept of social development.

2.3.2 Social development of children

In order to understand the concepts of social development of children, it is important to touch on some of the developmental theories of children. Papatheodorou and Potts (2013) point out that the image of a developmental child has emerged mainly from biological and child developmental theories which understood development as a maturational process, taking place in different stages and ages. The authors allude to Piaget's theory, which viewed children as progressing through a series of developmental stages.

According to Papatheodorou and Potts (2013), Piaget argued that if given suitable resources and an appropriate level of challenge, children will be able to construct their own ideas and knowledge. In contrast to the Piagetian view, behaviourists saw learning as being the direct outcome of responses to environmental stimuli through a process of positive or negative reinforcement. Social learning behaviourists, according to Papatheodorou and Potts (2013), that children are not passive in the learning process but that learning takes place within the social context and through observation and association.

Erikson, according to Slavin (2012), hypothesized that people pass through eight psychosocial stages in their lifetime, each stage with its crises or critical issues that needs to be resolved. According to Slavin (2012) in Erikson's theory, most people resolve each psychosocial crisis satisfactorily although some people do not completely resolve these crises and have to deal with them later in life. Stage one of life, according to Erikson, is Trust versus Mistrust (Birth to 18 months). This is the stage where the infant develops a basic trust in the world. It is up to the mother or maternal figure, who usually is the first important person in the child's world, to satisfy the infant's need for

food and affection. If the mother is inconsistent or rejecting, she can become a source of frustration to the infant and creates a sense of mistrust for the child's world.

Autonomy versus doubt (18 months to 3 years) is the second life stage where children strive toward autonomy. If parents are overly restrictive and harsh, this may give their children a sense of powerlessness and incompetence, which can lead to shame and doubt in one's abilities. Stage three, which Erikson calls the initiative versus guilt stage (3 to 6 years), is the stage where children, as a result of their enhanced motor and language skills, aggressively explore their social and physical environment. If parents severely punish their children's attempts at initiative, it will make the children feel guilty about their natural urges, both during this stage and later in life. Stage four, industry versus inferiority (6 to 12 years), is the stage where entry into school brings with it a huge expansion in the child's social world. This is where success brings a good feeling in one's ability whilst failure creates a negative self-image.

Stage five, identity versus role confusion (12 to 18 years), is, according to Erikson, a reassembly or an alignment of the individual's basic drive. In stage six, intimacy versus isolation (young adulthood) is where the young adult is ready to form a new relationship of trust and intimacy with another individual. Stage seven is called generativity versus self-absorption (middle adulthood) is where people should continue to grow otherwise they will develop a sense of stagnation and interpersonal impoverishment set in. The last stage is called integrity versus despair (late adulthood). In this final stage of psychosocial development, people look back over their lifetime and resolve their final identity crisis (Slavin, 2012).

Papatheodorou and Potts (2013) suggest that socio-cultural theories have furthered our understanding of child development and learning as a social process. The authors

allude to Vygotsky who argued that development and learning take place within the social and cultural milieu. Papatheodorou and Potts (2013) note that socio-cultural theorists emphasise interdependence and relationships with others; be it parents, teachers or any knowledgeable others. On the other hand, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory highlighted the influence of dynamic interactions of many factors within and between different systems in which the children find themselves. These theories have furthered understanding of the influence of the social and cultural milieu, the significant role of cultural values and practices as well as the role of knowledgeable others on child development and learning. Child development theories have emphasized the importance of early childhood development.

Slavin (2012) notes that as children improve their cognitive skills, they also develop other concepts such as self-concepts, ways of interacting with others, and attitudes towards the world and people living in it. The author argues that understanding personal and social development is critical to one's ability to motivate, teach, and successfully interact at various ages. Lamont and Van Horn (2013) argue that social skills are a set of learned behaviours that enable social interaction, pro-social behaviour, and social-cognitive skills. They further argue that the range of behaviours that constitute social skills are culturally based, but they typically involve a child's ability to regulate behaviour according to the social context, to engage in group interactions with peers and adults, and to use verbal expression appropriately. Lamont and Van Horn (2013) also note that *social skills* refers an umbrella term used to describe a constellation of interpersonal skills that increase an individual's effectiveness in social situations. The extent to which each individual social skill component, assertion, cooperation skills, self-control skills and responsibility, develop in unison, remains unknown. Lamont and Van Horn (2013) point out that the

development of self-control has received the most attention among the different social skill components whilst much less is known about the development of cooperation, responsibility and assertion.

Dereli-iman (2014) points out that the pre-school ages of zero to six are critical years during which most of child development occurs. Dereli-iman (2014) is of the opinion that physical development, psycho-social development and personality structure, founded during this early development period, will develop in the same direction in the further ages, rather than changing direction. This is also the period during which the child begins to gain their societal value judgements, behaviours and habits in accordance to society's cultural structure. This is the period where children move from the traditional home environment to a relationship with groups, socialising among peers and interacting in the school environment. This is also the period whereby children gain a lot of positive and negative behaviour and social ideas (Dereli-iman, 2014).

Dereli-iman (2014) further suggests that although instructions related to values are learned throughout one's lifetime, first instructions are gained during early childhood. The author notes that children who adopt the values at an early age have self-confidence, can make their own decisions, solve their problems well, and this condition improves their happiness. On the contrary, if the individual fail to comply with societal values it might cause failure and exclusion from society. Social change, as well as advancements in science and technology, has shortened the time that family members spend together and has caused members to behave more independently (Dereli-iman, 2014). Therefore, educational institutions had to support families in their duty to gain values otherwise learned in a family environment.

Bennet and Palaiologou (2013) argue that personal, social and emotional development tends to be considered together as they are linked and reinforce each other. The authors emphasize elements such as self-confidence and self-awareness, managing feelings and behaviour and making relationships.

The authors argue that each of these elements are critical to the development of well-rounded, secure children who feel accepted, both individually and as part of their community, and have the confidence to succeed or fail. Within the development of self-concept and the understanding of personal identity, the critical areas of self-confidence and self-esteem must be fostered by all those responsible for the development of young children. Bennet and Palaiologou (2013) claim that if a community values its children, it must cherish their parents as parents and children form strong attachments. An important aspect of children's development is how they form relationships with others, how they behave during these interactions with either other children or adults and how they make attempts to become part of the community and the wider social environment (Bennet & Palaiologou, 2013).

Making relationships during early childhood is a major developmental task for children (Bennet & Palaiologou, 2013). The authors note that as children grow older and develop their own concept of self, self-awareness and an awareness of others' thoughts and feelings, they are able to form relationships involving mutual trust. The degree of peer acceptance is a powerful predictor of current as well as later psychological adjustment. Rejected children are unhappy and have a low self-esteem and are viewed by practitioners and parents as having a wide range of emotional and social problems. Research claims that peer rejection during middle childhood is strongly associated with poor school performance, anti-social behaviour, delinquency and criminality in adolescence and young adulthood (Bennet & Palaiologou, 2013).

Meanwhile, fathers have unique influences on children's development and particularly in the development of their social skills (Stevenson & Ćrnic, 2013). The authors note that although father-child relationship influences on children's social competence have received increased attention in general, research on fathering in families of children with development delays (DD) is scant. The authors examined the pathway of influence among paternal intrusive behaviour, child social skills and child self-regulatory ability, testing a model whereby child regulatory behaviour mediates relations between fathering and child social skills. The result of the study showed that father's intrusiveness, controlling for mothers' intrusiveness and child behaviour problems, were related to later child decreased social skills, and this relationship was mediated by child behaviour dys-regulation. As a result, the authors conclude that intrusive fathering appears to carry unique risk for the development of social skills in children with DD.

Jacobsen, Moe, Ivarsson, Wentzel-Larsen and Smith (2013) analyzed the cognitive development and social-emotional functioning in young foster children. They are of the opinion that most foster children have experienced disruption related to their primary caregivers, which may be due to negative adverse parenting prior to placement. Jacobsen *et al.* (2013) argue that these children are, therefore, at risk of developmental delays in both cognitive- and social-emotional development. They further point out that even if foster children are institutionalized, they often experience an array of negative care giving environments early in their lives before being placed in foster care. The authors allude to the fact that research has underscored the importance of early, nurturing care giving environments on brain development and the importance of positive brain-environment interaction in the first two years of life.

Studies on cognitive development in foster children are important, according to Jacobsen *et al.* (2013), as findings from such studies could assist in dealing with foster children if identified early. Behavioural problems among foster children are also important to identify early because foster parents may have difficulties identifying and responding to foster children's behaviour. Infants and young children in foster care need help in regulating their emotions and developing healthy social-emotional functioning (Jacobsen *et al.*, 2013). Slavin (2012) argue that the social network of humans grow from an intimate relationship with parents or other guardians to include other family members, non-related adults, and peers. According to the author, social interactions extend from home to neighbourhood and from preschool to formal school. The next sub-section looks at the issue of parental involvement.

2.3.3 Parental involvement: A generalist approach

The importance of parental involvement in a child's education has been heavily emphasized in the literature over the last decade (Epstein, 1991) as cited in Kim, 2002). An important component in the study of parental involvement is a child's family background. Coleman (1988) suggested that family background can be analytically separated into at least three distinct components, financial (physical), capital (family income or wealth), human capital (parent education), and social capital (relationship among actors). Coleman (1988) notes that with respect to children's educational achievement, there is a direct relationship between parental financial and human capital and the successful learning experience of their children.

Mishra (2012) argues that although many studies have focussed on parent involvement, the concept remains unclear and, therefore, leads to uncertainty for many families and early care and education providers. According to Mishra (2012), there is

no standard definition of parent involvement and as such, the concept is being used loosely. Barge and Loges (2003) are of the opinion that parents have been viewed by society as occupying a central role in their children's education.

From colonial school days, it was expected from parents to be involved with an array of school activities such as school governance, curriculum support, selection of teachers and the backing of religious teachings (Barge & Loges, 2003). However, this type of parental involvement waned during the late 1800s and early 1900s as a result of bureaucratization of schools and the rise in the professionalism of school personnel (Barge and Loges, 2003). Consequently, home life and school life became viewed as two separate spheres where parents were expected to provide academic support at home to their children and to provide financial and emotional support to schools. This support includes fundraising, acting as chaperones for school events, and helping teachers in the classroom, whilst leaving decisions such as curriculum development to the professional staff and administrators.

Parental involvement is defined as the devotion of resources by the parent to the child within a given domain (Karakus & Savas, 2012). Three types of parental involvement are listed, namely, behaviour, cognitive-intellectual, and personal. According to Karakus and Savas (2012), parents' behaviour involves participation in activities at school and home, such as attending parent-teacher meetings and asking about school and helping with homework. Cognitive-intellectual involvement includes engaging the child in intellectually motivating activities such as discussing about daily events. The last type of involvement, personal, is staying informed and knowing what is happening at your child's school. Karakus and Savas (2012) argue that a plethora of research has consistently shown that parental involvement in their children's schooling impact children' school success, and it has been demonstrated across a wide range of age

levels and populations. They further argue that parents who have high anticipations have positive effects on their children's academic achievements.

According to Young, Austin and Growe (2013), there remains a plaguing question of how to get parents involved with their children's education. Young *et al.* (2013) argue that many parents and educators have different perceptions of what parental involvement means and is of the opinion that miscommunication between the two groups often exists because of how parental involvement is conceptualized. While educators define parental involvement as being involved in the education process by helping in the school and helping out with homework, parents see parental involvement as getting their children to school on time and solving issues that involve them at home.

Christie (2005) argues that there are different types of parental involvement such as where parents volunteer their time in schools, making costumes and staffing the school carnival fund-raiser, and on another level, where parents have a more significant impact whereby parents and teachers work together as real partners, are mutually accountable and have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to succeed at improving the achievement of all learners. Christie (2005) further argues that volunteering at your child's school might be the first step on a ladder of multiple level of parental involvement, such as being a faithful attendant at school activities or on a higher scale such as serving as a parent representative on school committees or spending time in classrooms, tutoring or reading one-on one with students. The author argues that too frequently, parental involvement is defined as those activities that are easier to measure. Nevertheless, the importance of these activities is that it is often easier for educators to talk to parents about what they can do for the school than it is to listen to parents about what they know their kids need to succeed. According to

Christie (2005), sometimes when parents appear not to care, it is because they know that what they have to say will not be heard.

Mishra (2012) did a study aimed at providing solutions to the parental involvement in early childhood care education centres in Orissa. The intention was to assist in modifying their mode of parental involvement towards achieving a better future for themselves and their children notwithstanding their busy schedules and in some cases, inadequacy of resources. Their findings confirmed the very big influence of parental involvement on early childhood education and in particular on the academic performance of the child. Loomis and Akkari (2012) argue that there is consensus among international actors that early childhood education is important for future well-being of the child and that parent participation in various school activities is relevant.

Loomis and Akkari (2012) focused on parents' participation in early childhood education in Madagascar, placing parental participation within a context of poverty, in which many families in sub-Saharan African countries find themselves. The authors also point out the many differences in parents' participation in the school systems across the continent. Some will invest their time and money in the child's school, others will expect professionals to be solely responsible for educating their children, and still others will have no input at all because schools do not create opportunities for them to participate. Swick (2009) focused on the potential of early childhood family literacy programs to positively influence children and families. She argues that these types of programs have been designed to help prevent the processes of illiteracy and related school failure syndromes during the preschool years. Swick (2009) is of the opinion that these programs hold great potential for increasing children's readiness for school and for school success.

Hayes (2012) investigated parental involvement in African Americans and concludes that students and parents have different perceptions of what activities are considered involvement as how they relate to student achievement. The author is of the opinion that parents need to realize that traditional direct school involvement although important may not be the best way for parents to be involved. Furthermore, parents must consider that although having high values about education is important, it is the parent-adolescent communication that transmits the importance of these values. Although parents have limited opportunities to interact with their children at school due to time constraints and school scheduling. They can take comfort in knowing that they can continue to be positive influences in the academic outcomes of their children by engaging in frequent dialogue that focuses on schooling and learning.

Young *et al.* (2013) are of the opinion that parental involvement boosts a child's perceived level of competence and autonomy, offers a sense of security and connectedness as well as internalize the value of an education and performance. The authors further argue that parental influence can have considerable impact from kindergarten up to high school levels and involved parents directly support learning while indirectly encouraging achievement. Young *et al.* (2013) pose the question why involvement is low for ethnic-minority and lower resource families if the results of parental involvement are so positive. Shin (2004) as cited in Young *et al.* (2013), notes that encouraging these parents is a challenge noting that race, ethnicity and linguistic characteristics of these parents often contribute to the reason why such parents fail to participate in parenting activities.

In many countries in Southern and Eastern Africa, international development financing and involvement in education, particularly in basic education, has increased significantly over the past two decades (Kendall, 2007). According to Kendall (2007),

there has been a flurry of discussion, programming and policymaking aimed at improving educational quality by increasing parental and community participation in primary education. The author argues that parental and community involvement in schools has been posited as affecting quality of the child's educational achievement in a number of ways. These include issues such as providing an oversight of school budgeting and teacher attendance and performance, managing student attendance and homework, providing resources for school building, teacher-hiring as well as other school infrastructure and services. Kendall (2007) notes that many of these programs and policies have been designed to create formal structures such as school committees through which parents can play active and regularized roles in the school. The author further notes that the focus of decentralization policies was to transfer power over school budgets, school personnel and school planning to parents or local governments.

Chen and Gregory (2010) investigated whether student-perceived parental involvement predicts improvement in academic, behavioural and relational outcomes for low-achieving adolescents. Using a sample of 59 racially diverse 9th grade students, Chen and Gregory (2010) measured 3 dimensions of parental involvement, namely, direct participation, academic encouragement and expectations for grades and attainment. Analysis revealed that students whose parents had higher expectations about grades and attainment had higher grade point averages and were rated as more academically engaged by their teachers whilst those whose parents were more academically encouraging experienced more care from their teachers. Consequently, results suggest certain types of parental involvement may be more effective than others in supporting low-achieving adolescents' school performance (Chen & Gregory, 2010).

Koutrouba, Antonopoulour, Tsitsas and Zenakou (2009) argue that parents' involvement in their children's education has been shown to have positive results in various aspects such as behaviour, social-emotional development and academic performance. Koutrouba *et al.* (2009) investigated teachers' views of the major problems affecting home-school partnership and possible solutions to improve communication between school and family. Koutrouba *et al.* (2009) also examined teachers' accounts of the components of parental participation in the process of pupil learning and evaluated teachers' suggestions for improving teacher-parent participation in Greek schools. The results of their study showed that Greek secondary school teachers have a positive attitude towards parental involvement in school but find that in fact, parental involvement is poor and infrequent. According to Koutrouba *et al.* (2009), most teachers ascribe poor parent school relationship to factors such as parental unwillingness to respond to school initiated partnership schemes as well as the parents' educational and social background. Greek teachers appear to be in favour of an active collaboration with parents which will benefit schools, families and pupils (Koutrouba *et al.*, 2009).

According to Altschul (2011), parental involvement in education is a key focus of current policies and programs aimed at improving the academic outcomes of students at risk for academic underachievement. The author is of the opinion that parental involvement is a broad construct that encompasses a range of parenting behaviours from discussing school-related matters with children to being active in parent-teacher organizations (Pomerantz *et al.*, 2007) as cited in (Altschul, 2011). Pomerantz *et al.* (2007) as cited in (Altschul, 2011) focused on Mexican American families and youth, which is a population at high risk of academic under-performance. Perceptions were

that Latino and American parents, particularly those who have low incomes or are recent immigrants, are uninvolved and uninterested in their children's education.

However, Altschul (2011) notes that multiple empirical studies have shown that Mexican American parents care deeply about their children's education, have high expectations for academic success, and engage in a range of activities in relation to their children's education. This disjuncture, according to Altschul (2011), is in part reflective of the differing definitions of parental involvement used by both scholars and educators. The findings of Altschul's (2011) study showed that positive effects of parental involvement among Mexican American parents occur through involvement in the home, whereas parental involvement in school organizations is not associated with youths' achievement. Parents' investment of financial resources in their children's education was found to have a somewhat higher impact on achievement than forms of involvement that require parents' investment of time. Furthermore, the findings showed that the impact of these forms of parental involvement occurs prior to high school (Altschul, 2011).

Hornby and Witte (2009) reports on the results of a survey of parental involvement, policy and practice in middle schools in a large New Zealand city. According to the authors, schools reported using a range of activities to encourage parents to establish contact with the school such as open days where parents could visit the school, new parents' evenings, when parents of newly enrolled pupils could look around the school or annual school fairs. Some schools had written policies on parental involvement, which included input from parents. Parents also acted as resources at sport events, school camps, helping in the school library and helping in the school canteen. Assessment results were communicated to parents through pupil reports, individual parent-teacher meetings as well as portfolios of pupils' work. Principals, in Hornby and

Witte's (2009) study, reported that information on children's special needs was obtained from parents at enrolment, during parents' visits to school, from feeder schools as well as home visits.

Schools also reported that communication with parents was done through school or class newsletters, school prospectuses, parent interviews as well as parent evenings. Parent-teacher meetings were seen as a key strategy for liaising with parents. This was also used as opportunities for parents to obtain support from teachers with regards to any challenges their children might face. Schools also liaised with local ethnic communities in order to make adaptations to improve the involvement of parents from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Although there were excellent examples of parental involvement reported, Hornby and Witte (2009) concluded that it was not consistent across all schools. The authors are also of the opinion that policies for parental involvement should be developed in collaboration with parents to ensure that the procedures and activities included will meet the needs of the different communities in which schools are based (Hornby & Witte, 2009).

Chen and Ho (2012) note that there was an increasing interest on the factors that contributed to academic achievement among East Asian students. The authors note that parental aspirations or expectations have been found to be a significant predictor in explaining this phenomenon. According to Phillipson and Phillipson (2007) as cited in Chen and Ho (2012), parents' educational values and expectations tend to shape the way parents discipline or interact with their children. The authors, further note that influenced by the Confucian belief that education is the only way to attain higher social status, Asian parents generally set high standards for their children's school performance, which contributes to academic success.

According to Phillipson and Phillipson (2007) as cited in Chen and Ho (2012), Asian parents are also likely to involve and invest a great deal in their children's education, maintain interest in schoolwork, create a study-friendly home environment, pay for expensive tuition as well as control and restrict their children's after-school activities. A supportive parent-child relationship will facilitate children's internalization process of parent's values, meaning they will interpret their parents' values and make it their own. Parents' educational values are internalized and thus influence students' own motivation and attitude towards school, ultimately creating a lasting positive impact on children's academic success (Marchant *et al.*, 2001) as cited in Chen and Ho (2012). Asian parents and students attribute their school success to effort more than ability, and parents tend to attribute their children's low achievement to a lack of effort.

Kim (2002) notes that there are many different ways parents can get involved with their children's educational activities. However, depending on the resources available to them, children of different ethnic groups may need different kinds of involvement from parents. Kim (2002) investigated the relationship between parental involvement and children's education achievement of Korean immigrant family. The results of their study showed that parental involvement makes a positive contribution to children's educational achievement in Korean-American families. The results also indicated that parental expectations were inversely related to family income as children from lower income families had higher parental expectations for their education.

Kim (2002) concludes that parental involvement, as a form of social capital, mediates the relationship between parental financial and human capital and the recreated human capital of Korean-American children. The results showed that parental expectation was positive, and it had predictive power for children's educational achievement. The results also showed that communication between parents and

children resulted in higher levels of educational performance at school. A higher level of home supervision was positively associated with higher educational achievement. The results also showed that parents' school participation did not have a significant impact on children's educational achievement in Korean-American families. English proficiency had a consistent and positive impact on children's educational achievements (Kim, 2002).

The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) model of parental involvement proposed that motivational beliefs, the general climate of the school and life context affect parents' decisions to become involved in their children's education. Using this model of parental involvement as a guide, Bramsfeld, Carrick, Lessmeir, Nicoloff, Keiser and Metter (2013) examined predictors of school-based parental involvement at a non-profit childcare center. According to Bramsfeld *et al.* (2013), parents' motivational beliefs emerged as a stronger predictor of actual school-based involvement than parents' time for involvement. However, time for involvement emerged as the number one reported barrier to involvement.

Bramsfeld *et al.* (2013) advise that school officials should also be mindful of the numerous constraints on family time and how those time constraints can affect parents' beliefs about the importance of involvement. The study showed that encouraging parents to form friendships with other parents could serve to strengthen a parent's beliefs about the importance of becoming involved at schools. The study further concludes that efforts to strengthen parents' motivational beliefs may not matter if the parent is not aware of the opportunities to become involved (Bramsfeld *et al.*, 2013).

McMillan (2005) notes that the increased interest in the relationship between home and school is one of the most positive educational developments of the past decades. The author further notes that there is, at all levels of education, an overwhelming agreement that parents have a valuable role to play in the education of their children. McMillan (2005) investigated whether the high level of attendance at special occasions at nursery schools in Northern Ireland constitute partnership as well as whether parents and providers speak the same language with regard to communication, partnership and involvement. McMillan's (2005) study found that parents expressed their need to know what their children are doing, how they develop and how they as parents could support learning at home.

Providers stressed the self-esteem benefits for parents and the moral and educational importance of involving parents. The study also found that there was a high level of commitment on the part of both providers to parental involvement. However, lack of professional training for working with parents emerged as a cause for concern (McMillan, 2005).

According to Hill and Taylor (2001), developing collaborations between families and schools to promote academic success has a long-standing basis in research and is the focus of numerous programs and policies. The authors outlined some of the mechanisms through which parental school involvement affects achievements and also identifies how patterns and amounts of involvement vary across cultural, economic and community contexts and across developmental levels. According to Hill and Taylor (2001), families and schools have worked together since the beginning of formalized schooling. However, the nature of the collaboration has evolved over the years (Epstein & Sanders, 2002) as cited in Hill and Taylor (2001). According to Hill

and Taylor (2001), there are two major mechanisms by which parental school involvement promotes achievement.

The first is by increasing social capital. Hill and Taylor (2001) argue that parental school involvement increases parents' skills and information which, in turn, makes them better equipped to assist their children in their school-related activities. Social control is a second mechanism through which parental school involvement promote achievement. According to Hill and Taylor (2001), social control occurs when families and schools work together to build a consensus about appropriate behaviour that can be effectively communicated to children at both home and school (McNeal, 1999) as cited in Hill and Taylor (2001). Demographic characteristics such as socio-economic status, ethnicity, and cultural background are systematically associated with parental school involvement. The authors argue that a higher education level of parents is positively associated with a greater tendency for them to manage their children's education whilst parents from lower socio-economic backgrounds may face more barriers to involvement, including non-flexible work schedules, lack of resources, transportation problems and stress related to residing in disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Hill & Taylor, 2001).

Finn (1998) argues that home-school partnerships command a lot of attention, and educators are recommending an infusion of energy toward increasing parental participation in schools. The author notes that until the early 1960s, sociologists believed that school performance and intelligence were immutably connected with socio-economic status and family structure. However, differences in children's performance could be explained, instead, by specific conditions and parental behaviours, including parents' roles as language models, parents' press for achievement, and provisions for general learning. According to Finn (1998), three

types of parental engagement at home that are consistently associated with school performance include: actively organizing and monitoring the child's time, helping with homework, discussing school matters with the child and reading to and being read to by their children.

Patacchini and Zenou (2011) analyzed the inter-generational transmission of education focusing on the interplay between family and neighbourhood effects. The study has shown that the better the quality of the neighbourhood, the higher the parents' involvement in their children's education is. The authors note a positive effect of neighbourhood quality on the parents' effort in their children's education. Both parental investment and neighbourhood quality contribute positively to children's education attainment. However, Patacchini and Zenou (2011) further note that the effect of parental investment seems to be more potent for children of highly-educated parents while neighbourhood quality shows a more important role for children of low-educated parents (Patacchini & Zenou, 2011).

Holloway and Pimlot-Wilson (2013) note that nation-states across the Global North are restructuring their education system changing the relationship between school and home, with an increasing onus being placed on parents to involve themselves in their children's education. The authors explored what mothers with different social class positions think about state's attempts to enrol them in the education of their primary-aged children. In addition, Holloway and Pimlot-Wilson (2013) also consider the mothers' experiences of school curriculum events through which schools seek to provide parents with resources to better help their children at home.

The authors conclude that there was widespread support for parental involvement across all classes. As far as the curriculum was concerned, all mothers felt that new

teaching methods should be explained to them. However, mothers in the middle income and low income categories found the curriculum events intellectually and emotionally challenging, and some were simply too fearful of failure to engage with it at all (Holloway & Pimlot-Wilson, 2013).

Parents of students in special education have greater barriers to parental involvement than parents of students in general education (Fishman & Nickerson, 2014). However, the authors argue that little is known about the factors that facilitate or impede involvement practices for this group. Parents of students with disabilities face greater barriers to involvement and are less involved than parents of typically developing children in school. The importance of empowering parents of students with special needs to advocate for their children has been well documented in the literature (Fishman & Nickerson, 2014). Parents of students with disabilities generally view advocacy as their obligation, the process is viewed as a life-long adversarial battle, which results in a great amount of stress for these families. Fishman and Nickerson (2014) note that it is for that reason that special education professionals have been encouraged to focus not only on improving the quality of life for students with disabilities, but also for the entire family. The authors are of the opinion that this can be done by acknowledging realistic family participation given their time, energy and resources and by encouraging collaborative decision-making. It is also recommended that this group of parents be given more support and individualized attention to get them more involved than parents of typically developing children (Fishman & Nickerson, 2014).

Literature has lauded parental involvement as an effective strategy to increase student achievement, but schools still struggle with how to effectively involve parents of colour and low-income families (Bower & Griffin, 2011). The authors explored parental

involvement strategies in a high-poverty, high-minority elementary school that included parental involvement as an approach to increasing the academic achievement of its students. The study utilized the Epstein Model of Parental Involvement (Bower & Griffin, 2011) as its guiding framework, which includes a discussion of considerations for race, ethnicity and socio-economic status. This model outlines six concrete types of family involvement behaviours such as positive home conditions, communication, involvement at school, and community partnership.

Although discourse demonstrates disagreement on how to define parental involvement, the positive aspects of Epstein's Model are that it encompasses the traditional definitions of parental involvement and recognizes the role of parents in the home, including supporting educational efforts and providing an environment where educational activities are supported and encouraged (Bower & Griffin, 2011). The results of the study indicate that cultural differences that can impact on how parents demonstrate parental involvement need to be taken into account. Schools also need to investigate how parents are or want to be involved in their children's education, indicating that new ways of working with parents in high-minority, high –poverty schools are needed. The authors conclude that fostering relationships among families, increasing parental involvement efficacy, and empowering parents for advocacy are the keys to increasing parental involvement (Bower & Griffin, 2011).

The value of parental participation is widely accepted, but participation is difficult to promote and maintain (Larocque, Kleiman & Darling, 2011). Larocque *et al.* (2011) argue that schools are becoming more diverse, and a great challenge facing educators is meeting the needs of all students. The authors argue further that closing the achievement gap and increasing student learning requires the collaboration of various interest groups, most notably parents. Larocque *et al.* (2011) explored numerous

strategies for addressing barriers to school involvement and participation. Larocque *et al.* (2011) note that parents might feel intimidated by the professional languages used in school, especially when students have disabilities as the language can appear to be too academic, scientific or abstract. This, the authors further note, may cause parents to withdraw, which can be misconstrued as lack of care.

Larocque *et al.* (2011) suggest that in order to improve communication, schools may use translators, translating newsletters using pictures or videos. In order to address physical barriers, schools can facilitate parents being able to physically attend school activities. It may be as simple as scheduling parent-teacher meetings to accommodate the schedules of the families or providing a variety of meeting times so that parents can find a time that suits their schedules (Larocque *et al.*, 2011).

Chen and Gregory (2010) investigated whether student-perceived parental involvement predicts improvement in academic, behavioural and relational outcomes for low-achieving adolescents. They measured three dimensions of parental involvement, namely, direct participation, academic encouragement, and expectations for grades and attainment. Chen and Gregory (2010) found that the three measured dimensions of student-perceived parental involvement, namely, direct parental participation in school-related activities, parental expectations of course grade achievement and educational achievement were not significantly related to each other. The authors also note that although parental expectations seem more distal from student outcomes than direct participation, they may actually have more influence with maturing teens. Students may have internalized their parents' desire for them to go far in school, and a lack of response to traditional involvement could reflect a desire typical in adolescents for less parental supervision and oversight (Chen & Gregory, 2010).

Karakus and Savas (2012) explored the effects of parental involvement, teachers' trust in parents and students, and teachers' pupil control ideology on the conflict management strategies used by teachers in classroom management. Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994), as cited in Karakus and Savas (2012), define parental involvement as the devotion of resources by the parent to the child within a given domain. Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994), as cited in Karakus and Savas (2012), focused on three types of involvement such as behaviour, cognitive-intellectual, and personal. The first category, the parent's behaviour, involves participation in activities at school, for example attending parent-teacher meetings, conferences and school activities. The second category, namely, cognitive-intellectual, involvement includes revealing the child to intellectually motivating activities such as discussing daily events. The third category, personal involvement, entails staying informed and knowing what is going on with the child at school.

The results of Karakus and Savas' (2012) study showed that as the parents are more involved, teachers develop trust in parents and their students, and their higher levels of trust lead teachers to develop a more humanistic orientation towards their students. Parental involvement and teachers' trust in parents and their students cause teachers to use more constructive conflict management strategies such as integrating, compromising and obliging. Teachers' lower level of trust and their custodial orientation cause them to use dominating strategy. Karakus and Savas (2012) conclude that the results imply the importance of parental involvement and building trust for effectively solving the conflicts in the classroom.

The issue of parental involvement in education is notable for the extensive rhetoric supporting it and considerable variation in the reality of its practice (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). The authors argue that this gap between rhetoric and reality has come about

because of the influence of factors at the parent and family, child, parent-teacher and societal levels which act as barriers to the development of effective parental involvement. The authors point out that parents' beliefs on various issues can act as barriers to effective parental involvement. According to the authors, the way parents view their role in their children's education is crucial. Notably, parents who believe their role is only to get children to school, which then takes over responsibility for their education, will not be willing to be actively involved in either school-based or home-based parental involvement.

Hornby and Lafaele (2011) point out that parents are most effectively involved when teachers are actively encouraging parental involvement. According to the authors, if teachers with positive facilitating attitudes toward involving parents encourage more parents to become involved and increase the effectiveness of parental involvement. Therefore, the authors argue that if parents perceive that teachers are not open to involving parents, it could act as a major barrier to parental involvement. Barriers related to class, ethnicity and gender of parents are relevant when accounting for the gap between rhetoric and reality in parental development (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Parents who possess cultural capital that matches that of the school are usually more involved, more represented and have access to resources. They are also in a position to engage home-help to free up time for greater involvement at school. This type of class related parental involvement helps maintain the current inequalities in the system and the gap between rhetoric and reality (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

Sheng (2012) employs the concept of cultural capital to examine the way in which social difference in terms of gender are played out in parental involvement in children's schooling and higher education choice. The study concluded that parental involvement in children's schooling and higher education is powerfully gendered. According to the

findings of Sheng's (2012) study, mothers were always the parents who are most involved in their children's schooling. The study also shows that the majority of fathers adopted a distant and broad role in terms of their involvement in their children's schooling and higher education choice on a day-to-day basis, while the mothers are directly and primarily involved in the process. However, this does not mean that the fathers are not committed to the education of their children. According to Sheng (2012), one of the main findings of the study was that the transmission of cultural capital was gendered as it was noticeable that mothers and fathers are positioned very differently in relation to the transmission of cultural capital. Mothers have a different and more direct relationship to the generation of cultural capital than fathers, and it is also the mothers who are putting cultural capital to work in the process of higher education choice.

Although there are differences between scholars on the definition and impact of parental involvement, literature related to parents and school is rife with articles that convey a convincing and positive connection between parent involvement and academic achievement. Long-term social and financial benefits such as improved health outcomes, decreased welfare dependence and reduced crime are also correlated with increased parental involvement. Having taken this generalist approach to parental involvement, the next sub-section will look at the concept of fatherhood and fathers' involvement in ECD in South Africa.

2.3.4 Fatherhood and fathers' involvement in early childhood development in South Africa

Richter, Desmond, Hosegood, Madhavan, Makiwane, Makusha, Morell and Swartz (2012) point out that South Africa has one of the highest rates of father absences in

the world and that only about a third of South African preschool children live in the same homes as their fathers and mothers. Richter *et al.* (2012) further point out that many fathers support their children and remain in contact with them despite living apart. In the absence of the biological father, maternal uncles and grandfathers, as well as older brothers, assume the role of social fathers, supporting their mothers, providing for children's livelihood and education as well as giving them paternal love and guidance.

Richter *et al.* (2012) argue that father absence is associated with adverse consequences for children, women, families and men. According to these authors, the early years are a vulnerable time for father-child ties and involvement during these years solidify men's ties to their children, regardless of their relationships with their child's mother. The authors note that opportunities for contact and communication, as well as activities together are important in addition to financial support. Richter *et al.* (2012) recommend the engagement of men in groups to change the norms, including those held by women, and to increase demand for policy changes and modifications to service to make them more inclusive of men and the important roles they play in the lives of children.

Morrell and Richter (2006) argue that fatherhood is a social role and that the importance of this role fluctuates over time and the content of the role shifts. The authors further argue that not all fathers are proud to be fathers, and not all of them want to participate in the lives of their children. Morrell and Richter (2006) are of the opinion that most South African men do not seem, especially interested in their children and that they do not always acknowledge their children. Nevertheless, the authors point out that some South African men are beginning to reassess the value of

fatherhood. The authors note that this is part of an international process where men demand rights for fathers as well as approach the question of parenting from a holistic position and emphasizes the interest of children.

South African laws and policies, with regard to fathers, have shown a moderate improvement in areas such as paternal leave although its focus was not explicitly to increase father involvement in childcare. Morrell and Richter (2006) note that fathers can now also take family responsibility leave to attend to serious family business. Morrell and Richter (2006) note that the experiences of South African fathers have been powerfully influenced by history. The authors further argue that Black, particularly African fathers, were for the most part separated from their children by the need to work in distant places on terms of migrant contracts that permitted only annual visits home.

According to Richter, Chikovore and Makusha (2010), the majority of South Africa's children are not fortunate with regard to a positive father/child relationship. The authors note that many young fathers speak with sadness about the fact that they never knew their own fathers and recognize that they lack experience and guidance regarding father roles and responsibilities (Richter *et al.*, 2010). The authors argue that in view of this, a father's presence and involvement in the lives of children is a critical issue for social policy and programs.

Clowes, Ratele and Shefer (2013) argue that the legacy of apartheid and continued social and economic change have meant that many South African men and women have grown up in families from which biological fathers are missing. Consequently, this has been seen as a problem, especially for boys who are assumed to lack a positive male role model. Clowes *et al.* (2013) argue that South African the discourse

tends to pathologize the absence of the biological father while simultaneously undermining the role of social fathers. The authors further argue that in spite of the absence of the biological father, the participants could identify men such as maternal or paternal uncles, grandfathers, neighbours and teachers who often serve as social fathers. According to Clowes *et al.* (2013), popular and professional discourses suggest that the absent father is the source of many societal ills, and that biological fathers are critical for the mental and psychological health of boys growing into young men.

Clowes *et al.* (2013) further suggest that such an understanding emerges out of particular conceptualization of the family comprising biological father, mother and children. These authors conclude that many of the men interviewed alluded to the tensions between the presence and significance of biological fathers versus social fathers in their own childhood. The authors further conclude that linked to this was the tension between the provider and protector role of the fathers, and the emotional and nurturing needs provided on a day-to-day basis by father figures such as uncles, grandfathers, or neighbours. Clowes *et al.* (2013) also suggest that fathers' attempts to perform normative masculine roles as the autonomous decision-maker and head of the household served to marginalize them from both family and community support networks, with the resulting anxieties and insecurities often expressed through violence or the threat of violence (Clowes *et al.*, 2013).

Rothmann (2010) explored the realization of the principles of generative fathering in the parenting practices of fathers and the manner in which pathological views of gay men, in general, influenced these practices of fathers. The author argues that gay men also experience the need to become fathers or play a more intricate part in the lives

of their children. These children, according to the author, may be from previous heterosexual relationships.

However, the link between homosexuality and parenting has never been met with a great deal of enthusiasm. Nevertheless, same-sex marriage legislation and adoption rights for gay and lesbian couples in South Africa underscores the changing nature of traditional views of married and family life. Rothmann (2010) notes the tumultuous relationship between homosexuality and fathering against the background of the principles of generativity, that is, the desire to establish and nurture young people. The findings showed that those fathers who had postgraduate degrees and who were either teachers or lecturers displayed high levels of paternal involvement. Also associated with their gender role orientation, gay fathers displayed an affinity for a more androgynous and egalitarian approach to the parenting practices. According to Rothmann (2010), gay fathers opted for the negotiation of the allocation of household tasks for the couple, based on their strengths and mutual support, rather than the gender of the individual. The author concludes that sexual orientation played a minimal role in the parenting process.

The Joint Learning Initiative on Children and Aids recommended that families need to be more central in intervention programs to support children affected by HIV and Aids in sub-Saharan Africa (Hosegood & Madhavan, 2012). These authors note that as a result of the growing body of literature on the positive influence men have on their children, policymakers, researchers and communities feel encouraged to include men in these programs. Hosegood and Madhavan (2012) conclude that the enrolment of fathers or other male relatives may sometimes be impossible or ill-advised, as in the case where these men are in prison or hospital, or have problems related to mental health. The authors specifically refer to countries such as South Africa with its high

rates of domestic violence and child sexual abuse. The authors point out that the picture of South African fatherhood that comes to the fore is one of large numbers of children whose biological fathers are not co-resident and the commonplace situation of men taking on father roles and responsibilities for non-biological children, typically without formal legal recognition or rights.

Hosegood and Madhavan (2012) argue that questions, therefore, may be asked whether the case of South Africa needs to be understood in particular given some of the legacies of the unique policies and practices linked to apartheid. However, the forms and patterns of fatherhood and father involvement are similar in their diversity of types to those identified in work in Western countries. The authors argue that the dearth of the data about fathers in South Africa has resulted in a gap in the knowledge about the role of fathers, at best, and a misrepresentation of what they do or not do. Therefore, Hosegood and Madhavan (2012) suggest that household surveys could be enhanced to improve the data collected about the involvement and impact of fathers, mothers and other people on child and family well-being.

According to Swartz, Bhana, Richter and Versfeld (2013), obstacles to fathering have not been well documented, especially with regards to young fathers who became parents while still at school or college. Swartz *et al.* (2013) argue that these young fathers have frequently been portrayed in the media as unwilling to take responsibility for their children.

The authors focused on South Africa as a country within Sub-Saharan Africa for their investigation as they felt that in South Africa there was an established body of multi-disciplinary work on fatherhood research and policy. Swartz *et al.* (2013) argued that descriptions of father involvement in South Africa are primarily based on a child's access to his biological father, with access narrowly defined as whether the father is

alive, and if so, whether he is co-resident. The authors note that many men are involved in fathering of step-children and non-biological children. According to the authors, social fatherhood in South Africa is very common, whether formally through fostering or adoption or more typically, informally.

Amongst the contributing factors to this social fatherhood, cultural practices that emphasize collective responsibility of the extended family in child-rearing, high levels of long term migration, relationship dissolution and re-partnering due to severe HIV epidemic and other causes of premature male mortality (Hosegood & Madhavan, 2012). The authors note that the picture of South African fatherhood that comes to the fore is one of large numbers of children whose biological fathers are not co-resident and the commonplace situation of men taking on father roles and responsibilities for non-biological children, typically without formal legal recognition or rights. The authors conclude that the dearth of data about fathers in South Africa has resulted in a gap in knowledge about the role of fathers at best and a misrepresentation of what they do or not do at worst.

Roy (2008) developed a framework to analyze and understand men's work and family roles in multicultural societies with histories of inequalities. The author examined lived experiences of and effect of social structure on poor fathers in South Africa and the United States. According to Roy (2008), traditional notions of masculinity are under dramatic reconstruction in local, regional, and global communities. In recent decades, there was a profound re-evaluation of men's roles in the lives of children and families around the world (Roy, 2008).

The mirror trend of father absence from children's lives is also increasingly evident. Roy (2008) argues that in many societies, poverty goes hand in hand with the almost permanent absence of biological fathers from home. Father absence is of particular

concern for poor families, for whom men's contributions could make a real difference in pulling children out of poverty (Roy, 2008). The author is of the opinion that in both societies, non-residential fatherhood emerges from a complex interplay of subordination by race and class, dynamic political economies, and family dynamics. Furthermore, the author concludes that paternal absence is shaped by migrant labour and coping with unemployment as well as under-employment, imprisonment, military service, desertion and divorce.

Spjeldnaes, Moland, Harris and Sam (2011) did a study aimed at exploring semi-urban South African school-boys of Northern Sotho ethnicity and their understanding of fatherhood from a socio-psychological perspective. According to Spjeldnaes *et al.* (2011), there did not seem to be any adult man, neither in nor outside the family that could take on a guiding and supporting role for the boys in the transition to manhood. During apartheid, race and class were manipulated by the state in a manner that deeply affected gender identity (Spjeldnaes *et al.*, 2011). Fatherhood in South Africa is commonly linked with absence, which has been associated with less social security and even a lack of dignity for the household.

A father's absence may have important ramifications for the child's development as important decisions regarding his or her education may be delayed until the return of the father. Spjeldnaes *et al.* (2011) argue that guiding youth into adulthood is a dimension of responsible fatherhood that has not been underlined to the same degree in other South African fatherhood studies. Spjeldnaes *et al.* (2011) further argue that fathers and other men do not see discussions on life, in general, as their responsibility. Providing (economically) is an important part of being a father for many of the boys interviewed. The authors conclude that regardless of father absence, their participants had a strong inner longing for a father-figure to be present emotionally and to guide

them into manhood. The authors also conclude that there was a gap between how these boys envisaged responsible fatherhood in the future (Spjeldnaes *et al.*, 2011).

The absence of biological fathers in South Africa has been constructed as a problem for children of both sexes but more so for boy-children (Ratele, Shefer & Clowes, 2012). Ratele *et al.* (2012) argues that fathers are constructed as either absent or bad, and examined discourses of fatherhood and fatherlessness by groups of men in South Africa. According to the authors, there is a strong policy-based perception that family life is under pressure, and the dominant view is that fathers are not playing their role. The authors note that the absence of fathers mirrored in the rising numbers of single mothers is understood to have a number of causes for example, the greater numbers of men who die prematurely in comparison with women, unemployment, poverty, income inequality, gender power, and so forth. These cause biological fathers to play a relatively limited role in the lives of their children.

The dominant discourse that families are under more in pressure post-apartheid and that fathers are more absent has also been challenged since there is much historical evidence to illustrate the impact of apartheid, forced removals and migrant labour on African families (Ratele *et al.*, 2012). Nonetheless, the statistics gathered on the increase of female-headed households, as well as the lack of biological fathers living with their children, has served to reproduce an image of men, in particular Black men, as either not fulfilling their expected roles as fathers or performing it badly (Ratele *et al.*, 2012).

According to Ratele *et al.* (2012), the legacy of apartheid, unemployment, poverty and inequality in post-apartheid South Africa, gender inequality, and the burden of HIV/AIDS and violence-related mortality have negatively affected family and parental practices with a significant number of children growing up without biological fathers,

either through premature death or abandonment. Nevertheless, the authors emphasize the importance of positive models of fathering in the care-taking of children. The study concludes that non-biological father figures and male relatives are immensely important in the fathering of South African boys and men and that the role of non-biological fathers in the lives of boys and young men has, perhaps, been underestimated within the dominant assumption of the centrality of the biological father. However, according to the authors, the absence of biological fathers, physically or emotionally, is sometimes experienced as a loss even while participants acknowledge the importance of social fathers. The authors argue that this could be because of the dominant notions of masculinity in many communities in South Africa that places great emphasis on fathers as heads of households and breadwinners and therefore, communities may tend to see the lack of such a male figure as a deficit.

Langa and Smith (2012) explored the meaning of teenage fatherhood in a historically disadvantaged South African community with teenage fathers between 16 and 21 years. Their findings suggested that many of these early fathers were actively involved in their children's lives. They also concluded that those teenage fathers with a history of absent fathers sought, in their parenting, to be good fathers as compared to their absent fathers and also embraced a diverse range of roles including emotional care, love and nurturance for their children. According to the authors, the participants in their study were emotionally invested in being good fathers despite their lack of positive fathering. The authors argue that this was contrary to the dominant literature that holds that teenage fathers who grow up without a positive male role model or father figure are more likely to become poor male role models themselves.

Morrell (2006) argues that the connection between fathers and masculinity seems patently obvious as fathers are men. Drawing on South African examples the author

examined this link between fathers and masculinity. Morrell (2006) notes that the understanding that a man becomes a father after impregnating a woman makes this biological happening the sole criterion of becoming a father. The author argues that artificial insemination, in vitro fertilization as well as other technologically advanced procedures, is forcing new definitions of what a father is. Morrell (2006) further argues that in many African contexts, being a father has more to do with kinship ties than with medically established paternity. Fatherhood is associated with manhood, but the point at which one becomes a man is reached along different routes, and the process is often contested (Morrell, 2006). The author points out that over the last four decades in countries across the world, states have been intervening to shape the rights and duties of fathers. In South Africa, laws that seek to force men to meet their financial obligations to their children have existed for many years. According to Morrell (2006), fatherhood policy-making in South Africa is complicated by the different situations in which men find themselves. Middle-class men can generally adopt a fatherhood role that includes being a provider, protector and caregiver whilst for the unemployed, money and resources are scarce, which has a grievous effect on the relationships with their children.

Firstly, Posel and Devey (2006) sought to know how many biological fathers there were in South Africa and which of them were fathers; secondly, they examined how many children under 15 were not staying with their biological fathers or had fathers who were deceased. The authors, in examining and evaluating the possible sources of data in South Africa, noted that the available data to count and describe fathers are limited. Posel and Devey (2006) argue that there were only crude estimates to answer the question on how many biological fathers there were in South Africa and suggest that such information would result in the recognition of men, and thereby promoting of

the role of men as parents (Posel & Devey, 2006).

On the second question, the authors noted that between 1993 and 2002, a large and growing proportion of children in South Africa neither had a father who was alive nor a father who was a resident member of their household. The authors argue that if the absence of a father from the household has significant economic and psychological implications for the well-being of a child, the data were a cause for concern. The authors argue that household surveys in South Africa do not include a question that makes it possible to directly identify all men who are biological fathers.

A possible reason Posel and Devey (2006) may adduce for this omission is that such information could be questioned as men may not know whether they were fathers or may wish to deny paternity. The authors emphasize the importance for identifying men who are fathers as well as birth rates for fathers as it recognizes the role that men can or do play as parents. This lack of data makes it difficult to explore whether there is a relationship between education, employment status and fatherhood or whether the age distribution of fathers is shifting. The authors conclude that it is not possible to say anything meaningful about the characteristics of fathers and the households in which they live, using the available national household survey data (Posel & Devey, 2006)

Wilson (2006) argues that not all poor households in South Africa have members who are migrant workers but assumes that virtually, all migrant workers come from households that are poor as they earn very low salaries. The wide overlap between poverty and migration, the author argues, requires us to consider the double impact of these two states on fatherhood. The author notes that at the start of the new dispensation in South Africa, 87 percent of White and Indian children under the age of 19 lived with both parents while this was true for only 34 percent for African children.

This was because in many cases, both parents were absent in order to earn money. Wilson (2006) argues that assuming that most men have their children between the ages of 25 and 35, the fathers are away from their children during the crucial years of early childhood, up to the age of 15. The author points out that the combination of poverty and the migrant system caused havoc in the rural areas. The author further points out that there were a significant relationship between children missing meals due to lack of funds and adults' self-reported depression by both women and men. Poverty deprives men from sharing the inherited riches of humanity with their children by the simple harsh fact of not having enough money (Posel & Devey, 2006). The authors argue that the extent of poverty in South Africa goes hand in hand with a dislocated social structure. Posel and Devey (2006) further argue that a process of rural impoverishment combined with increasing dependence on migrant remittances, has left fathers with little alternative but to leave home to look for money. This, the authors note, has created a Black social structure throughout much of rural South Africa where poverty is combined with the almost permanent absence of fathers from home.

Makusha, Richter, Knight, van Rooyen and Bhana (2013) considered how childhood experiences with fathers are associated with women's expectations and men's experiences of fathering. The authors conclude that fatherhood is dynamic and is influenced by socio-cultural and economic factors, societal expectations, father-mother relationship and individual characteristics of men. Their study focuses on adult women and men's experiences with their own fathers or father-figures and explores how these experiences influence women's expectations and men's experiences of fathering in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Makusha *et al.* (2013) note that retrospective understanding of fatherhood is defined as adults reflections on their

relationships with their fathers when they were growing up. This view is underpinned by the modeling hypothesis which holds that men who experienced involved fathers when they were growing up tend to see involvement in their children's lives as important and natural, and that men who had less involved fathers usually have less favourable attitudes towards fatherhood (Makusha *et al.*, 2013).

The findings Makusha *et al.* (2013) study show that men use their childhood experiences of fatherhood to guide them on how to perform as fathers and women use their childhood experiences to shape their expectations of fathering to influence their children's fathers. Makusha *et al.* (2013) also conclude that while some men want to co-reside and be more involved in their children's lives, these expectations can act as barriers for poor men who may not be able to meet the socio-cultural expectations and obligations to be involved in their children's lives. According to Makusha *et al.* (2013), women who have a good relationship with their children's fathers, regardless of marital status or residency, are more likely to influence father-child involvement in a positive direction than those women who have a poor relationship with their children's fathers. Makusha *et al.* (2013) also conclude that fathers try to overcome adverse childhood experiences with their own fathers, negative father-mother relationship, and contextual influences if they have high levels of fathering motivation and skills. The next section takes a look at the constraints to fathers' involvement in their children's lives.

2.3.5 Constraints to fathers' involvement in early childhood development

The presence of fathers in children's lives is known to contribute to children's chances of experiencing positive developmental outcomes. Swartz, Bhana, Richter and Versfeld (2013) are of the opinion that obstacles to fathering have not been well documented, especially young fathers who became parents while still at school.

According to Swartz *et al.* (2013), young fathers have frequently been portrayed in the media as unwilling to take responsibility for their children. However, these young fathers as well as fathers, in general, are confronted with numerous barriers to fulfilling their parenting roles. The authors describe some of these barriers and examine the policy framework in light of these barriers.

Swartz *et al.* (2013) note that being able to take responsibility and financially support a child is often regarded as synonymous. They further note that financial provision often overshadows other aspects of fatherhood, such as contact time, physical care and emotional support. The authors argue that this is problematic to young fathers in the context of poverty as they tend to have limited access to finances due to absence of income. Swartz *et al.* (2013) allude to the fact that young, Black African men's involvement in their children's lives is hampered by cultural expectations. The authors point to the fact that in the case of unmarried couples, a father is required to make damage payments to the family of the mother of his child.

Swartz *et al.* (2013) are of the opinion that this might frighten off a young father from claiming paternity, especially if he is unemployed. Therefore, Swartz *et al.* (2013) argue, in the absence of damage payments being made, the family is likely to deny the father access to his child. In addition to the above, the study also concludes that there are few professional or community services aimed at supporting young fathers. Furthermore, the young men reported that their actions towards their children are most likely to influence encouragement and support from their own mothers as well as positive relationship with the mothers of their children and the family members of those mothers.

An earlier study by Marsh and Yiap (2005) tended to support the above views as it concurs that socio-economic challenges poses its problems to father involvement.

Marsh and Yiap (2005) argue that while affirmative action programs have helped women overcome past unemployment problems, there is now a growing crisis in male unemployment, especially among young and middle-aged men. The authors argue that male unemployment has two major socio-economic impacts on fatherhood. Firstly, fathers and, therefore, families are put under severe pressure when fathers are unemployed. Secondly, the authors argue that many men in low socio-economic circumstances will not marry and will not have children. Marsh and Yiap (2005) recommend that all inequalities in current male and female employment opportunities and policies that may occur through affirmative action be removed.

Sheehy (2004) highlights bonding and breastfeeding, coaching, lack of male role models, peripheral role and exclusive language as barriers affecting father involvement in early parenting. The author argues that breastfeeding and bonding are, many times, spoken of in the same sentence, thus giving the impression that bonding happens exclusively with breastfeeding. Sheehy (2004) further argues that many men associate bonding with breastfeeding and, therefore, see themselves as having a limited role in the bonding process. As far as coaching is concerned, the author points out that many men talk about feeling supervised in their attempts to address the physical needs of the child. The author argues that a feeling of incompetence can arise through this, and the father may withdraw from this activity altogether.

Sheehy (2004) is of the opinion that fathers should be given room to explore their own way of doing things and that it might be good for mums to avoid watching or coaching. The author alludes to the fact that many people talk about their experience of fathers as being distant, working, busy and the disciplinarian. According to Sheehy (2004), if we had not experienced a nurturing father ourselves then it is more difficult to feel comfortable in a nurturing role. The author argues that the belief that the fathers' role

is to act as support for the mother/child relationship is not enough for the involved father. Sheehy (2004) is also of the opinion that such a perception could lead to isolation if the father does not feel competent or important.

The benefit of the perception that the father has a direct relationship with the child leads to the experience of parental love and the focus of the couple relationship is more in line with each other (Sheehy, 2004). The author then argues that the perception of ante-natal and post-natal services about the father's role can also serve to communicate confusing messages to the father when the emphasis is solely on his support for the mother/child relationship. Sheehy (2004) warns that we need to be aware of the language we use when encouraging father involvement in the parenting process.

Lu, Jones, Bond, Wright, Pummpuang, Maidenbureg, Jones, Garfield and Rowley (2010) point out that men are important to maternal and child health, but their involvement is sometimes constraint by barriers. Lu *et al.* (2010), using a life-course perspective, examined amongst others, barriers, such as intrapersonal, interpersonal, neighbourhood, cultural, policy and life course factors, to Black fathers' being involved with their children. Lu *et al.* (2010) point out that a life-course perspective recognizes that like mothers, fathers have a life history of their own. The authors argue that two of the most important interpersonal factors influencing father involvement are the fathers' relationship with the child's mother and maternal grandmother. The authors further argue that research has shown that maternal grandmothers play an important role in father involvement as they play an important goalkeeping role in the family. The authors note that although there was an explosion of interest over the past few years on neighbourhood effects on child health, little is known about the effects on father involvement.

One important cultural influence on father involvement, according to Lu *et al.* (2010), is the growing perception that fathers, particularly Black fathers, are expendable in parenting. According to the authors, this cultural perception has been fuelled by declining wages and employment among Black men and welfare policies that favoured women. Another factor deterring father involvement, according to the authors, is child support policies. Low-income, non-custodial fathers are routinely required to pay much higher proportions of their income than middle- and upper-income fathers, and many are required to pay unreasonable amounts of arrearages. Lu *et al.* (2010) allude to the numerous studies that have shown that fathers' involvement is much influenced by their own experiences. Therefore, men who did not have a positive fathering model are less involved with their children.

Nepomnyaschy and Waldfogel (2007) allude to the fact that proponents of paternity leave argue that extending leave for fathers would lead them to be more involved in their children's lives. They point out that although childcare continues to be highly gendered in most families, the argument is that at least some fathers might be willing to be more involved in childcare tasks than they are currently doing, but are discouraged from those tasks because mothers spend more time with the child after birth and hence, becomes the experts on that child's care. They also point out that if this argument is correct, giving fathers the opportunity to spend more time at home directly after birth should then result in them being more involved in child care-taking tasks in the future.

However, Nepomnyaschy and Waldfogel (2007) point out that the link between fathers' early involvement in child care during a period of parental leave, and their later involvement in child-care taking, have not been studied. The authors warn that establishing a link between leave-taking and subsequent caretaking is challenging as

it is possible that both leave-taking and care-taking are driven by some other factor. They point out that fathers who take leave may simply be more committed fathers, and that this may be reflected both in their leave-taking and subsequent care-taking. Nepomnyaschy and Waldfogel (2007) further argue that men who take leave may be less committed employees, and that this may be reflected both in their leave-taking and in being more involved in child care-taking subsequently.

Feeley, Waitzer, Sherrard, Boisvert and Zelkowitz (2012) explored what fathers perceived to be facilitators or barriers to their involvement with their infants. The authors are of the opinion that fathers make unique and important contributions to the development of their infants. Feeley *et al.* (2012) point out that father of infants in the neonatal intensive care unit often feel that they have a limited role to play in their infant's care. According to the authors, fathers want to be involved, and their lack of involvement is an important source of stress.

Feeley *et al.* (2012) found three major categories or facilitators, namely: infant factors, interpersonal factors and neonatal intensive care unit environmental factors. The authors point out that most infants admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit are born prematurely and have low birth weight or a medical condition that requires intensive medical and nursing care for several months following birth.

Feeley *et al.* (2012) argue that fathers perceived that a range of interpersonal factors such as rewards of and their attitudes and beliefs concerning fatherhood, family responsibilities, support and previous personal experiences, played a role in their ability to be involved. The study findings indicate that a range of infant, interpersonal and environmental factors appear to act as barriers or facilitators to fathers' involvement with their infant during hospitalisation. Feeley *et al.* (2012) note that

fathers perceived that the infants' physical attributes affect their involvement as they fear they could harm them. The study found that feedback from the infant played a role in shaping involvement as some fathers understood that their infant might not be capable of providing feedback at the time because of their immaturity. However, Feeley *et al.* (2012) also found that some fathers mistakenly interpreted the infants' lack of responsiveness to some failure on their part, hindered involvement. The study also found that fathers' beliefs and the specific demands of the family situation can affect involvement. The study also found that the social context influences involvement and identify the varied types and sources that impact on involvement.

Troilo and Coleman (2013) examined how 20 newly divorced, non-residential fathers' believe their physical involvement with their children allows them to maintain an involved father identity. The authors note that these fathers' identities were negatively influenced by five barriers, namely, rushed time, the legal system, geographic distance, negative perception of child support and former spouse relationships. Troilo and Coleman (2013) point out that all fathers identified at least one barrier to physical involvement and some identified multiple barriers. The more barriers the fathers perceived, the less access to their children they believed they had. According to the authors, the fathers seemed aware of how little time they had to spend with their children and wanted more time, preferably over weekends, which they felt were not as rushed as overnight visits during the week.

Troilo and Coleman's (2013) study found that the legal system seems to be a major barrier to the fathers' physical involvement with their children. The authors note that the fathers believed that the courts unfairly favoured women and therefore, it would have been pointless to seek more physical custody at the time of the divorce. The fathers also felt that they paid too much child support. The authors also noted that

there was a belief amongst the fathers that time and child support should be inversely related. The fathers argue that the more they see their children, the less they should pay regardless of the amount of money either they or their former wives made. Geographic location also hampers physical involvement for the fathers, and they believed that being separated by distance was the single greatest barrier that affected their relationships with their children. Contentious relationships with their former wives, characterized by a lack of communication, inflexible custody arrangements and a feeling of being undermined made gaining access to their children difficult, according to the fathers (Troilo & Coleman, 2013).

Mohlala, Gregson and Boily (2012) assessed pregnant women and men's attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions to male partners' involvement in antenatal clinic in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, South Africa. Mohlala *et al.* (2012) wanted to determine barriers to male partners, attendance of antenatal clinics with their pregnant female partners and to identify possible strategies to overcome these barriers. The study found that men were unaware of their role in antenatal clinic and did not attend as they thought it was not important. They felt that it was the role of women to check the baby's status. The study also concludes that economic activities were a major barrier to men attending antenatal clinic. According to Mohlala *et al.* (2012), most of the men were breadwinners, casual workers and were not allowed paternity or family responsibility leave. The study also found that social reasons were a barrier to men's involvement in antenatal clinics. According to the authors, men do not attend antenatal clinic because they are afraid that they will be the only ones attending, and that it could be embarrassing.

Cosson and Graham (2012) set out to identify barriers and opportunities in relation to fathers' engagement with residential parenting support programs. The focus of the

research was fathers' experiences of residential support program, but the study concludes that participants described experiences of seeking support from a range of health professionals where they were treated as secondary parents. According to Cosson and Graham (2012), the fathers saw themselves as critical contributors to the care of their children, yet they felt that their contribution was not always valued or recognized. The fathers indicated that they wanted to be better informed about what to expect when they entered the residential support environment. The study also found that the participants indicated that as parents, they were under pressure to balance work and family. The fathers also wanted access to father-specific information that addresses their experiences as fathers trying to juggle work and family.

The study concludes that fathers in consideration of their needs, wanted father-friendly devices such as wireless internet connections so that they could catch up on work when children were sleeping. The study concludes that instead of just being seen as secondary parents or just as supporting their partners, fathers want to feel welcome and fully integrated into the process.

Cosson and Graham (2012) assert that fathers felt that even when they tried to play an equal role they were still perceived as the secondary parent. The authors argue that such a response can be likened to a form of maternal gate-keeping as it continues to place a cultural emphasis on mothers as primary carers, which can undermine fathers who seek to engage with and involved in caring for children. Cosson and Graham's (2012) study concludes that the importance of identifying and acting on instances of exclusion, however unintentional, cannot be under-estimated as this ultimately helps to normalize involved fathering and shared care.

Earlier, Landale and Oropesa (2001) examined the nature and determinants of father involvement, focusing on both financial contributions and participation in child care, among mainland Puerto Ricans. The authors conclude that although the nature of fatherhood has received considerable scholarly attention during the last several years, little is known about the behaviour of Latino fathers, especially Puerto Ricans. Landale and Oropesa (2001) argue that Puerto Ricans are of interest, theoretically, as they are a highly disadvantaged ethnic group whose economic situation closely resembles those of African Americans. The authors point out that as in the case of African Americans, the majority of births, for Puerto Rican women, occur outside of legal marriages. Thus, the authors argue that understanding the circumstances of Puerto Rican children requires attention to the behaviour of cohabiting fathers and non-resident fathers. The study's result underscores the critical role of employment in fathers' contributions to Puerto Rican children. The study found that the father's employment status is the key predictor of whether the father contributed financially and his level of involvement in the care of the child.

Landale and Oropesa (2001) are of the opinion that this suggests that the lack of involvement that is evident among many fathers reflects larger, structurally-induced problems rather than a desire to abdicate responsibility for their offspring. The authors found that multiple dimensions of the father-child relationship appear to suffer when fathers are unable to obtain employment. The study concludes that men who lack employment also have weaker relationships with their children that are characterized by fewer visitations and less direct involvement when they live apart.

Carpenter and Towers (2008) aimed to develop a better understanding, among practitioners, of the issues faced by fathers of children with a learning disability. The authors are of the opinion that as a result of the growing interest in fatherhood in

Britain, there is recognition of the important contribution fathers make to family life and that strategies need to be developed to promote involvement. The authors are of the opinion that support services for families focus primarily on the needs of mothers and are predominantly provided by women. The authors point out that research around the needs of fathers of children with disabilities has been infrequent and usually focuses upon biological fathers who live with their families (Carpenter & Towers, 2008). The authors argue that fathers are a heterogeneous group and as result, have differing needs.

Carpenter and Towers (2008) further argue that opportunities such as attending meetings independently of the child's mother should be created for fathers who are not resident with their children but still want to be involved. Carpenter and Towers' (2008) study found that lone fathers may need additional consideration as they may find it difficult to develop supportive social networks and may feel stigmatised as a result of being lone, male carers. The authors argue that some fathers may not have a positive experience at school and may not feel confident in a school environment.

Carpenter and Towers (2008) further argue that whilst fathers with higher qualification levels are more likely to feel comfortable in their contact with professionals, it should not be assumed that others would not welcome opportunities to be involved. The authors are of the opinion that some fathers may need additional encouragement to step over the threshold as they could also have had mild learning disabilities themselves, and if this is the case, extra consideration will need to be given, for example, to home-school communication. The study also concludes that fathers from Black and minority ethnic communities may have different roles in relation to their children's education from those with White European backgrounds, and that their needs, in relation to school involvement, need to be considered.

Cullen, Cullen, Band, Davis and Lindsay (2011) examined views on how to engage fathers, and of the barriers explaining the overall absence of fathers from the Parent Support Adviser (PSA). The PSA role was piloted between 2006 and 2008 in 20 local authorities in England, offering preventative and early intervention support to families where there were concerns about children's school attendance or behaviour. Although this was a highly successful initiative in terms of supporting parental engagement with their children's school this article focused on the one key area that was less successful namely, the engagement of fathers. Cullen *et al.* (2011) point out that, overall, the evidence provided by the PSAs indicated that at the point of service delivery, the level of engagement of fathers was low and that there was a clear deficit in terms of paternal, as opposed to maternal engagement.

Barriers to engaging fathers arose from the fact that men were more likely to be in full-time employment, or cultural attitudes that child care was women's work on the part of schools, communities and some men themselves. There were three main reasons suggested by interviewees as barriers to engaging fathers.

Firstly, traditional social attitudes among men and women towards dichotomised gendered roles, women being seen as carers and child issues being primarily the concern of mothers, was viewed as hindering the process of trying to engage men with PSA work (Cullen *et al.*, 2011). Secondly, the authors point out that timing was also raised as a key issue, with weekdays being seen as a difficult time to engage fathers as a result of their work commitments. Thirdly, Cullen *et al.* (2011) note that there was awareness that men could be discouraged by attending groups and events dominated by mothers and women carers, as indicated by the line manager. The study also concludes that other barriers included the nature of family structure and practicability.

Barriers to father involvement may be faceted and multi-dimensional; only a few of those have been presented in this sub-section. The presentation is, therefore, not exhaustive. In the meantime, the discussion below examines some of the strategies for active fathers' involvement in early childhood development.

2.3.6 Strategies for active fathers' involvement in early childhood development

Men, as fathers, are often ignored or portrayed in narrow ways in the media and society, which inhibits them from expanding their engagement with their children. Therefore, it is important that obstacles that hinder fathers' involvement with their children be removed. Morrell and Richter (2006) are of the opinion that some South African men, as is the case internationally, reassess the value of fatherhood, in which two kinds of responses by men can be discerned. The authors note that one is to demand rights for fathers, while the other approaches the question of parenting from a more holistic position and emphasises the interests of children. Morrell and Richter (2006) cite, as an example, the radical activism undertaken by fathers who have been deprived of access to their children in situations of divorce and separation. The authors note that the position taken by these organizations is often confrontational, and their actions thus appear to be anti-feminist. However, the authors argue that it is difficult to discount the case made by fathers' rights organisations as, increasingly men are being denied access to their children.

Morrell and Richter (2006) point out that current international movement to promote fatherhood include changes in state policy in various areas of the world such as the Scandinavian countries, where paternity leave has been dramatically extended, encourages men to be primary caregivers for their children. The authors note that in

Iceland, a parent-leave system allows mothers and fathers to take leave up to six months whilst receiving 80% of their salaries. South African laws and policies, with regard to fathers, have not yet followed the lead taken by social welfare states in the north. The authors note that modest attempts have been made to extend parental leave, but this has not been explicitly aimed to increase father involvement but more because of the equity arguments generated by the country's human rights culture.

Marsh and Yiap (2005) note that fathers are no longer ignored but that family scholars the world over have produced a large body of evidence from thousands of independent studies on the important contribution that fathers make to children and to the success of the family unit. The National Fathering Forum in Australia formulated a Twelve Point Plan to strengthen and support fatherhood and turn the tide of fatherlessness in Australia. This plan suggested that all levels of government acknowledge the importance of fatherhood by establishing an official body to support and strengthen Australian fathers, such as an office of the Status of fathers or a Ministry of Fatherhood.

Marsh and Yiap (2005) also recommend increase in funding for father-based family initiatives, addressing the gross inequity in funding for men's issues compared to that currently available for women, running an annual campaign to promote fathers and fathering and reducing inequalities for low-socio-economic fathers by increasing their employment opportunities. The authors further suggest that every child has equal contact with both mother and father after divorce or separation unless there are proven mitigating circumstances.

Marsh and Yiap (2005) argue that all current and future legislation, both federal and state, in terms of how it impacts on fathers, marriages, families and children should be

examined, and that when the word *parenting* is being defined, it should be emphasised that the word means both mothers and fathers. As far as education is concerned, the authors recommend that there is a need to increase the participation rates of males as educators in order to increase male role models and mentors. Furthermore, the authors argue that fathers, at various stages, need to be equipped and empowered through education programmes that will enable them to acquire the relevant knowledge and skills that they need to be effective parents.

Sheehy (2004) suggests certain tips for engaging fathers. The author argues that one of the most important things when seeking to engage fathers is the language that we use when promoting a service. According to Sheehy (2004), it is important to meet the men before the commencement of the group or service to be provided. The author is of the opinion that men need to know that their knowledge and parenting experiences are valuable to other men especially in a group setting. According to the author, it is important to let fathers know that their comments and experiences are important, relevant and valued.

Sheehy (2004) warns against trying to correct men's attitudes or jumping in to clarify what they are saying. The author also suggests that one needs to ask questions about fathers work as well as their interest as it provides a way for men to assess their own position in relation to others, and it normalizes the communication process. Sheehy (2004) notes that continuity of service is an important issue in engaging fathers as those men who are met in the antenatal stage and are involved in discussion around the role of fathers, have gone on later to reconnect around parenting when the baby is older.

Lu, Jones, Bond, Wright, Pummpuang *et al.* (2010) argue that in order to promote greater involvement of fathers quality programs was needed which does not lack a conceptual framework or theoretical basis for their interventions. Lu *et al.* (2010) further argue that contextual factors such as neighbourhood, community, cultural or societal issues including institutionalized racism must be considered. The authors argue that future intervention programs designed to improve father's involvement should take a multi-level, multi-discipline approach and be guided by community-based participatory research which will ensure inclusion of key contextual factors. The authors are also of the opinion that intervention programs need to take a life-course approach so that men's capacity to support and nurture needs to be cultivated not only after they become fathers, but over their entire life course.

Lu *et al.* (2010) suggest that men need to be involved in promoting not only maternal and child health, but also their own health. The authors point out that there are few father involvement programs, particularly those targeting low-income men of colour. The authors also conclude that reforms in current tax, welfare and child support policies are needed to encourage family formation and father involvement. The authors also conclude that strengthening the capacity of Black men to provide for their families will go a long way toward restoring Black fathers to Black families.

Feeley *et al.* (2012) not only explored what fathers perceived to be barriers to their involvement with their infants, but also note a few ways to facilitate involvement. Feeley *et al.* (2012) are of the opinion that involvement could be reinforced by positive feedback from the child as fathers looked for and enjoyed the response of their infants to their involvement. According to Feeley *et al.* (2012), increased presence allowed for greater and more varied forms of engagement, which lead to fathers actively attempting to elicit infant responses by engaging in playful interactions. The authors

alluded to the fact that fathers' desire to develop an attachment to and have their child recognize them as their parent was also a motivating factor for fathers to become involved. The authors emphasize that fathers who believed that their involvement affected the child's development and well-being engaged in activities such as feeding and bathing. The authors also point out that paternity leave and instrumental support, from family and friends, contributed to greater involvement by fathers.

The authors note that for some reason, a tour of the ante-natal clinic prior to the birth of the infant facilitates involvement. As far as the social environment was concerned, the study found that when nurses provided information, encouragement to become involved and coaching, involvement was fostered. The authors conclude that when fathers observed what they perceived to be a positive response, this acted as an important motivator to be involved. Feeley *et al.* (2012) study findings suggest that a range of infant-related, interpersonal and environmental factors influence father involvement.

As discussed in the previous section on barriers to fathers' involvement, Troilo and Coleman (2013) examined how 20 newly divorced, non-residential fathers believe reframing allows them to maintain an involved father identity and managing these barriers. Some fathers decided to make their children their first priority, forgoing opportunities that would interfere with time spend with their children. This decision fathers made, affected their personal lives but allowed them to stay involved with and accessible to their children according to the authors.

Troilo and Coleman (2013) point out that because fathers thought that the time they spend with their children was limited, they focused on making it count, spending as much time as possible engaging in conversations and activities. These divorced

fathers believed that quality time spent with their children created stronger father-child relationships. The study found that some of the fathers reframed their own needs in order to save time and money so that they could be better involved with their children, both physically and financially. The fathers believed that by reframing their own needs, fathers sacrificed for the benefit of their children and believed their relationships with their children benefited as a result.

Troilo and Coleman's (2013) study also found that when fathers reframed their relationships with their former spouses, there appeared to be flexible custody and high access to children. These fathers, according to the authors, felt well-informed about their children, were comfortable contacting them while mothers had custody, and did not feel that their former wives interfered with their time with their children. Troilo and Coleman's (2013) study concludes that reframing barriers served as a protective factor for fathers and allowed them more freedom to contact their children and maintaining relationships with them.

Mohlala, Gregson and Boily (2012) who assessed pregnant women and men's attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions to male partners' involvement in antenatal clinic in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, South Africa recommend the following in order to encourage male partners' involvement. Mohlala *et al.* (2012) note that three ideas emerged from the study for encouraging male partner involvement. The authors recommend that firstly, the health or ante-natal clinic environment should be made more male-friendly. Secondly, the authors suggest that invitations should be provided to men to attend ante-natal clinic visits with their pregnant partners. Thirdly, the authors make a case for community sensitization activities to support men in attending ante-natal clinic by correcting common misconceptions and challenging prevailing social norms. The study found that men felt that the clinic environment should be

inviting to men and that men should feel free to attend. The study found that men felt that there should be friendly waiting rooms and toilets for men, and clinic staff and counsellors should be trained to ensure that they are comfortable in dealing with men. The study also recommended that the clinic should introduce an appointment system, flexible opening times and officially invite men.

Mohlala *et al's.* (2012) study concludes that involvement of men in antenatal clinics would seem feasible if the barriers to male involvement are removed as was the case at some clinics where men were forbidden from attending. The study concludes that for men to attend, the policy had to change. In addition, the authors recommend that the clinic environment and nursing staff attitudes have to be addressed to ensure that clinics are male-friendly.

Alio, Bond, Padilla, Hiedelbaugh, Lu and Parker (2011) suggest key policy priorities in order to increase involvement of expectant fathers during pregnancy. The Commission on Paternal Involvement in Pregnancy Outcomes (CPIPO) recommends a revision of the laws and initiatives in the United States of America, to focus on the family, the father, mother and child, no matter the legal composition, married, cohabitating, or not. The CPIPO recommends that the Family and Medical leave Act (FMLA) should be amended to include paid and extended parental leave, maternal and paternal. The CPIPO argues for the elimination of the distinction between single-parent and two-parent families in determining Temporary Assistance for Needy families (TANF) eligibility.

Furthermore, the CPIPO recommends that the marriage penalty in the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) be reduced to allow for deductions on the second earners' income. It is further recommended that the Workforce Investment Act should be re-authorized

to support employment-training opportunities for low-income fathers as fathers who are employed during pregnancy are more likely to sustain parental involvement. The CPIOP argues that Managed Care Organizations be mandated to offer comprehensive family planning services for fathers and mothers. It is also suggested that in order to improve quality of data collected on fathers, the requirements of birth certificates should be amended to include more paternal information. The study concludes that adopting a family approach to pregnancy and childbirth will allow practitioners to not only build father-friendly environments, but to also engage expectant fathers and thereby empower a shared responsibility.

Carpenter and Towers (2008) suggest a few elements schools could do to support and involve fathers of children with a learning disability in order to develop an environment and practice that is father friendly. In order to reach such a goal, the authors recommend that fathers need to be encouraged to be involved in the general life of the school, including informal contact with the staff and other parents. Fathers should be given the opportunity to attend and fully participate in meetings concerned with their own children. The authors also suggest that schools create opportunities for fathers to have contact with other fathers either face-to-face or even virtually through the internet.

The authors are of the opinion that there are often more opportunities for parents to be involved at pre-school and primary school and that secondary schools should create opportunities to continue this involvement. The authors point out that most schools operate only within defined hours, namely, Monday to Friday which gives little or no opportunity for fathers to visit the school or participate in school-related activities.

Carpenter and Towers (2008) suggest that we generate more flexibility in how school staff discharges their working hours. The authors refer to schools that organized a termly Saturday morning computer club where father supported their child with special needs. The authors note that the school benefitted as several of the fathers were able to offer particular expertise in reading and information technology. The authors argue that many fathers have specific skills from their professional lives, which means that within a model of reciprocal partnership, they can assist in many aspects of school policy development. The study concludes that fatherhood needs to be offered status and equality with motherhood, and the fathers of disabled children warrant respect and support.

Cullen *et al.* (2011) examined views about how to enhance father involvement in the Parent Support Adviser (PSA). The study indicated that, at the point of service delivery, the level of engagement of fathers with PSAs was low and that, for a new role designed to improve parental engagement with schools and children's education, there was a clear deficit in terms of paternal as opposed to maternal engagement. The PSA professionals recommend visiting fathers at home at times that suited them, communicating with resident fathers, engaging fathers through activities shared with their children and employing men as PSAs so that fathers could engage with a male PSA if desired.

The dissonance between research on the benefits of father involvement with their children's learning and education, government policy imperatives and practitioner guidance to engage fathers, on the one hand, and the experience of father engagement in the PSA pilot, on the other, was striking. The study found that the social relations of gender in the everyday practices of family support and extended services in an around schools merit careful research. In addition, the study found that despite

the existence of a body of literature on strategies for engaging fathers, PSA professionals frequently struggled to articulate an effective approach to engaging fathers, hence, with schools and their children's education.

Hairston (1998) argues that the nature of the debate about children whose parents are incarcerated must be reframed to include fathers as important members of children's family networks. The author argues that fathers, whether they live in prisons or in neighbourhoods, in households with or separated from their children, have key roles in fostering their children's well-being. The author further argues that children need their fathers, fathers need their children, fathers need to feel that they are good parents and need to be supported in doing so. The author is of the opinion that paternal involvement and connections with children and responsible fatherhood must occupy a more central position in any thinking about public policies, programs and services.

In addition, the authors also feel that it is imperative that the unique challenges that imprisonment presents for parenting be recognized and that parental incarceration as a specific parenting and family public policy issue be addressed. Negative views about imprisoned men and their fathering roles are pervasive, as is the willingness of correctional institutions to disregard or severely restrict prisoners' family connections.

Hairston (1998) suggests four basic strategies, noting that although the focus is fathers, the recommendations also apply to incarcerated mothers and their children. Firstly, the author is of the opinion that child welfare and correctional leaders should establish national standards covering parents in prison and their children and adopt these standards as part of the accreditation process for correctional institutions and child welfare agencies. Secondly, the author is of the opinion that state-level departments of child welfare and federal level child welfare agencies should provide

leadership in developing model policies and administrative regulations to guide child welfare practice when children are involved in the child welfare system and their parents are in correctional institutions. Thirdly, family advocates and child welfare and criminal justice professional should promote the development of a national research, knowledge-building, and knowledge-dissemination agenda focussing on prisoners and their families and children. Lastly, the author recommends that social service organizations and practitioners should provide leadership for the development of public policies and service programs that help parents in prison maintain ties with their children and address family needs related to correctional supervision.

Van Velsor and Orozco (2007) suggest community-centric strategies to enhance parent involvement. The authors recommend that school personnel must learn about the families of the children in the school they serve in order to provide optimal education for their children. The authors are of the opinion that getting to know parents by cultivating meaningful relationships will enhance parents' desire to be involved in their children's education. The authors also recommend home visits as they argue that these help to overcome barriers related to low-income parents' work constraints and transportation problems.

The authors further argue that learning about families involves learning about the community where students live, which in turn involves identifying the leaders in the community. The authors argue that community leaders have helpful information concerning families and the challenges they face. In order to enhance parental and especially father involvement, the authors note that when basic family's needs are met, low-income parent involvement may be more consistent with that of parents who have fewer financial concerns. The authors argue that low-income parents often struggle to provide for their family's basic needs, such as food and health care.

The authors further argue that linking families with needed resources and support can lead to improved family effectiveness and contribute to parent involvement (Van Velsor & Orozco, 2007). The authors argue that schools provide on-site services for parents that could include parent-child teams, plays, or art projects. The authors are of the opinion that such programs resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of parent volunteers, and parent volunteer hours at school. Increasing parents' social capital skills and information consistent with existing school culture is the goal of school centric strategies and makes parents better able to aid their children in school-related activities (Van Velsor & Orozco, 2007).

As discussed in the previous section on constraints to father involvement, Cosson and Graham (2012) set out to identify barriers and opportunities in relation to fathers' engagement with residential parenting support programs. The authors point out that when asked how the environment could be made more father-friendly, the fathers suggested a range of solutions such as internet access so they could work while the children were sleeping. They requested for Foxtel, a sport channel, so that they could watch some sport and more masculine reading matter such as car magazines.

Cosson and Graham (2012) note that attention to fathers' needs in parenting programs, especially where it requires a residential component, would make a difference to father engagement with their children. Fathers also indicated that they would feel more comfortable if more fathers were allowed to stay overnight. The fathers also indicated that there was a need to make it clear that fathers are seen as valued and important to the process of solving parenting difficulties with young children.

Cosson and Graham (2012) study concluded that from the fathers' perspective, they would like education programs to address issues that directly affect fathers such as how they could juggle work and family, how to cope emotionally and understanding what matters to them as fathers. The authors also point out that the frequently mentioned perception, by nurses, of the father as an adjunct or a third wheel suggests a parallel with maternal gate keeping. The study also concludes that these fathers indicated that they are embodying notions of engaged and involved fathering, sometimes described as the new father in the popular media and that they want to be seen as part of the parenting team.

Ball (2010) argues that the monumental challenges facing indigenous fathers should not be underestimated and that indigenous fatherhood should not be understood within what some have called the deficiency paradigm. Ball (2010) notes the numerous implications of the study, for the cultivation of an environment that recognizes, supports, and promotes indigenous father involvement. Firstly, the study uncovered a strong desire on the part of indigenous fathers to tell their stories, to construct a way forward to engaged and sustained fathering. The author is of the opinion that this is encouraging for community-based programs that see father involvement as an important support to indigenous children and families.

According to Ball (2010), fathers confirmed that child care programs were the best access point for father outreach and support initiatives. Secondly, the study found that fathers in the study articulated a mandate for community-based agencies as well as political bodies to get involved in supporting healing programs, reducing negative stereotypes of indigenous fathers and families, and actively reaching out to support fathers in their fatherhood journey. Thirdly, the findings of the study offer an initial framework to further investigate the kinds of assistance individual fathers may be

receptive to at different points in their fathering experience. The study also concludes that different kinds of support are needed to help fathers work through the issues associated with their own lost childhoods, to recover psychologically and spiritually, to learn fathering skills, and to achieve balance in their lives and family relationships.

Fagan, Bernd and Whiteman (2007) examined the relationship between concurrent measures of adolescent fathers' parenting stress, social support, and fathers' care giving involvement with the 3-month-old infant, controlling for fathers' parental involvement. The findings revealed that fathers' parenting stress was significantly and negatively related to fathers' and mothers' reports of fathers' care giving, after accounting for parental involvement and other control variables. The authors argue that the results of their study are relevant for social policy and practice with adolescent parents and have implications for the timing of services to young fathers.

The authors recommend that policy and programs should target young fathers before the birth of the baby as the degree to which fathers are involved prenatally is related to the level of father involvement during the first months following the baby's birth. The authors suggest that programs should work with adolescent fathers and mothers to address obstacles that may interfere with the young men's continued involvement before the birth. The authors are of the opinion that the first year following the child's birth is critical for the development of the father-child relationship. The findings suggest that the need to address fathers' parenting stress, as a means to increase the amount of father involvement and the quality of the father-child relationship. Fagan *et al's*. (2007) study concludes that some young fathers may need more personalized attention to address issues that affect their involvement with the child.

Wong, Roubinov, Gonzales, Dumka and Millsap (2013) argue that fathers are an important, though under-represented, population in family interventions. The authors further argue that an understanding of factors that promote and hinder father participation may suggest strategies by which to increase fathers' presence in studies designed to engage the family unit. The authors examined Mexican origin fathers' involvement in a family-focused intervention study. The authors are of the opinion that there are several avenues through which the findings may inform future family and intervention research with fathers. Wong *et al.* (2013) argue that their findings offer promising evidence that a majority of fathers are willing to engage if their participation is explicitly valued and encouraged. The authors note that although they could not specify the strategies that were most effective, their efforts to reach out to fathers, communicate the importance of their participation, and reduce potential participation barriers may be useful to both researchers and practitioners who work with fathers.

Wong *et al.* (2013) recommend that it was important for researchers and interventionists to acknowledge economic stress as a particularly important barrier to father engagement in family interventions. Wong *et al.* (2013) note that although they tried to reduce most barriers to participation of low-income parents, economic stress reduced father involvement. In order to overcome this barrier, the authors recommend additional strategies such as greater flexibility in the timing of the intervention or alternative modalities, such as internet-based delivery.

The authors note that the role of inter-parental conflict in fathers' engagement and participation in family oriented preventive interventions appears important. Therefore, the authors suggest that future research needs to develop effective messages to recruit fathers experiencing inter-parental conflict into family interventions that have

the potential to increase the parenting alliance and perhaps reduce this conflict and its impact on the family system.

Massoudi, Wickberg and Hwang (2010) argue that paternal involvement in childcare has been shown to enhance parental responsiveness and closeness in father-child relationships and also seems to predict different aspects of adult adjustments. Massoudi *et al.* (2010) note that with changing cultural expectations concerning men as fathers, and dual earner families gradually becoming the norm in most Western societies, fathers have begun to take increasing responsibility for childcare.

Therefore, the authors further note that the importance of encouraging fathers' early involvement in their children's care, in general, as well as in their children's healthcare has been emphasized in several studies. It is with that in mind, that the authors investigated how nurses in Swedish child health care perceived working with fathers, and to what extent they offered support to and included fathers in clinical encounters. The authors point out that literature review of fatherhood experience reveals that fathers initially have positive expectations and intentions, but during the first few weeks after the birth of their new born, they are confronted with the realities of adjusting to fatherhood, including experiences of distress, frustration and inadequacy.

Fathers, according to the authors, have stated that they gradually bond with their children and find a sense of satisfaction in fathering but also that the absence of role models forces them to create their own roles for involved fatherhood. The authors point out that Sweden stands out, internationally, for its generous and gender-neutral parental leave policy as well as for its long tradition of child health care services. The study concludes that an important issue that needed to be addressed is how child

health nurses' attitudes to fathers as carers for their infants may influence fathers' involvement in the child health care programme.

2.3.7 Summary of literature review

This literature review has attempted to present the theoretical framework as well as a presentation of the structure of the empirical studies on the dynamics of parental and specifically of fathers' involvement in the social development of their children. This study is aligned to Coleman's social capital theory. As mentioned in 2.1, there is a level of connectedness between the child and his or her family, friends, community and school. This connectedness, which is a product of social relationships and social involvement, generates social capital. It is this connectedness, as well as the aforementioned social interaction assets such as trust, mutual understanding, collaboration between fathers and their children that this study had explored within the frame of early childhood education.

The current study followed a social capital perspective to illuminate the involvement of parents in the social development of their 0-6year children from the perspectives of fathers themselves. The researcher also presented some structure on the development of various concepts and issues from previous related articles reviewed.

This section explored different issues including:

- Context of early childhood development in South Africa;
- Social development of children;
- Parental involvement: A generalist approach;
- The concept of Fatherhood;
- Fathers' involvement in early childhood education: A global perspective;

- Fathers' involvement in early childhood development in South Africa; and
- Strategies for active fathers' involvement in early childhood development.

The following chapter will look into research design and methodology and design issues in-depth, and it will also seek to justify how the methodology employed was found to be more appropriate for this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Research is the way in which scientific knowledge meaning is acquired and verified while systematised knowledge is created (Wolhuter, 2015). This, according to the author, means the researcher has to give an account of the method he or she has used, when conducting his or her research. This method consists of a number of indispensable steps such as the statement of the problem, the literature survey, the hypothesis formulation, an explanation of the research method, the collection of data, the interpretation of the data, the drawing of conclusions and the writing up of the research report.

This section presents the research approach and paradigm, and research design. It also presents the location, population, sample and sampling procedure. The instrument and procedures for data collection and data analysis are also explained here. Validity, reliability and trustworthiness are dealt with in relation to the study. The ethical considerations are also explained in this section in order to make this study a worthwhile and trustworthy study.

3.1 Research paradigm

Bakkabulindi (2015) defines a research paradigm as a sort of camp to which a researcher belongs in terms of assumptions, propositions, thinking and approach to research. The author argues that research paradigms are important because they are the philosophical bases for researchers that inform the choice of research questions to address as well as to what methodology to employ.

According to Bakkabulindi (2015), there are two research paradigms which are widely discussed in the literature namely, positivist and the interpretive. The author points out that a positivist study is one whose implementer takes a position which is underpinned by the positive belief or assumption that most phenomena in the world are observable and measureable. Bakkabulindi (2015) asserts that qualitative researchers do not accept the view of a stable, coherent, uniform world. According to the author, all meaning is situated in a particular perspective or context, and since different people and groups have different meanings in the world, none of which is necessarily more valid or true than another. Bakkabulindi (2015) deduced that in interpretive research, a researcher must be ready to understand what the participants are thinking and feeling, in addition to how they communicate, both verbally and non-verbally.

The current study adopted an interpretivist paradigm as this allowed the researcher to focus on contextual meaning. Generally, this study investigated fathers' experiences with involvement in the social development of their 0-6 year children and specifically, the purpose of the study was to understand how fathers get involved in the social development of their children as well as possible implications for early childhood development. In this paradigm, individuals seek an understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences – meanings directed toward certain objects or things (Creswell, 2014). Proponents of the interpretivist paradigm share the goal of understanding the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live in it (Schwandt, 1994). The goal is variously spoken of as an abiding concern for the life world, for understanding meaning, for grasping the actor's definition of a situation (Schwandt, 1994). Furthermore, the world of lived reality and situation-specific meanings that constitute the general object of investigation is thought to be constructed by social actors. The

interpretivists believe in order to understand the world, one must interpret it (Schwandt, 1994; Creswell, 2014).

As this study sought to uncover fathers' experiences with involvement in the social development of their 0-6 year children as well as to understand how fathers get involved in the social development of their children, a study of a qualitative nature became more worthwhile to pursue.

3.2 Research approach

Creswell (2014) is of the opinion that research approaches are plans and the procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The overall decision should be informed by the philosophical assumptions the researcher brings to the study, the research design, and specific research methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. Furthermore, Creswell (2014) notes that the selection of a research approach is also based on the nature of the research problem or issue being addressed, the researchers' personal experiences, and the audiences for the study. Creswell (2014) explained three research approaches, namely, qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. He argues that the three approaches are not as discrete as they appear and that qualitative and quantitative approaches should not be viewed as rigid, distinct categories but rather, as different ends on a continuum with mixed methods research in the middle of this continuum because this incorporates elements of both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Qualitative research, according to Creswell (2014), is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. He further points out that those who engage in this form of inquiry support a

focus on individual meaning, and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation. Tshabangu (2015) notes that rooted in its philosophical underpinnings, interpretive research is founded on the belief that reality is personally constructed and as such, uses qualitative methods to explore in depth each individual's experience of a phenomenon, artefact or social world.

Therefore, this study followed a qualitative research approach as it is more consistent with the chosen paradigm. Creswell (2014) argues that qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. This process involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative researchers tend to collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study. This up-close information gathered by actually talking directly to people and seeing them behave and act within their context is a major characteristic of qualitative research (Creswell, 2014).

In the entire process, the researcher needs to keep a focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue, not the meaning that the researcher brings to the research. Therefore, the key idea behind qualitative research is to learn about the problem or issue from participants and to address the research to obtain that information (Creswell, 2014).

In addition to the afore-mentioned, the inquirer also needs to reflect about how his role in the study, as well as his personal background, culture and experiences hold potential for shaping the meaning he/she ascribes to the data. Okeke (2015) notes

that qualitative research is concerned with the understanding of how a particular individual or group of individuals think, and the meanings they attach to their actions. He further notes that qualitative researchers, in their quest to understand these meanings, are encouraged to adopt ways that enable them to represent the voices or actual words of the participants in their research reports. Okeke (2015) argues that this approach of using the participants' actual words in reporting research findings is what enables qualitative researchers to claim that their approach is deep and substantial.

3.3 Design of the study

Van Wyk and Taole (2015) argue that a good research design is well planned, and its components work harmoniously together to fit the study. A research design includes all the issues involved in planning and executing a research project, from identifying the problem through to reporting and publishing the results (Van Wyk & Taole, 2015). They further note that a research design is your plan of action in which you decide how you will communicate your framework for the study.

The current study adopted a case study design. Punch (2011) as cited in Van Wyk and Taole (2015) defines a case study as a study of a bounded system, emphasising the unity and wholeness of that system, but confining the attention to those aspects that are relevant to the research at the time. According to Creswell (2014), case studies are a design in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process or one or more individuals.

Creswell (2014) points out that the researcher collects detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time. This description culminates in the essence of the experiences for several individuals who have

experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Rule and Vaughan (2011) as cited in Van Wyk and Taole (2015) argue that case studies provide a thick, rich description of the case under investigation. The reason for using this design is to generate theoretical insights in developing new knowledge, to test existing theory in reference to the case and to shed light on other similar cases, hence, providing a level of generalisation and this made case studies more relevant to the current study. As this study investigated fathers' experiences with involvement in the social development of their 0-6 year children, such understanding informed the current researcher's rationale for a case study design.

3.4 Location of the Study

The study was conducted in 3 of the educational institutions in one Education Districts in the Eastern Cape Province. Whilst all of the institutions catered for learners younger than 7 years, each had a unique character. The centres are of different geographic locations. One school, School A, is located in a former Black township surrounded by a number of informal settlements. The second school, School B is located in a former White suburb and the third school, School C, is located in a former Coloured township. These institutions have been deemed suitable by the researcher as they offered the necessary information needed to provide answers to the research questions. Perhaps a brief description of the various centres is necessary under this sub-section:

School A

This was a typical township school. The school is approximately 14 km from the city of East London. The school caters for children between the ages of 0 to 6 years and is situated on the grounds of a church. It consists of 3 free-standing classrooms. The administration section is hosted in a room across the school. There are 9 practitioners,

and the school has an enrolment of 98. There are no sporting fields apart from one free-standing jungle gym and a swing for the children to play on. The classrooms are wooden structures converted into classrooms. The school is fenced. According to the principal, there are certain factors that impact negatively on their institution. Most of the children are from single teenage parents who drop the children off early (any time from 5° clock) in the morning and fetch them very late (up to 8° clock in the evening). The fact that they do not have a permanent formal structure also poses its own challenges especially as far as future planning is concerned.

The fact that employment was created with the start of the Day Care Centre is a positive for the school. Many of the children who were aimlessly wandering around in the township were at least now provided for in a safe environment and are kept constructively busy. Although the centre is not funded by the government, it manages to provide four meals to the children per day. The centre was started in January 2006 as there was a need for such an institution in the community as the parents were struggling to find someone to take care of their children whilst they were seeking employment in the city.

The centre started with 12 babies aged 0 to 18 months at the principal's house. As the centre expanded, they managed to obtain space at the nearby church. Since 2008/9, the Department of Social Development subsidised 10 children. This subsidy has now increased and currently stands at 40 children. This funding has made a huge difference as far as the daily operations of the centre are concerned.

School B

The school is situated in a former White suburb, across a former Model C school, approximately 6 km from the city centre. It is surrounded by beautiful, suburban,

middle-class homes. Although it was initially meant to enrol only white children, it now caters for all races. The school is neatly fenced, and access is controlled with remote-controlled gates. It has also been fitted with cameras. The school is also situated along a busy road but there are quite a number of speed humps as well as scholar patrol which regulates the traffic. The staff consists of 3 educators and 4 helpers. The centre caters for age groups from 18 months to 6 years. The centre was started in August 2000 with an enrolment of 20 children as an employment opportunity. The centre currently has an enrolment of 86 learners. A second and third classroom was built later as the centre grew. They also had to apply for re-zoning as the centre was situated in a suburb.

Preliminary findings indicate that parental support is a challenge. It seems that no parent meetings are being held and that there is very little contact with them. The learners are being dropped off and fetched at school by private transport. It also seems as if there are staff challenges as far as experience and absenteeism is concerned.

School C

This is also a typical township centre, approximately 12 km from the city of East London. The school caters for children between the ages of 0 to 5 years and are situated in a shopping complex. In the same complex, there is also a butchery, sport shop, taxi offices as well as a liquor outlet. There are 6 helpers and only one has an educational qualification and currently the school have an enrolment of 72. There are no sporting fields apart from a small play grounds consisting of a jungle gym and a swing for the children to play on. The classrooms are not very spacious and are very close to each other. The school is fenced. Toilets are in the building and learners, therefore, do not need to go outside to use the toilets.

According to the owner, elements such as lack of space, location and lack of parental support impact negatively on their institutions. There is no space to expand, and the only way possible for expansion will be to move the centre. The fact that employment was created with the establishment of the Day Care Centre is also a positive for the school. Unemployment is a serious reality in the community and therefore, people take any employment regardless of remuneration. The centre was started in January 2000 as there was a need for such an institution in the so-called Coloured community. The centre started with 22 children between the ages of 6 months to 5 years.

3.5 Population of the study

The target population of this study was all fathers whose 0-6 year old children attended preschool centres communities in the Education District where the study took place.

3.6 Sample size

The sample size comprised 20 fathers whose 0-6 year old children attended preschool centres communities in the Education District where the study took place.

3.7 Sampling procedure

The researcher purposefully selected 20 father-participants whom he thought would best help the researcher understand the problem (Creswell, 2014). The choice of respondents was, therefore, guided by the judgement of the researcher on what information respondents can offer. The important criterion of choice was the knowledge and expertise of the respondents, hence their suitability for the study.

3.8 Instrument for data collection

Data collection for this study proceeded through the use of semi-structured face-to-face interviews. The interview schedule was constructed in such a way as to maximise appropriate data from the respondents. Included in the interview schedule was biographical information as to ascertain a fuller picture of the interviewees. The interview schedule also consisted of 8 open-ended questions in line with the main research question as well as the sub-research questions. There is also a 9th general question which aimed to probe for information that might not be forthcoming through the first 8 questions. The following were the questions included in the interview schedule:

1. What is your understanding of the concept of social development?
2. How would you describe your role as a father in the social development of your child? Do you feel that you can be more involved? How?
3. Does your child's school offer any programs that target fathers' involvement? Elaborate? If they do not have any, what would you like to see them do?
4. Are you, in any way, actively involved in any programs at your child's school? If yes, tell me about it. If no, how would you like to be involved?
5. It is perceived that mothers are more involved with their 0-6 year children. Do you agree? Elaborate?
6. What would you say are inhibiting fathers to become more involved?
7. What can schools do to involve fathers more in their programs?
8. Do you think that the Department of Education can do more to involve fathers in early childhood education?

The first 2 questions sought to answer sub-research question 1.2.3.1 which explored fathers' understanding of their roles in the social development of their 0-6 year old children. Questions 3 and 4 sought answers on sub-research question 1.2.3.2,

exploring fathers' involvement whilst questions 5 and 6 sought to address sub-research question 1.2.3.3 concerning the challenges confronting fathers towards their involvement. The last two questions 7 and 8 sought to answer sub-research question 1.2.3.4 as to what can be done by schools as well as the Department of Education to increase the involvement of fathers.

Dakwa (2015) defines an interview as a face-to-face conversational engagement between two people where questions are asked by the interviewer in order to elicit responses that can be analysed within the qualitative research framework. The author further points out that the major objective of qualitative interviewing is to enable the researcher to measure what the interviewee say so that the information can be captured and interpreted in the research analysis. The interview, as a research technique, consists of questions by the interviewer and oral responses by the research participants.

According to Dakwa (2015), the qualitative research interview seeks to describe and reveal the meanings of central themes and issues in the lives of the people being interviewed as the main purpose of a qualitative interview is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say. This approach centres on the general questions for discussion, which are open-ended to allow for the understanding and exploration of the issues being raised. Probing questions will be used for the purpose of understanding the feelings, thoughts and intentions of the participants, their recollection of past experiences, as well as the meaning they attach to the phenomenon under study.

Interviews do have their advantages as well as disadvantages. According to Creswell (2014), some of these advantages are: interviews are useful when participants cannot

be directly observed; they can provide historical information and allows researcher control over the line of questioning. Some of the disadvantages are that they provide indirect information filtered through the views of interviewees; researcher's presence may bias responses, and not all people are equally articulate and perceptive.

Interviews can be structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Okeke (2015) notes that in an unstructured interview, the researcher adopts an open-ended approach that allows the participants in the interview the freedom to respond in their own way. According to Okeke (2015), such an approach is usually and necessarily not systematic and does not proceed with any form of listed or prepared questions. The structured interview is one in which the researcher carefully prepares the interview procedures. Okeke (2015) notes that another name for structured interviews is *sequential* as the interview questions are presented in a sequence or order. According to Okeke (2015), a participant in a structured interview is pre-informed on the nature of the interview and may even be given the interview questions in advance. An interview becomes semi-structured when the researcher decides to order his or her questions in such a way as to present the interview procedure to the respondents.

3.9 Instruments' trustworthiness

Qualitative validity entails achieving the truthfulness, correctness or accuracy of research data (Bartlet & Burton, 2007). Qualitative validity speaks to the demonstration of objectivity on the part of the researcher. McCotter (2001) as cited in Okeke (2015), argues that there are several steps that a qualitative researcher will have to follow in order to achieve qualitative validity, including reflexive subjectivity, face validity, catalytic validity and triangulation. Okeke (2015) points out that reflexive subjectivity relates to clearly documenting how the researchers' assumptions are made to

manifest during the data collection process.

Okeke (2015) further notes that reflexive subjectivity is a continuous process and resonates throughout every stage of the research until the report is completed. According to Okeke (2015), face validity is a process whereby the research findings are constructed through the participants in a study. This involves the recycling of the established categories, analytical themes and conclusions back to the participants in a study. Catalytic validity, according to Okeke (2015), requires the researcher to clearly show with documented evidence that the respondents or research participants have been actively involved in the research process, through the various methods employed during the fieldwork leading to the data collection, analysis and research report. Triangulation involves mixing various methods and instruments to assist researchers to achieve or reach a point of comparison between methods.

It must be noted that issues of trustworthiness in qualitative research suggest that the research is credible when those familiar with the topic of the study recognise the findings to be accurate, and therefore valid. To ensure this, the interview guides that were used during the interview sections were face-validated by a panel of experts in the Faculty of Education of one of the Universities in the Eastern Cape Province. The supervisor of this thesis was also part of this process. The members of this panel carefully checked the content of the interview guides in the context of the research questions and objectives of the study whether they covered enough grounds to enable valid data to be obtained.

3.10 Data collection procedures

The researcher made use of semi-structured interviews and personally arranged and conducted the interviews with the participants. These interviews involved open-ended

questions that were few in number and elicited the views and opinions of the respondents. From the interviews, the researcher sought to understand fathers' experiences with involvement in the social development of their 0-6 year children. 20 interviews were conducted in all, and each interview lasted about 45 to 60 minutes with the permission of the participants; the venue for the interviews was agreed upon with the participants. Interview protocols as discussed above were developed by the researcher in line with Creswell (2014) for asking questions and recording answers during a qualitative interview. This, according to Creswell (2014), includes components such as a heading (date, place, interviewer, interviewee), the questions asked in line with sub-questions as well as a final remarks or thank you statement to acknowledge the time the interviewee spent during the interview.

3.11 Data analysis procedures

Feza (2015) is of the opinion that careful and deep understanding of a complex situation is the key to qualitative enquiry as unravelling the hidden motives of experienced actions can only happen when time and focus is given to the particular studied behaviour. As validity and trustworthiness is of key focus in this study, the researcher allowed for certain authentication measures suggested by Creswell (2014) as cited in Feza (2015), such as allowing peers to review the researchers work, reflecting on the researchers own subjectivity, painting the story in such a way that the reader would enter the study context through the text as well as seeking outside examination for the field notes, research procedures as well as the final product.

The following steps, as recommended by Creswell (2014), were followed in analysing the data obtained from the fieldwork:

- The data was organized and prepared, which involved the transcribing of the raw information obtained;
- The researcher then looked at all the transcribed data in an effort to get a general sense of the information and an opportunity to reflect on its overall meaning such as the impression of the overall depth, credibility and use of the information;
- The researcher then applied a coding mechanism to the information obtained into categories while labelling each category to allow for constant comparison according to Tesch (1990, as cited in Feza, 2015). Tesch explains that the researcher's role is to read through the entire collected data, then group this into manageable parts for comprehension. These parts of data are then put into similar categories using a low-inference analysis to describe them with the aim to bring together similarities and contrasts between these low inferences. Tesch (1990) further explains that when all the data has inferences, the inferences are then grouped together according to their similarities and contrasts and codes will emerge. According to Tesch (1990), the researcher then creates groups or categories allocating similar sentences or words to categories, in order to discover patterns. Such patterns bring out themes that must be supported by groups. Tesch (1990) is of the opinion that this method promotes member-checking where a researcher returns to the field where data was collected and checks if the codes, themes and claims made, describe the participants' statements. This practice also strengthens the validity of the findings of the study; and
- The researcher then used the coding process to generate a description of the people as well as themes for analysis.

In line with that, a general overview of the results of the coding process for all the individual cases is then presented. Then, the selected cases were repeatedly read and interpreted precisely with reference to a particular question asked and answered by the participants during the interview. It is the above processes that were followed by the current researcher to analyse the data obtained from the interviews. The outcome of that analysis is presented in chapter 4 of this thesis.

3.12 Ethical considerations and requirements

Sotuku and Duku (2015) argue that engaging in research gives one certain privileges and freedom. These privileges and freedom include the freedom to conduct investigations or search for knowledge, the right to disseminate findings and the opportunity to conduct research on human beings. The authors warn that such freedom comes with responsibilities. It is, therefore, of utmost importance that researchers should uphold certain principles and values, such as honesty, truthfulness and reliability into their work in order to maintain research integrity. The current researcher was (and is still) aware of the ethical concerns that needed to be adopted and considered as guidelines in the process of conducting research involving human participants. The following ethical issues were considered:

- **Gaining entry**

Appropriate channels of communication were used to negotiate entry into the Districts. Evidence of this has been presented in the appendices section of this thesis.

- **Participants' right**

It is important to state that participants were not coerced into participating in the study leading to the thesis. Instead, they participated of their own free will and were advised to discontinue participating at any time they chose to do so.

- **Informed consent**

The general nature of the study, its goals and procedures were discussed with the participants. Consent forms were then issued to the participants, which they duly signed after explanations by the researcher. A sample of the consent form can be viewed in the appendices section.

- **Confidentiality**

The researcher assured the participants of their utmost confidentiality and assured them that information made public will neither include the name of the respondent, nor make it possible for the information to be linked with a particular respondent.

- **Protection from harm**

As far as reasonably possible, the researcher ensured that the participants were not exposed to any harm, whether physical or otherwise.

- **Achieving anonymity**

The researcher then promised the respondents anonymity, implying that the names of the respondents will not appear on the research instrument or the data; and that the names of the participating Day Care centres will also not be mentioned in any correspondence. The participants were made aware that this study will, by no means, reveal their identities, nor link responses with participants' identities will be made at any time unless they give permission for that. Moreover, pseudonyms were used should information from the study be made public.

- **Maintaining professionalism**

The researcher endeavoured at all times throughout the study to maintain professionalism.

- **Participants' vulnerability**

Although the focus of this study was the experiences of fathers with involvement in the social development of their children under the age of six, the researcher was aware of the impact that participating in the research, directly or indirectly, may have on children as well as the participants in terms of potential harm or benefits. There were some thorough discussions on the ethical dilemmas raised by medical and psychological research with children (Morrow & Richards, 1996). According to Morrow and Richards (1996), children's perceived vulnerability means that a further fundamental difference is that the obligations, duties and responsibilities that researchers have towards their subjects are qualitatively different when working with children and relate to adult responsibilities towards children in general. Thus, if a child discloses that he or she is at risk of harm, then the researcher has a duty and moral obligation as to pass this information on to a professional who can protect the child even when this may mean losing access to, or the trust of, the children concerned.

In any study, one needs to be alert to any possible scenarios that can take place. For instance, it is possible that some fathers may feel that they have let down their children if the interviews make them to realise their failures pseudonyms were used and this may cause psychological problems to them. Although the researcher did not experience any such situation, he was well prepared to deal with such situation should any had arisen. For instance, the researcher attempted to ensure participants know that the study was not to criticize anybody but to enrich the relationship between the father and child. The researcher also explained to them that they were free to cancel the interview at any time they felt uncomfortable. The researcher had prepared to offer participants the services of professional counsellors and have referral forms available for that matter.

It was also the researcher's intention to conduct the interviews at a time and place that the interviewees felt comfortable with. As the researcher did not want to involve the children at all, he conducted the interviews after school in venues of the participants' choice in cases when the participants preferred not to be interviewed at school. This further ensured confidentiality. In order to erase any suspicion and build confidence between the researcher and the participants, the researcher offered the participants the opportunity to read through the transcripts once they were transcribed. This measure also ensured qualitative reliability or trustworthiness. The researcher also assured participants that their names would never be used. In relation to the issue of vulnerability, it was, therefore, the aim of this researcher to be sensitive of any consequences to participants as well as provide the necessary support and guidance if needed. The next chapter deals with the data presentation, analyses and interpretation.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the data from the qualitative interviews with the twenty fathers selected for the study. The previous chapter discussed in detail the research design and methodology issues. This chapter focuses on the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data. In doing so, the researcher had to consider the purpose of the study which was to investigate what fathers' experiences were with their involvement in the social development of their 0-6 year old children from a social capital perspective. In line with this understanding, the objectives were to:

- I. Establish fathers' understanding of their roles in the social development of 0-6year old children;
- II. Understand how fathers get involved in the social development of their 0-6year old children; and
- III. Find out the challenges confronting fathers towards their involvement in the social development of their 0-6year old children.

The research questions of the study were of the utmost importance in facilitating the presentation and analysis of data. The main research question this study was set to answer was: What are fathers' experiences with involvement in the social development of their 0-6year old children from a social capital perspective? The sub-research questions being:

1. How do fathers understand their roles in the social development of their 0-6 year old children?

2. How do fathers get involved in the social development of their 0-6year old children?; and
3. What are the challenges confronting fathers towards their involvement in the social development of their 0-6year old children?

4.1.1 Approach followed

Okeke (2015) notes that qualitative research is concerned with the understanding of how a particular individual or group of individuals think and the meanings they attach to their actions. The author further notes that qualitative researchers, in their quest to understand these meanings, are encouraged to adopt ways that enable them to represent the voices or actual words of the participants in their research reports. Okeke (2015) argues that this approach of using the participants' actual words in reporting research findings is what enables qualitative researchers to claim that their approach is deep and substantial.

As the design of this study was qualitative in nature, data were collected through semi-structured interviews from fathers. As the researcher worked with qualitative data, he had to organize, prepare and transcribe the data from that perspective. The researcher looked at the data to reflect on its overall meaning, coded the information into categories and labelled it in line with Tesch (1990). The researcher read through the entire data, grouped them into manageable parts for comprehension. The data were then put into similar categories using a low-inference analysis to describe them with the aim to bring similarities and contrasts between these low inferences.

Tesch (1990) further explains that when all the data has inferences, the inferences are grouped together according to their similarities and contrasts and codes will emerge. The researcher then created groups or categories allocating similar sentences or

words to categories, in order to discover patterns. Such patterns brought out themes that were supported by groups. Tesch (1990) is of the opinion that this method promotes member-checking where a researcher returns to where the data was collected and checks if the codes, themes and claims made describe the participants' statements. As stated earlier, this practice also helps to strengthen the validity of the findings of this study.

4.1.2 Description of the study sample

Data was collected from fathers of children who attended the educare centres already described in 3.3 in chapter 3 of this thesis. In this chapter, the respondents are identified as father (F) 1 to 20. This enabled the researcher to refrain from using the participants' real names when reporting on the data as in accordance with the research ethical considerations described in 3.11 in Chapter 3 of thesis. All interviews were transcribed verbatim in order to ensure accurate reflection of the responses as well as to ensure trustworthiness. All quotes from the data obtained from the participants are appearing in italics wherever such quotes have been used.

4.2 Fathers' experiences with the involvement in the social development of their children.

In this section, the researcher presents the analyses of data obtained in relation to what fathers' experiences were with their involvement in the social development of their 0-6 year old children from a social capital perspective in the following manner:

4.2.1 Understanding of the concept of social development;

4.2.2 Fathers description of their roles in the social development of their children;

4.2.3 The availability of programs at schools targeting fathers' involvement;

- 4.2.4 Personal involvement of fathers in school programs;
- 4.2.5 The role of mother involvement versus father involvement;
- 4.2.6 Factors inhibiting father involvement;
- 4.2.7 Strategies schools could use to involve fathers more in their programs;
- 4.2.8 Strategies that the Department of Education could to encourage involvement of fathers in early childhood education;
- 4.2.9 Any other thoughts participants might have on fathers' involvement; and
- 4.2.10 Chapter summary

The first two sections, **4.2.1** and **4.2.2** sought to explore fathers' understanding of their roles in the social development of their 0-6 year old children. The next two, **4.2.3** and **4.2.4**, explored how fathers can get involved in the social development of their children. Sections **4.2.5** and **4.2.6** probed the challenges confronting fathers towards their involvement in the social development of their children. Sections **4.2.7** and **4.2.8** looked at possible implications for early childhood education and **4.2.9** had, as its aim, any other thoughts participants had on fathers' involvement. Finally, **4.2.10** presents summary of chapter 4.

4.2.1 Understanding of the concept of social development

As defined in chapter 1, this concept entails learning how to behave and to get on well with others within the society. The acquisition of social skills that enable the individual to interact with others in ways that is acceptable to the generality of the citizenry. Participating fathers were asked to describe what their understanding was regarding the concept of social development. This is how some respondents understood the

concept of social development. One of the respondents declared: *“Education is the first key; parents must be involved in what he/she is doing. Parents must assist the child in his growth”* (F1).

Similarly, (F2) was more explicit in his descriptions of his understanding of the early social development of the child. According to this participant:

The development of a child is very important, firstly you must lay good foundation reason being, the character of the child is determined by growth in the family especially the atmosphere plays big role in the life of the child. Secondly, the children practice what they see mostly and hear. With the development of child they need to know what is it to be love by both parents that’s how they will grow up with knowledge of love (F2).

However, participant F5 appeared not to be very confident about his understanding of the concept of social development, and its impact on the early development of the child. Here is how he expressed his views:

I am not 100% sure. I think education firstly, I think parents involved in whatever he or she is doing maybe I will say at the same time help, what I think, help the child at school, teach them how to talk to others and to respect others (F5).

Although very succinct, however, some participants appeared to understand the link between the individual’s social development, and the standards of the society, which help the individuals to live normally within a given society. This is appears to be what F3 meant when he said *“I think it has to do with how a child relates socially with others in their development. It has to do with their values and skills”*. This explanation is closely related to another contribution by one of the participants in the study. According to F6 *“Right, according to my understanding social development means growth, removing all barriers especially children in the younger categories, making the path for them much easier developmentally, irrespective of what is in their path”*.

The understanding drew much deeper revelation from the participants in the study. Social development, for some of the participants, involves understanding the child as well as understanding the challenges confronting the child. Such understanding will then enable the parent/s to try to understand what the child requires to enable him/her to acquire the right skills, attitudes and values that may facilitate life for the growing individual in his/her later stage especially during the primary education stage. This is what participant seven said when asked of his understanding of the concept of social development:

It has something to do with skills, attitudes and values, it has to do with developing a child's skill base to cope with primary school or whatever since it is a little one that needs to be developed. My understanding is to negotiate with your child and then to know about the problems and when he is growing up you should know the problems and the communication with the teacher and the and help the child to communicate with others as well as circumstances, that is, challenges surrounding the child as a father and understand the problems (F7).

And for participant nine *"I would say teaching the child to interact with others, knowledge, the values of life and making sure he is stable of what been taught" (F9).* However, when respondents were required to express their views on how the concept of social development relates to parental involvement, the following respondents (F8, 10 & 11) equated the concept of social development with parental involvement as just being there for their children. According to this particular father participant:

My understanding is to negotiate with your child and then to know about the problems and when he is growing up you should know the problems and the communication with the teacher and the and help the child to communicate with others as well as circumstances, that is, challenges surrounding the child as a father and understand the problems (F8).

It is about the way children grow up. As a father I am supposed to take the responsibility for the child all the time, fathers must be close to the child all the time but the problem is if we, that time of the ancestors from that

ancestors if we are men we were educated that the man is not supposed to be close to the child but now this government are accommodating now they call the fathers to be close to their children, must know all the things the children are doing. If the mother is not here I must take responsibility as the father (F10).

I'll talk to you about my child. My child is growing up nice and good. We help the child he likes the TV with all the pictures, since I have bring my child to this school I see he has grown up in his mind and talking nicely and understanding what I am saying. I know we must let him play with other children but we must teach them how to behave (F11).

As can be evidenced from the above revelations, the importance of father presence resonates through the discussions of F8, 10 and 11. Fathers and parents generally must necessarily be present in the lives of their growing child to prevent the accumulation of negative influences in the child. Parents and fathers, in particular, need to be there for the child. This is important for the social development of children and as discussed in Chapter 1, Coleman (1988), Edwards *et al.* (2003) and Tzanakis (2013) concur that parents invest in their children, as the next generation of the family who will in turn support them in later life, by being physically present, giving them attention and developing an intense relationship with them that involves talking about personal matters and expectations of their educational achievement.

Moreover, most participating fathers were of the opinion that social development involves learning the values, knowledge and skills that enable children to relate to others effectively and to contribute in positive ways to family, school and the community at large. For instance, **F12** responded that the concept of social development entails continued presence of the parents in the lives of their children “to ensure good relationship and interaction in the development of any human being; to allow the child to grow socially”. In addition, participant **F13** had the following to say regarding the concept of social development: “as opposed to academic progression

alone, a child should be able to relate to other kids of same age and practice in activities”.

Other explanations by the father participants that appear to implicate the environment and the developing of social skills as imperative factors in the shaping of the social development of the child are presented below. As can be seen from the participants' statements below, these influences seem to be important elements in the respondents' understanding of the concept of social development. Some examples of the participants' responses include:

To be able to communicate and also relate to people and happens of and to bring the two together (F14).

To help children to adapt to the changes in life and to fit somewhere as they grow up (F15).

It could be seen as how an individual acts or responds to his environment and also looks at those reactions in relation to age (F18).

I understand social development to be the environment where the child grows up in and learn skills and values (F19).

My understanding of social development is learning skills, values, morals and knowledge in order to relate to those around us in our families and communities. By communicating with those around us we develop socially (F20).

From the above discussions on the participants' understanding of the concept of social development, it may be argued that the participants who took part in the study had some understanding of what the concept of social development meant. Fathers who took part in the study understood clearly the social influences that may enable their children to develop in more positive ways. Having looked at how participants in the study understood the concept of social development, the discussion proceeds to the

next section which looks at the fathers' description of their roles in the social development of their children.

4.2.2 Fathers' description of their roles in the social development of their children

This section explores fathers' understanding of their role in the social development of their children. The researcher wanted to find out how the respondents perceived their roles as well as whether they felt that they could be more involved in the development of their children. Most respondents understood the importance of supporting and guiding their children. Of interest is the fact that participating fathers also expressed a lack of knowledge on ways to become involved with their children. With this in mind, it would be argued that educators may need to be more creative in their approach towards fathers.

On the question of how they understood their roles as fathers in the development of their children, **F3** responded *"I believe that a father should be there for his children. I might not know everything that a father should know and do but I always try to be supportive as far as my children are concerned"*. This respondent's view appears to have received the support of **F7**, **F10** and **F11**, whose views were suggestive that a father must be physically involved with his children. Here are their views on the question:

I am fortunate that I am an educator myself and there was one moment I will never forget when my father attended a soccer game of mine. He was there for about two minutes but that made my day so based on that it is of the utmost importance that you be involved in your child's development whether it is for a small time because it makes a huge difference in future on how your child relates and socialise with others (F7).

I am already involve to my children because I'm behind my children all time, from the start, born my children I am closed until now because I am here to

come to my house to take my children to my house that is my responsibility as a father (F10).

The father must help the child and look after the child, I'm doing like that. When he comes from school to house, I am asking him what did you do at school, what did the teachers give you to do, something to learn, drawings, that is what I asked (F11).

Fathers viewed their roles in the lives of their children as supportive to what is already in place through the child's mother. For instance, some of the participants understood their roles as playing the supportive role to the mother. **F2** had the following to say concerning his role:

I play very role in my child's life, the reason being that the mother are constantly working and I work 9/5 shift and are off weekends so my role is bigger than mother because I have to be the mother and father. Fortunately I grew up with both my grandmother and grandfather that showed me what is love and that's the principle that I want to show my child.

It is also important to explain that the modelling theory appears to resonate in **F2's** approach to fathering. He learnt from his grandparents the idea that it is important to show love to the growing child. Similarly, **F6** responded in the following manner:

My role I think is more to be protective, to be more of a provider for them but I can be more involved in the sense that I can fill in where my wife get short but it actually also means that I can guide him and mentor him in future endeavours

However, a stereotypical dimension was brought into the discussion when one of the participants hinted that some family responsibilities were better left in the hands of the women. For instance, **F19** hinted that certain duties were more appropriate for women. According to him, *"My role as a father which includes being the head of the family is very important. Yes, I can be more involved. Sometimes the father regards certain responsibilities as the wives duty"*. Within the (South) African societies, it is not

uncommon for men to openly proclaim that some household and family responsibilities are meant for the girls, daughters, mothers, women or females.

Fathers' perceived roles appear to be multifaceted; while some perceive their roles to include being supportive to their wives' or partners' already existing efforts, others perceive theirs as simply modelling as have been discussed above. However, some of the father respondents understood their role as being the provider of the means of sustenance. The idea of the provider role resonates from the understanding that a father has to be there mainly financially to the needs of his child. However, this role may not be as simplistic and straightforward, given the varying economic backgrounds of the fathers who took part in this study and for the generality of fathers within the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

Therefore, responding to the discussions on his perceived roles as a father in the social development of children, **F1** noted his *"availability in everything, have to assist the child financially, father must be there. If I had more time, maybe I could be more involved"*. Similarly, **F18** highlighted the provider role of the fathers but indicated that time constraints may have negatively impacted the nature of his involvement. This is how he puts it: *"I am the protector and the provider and also how a man should treat any women correctly. Yes, I would like to be more involved, time permitting of course"*.

Some of the fathers who participated in the study indicated that their involvement was rather that of assisting the child in doing the homework. As far as these categories of fathers were concerned, they understood their roles as being involved in school activities, especially assisting their child with the homework. Below are some of the extracts from the fieldwork data which clearly represented how some of the participants perceived their roles:

I would like to be involved so I can get sometimes the contact of the teacher, of the class teacher and also the principal so when there is a meeting I can communicate to the teacher to find out what the problem of the child is and what is lacking sometimes so that I can help to his homework. I don't want to lie because sometimes as a father we stay away from those things according to the lack of knowledge and understanding because sometimes we are getting this opportunity and we give these duties for his mum. As a father we sometimes we shout at these children and we don't sit down as a father. If your son is doing something wrong we say go to your mother and we don't talk to him. Fathers must sit down and listen to children (F8).

My role because I am unemployed I am very involved in my children's life, from the moment they wake up until they go to sleep. I help them go to school, sit with them when do they homework and all the other stuff I try to be involve as much as I can. I can be more involved as I have mentioned I am not working and I try to be as much involved as I can (F9).

Quite interesting were the perceptions of father participants **12**, **13**, **17** and **20**; together, these father participants appear to have some aspects of involvement in common. These are shared below regarding how these participants represented their involvement in the social development of their children. Accordingly, **F12** noted “*I am escorting my daughter to the zoo if I have the time. I would like to do more but I am working but I try to help her whenever I can (F12)*”. For **F13** “*I am not over- protective. I allow a child to play with others. I am involved and support his school programs when necessary*”. **F17** also agreed and responded in the following manner, “*Yes, I can be more involved. Assist my child in school work, attend sports almost everything*”. Finally, **F20** saw his role as exercising authoritative control and discipline. This was the manner in which put it, “*My role as a father is to pass on my knowledge so that my child can grow in his social awareness and also on a cultural level to build a strong sense of who they are*” (**F20**).

It was, therefore, obvious that some of the respondents, equated involvement with time spent together. They see their role as supportive, sensitive, nurturing and

encouraging. It is important for them to spend time together. Of course, children enjoy and value time spent together with their family members, including their parents, their siblings and other significant members of their family. However, there appears to be many reasons why this preferred and valued 'time spent together' may not be realised by majority of the children within the setting where the current study was conducted. The next section presents the findings on the availability of school-based programs that support and target fathers' involvement in the early social development of their children.

4.2.3 The availability of programs at schools targeting fathers' involvement

Earlier, Bar-On (2004) had argued that since Friedrich Froebel opened the first kindergarten in 1837, formal early childhood care and education augmenting family childbearing with systematic social, physical, cognitive and emotional child development has gradually become a sound private and public investment in helping children to optimize their potential. Given this, it is the argument of this thesis that early care providers should be aware of this and understand that a father's willingness and comfort when caring for his child depends, in part, on the level of encouragement that he receives in addition to family, but also from his child's teachers. Therefore, it is important to support and encourage fathers who are eager to try to take an active role in their child's education.

In this section, the researcher wanted to explore what programs schools offer in order to involve fathers specifically. Furthermore, the researcher wanted to explore how fathers would like to be involved. There were only five of the twenty respondents who said that their children's schools offered programs specifically targeting fathers. In response to this particular question, **F7** responded as follows "*Yes, there is one*

coming up this weekend where myself and my child must go on camp on the school yard so that the child and myself can spend time together, so the school does provide programs". In support of the above claim of the availability of father-specific program,

F8 had this to say:

Yes, but most of the time I didn't go it is his mother because sometimes I work shift, half past seven to five o'clock and sometimes is doing a nightshift and sometimes during the day I have a chance to go to school to attend a problem.

In addition, there were three other responses which supported the both claims from fathers **7** and **8**. Of these claims, it was the response from **F10** that appeared more detailed in this respect, while **F14** simply noted: "yes, *they do, father's day, family day*".

According to this respondent,

*Yes, The school must educate first and call the fathers who must be involve because if the meeting is here, maybe I can get 5 fathers and maybe the women is twenty because the problem is that it is the responsibility of the government to tell the fathers to be involve all the time because I see the government is not doing enough to involve all the fathers. The government is supposed to educate make a choice, the fathers must be close all the time. Take your responsibility as a father like a mother, not say when the mother is not here maybe the mother is working in Cape town and the father is not doing the job like mother but they are supposed to do it because he is a parent (**F10**)*

Another participant who confirmed the availability of programs in which fathers were involved was **F15**. This participant confirmed "yes, *but they can even organise more and involve fathers. I am sure if the fathers have time they will attend*".

Although as few as five father participants confirmed availability of school-based programs in which fathers confirmed participation, it has to be borne in mind that only three educare centres took part in the study. Given this, it is obvious that the majority of the fathers who took part in the study either did not bother with participation in such programs or were not encouraged by the centres to get involved in such programs.

Moreover, since those fathers who confirmed availability of programs indicated time constraints with regards to participation in the programs, it was then most likely, that the majority of the fathers who took part in the study may have been faced with similar constraints. This revelation may have serious implications for the organising schools/centres with respect to school-based programs in which fathers are themselves expected to participate.

However, a few participants did not really know whether their children's schools were offering such programs, and it seems as if their wives were more involved with the school activities of their children. Below are a few extracts from the fieldwork representing the manner some of the participants disclosed their non-involvement in school-based programs at their children's schools:

Yes and no. In sports I'm totally involved there on the other hand, there are not really developmental programs that I can take part in (F1).

Firstly, not that I know of because I'm not that involved in school activities that why I can't say no, not that I know of. Secondly yes, I think the father will play good role into the development of school reason being that we can groom to teach them the manly and the right way how to grow up and how to treat woman and talk towards them and know what is expected from them as man from community (F2).

At the moment, because my child, I think, if my child started this year, I am not working locally. I am working in different places like I am working in Umtata. I don't know exactly what is going on here. My wife once told me that they said I must bring white shorts which mean that my child is involved in sport. I have never being called starting from January; I have never been called as a father" (F5).

Nonetheless, there were a couple of participants who only had definite negative answers on whether there were programs targeting fathers specifically. Nevertheless, fathers who took part in the study indicated that they would like to be more involved if

given the chance. For fathers in the study, sport activities seemed to be top on the list for as far as possible involvement was concerned. For instance, **F3** indicated:

No, the programs that the school have always invite parents and not fathers alone. I never really thought about it but it would be interesting to meet with other fathers and hear their opinions. Yes, it could be good for the children.

No, they don't have any that I can think of. They normally invite parents and not specifically fathers. It would be nice if they could invite fathers alone (F4).

I can say yes and no, in sports I am totally involve there, but on the other hand there is not really much developmental programs that specifically targets fathers (F6).

They don't, at the moment they don't target specifically fathers, any parent can come. They generalize it by saying any parent can come. I would suggest for fathers to come once a month or once a term where it is compulsory for fathers to be at school so that he can update themselves with what his child is going through at school. Many fathers say they are working and don't have time to be more involved in the lives of their children so they leave that responsibility to the mothers (F9).

Not that I know off. I like to when I think in my mind, all the fathers to come and help at school when they are not at work for our children and look after our school, because no one must come and break the school. It is our school the children can't play in a dirty place. They must come and help because it is our school. The school should call fathers and they must come (F11).

However, a number of reasons may be responsible for this. First, although fathers were not asked to explain how frequently they read their child's communication books, it was possible that some fathers did not consult with their child's communication booklets. As a result, even if they were informed and invited through such media, such fathers would not have attended for lack of information, rather than that of negligence. Second, besides the above reason, it was possible that the situation of lack of information may have been a clear indictment of lack of commitment on the part of the affected fathers. As the study was not set to cast blame, the researcher did not

accentuate this feeling during the course of the interviews. A third reason for this may have been that fathers who took part in the current study did not feel welcome by the schools which took part in the study. Notwithstanding, there were indications that some of the fathers who took part in the study were eager to get involved.

4.2.4 Personal involvement of fathers in school programs

From the previous section, it can be deduced that although schools might not offer special programs to enhance father involvement, this did not mean that fathers were not eager to be involved. As mentioned earlier, it seemed as if sport could be a great tool to get fathers involved with their children. Play is an excellent learning tool and children, in general, love and enjoy it. Through play, fathers provide a safe, yet challenging arena for children to learn how to interact with the world and others. When asked whether and how they would like to be involved in any programs at their children's school participants in the study, they responded as follows:

At the moment no! I think my child started this year. I'm not working locally I work in different places. I don't know what's happening there, I know my wife ask me to bring sport material, so I take it my child play sport. As a father I have never been called by the school (F1).

In the same vein, **F3, F4, F5, F18** and **F20** responded as follows:

If you mean attending meetings or assist when there are fundraising events, then I will say I am involved but not at all in the academic programs. I saw on television that some schools, especially overseas invite parents to share with the children what they are doing in their different careers, maybe something like that (F3).

If I have the chance I will watch if they play sport. I would also like to be in social development because of the barriers at home so if there is more information available I would appreciate it (F4).

I think if I can say especially my child, I know I can see he can be good in most of the sport I can see he can run. He is a very energetic young man

so I think in one of the sports he can be so good so if the school can have a sport I would say all of the sport, if possible, I would like to be involved. No, I am not involved in any programs because it will be difficult for me, with my work. I will be involved in any way that I am called to do (F5).

No, but I would love to be more involved in sports days and such but at the moment I am the only salesman and cannot leave the business to attend sports days (F18).

No. A fathers support club for sport because there is not much support or interest from parents on this matter (F20).

Following these revelations from the participating fathers regarding their preferred school-based programs that may attract them to school, it would be argued then that whatever would positively attract fathers to their children's school has to be encouraged by all stakeholders in the business. Fathers need to actively get involved; that is the tune that every section of the South African population is playing. What is more, schools have to lend a listening ear to the needs of fathers in their quest to engage them in the early education of their children. In addition to this, participants also had an array of items in which they showed interest of involving themselves in schools. These include talking about issues at hand and sharing information and removing barriers in order to enhance the growth of the children. Again, here is how this participant presented his case when asked how he would love to be involved:

I would love to see them bring us together and talk about issues at hand and sharing information. Such sessions would actually enhance and would rub off on other fathers so they will also see that their involvement is of paramount importance. I would also like to be more involved in social development as I said in the beginning there is quite a few barriers that mummy's cannot handle and as fathers we should share information and maybe a stronger type of attitude can enhance growth in the child as such (F6).

Yet again, the issue of modelling was expressly revealed in some of the responses to questions relating to personal involvement. Some participants thought that things

needed to improve and expressed a need for guidance. Some of the participants equally acknowledged that they were simply following the examples of their own fathers. Participant **F8** noted:

I would like to be involve, because now that I have listen to you and talking about these things, see most of us are not educated and do not understand but are just doing what our fathers were doing and we need the knowledge the teacher to tell us what we are supposed to do to be involved in our children

Other participating fathers felt that the school should not be the one to initiate parental involvement but that it should have to come from the fathers themselves because the kids belonged to the fathers. For instance, this participant has this to say:

*Actively involve at school I would say not at school but at home with my children and mostly I think it should not be personal for the school to tell a father to be involved in his child's life. I would say it has to come from the father himself to be involved in the child life (**F9**).*

*Sometimes if I am off, but then there is not anything my child is busy with at school. So I try to assist at home (**F12**).*

There is a general feeling that resonates in the literature reviewed and presented in chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis that most South African fathers (of which many are Blacks) do not want to get involved in the early education of their children. However, some of the revelations that are emerging from the data collected during the fieldwork are that many respondents showed a willingness to assist in school activities such as maintenance, transport and fundraising. According to F11, “No , but I would like to come and help and look after school for cleaning or cut the grass or just making clean at the school”. Again, **F14** revealed in his statement “Yes, I am the meat man who braai when there are fundraising events”. And finally, **F15** proclaimed “My job is to transport them on their outings as I have a bus”.

Although no specific sub-research question was drawn to obtain data on the interaction between mothers' and fathers' involvement, it emerged that the dynamics of such interactions in the early education did eventually resonate through the interview to warrant attention. The next section presents some of the discussions that emerged during the course of the interview.

4.2.5 The role of mother involvement versus father involvement

It is commonly accepted that the most important thing in raising children is to give them lots of love, something that all parents can do, regardless of whether they are a mother or father. However, both bring something different and unique to their relationship with their children. In this section, the researcher wanted to explore the challenges that confronted fathers towards their involvement in their children's social development. The researcher further wanted to explore fathers' understanding of the role that the mothers play. On the question of whether mothers are more involved with their 0-6 year children, the responses were mostly in favour of mothers as the ones being more involved. It was interesting, though, that fathers became defensive and made it clear that they also do their part. The issue of time and work were also pertinent reasons of not being involved a lot. In general, though, the responses on whether mothers were more involved were as follows:

I will agree, most of the time mother is always next to the child and it's difficult for us to watch the child. There, a mother can do things we can't do. The job of a mother is, washing cloths and watches the child. I do my part like playing with them (F1).

Woman are more involve now they called it gender equality because men always knew that they must only do this and woman that, but as you see the modern days now as time going things are changing. You can see male nurse so the society plays a big role because you always think of what other will say to you. The role of the mother or the mother playing the role of father. That's why I called it programming, program from small age that, that is the

job of a mother and that that is the job of a father. I won't say I don't agree yet I said earlier I'm more mother and father figure. Normally when I look at my child everything that formed me was my mother or grandmother that I grew up with. When I was hungry or sickness I would say yes, reason being for that answer we grew up, I called it programming. You, being programmed by generation. We don't realize time is percentage changing my grandmother was there so it's different in my situation. If u put in a out of 100, I would say 90 is normally on the mother side but with me it's different because I'm more the parent most in activities in the child's life (F2).

I suppose it has to do with mothers being more available then fathers although this situation is also changing. Many women are also working and many men are unemployed but it is true that you see more women at school functions (F3).

Yes, but the fathers play paramount role just as the school expect. When the mother is occupied the father need to step in and play the role of the parent too (F4).

Like, I would agree and disagree at the same time because you see making an example of me, let me put it like this, I would agree first because most of the time mothers are always next to the child, you see it is difficult for us to wash and clothe the child. It is motherly things. It is difficult because of our backgrounds, the way we grew up and the way we were taught this is a job of a mother and this is a job of the father, if a mother is not available you are forced to, but if she is available I don't think personally I would be able to do it. There are many things like washing, clothing, all that stuff is something the mother can do. There are things that I can do, to let the child grow like taking them to play stations, go around with children, playing with children, yes those things (F5).

Yes, I do agree but the fathers also plays a paramount role as the schools act states the child is of paramount importance so where the mother can't come in I as the father need to fill in there so I must always play a supporting role (F6).

Yes, breastfeeding, when they were babies, but myself and my wife we are equally involved, distributing tasks so we are both involve with the child. I cannot speak for others but with me and my wife we both equally involved with our child (F7).

Yes, I agree, I agree because most of time, sometimes, the fathers run away and other situations whereby they make a women pregnant and they run away and get another wife and they concentrate on these children his involve within the marriage and they forget about the children that is outside. I talk about experience (F8).

100%. I think most people take it from the old times when it was the mother's duty to be with the child and sometimes the parents break up the mother is the one who stays with the child and the father is not there anymore the mothers alone involve with the child. Sometimes the 'fathers is' just lazy and misses out on the growing up of the child (F9).

Uhhhh, Yes. The mother is more involve but even the father must also be involved like mother. That is 50/50, not supposed to say I am a father I am not doing those things to my children, it is my children. If the mother is not here, if they die what do you think what must happen, the father must look after the child (F10).

Not really. Most of the mothers that I know are employed and therefore have other responsibilities other than their children. As a father I do share the responsibility of supporting and taking care of my child. Therefore, I believe that more and more fathers take on more responsibility (F20).

The revelations of participants **F1** to **F10** and **F20** denote an acceptance that although fathers are very important part of the child's early as well as in later stage developmental trajectory, mothers occupy a unique space in the lives of their children. It would then appear that some fathers may be influenced by this understanding to shift the responsibilities of the child's early beginning to mothers alone. No doubt, fathers in the study were of the opinion that mothers take an upper hand with respect to parental involvement in the social development of the child. Fathers accepted that their active involvement in the early social development of their child is of paramount importance, so what, in the participating fathers' views, are the inhibiting factors to active father involvement in the early social development of their children?

4.2.6 Factors inhibiting father involvement

If the presence of fathers in children's lives is known to contribute to children's chances of experiencing positive developmental outcomes, as pointed out in the literature review section of Chapters 1 and 2, then it is important to find out the barriers that hinder optimal father involvement. In this section, the researcher explored those

possible hindrances to fathers' involvement from the perspective of fathers themselves. On the question of what participants would regard as the factors that inhibit fathers to become more involved, below are some of the extracts from eleven of the twenty participants in the study where work emerged as the main factor inhibiting main from actively participating in the early social development of their children. For instance,

Most of the time according to my understanding, we work and support and the only job is to provide money, but during these days children like their fathers. Children if they are under age it's too difficult to small it's difficult to handle them. Mothers are one's who have patience with the small children. They listen to their mother (F1).

Fathers work most of the time. Some children does not stay with their fathers, some fathers do not worry about their children as long as they support them financially (F4).

You see, I cannot tell what happens but most of the time according to our understanding we are the people (fathers) that provides, we work, we support we taught that the only job for us is to provide money and all that stuff to the children, we don't think to parent the children is our job, but during these days let me not lie we do help a lot because the children like their fathers more than their mothers (F5).

Well, social and moral issues like it is more acceptable that women take on that role and fathers tend to lose focus, they forget that they also have to play a role in the child's life and also the way we grew up where the mothers take more charge (F6).

In most cases fathers are breadwinners and it may be a question of time. I am lucky that I work from 8 to 15h00 while some parents have to leave early, 5h00 and return late at night, so I think it is just a question of time (F7).

As it were, it is obvious that work constraints present a major challenge to father involvement in the early social development of the child. However, if fathers work long hours and return late at night very tired, and if they are also expected (and want) to get involved, the question remains how these categories of fathers should be assisted to enable them to balance work with important family responsibilities. This is a very

contentious issue; fathers are expected to be there at all times for their children, yet fathers are expected to work and earn financial value in order to provide sustenance for the rest of the family. Fathers in the study indicated that work forms a major inhibiting factor to their involvement, and this raises very serious implications for all stakeholders in the business of the child's education.

That notwithstanding, it also seems as if there is a challenge in the relationship between the biological parents. One of the participants points to strain in the relationship between the man and the woman as a major source of constraint to father involvement. For instance, this particular participant was of the opinion that the child is being used to serve as a barrier to father involvement. As **F8** puts it:

Something that makes one not to be involved, sometimes the parents are divorce. Let me talk about my own experience, I was married before and then I getting a divorce with my wife and I went to stay with my friend and then my other son is doing, what is the name of that school, he is going to that school and his parents do not give me chance to sit down with my child, he is 8 or 9 years old, doesn't give me a chance because he is fighting with me and putting the child to be involved in that situation but sometimes I am trying to go the school speaking to the teacher because I have the teachers number but I don't want to lie sometimes I do not know what is happening at the school with my child.

In addition, it was revealed in the data that fathers appear to lack the psychology to deal with the little ones. Personal experience appears to support this view. Some fathers in the study responded that it is easier for mothers to be involved with the little kids. Participants' views appear to suggest that men do not inherently have what it takes to look after infants, little kids and children as the case may be. According to **F2**):

Patience, most men according to my search do not have patience and those with the age group from 0-6 you must have a lot of patience. That's the downside for males. The female side it's like the Lord make them with

patience, for us men I won't say keep us away from that age group but we are impatient.

In a related view, **F19** felt that it is because man does not know how to be involved. Said he, “*maybe it is their work situation or maybe they do not know how they could be involved*”.

Given the above, it would appear that fathers' work commitments are ranked by fathers as the most important reason for low levels of father involvement. Relationship strain as well as the perceived lack of the knowledge of child psychology by fathers was also implicated in the fathers' responses. Of course, these empirical revelations present implications for all major stakeholders in the business of child development.

4.2.7 Strategies schools could use to involve fathers more in their programs

As discussed in the literature review chapter, men, as fathers, are often ignored or portrayed in narrow ways in the media and society, which inhibits them from expanding their engagement with their children. This is one of the reasons that it is important that obstacles that hinder fathers' involvement with their children be removed and strategies be found to enhance their involvement. In this section, the researcher explored what the possible implications for early childhood education could be if there were special programs targeting father involvement at school, and at departmental levels. On the question of what schools could do to involve fathers more in their programs, the respondents replied as follows:

For fathers to attend school meeting and everything it's difficult for father to come, most of the time. Fathers are business men, we are involved in everything. If you want fathers to come to school they will come for sports, or if the meeting can be after-hours (F1).

Fathers, let me not lie, as I am saying as fathers we work. You see for a father to attend school meetings and all that stuff to attend anything, you

see it is difficult to tell; for a father not to come to meetings is not because they don't want to come because they don't care; it is because of their duties because most of the time fathers are workers and you see we are involved in many things. You see if you want fathers to come to school I think because we like our children to be involved in sports if you got those things like maybe you got a match or something like that; those are the things that will attract man but for meetings, thinks that can be during the day will be difficult for man to come; if you have it over weekends maybe man will come (F5).

They must try to accommodate fathers by having meetings at different times and on weekends. They should also notify parents of activities long before the time so that one can arranged (F18).

The above comments, again, show the willingness of fathers to become involved. The barrier for them is the timing of most school programs and activities. Schools need to be innovative and perhaps have to move beyond normal school hours in order to accommodate fathers and thereby strive for optimal father involvement. Some of the respondents also suggest that schools devise special programs to get fathers more involved. According to **F2**, teachers and principals should “*invite them to school and arrange special programs*”. In addition, another participant went further in support of the idea of special programs for fathers in schools. According to **F3**, “*As I have said, fathers might have good reasons not to attend such as time constraints but schools should be innovative and design specific programs such as father-child days*”.

Other participants felt that they needed more information and guidance on how to increase their involvement. It might be that as a result of the large body of evidence, some of which has been discussed in the literature review chapter of the thesis from thousands of independent studies on the important contribution that fathers make to children as well as to the success of the family unit, there exist inspiration for fathers to re-evaluate their role. As this focus on them might be something new to fathers, it makes sense that they would need assistance and guidance on how to respond to the

'new' responsibilities in the early social development of their children. Participants in the study had made some suggestions on how schools can involve fathers more in their programs. Below are some of the extracts from the fieldwork data:

F4: *Bring us together and talk issues regarding this and providing information sessions it will enhance father's involvement and influence other father to be active.*

F6: *Schools as I said, information sessions is one way to go and then having other programs like visiting hospitals so that they can see that there is a role in society that they can play.*

F7: *Yes, camping and to get like two days in the year where you inform them in term 1 that you will have to make time in the 3rd term to take time off at work just to spend time at school like painting or cleaning, or just braai or have a mass participation sport day where fathers can come and participate with the child in all the activities, Yes, that would be good.*

F8: *I think some of parents don't speak exactly what is going on. I think the parents is supposed to speaking true information so that the teachers can get a plan to help us because sometimes we don't understand these children who got another son another father staying with his stepfather and he doesn't get time to talk with his own father. Sometimes the father is drunk and the child doesn't sit down with his parents, so teachers must guide us.*

F17: *They must create programs that will involve strictly fathers [and],*

F19: *Schools can create a platform for fathers o become more involved. Get parents to be involved in clubs, sports and other extra-mural activities.*

Notably, some of the participants were of the opinion that the initial response should come from the side of the schools or the providers of the early education of the child. Communication between the school and the fathers are of the utmost importance. As a result, some of the participants in the study had the following to say:

The school must maybe call the fathers and write letters to be involved, come be involved with the school; the father must know that the school belong to the parents because without the parents there is no school. So the school must write letters and call the fathers and if they don't come write a final letter and if they don't want to be involve take other children and then you will see they will come (F10).

Yes, give letter to each father to come to school and ask the father to come to school when the principal call us, or phone them and talk to them over the phone. Maybe there by the letter they might not understand but talk to them over the phone (F11).

Schools can ask fathers who are not working to help with coaching of certain types of sports or assist with maintenance at school or even help with security (F12).

To have activities where little things, like medals can be awarded for father-child tasks/ work achieved to get her for example building house with cardboard etcetera (F13).

What is more, it is important that this desire of fathers to become more involved with their children be used to create a positive social environment for fathers. Schools should provide the necessary encouragement, information and programs enabling fathers to become more involved. The next sub-section takes a look at some of the strategies that the Department of Basic Education could put in place in order to encourage the involvement of fathers in the early education of the child.

4.2.8 Strategies the Department of Basic Education could put in place to encourage involvement of fathers in early education of the child

As an employer as well as the initiator of education policies and laws, the Department of Basic Education is in the perfect position to create the necessary environment for fathers to increase their involvement with their children. Respondents agreed that the Department of Basic Education has and should play a role to encourage father involvement. However, some of the participants were unsure of whether the Department was certain in which way this could be done. As a result, some of the participants have this to say:

They must have skill development program for fathers, how to handle that age group and you will see the difference how to humble yourself and lower yourself; the child and just know the feelings of the child, than the skill development than from there came just access the child skills (F2).

Participant **F6** was also in support of the above view when he noted that:

The department on their hand they can actually also, how can I say now, they can involve the fathers financially through schools programs, such as skills training, information sharing, these type of things

While **F3** also agreed that the Department of Basic Education could empower fathers through schools. Accordingly, **F3** stated:

The Department of Education as responsible for education can always play a role in strengthening the management of schools. As they have the expertise and finance they could design specific programs

Moreover, **F7** made a made a detailed suggestion when he declared:

More monies will always help, if there is a budget to create an environment for fathers to come and attend school functions. Historically the old teachers, females applied for these jobs in the foundation phase, I am not sure whether males applied. I currently see males in the foundation phase, so maybe the Department can create the necessary environment. Maybe, then fathers would find it easier to engage with a male teacher and therefore improve engagement with their young children.

On another note, participants in the study revealed something interesting that perhaps is not always utilized nor considered by the major stakeholders in the business of early childhood education (ECD). Surprisingly, one of the fathers in the study suggested that perhaps time is ripe for fathers to be involved in the development of the curriculum. According to him, “Yes, involve fathers in the curriculum who can teach learners different skills” **F12**. Notwithstanding, the bridge between the school and home is still an obstacle that needs to be overcome. Educators are not always willing to use parents particularly fathers as human resources. The positive impact fathers could have on the school as a whole is often under-rated, and this revelation again presents huge implications for all stakeholders in ECD.

4.2.9 Any other thoughts participants might have on fathers’ involvement

In this section, the researcher wanted to probe for possible data on the understanding and experiences of fathers regarding their involvement with their children that might not have surfaced in the other questions. On the question on whether they had any other thoughts in relation to fathers' involvement, the following respondents emphasized the importance of fathers being present. It is important to note that one does not talk about biological fathers alone but any father figure. The following fathers also imply that whenever a father is involved with their children, the children seemed more disciplined. On the question of whether they had any other thoughts, the following important data manifested through the participants' responses:

It's most important for fathers to be there even if the child is not that young. Children can feel neglected; they will start doing funny things like drugs. If the child is in a bad position father can help make right. A father is most important part of a child's life (F1).

For fathers to be involved with their children it is very much important for fathers to be there for his children because if you are there for your child even if the child is not young even, like I got a 18 year old child, you see that I can feel that if I can persuade him in anything, you see if a child is 18 year old perhaps between 18 and 21 you will find out that they do funny things; they are too much involved in drugs they do more things outside if a father is not involved and in that case that child will go to hell because of those things so if you are involved you will find the child is in a better position he will come right. I spoke to my child and I told him that school are so important I told him that his school things are important. So a father is most important part of a family and child because without a father there is lot of problems. If a child only has a mother they don't go far and have problems (F5).

At my school the majority of learners, when asked say they stay with their grannies. The grannies are the father and mother figures and although the father is not with the child, there are at least uncles. Most time children need to be around positive male role models. At school we try to be that role models that should be at home. I don't have facts but what I've seen if there are no father figures around the children they get away with murder with the grannies. I think it is just important for the growth and development of our young children (F7).

I'm, I don't think there is anything else but I am 100 percent sure that fathers need to know the importance of being involve in his child's life and the growing up of his child The child will be more stable to anything that comes to them in their life. The more a parent is involve in a child's life the stronger he will be with all the stuff that happens outside and be true to his values and principles taught to him by his parents, he will be stronger towards what is happening outside (F9).

During the researcher's initial contact with the respondents, he shared some of the benefits fathers' involvement had for children as well as for wives and families. It is interesting to note that the period of the study gave the participants the opportunity to reflect on their roles as fathers in the education of their children. In addition to that, the questions put to participants forced them to think more about their roles as fathers. Generally, the participants acknowledged the importance of fathers being involved in the development of their children. They warned that the task of parenting should not be that of the mother alone, but that fathers should also play their part. The participants responded in the following manner when asked if they had any other thoughts about father involvement:

It is important for fathers to be involved with their children but it is not always possible because mostly they are working. Fathers try to provide and leave the caring of the small children to the mother (F12).

No but I feel that it is of the utmost importance for a father not to leave the parenting to the mother alone (F16).

Yes, fathers must do their share to help with the development of children. They cannot leave it over to the mothers (F17).

To assist a child in his or her development need the help of both parents and not only the mothers. The fathers must also help (F18)

If one analyses the above responses, it appears as if the respondents show a definite willingness to be more involved in the development of their children. They seek guidance on how they could be involved. The participants also realized that co-parental relationship is the way to go to in order to assist in the development of their

children. There is no doubt by the researcher that all participants agreed that fathers should play a more prominent role in the development of the children.

4.2.10 Chapter summary

This chapter covered data that was collected in an attempt to answer the research questions that guided the study. There were no alterations made from the data collected from participants as it was presented *verbatim* (unedited). Data was presented according to the different major themes responding to the objectives of the study. One of the objectives was to establish fathers' understanding of their roles in the social development of 0-6year old children. Although some fathers did not understand that the concept refers to the acquisition of social skills that enable the individual to interact with others in ways that is acceptable to the generality of the citizenry, they understood elements of it.

Furthermore, the data also confirmed that given the opportunity, fathers in the study would like to be actively involved in the development of their children. Although mothers are seen as being more involved with the children, the data also confirms that if the barriers that hinder fathers' active involvement are removed, fathers would gladly become more involved. Schools, the Department of Basic Education and society as a whole need to be more accommodative and creative in creating an environment that will encourage father involvement. The last chapter of this thesis discusses various findings of this study, presents some recommendations and concludes accordingly.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

It has been argued that the first six years of a child's life are recognized as the most critical ones for optimal development (Mishra, 2012). The author further argues that since the process of human development is essentially cumulative in nature, investment in the programmes for young children (0-6) has begun to be accepted as the very foundation for basic education and lifelong learning and development. An important component of early childhood development is the home environment. Unfortunately an important, yet overlooked strategy to increase parent involvement in early childhood programs is the involvement of fathers or other significant male role figures (Brent et al., 1996).

According to Wardle (1991), the inclusion of men in early childhood programs has garnered considerable attention over the years because of three related trends namely: lack of men in the lives of many of young children, the dearth of men in the early childhood field and an increased interest in father involvement in early childhood programs. Popenoe (n.d.), as cited in Rosenberg *et al.* (2006), points out that fathers are not just second adults in the home, but they bring positive benefits to their children that no other person is likely to bring.

Fathers today are more involved in their children's lives than before because of a multitude of factors such as the changing roles of men and women. Men are no longer expected to be exclusive breadwinners but are expected to share the caring responsibilities with the partners. However, despite important progress, women still

are the main caregivers. In light of different studies pointing out the positive impact fathers' involvement has on the social development of their children, it demanded a deeper investigation into this phenomenon. It was, therefore, the aim of this study to examine the wishes, concerns and views of fathers on their involvement in the social development of their children.

This chapter, therefore, presents the discussion of the research findings of the study. The discussions in this chapter follow the major themes that emerged from data presentation and analysis.

5.2 Objectives and methodology of the study

The objectives that this study followed were to:

- i. Establish fathers' understanding of their roles in the social development of 0-6year old children;
- ii. Understand how fathers get involved in the social development of their 0-6year old children; and,
- iii. Find out the challenges confronting fathers towards their involvement in the social development of their 0-6year old children.

In conjunction with these objectives, the methodology that the study followed was a qualitative case study research methodology.

5.3 Summary of the main findings of the study

This section gives the summary of the main findings on issues that narrated fathers' understanding and experiences with involvement in the social development of their 0-6year old children from a social capital perspective. The following are the findings that resonate through the narratives presented in Chapter 4.

- Although most of the respondents could not give a definition of the concept of social development, they understood the importance of parents playing a role in the development of a child. In their understanding, they were able to mention some of the important elements of social development such as parental involvement, learning of values as well as the acquiring of social skills;
- Fathers understand their role as supportive, nurturing and being there for their children. Fathers also understand their basic role as being the provider and protector. They also perceive their role as being authoritative and see themselves as the main disciplinarians;
- According to the respondents (about 75%), most schools do not offer programs specifically designed for fathers. Of the respondents that did indicate that their children's schools do have programs especially designed for fathers, most of them were unsure what these programs entailed as they did not participate in them. Nevertheless, they would like to be involved if given the opportunity. Sport activities seem to be top on the list for fathers as far as involvement is concerned;
- As mentioned in Chapter 4, the respondents showed an interest in a variety of activities of which sport still seemed to be top of the list. Information sharing and talking about challenges the schools face is also high on the list of how fathers would like to be involved. Fathers also showed an interest to remove social barriers children might face as well as assist with maintenance and transport;
- The respondents mostly adhered to the stereotypical roles of fathers and mothers i.e. the mother is the homemaker, and the father's role is to be the provider and to amuse the children. The respondents do, however,

acknowledge that these stereotypes are changing and that fathers should take on more responsibilities in the home;

- From the responses, it appears that most fathers cite their role as breadwinners and providers as the key inhibiting factor, which prevents them from becoming more involved. An undercurrent that prevails is that it is not the role of the father to parent the child, but it is perceived to be the role of the mother;
- In the strategies to involve fathers more, the pervasive perception is that the strategies involve fathers, at a level where they participate in supporting children on a social and recreational level;
- The role of the Department of Basic Education is mainly seen as a financial contributor to facilitate the skills development of fathers as well as that of information dissemination. The skills development envisaged for fathers is not clearly specified; and
- The respondents were quite clear that a father has an influential role to play in their children's development. It also emerged that the greater the involvement, the more positive the influence on the child's development.

5.4 Discussion of the findings of the study

5.4.1 Understanding of the concept of social development

Although most of the respondents could not give a definition of the concept of social development, they understood the importance of parents playing a role in the development of a child. Gamarnikow (2003) is of the opinion that social capital is a term used in social sciences to discuss analogous concepts with regards to social resources derived from social interactions. Families are often regarded as a wellspring of social capital generation because of the link between individuals and families

(Edwards *et al.*, 2003). This study sought to investigate fathers' experiences with involvement in the social development of their 0-6 year old children from a social capital perspective. Therefore, the focus of the researcher was on the relationship between children and their fathers. This relationship or connectedness between a child and father could translate into many positive outcomes for both.

As mentioned earlier, the concept of social development entails learning how to behave and to get on well with others within the society. The acquisition of social skills that enable the individual to interact with others in ways that are acceptable to the generality of the citizenry. Respondents were in agreement with the argument that social development involves learning the values, knowledge and skills that enable children to relate to others effectively and to contribute in positive ways to family, school and the community at large. The result of the current study is in line with Slavin (2012) who argues that social skills are a set of learned behaviours that enable social interaction and pro-social behaviour. According to Slavin (2012), this range of behaviours that constitute social skills involve a child's ability to regulate behaviour according to the social context in order to engage in group interactions with peers and adults. The current thesis argues that the presence of the father, but also the mother, is very important in the accumulation of these skills.

5.4.2 Fathers' description of their roles in the social development of their children

As mentioned previously, this section also had as its intention the exploration of fathers understanding of their role in the social development of their children as well as whether they felt that they could be more involved in the development of their children. According to Morell and Richter (2006), fatherhood is a social role, and the importance

of this role fluctuates over time as the content of the role also shifts. Morell and Richter (2006) argue that most South African men do not seem especially interested in their children and that they do not always acknowledge their children. In contrast, this study found that the respondents were and, in fact, wanted to be more involved in their children's lives. They expressed a desire for guidance in ways to become more involved. This is in line with the findings of Richter *et al.* (2010) who noted that many young fathers speak with sadness about the fact that they never knew their own fathers and, therefore, recognize that they lack experience and guidance regarding father role and responsibilities. This is part of an international process where men demand rights for fathers as well as approach the question of parenting from a holistic position that emphasizes the interest of children.

The respondents perceived their roles as being supportive, nurturing as well as being authoritative and being the disciplinarian. Alternatively, they also see themselves as providers, protectors and mentors. This is similar to the findings of Sheehy (2004) where the respondents talked about their fathers being distant, working, busy and disciplinarians. Sheehy (2004) also noted that if one has not experienced a nurturing father, then it is more difficult to feel comfortable in a nurturing role. This can serve as barriers as fathers could feel incompetent. Most respondents agreed that it was important that fathers understood the importance of supporting and guiding their children. Hosegood and Madhavan (2013) argue that the dearth of data about fathers in South Africa has resulted in a gap in the knowledge about the role of fathers, at best, and a misrepresentation of what they do or not do.

5.4.3 The availability of programs at schools targeting fathers' involvement

Richter *et al.* (2012) are of the opinion that the early years are a vulnerable time for father-child ties and involvement during these years solidify men's ties to their children. Therefore, opportunities for contact and communication, as well as activities together are of the utmost importance in addition to financial support. Richter *et al.* (2012) recommend the engagement of men in groups to change the norms, including those held by women and to increase demand for policy changes and modifications to service to make them more inclusive of men and the important roles they play in the lives of children. The findings of this study have shown that most schools did not offer programs especially designed to enhance men's involvement in the lives of their children. The respondents that did indicate that their children's schools do have programs especially designed for fathers were unsure what these programs entailed as they did not participate in them. Nevertheless, they would like to be involved if given the opportunity. Sport activities seem to be top on the list for fathers as far as involvement is concerned.

As pointed out in the literature review, mainly in Chapter 2, Marsh and Yiap (2005) argued that when the word *parenting* is defined, it should be emphasised that the word means both mothers and fathers. Participants in this study, on the question of whether there were programs at their children's schools that specifically target fathers, said *no* and that all invitations were to parents. Invitations to fathers alone or fathers specifically are not being issued at most schools. There is a need to increase the participation rates of males in order to increase male role models and mentors. Furthermore, Marsh and Yiap (2005) argue that fathers, at various stages, need to be equipped and empowered through education programmes that will enable them to acquire the relevant knowledge and skills that they need to be effective parents. In

acknowledging their shortcomings, the participants also expressed the desire for guidance and program to empower them to become better fathers.

5.4.4 Personal involvement of fathers in school programs

The importance of parental involvement in a child's education has been heavily emphasized in the literature. Although authors differ on a single definition of parental involvement, Coleman and Churchill (1997) as cited in Mishra (2012), describe it as providing emotional support, providing parents with skills and knowledge as well as communicating about the child with the provider. The interpretation of parental involvement is highly dependent on the individual beliefs and expectations of each person concerned and often, the beliefs are not collectively shared and could lead to decreased involvement (Mishra, 2012). As the focus of this study is concerned with fathers' involvement in school programs, the researcher wanted to find out whether fathers were personally involved in any programs, where these existed, at their children's schools. The researcher could deduce from the responses that most participants were not personally involved in school programs.

The reasons for their non-involvement varied, but work duties seemed to be top of the list. A possible reason could be as Mishra (2012) argued that the interpretation of parental involvement is highly dependent on the individual beliefs and expectations of each person concerned and often, the beliefs are not collectively shared. Many fathers perceive themselves as the breadwinners and providers and leave the child-rearing to the mother. This is the way they were brought up, and that is the processes in which they believe in. Many fathers are highly dependent on their partners as far as information on their children's school is concerned. For example, one of the respondents said that he worked in different places, and when his wife bought sport

material, he took it that his child was involved in sport. Other fathers were saying that they were involved in fundraising and meetings, but not in any academic programs.

Barge and Loges (2003) are of the opinion that since colonial days, it was expected from parents to be involved in an array of school activities such as school governance, curriculum support and selection of teachers. Unfortunately, this type of parental involvement waned during the late 1800s and early 1900s as a result of bureaucratization of schools and the rise of professionalism of school personnel. Consequently, home life and school life became viewed as two separate spheres where parents were expected to provide academic support to schools. This in line with responses from some fathers in the current study who said that they were willing to assist their children at home as they do not find the time to be otherwise involved.

Although participants were not involved in any programs where it existed at their children's school, and there was a general willingness to become involved if opportunities were created. The participants had an array of items in which they showed interest of involving themselves in school activities such as talking about issues at hand and sharing information, removing barriers in order to enhance the growth of the children. Sporting activities should definitely be top on the list of attracting fathers to the school.

5.4.5 The role of mother involvement versus father involvement

Makusha, Richter, Knight, van Rooyen and Bhana (2013) are of the opinion that childhood experiences with fathers are associated with women's expectations and men's experiences of fathering. Makusha *et al.* (2013) also conclude that fatherhood is dynamic and is influenced by socio-cultural and economic factors, societal expectations, father-mother relationship and individual characteristics of men.

According to Makusha *et al.* (2013), findings have shown that men use their childhood experiences of fatherhood to guide them on how to perform as fathers and women use their childhood experiences to shape their expectations of fathering to influence their children's fathers. This is not too dissimilar with the findings of the current study regarding the stereotypical roles of fathers and mothers. Makusha *et al.* (2013) also conclude that some men want to co-reside and be more involved in their children's lives.

The mother are seen as the primary parent and fathers fill the gaps where and whenever the mother need his support. Sheehy (2004) is of the opinion that bonding and breastfeeding are elements that affect fathers' involvement as such elements are many times spoken of in the same sentence giving the impression that bonding happens exclusively with breastfeeding. Thus, many men associate bonding with breastfeeding and, therefore, see themselves as having a limited role in the bonding process. In addition, many men feel that they are supervised in their attempts to address the physical needs of the child, especially early on. This may cause feelings of incompetence which could cause the father to withdraw from this activity. This may be the reason why some participants in the current study felt that mothers were, most of the time, with the children and that they could do things that men cannot do. They also felt very incompetent as far as washing, clothing and feeding the child are concerned.

Participants actually felt that man and women are programmed differently and that it was in the genes of men and women to take on certain responsibilities as far as the children are concerned. Sheng (2012) examined the way in which social difference in terms of gender are played out in parental involvement in children's schooling. According to Sheng (2012), findings mothers were always the parents who are most

involved and that fathers adopted a distant and broad role in terms of their involvement in their children's schooling. Again, it is not dissimilar to the findings of the current study except that most of the respondents argued that whenever given the chance, they were involved. The respondents do, however, acknowledge that these stereotypes are changing and that fathers should take on more responsibilities in the home. It seems as the children grow older, so does the involvement of fathers. An investigation on whether fathers' involvement increases with the growth of the child could be useful.

5.4.6 Factors inhibiting father involvement

Swartz *et al.* (2013) argue that young fathers have frequently been portrayed in the media as unwilling to take responsibility for their children. The authors are also of the opinion that these young fathers, as well as fathers in general, are confronted with numerous barriers to fulfilling their parenting roles. Swartz *et al.* (2013) further note that obstacles to fathering have not been well documented. In describing some of these barriers the authors note that financial provision often overshadows other aspects of fatherhood, such as contact time, physical care and emotional support. Swartz *et al.* (2013) arguments resonate with the findings of the current study where most fathers cite their role as breadwinners and providers as the key inhibiting factor, which prevents them from becoming more involved in the lives of their children. Earlier, Landale and Oropesa (2001) found that fathers' employment status is the key predictor of whether the father contributed financially and his level of involvement in the care of the child. According to Morrell and Richter (2010), South African laws and policies with regard to fathers have shown a moderate improvement in areas such as paternal leave although its focus was not explicitly to increase father involvement in childcare. It is

important to note in particular, experiences of African fathers in South Africa have been powerfully influenced by history as for the most part, they were separated from their children by the need to work in distant places.

In the current environment of high unemployment, fathers are hit with a double-edged sword. If they are employed, their working hours serve, many times, as a barrier as far as involvement with their children is concerned. On the other hand, if they are unemployed, they are put under tremendous pressure which, in turn, rubs off on the whole family. As mothers, as well as grandmothers, play an important goalkeeping role in families, this further causes unemployed fathers not to see their children as they cannot provide for the children.

5.4.7 Strategies schools could use to involve fathers more in their programs

As mentioned previously, the fact that men are often ignored or portrayed in narrow ways in the media and society inhibit them from engagement with their children. Therefore, it is important that strategies be found to remove those obstacles that hinder fathers' involvement. Morrell and Richter (2006) are of the opinion that two kinds of responses by men can be discerned in this process of reassessing the value of fatherhood. These two include demanding the rights of men, and the other is to approach the question of parenting from a more holistic position which emphasises the interest of children.

In the current study, the findings indicated that any strategies should be centred on the fathers, at a level where they participate. Schools should be accommodative towards fathers in their planning of activities. If need be, meetings or sports events could take place at a time more convenient for most fathers even if this means moving away from regular school hours. Respondents also felt that if they are notified of any

father-child activities in advance, they could plan their own programs in such a way that they could attend. Sheehy (2004) emphasizes that the language that ECD providers and other stakeholders in the business of child's education use when promoting any service play a decisive role when fathers are being engaged.

Fathers should know that their knowledge and parenting experience is not only valid for other men but is sincerely appreciated and valued. This is exactly what some of the findings in this study have shown that men want to be brought together to talk about issues regarding this, and if schools could plan information sessions, these will enhance fathers' involvement as well as possibly influence other fathers to be active. What is important is finding out what interests fathers so that programs could be centred on those interests in line with what is important at school. It is important for schools to note that increased presence of fathers will allow for more varied forms of engagement. As Carpenter and Towers (2008) suggested, in order to develop an environment and practice that is father friendly, fathers need to be encouraged to be involved in the general life of the school as well as given the opportunity to attend and fully participate in meetings concerned with their own children.

5.4.8 Strategies that the Department of Basic Education could promote to encourage involvement of fathers in early childhood education

As mentioned in the main findings, the role of the Department of Basic Education is mainly seen as a financier and a facilitator of possible skills development programs of fathers and information dissemination. What these skills development programs envisaged for fathers would entail will depend on information schools can gather from the fathers. Lu *et al.* (2012) argued that in engaging fathers or planning intervention programs to enhance father involvement, contextual factors such as neighbourhood,

community, cultural or societal issues should be considered. These programs should take a multi-level and multi-disciplined approach and be guided by community-based research. The findings have shown a definite desire by respondents to be involved through schools programs such as skills training and information sharing. The two main obstacles are finances and time.

An environment conducive to encourage family formation and father involvement should be created. Therefore, the call for a trans-disciplinary approach towards father involvement is critical. As Lu *et al.* (2012) argue, reforms in current tax, welfare and child support policies are needed to maximise father involvement. Lu *et al.* (2012) are of the opinion that strengthening, especially Black, low income fathers will go a long way toward restoring Black fathers to Black families. In order to maximize successful programs that target increased father involvement, schools should be empowered. As respondents said, the Department of Basic Education as responsible for education, can always play a role in strengthening the management of schools as they have the expertise and finance to design specific programs. Fathers are excellent human resources, and the skills they possess could be used to facilitate curriculum involvement and, therefore, positively impact on the child's social development.

5.5 Conclusions

The purpose of the study leading to this thesis was to investigate what fathers' experiences were with their involvement in the social development of their 0-6 year old children from a social capital perspective. In line with this understanding, the objectives were to establish fathers' understanding of their roles, how fathers get involved, as well as the challenges confronting fathers towards their involvement in the social development of 0-6year old children. This study comes in the wake of a

growing focus on fatherhood as a response to the changing role of fathers in families in South Africa in particular.

The presence of fathers in children's lives is known to contribute significantly to their chances of experiencing positive developmental outcomes. This study (as with previous studies) has shown that fathers have unique influences on children's development and particular in their social skills. Although the father-child relationship's influences' on children's social competence has received increased attention, in general, research on fathers' understanding of their roles, involvement with their children as well as challenges confronting them with their involvement are scant. This study has shown that fathers neither understood the concept of social development nor knew all the stages of child development. However, in their own understanding of the concept and what it entailed, they realized the importance of their involvement with their children. The respondents were quite clear that a father has an influential role to play in their children's development. It also emerged that the greater the involvement, the more positive the influence on the child's development.

Although fathers understand their basic role as being the provider and protector, they do, however, acknowledge that these stereotypes are changing and that fathers should take on more responsibilities in the home. They also showed a desire to become more involved in school programs especially designed for fathers. This will have an impact on the planning of schools in order to involve fathers more. Schools should definitely change not only their ideas on parental involvement but also the times these activities take place.

As previously mentioned, it is important for schools to realize that men are playing an influential role outside the family as political, religious and community leaders. This

places them in a powerful position to influence the needs of children. If they are involved with their children, they will have an understanding of these needs and could, therefore, influence decision-making processes in favour of child programs. Although the role of the Department of Basic Education is mainly seen as a financial contributor to facilitate the skills development of fathers as well as that of information dissemination, they could in collaboration with other government departments such as Social Development, have a huge impact on increasing father involvement.

Fathers want to be involved with the social development of their children and, therefore, need guidance on how they could be involved. Although mothers seem to be more involved with the children, participants also realized that co-parental relationships could be positive for the development of their children. There is no doubt in the researcher that all participants agreed that the fathers should play a more prominent role in the social development of their children. Fathers' involvement will lead to better relations and trust between the father and child and as Coleman (1988) suggests, in a group where there is extensive trustworthiness and extensive trust, much more could be accomplished.

5.6 Implications of the study

This study will be of utmost importance in the way fathers see their roles. Hopefully, the outcome of the present study will instill in them a desire to become more actively involved in their children's lives.

This study will be of significance in terms of the general body of knowledge. As the main research question indicates, the focus of the study will be fathers' views on their involvement in the social development of their children. Therefore, the study sought to

unearth answers relating to fathers, their views, feelings, questions, uncertainties on child development.

Knowledge derived from this study may change the way principals organize their parenting programs and may equally assist them in mounting such programs where none exists. Knowledge of the positive influence fathers' involvement may have on their children might focus principals' planning to target male figures to be more involved in the education of their children

As far as schools are concerned, this study will have implications as the involvement of a father figure in the life of a child can open up many exciting opportunities which can assist in facilitating children's learning as well as designing a curriculum to help children achieve developmental and learning goals.

The study will have implications in terms of District, Provincial and National level policies. Better educated teachers, especially in child development, have more knowledge and skills which makes them more effective as they have larger vocabularies to which young children are exposed, are better at constructing and individualizing lesson plans and are better problem solvers. Regular pre-service and in-service training should, therefore, be an on-going feature.

5.7 Limitations of the study

Few limitations were encountered during the research study leading to this thesis, which the researcher would like to draw the readers' attention to:

- As this study was conducted after official working hours in order not to interrupt respondents' normal programs as well as the researcher's own duties as school principal, the researcher had to negotiate the available time with the

participants. In most cases, the researcher had to visit the participants wherever it was suitable for them. Consequently, much time than earlier planned was spent during this period of the study; and

- There were financial costs associated with the whole study which the researcher had to bear in full.

5.8 Recommendations

- All role players should understand the importance and relevance of Early Childhood Development programs.
- Educational institutions should have definite programs to involve fathers. These programs should not only entail telling fathers what they can do for their children's schools but also what fathers feel their children need to develop optimally. It should be an equal partnership.
- Fathers, at various stages, need to be equipped and empowered through education programmes that will enable them to acquire the relevant knowledge and skills that they need to be effective parents.

5.9 Areas for further studies

- An investigation on whether a father's involvement increases with the growth of the child could be useful.
- Another study may be conducted applying both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in order to find out if similar results will be attained.

REFERENCES

- Adams, C.M., Forsyth, P.B. & Mitchell, R.M. (2009). The formation of parent-school trust: A multilevel analysis. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 45(1): 4-33.
- Akcomak, I. S. (2011). Social capital of social researchers. *Review of Economics and Institutions*, 2(2): 1-28.
- Alio, A., Bond, M., Padilla, Y., Hiedelbaugh, J., Lu, M. & Parker, W. (2011). Addressing policy barriers to paternal involvement during pregnancy. *Maternal Child Health Journal*, 15(4): 425-430.
- Altschul, I. (2011). Parental involvement and the academic achievement of Mexican American youths. *What kind of involvement in youths' education matter most?* *Social Works Research*, 35(3): 159-170.
- Atmore, E., van Niekerk, L. & Ashley-Cooper, M. (2012). *A comprehensive research report on early childhood development to the national development agency (NDA): Challenges facing the early childhood development sector in South Africa*. Pretoria: National Development Agency
- Bakkabulindi, F. (2015). Positivism and interpretivism: Distinguishing characteristics, criteria and methodology. In C. Okeke & M.M. van Wyk. (Eds.), *Educational Research: An African approach* (413-432). Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Ball, J., (2010). Indigenous fathers' involvement in reconstituting "circles of care". *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 45(1-2): 124-138.
- Ball, J., & Wahedi, M.O.K. (2010). Exploring fatherhood in Bangladesh. *Childhood Education*, 86(6): 366-370.

- Barge, J.K. & Loges, W.E. (2003). Parents', students', and teachers' perceptions of parental involvement. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 31(2): 24-140.
- Bar-on, A. (2004). Early childhood care and education in Africa: The case of Botswana. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 2(1): 67-84.
- Bartlet, S. & Burton, D. (2007). *Introduction to education studies*. Singapore: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Bennet, J. & Palaiologou, I. (2013). Personal, social and emotional development. In I. Palaiologou (Ed.), *The early years foundation stage: Theory and practice*. London: Sage.
- Berry, L., Biersteker, I., Dawes, A., Lake, L. & Smith, C. (Eds) (2013). *South African child gauge 2011*. Cape Town: Children's Institute, University of Cape Town.
- Biersteker, L., Burns, J., Desmond, C., Feza, N., Harrison, D., Martin, P., Saloojee, H. & Slemming, W. (2012). *Diagnostic review of early childhood development*. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education.
- Bhise, C.D., & Sonawat, R. (2013). Measuring the quality in early childhood education. *South Asian Journal of Evaluation in Practice*, 1(1): 1- 24.
- Bower, H.A. & Griffin, D. (2011). *Can the Epstein model of parental involvement work in a high-minority, high-poverty elementary school? A case study*. *Professional School Counselling*, 15(2): 77-87.
- Bramsfield, K. D., Carrick, A. C., Lessmeir, S. L., Nicoloff, A. N., Keiser, M. E., & Metter, L. (2013). *Parental involvement in a child care centre: Assessing predictors of school based involvement*. *Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research*, 18(3): 103.

- Brent, A. M., & Thomas R. R. (1996). Father/male involvement in early childhood programs. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 25(1): 11-15.
- Carpenter, B., & Towers, C. (2008). Recognising fathers: The needs of fathers of children with disabilities. *Support for Learning*, 23(3): 118-125.
- Celik, S. B. (2007). Family Function Levels of Turkish Fathers with Children aged between 0-6. *Social Behaviour and Personality*, 35(4): 429-442.
- Chen, W., & Ho, H. (2012). *The relation between perceived parental involvement and academic achievement. International Journal of Psychology*, 47(4): 315-324.
- Chen, W., & Gregory, A. (2010). Parental involvement as a protective factor during the transition to high school. *Journal of Educational Research*, 103(1): 53-62.
- Christie, K. (2005). Changing the nature of parent involvement. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 645-646.
- Clowes, L., Ratels, K., & Shefer, T. (2013). Who needs a father? South African men reflect on being fathered. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 22(3): 255-267.
- Coleman, J. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 94: 94-120.
- Cosson, B., & Graham, E. (2012). 'I felt like a third wheel': Fathers' stories of exclusion from the 'parenting team'. *Journal of Family Studies*, 18 (2-1): 121-129.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (4th Ed.)*. New York: Sage Publications.
- Cullen, S.M., Cullen, M., Band, S., Davis, L., & Lindsay, G. (2011). Supporting fathers to engage with their children's learning and education: an under-developed aspect of the Parent Support Adviser pilot. *British Educational Research Journal*, 37(3): 485-500.

- Garfield, G., & Rowley, D.L. (2010). Where is the F in MCH father involvement in African American families? *Ethnicity and Diseases*, 20(1): 49-61.
- Dakwa, F. (2015). The interview method. In C. Okeke & M.M. van Wyk. (Eds.), *Educational research: An African approach* (296-313). Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.
- Dereli-iman, E. (2014). The effect of the values education programme on 5.5-6 year old children's social development: Social skills, psycho-social development and social problem solving skills. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*, 14(1): 262-268.
- Edwards, R., Franklin, J., & Holland, J. (2003). *Families and social capital: Exploring the issues*. London: ESRC, South Bank University.
- Evans, J. (1995). Men in the lives of children. *Notebook*, 16: 1-25.
- Fagan, J., Bernd, E., & Whiteman, V., (2007). Adolescent fathers' parenting stress, social support, and involvement with infants. *Journal of Research in Adolescence*, 17(1): 1-22.
- Feeley. N., Waitzer, E., Sherrard, K., Boisvert, L., & Zelkowitz, P. (2012). Fathers' perceptions of the barriers and facilitators to their involvement with their newborn hospitalised in the neonatal intensive care unit. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 22(3-4): 521-530.
- Fishman, C.E., & Nickerson, A.B. (2014). Motivations for involvement: A preliminary investigation of parents of students with disabilities. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 24: 523-535.
- Feza, N. (2015). Qualitative data analysis. In C. Okeke & M.M. van Wyk. (Eds.), *Educational research: An African approach*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.

- Finn, J. D, (1998). Parental engagement that makes a difference. *Educational Leadership*, 55(8): 20-24.
- Flouri, E., & Buchanan, A. (2002). What predicts fathers' involvement with their children? A prospective study of intact families. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 21: 81-98.
- Gamarnikow, E. (2003). Social capital and human capital. In K. Christensen & D. Levinson (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of community: From the village to the virtual world* (1287-1292). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Gisladdottir, B. (2013). *Social Capital and adolescents' mathematics achievement: A comparative analysis of eight European cities*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Columbia, USA: Columbia University.
- Graves, S.L., & Wright, L.B. (2011). Parent involvement at school entry: A national examination of group differences and achievement. *School Psychology International*, 32(1): 35-48.
- Gudmundsson, G. & Mickiewicz, P. (2012). The concept of social capital and its usage in educational studies. Retrieved from: <https://repozytorium.amu.edu.pl/bitstream/10593/5897/1/55-80.pdf> [Accessed 16/10/2014).
- Gumbo, M. (2015). The pilot study. In C. Okeke & M.M. van Wyk. (Eds.), *Educational Research: An African approach* (371-387). Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.
- Hairston, C. F. (1998). The forgotten Parent: understanding the forces that influence incarcerated fathers' relationships with their children. *Child Welfare*, 77(5): 617-639.

- Halme, N., Astedt-kurki, P., & Tarkka, M. (2009). Father's involvement with their preschool-age children: How fathers spend time with their children in different family structures. *Child and Youth Care Forum*, 38(3): 103-119.
- Holloway, S., & Pimlot-Wilson, H. (2013). Parental involvement in children's learning: Mothers' fourth shift, social class, and the growth of state intervention in family life. *The Canadian Geographer*, 57(3), 327-336.
- Hasan, S., & Bagde, S. (2013). The mechanics of social capital and academic performance in an Indian college. *American Sociological Review*, 78(6): 1009–1032.
- Hayes, D. (2012). Parental involvement and achievement outcomes in African American adolescents. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 43 (4): 567- 582.
- Hill, N.E., & Taylor, L.C. (2001). Parental school involvement and children's academic achievement: Pragmatics and Issues. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 13(4): 161-164.
- Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., Walker, J.M.T., Sandler, H.M., Whetsel. D., Green, C.L., Wilkins, A.S., & Closson, K. (2005). Why do parents become involved? Research findings and implications. *The Elementary School Journal*, 106(2): 1-40.
- Hornby, G., & Lafaele, R. (2011). Barriers to parental involvement in education: an explanatory model. *Educational Review*, 63(1): 37-52.
- Hornby, G., & Witte, C. (2009). A survey of parental involvement in middle schools in New Zealand. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 28(1): 59-69.
- Hosegood, V., & Madhavan, S. (2012). Understanding fatherhood and father involvement in South Africa: Insights from surveys and population cohorts. *Fathering*, 10(3): 257-273.

- Huang, Y., Chen, S., & Tsai, S. (2012). Fathers experiences of involvement in the daily care of their child with developmental disability in a Chinese context. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 21 (21-22): 3287-3296.
- Jacobsen, H., Moe, V., Ivarsson, T., Wentzel-Larsen, T., & Smith, L. (2013). Cognitive development and social-emotional functioning in young foster children: A follow-up study from 2 to 3 years of age. *Child Psychiatry Human Development*, 44: 666-677.
- Karakus, M.M., & Savas, A. (2012). The effects of parental involvement, trust in parents, trust in students and pupil control ideology on conflict management strategies of early childhood teachers. *Educational Sciences: Theory & practice*, 12(4): 2977-2985
- Keizer, R., Lucassen, N., Jaddoe, V., & Tiemeier, H. (2014). A prospective study on father involvement and toddlers behavioural and emotional problems: Are sons and daughters differently affected? *Fathering*, 12(1): 38-51.
- Kendall, N. (2007). Parental and community participation in improving educational quality in Africa. *International Review of Education*, 53: 701-708.
- Kibbel, M., Lake, L., Pendlebury, S., & Smith, C. (Eds). (2010). *South African Child Gauge 2009/2010*. Cape Town: Children's Institute, University of Cape Town.
- Kim, E. (2002). The relationship between parental involvement and children's educational achievement in the Korean immigrant family. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 33(4): 529-540.
- Kim, K. K., & Chung, J. (2011). The role of Korean Fathers: A study of Korean fathering Practices in the United States. *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy*, 5(2): 47-55.

- Koutrouba, K., Antonopoulour, E., Tsitsa, G., & Zenakou, E. (2009). An investigation of Greek teachers' view on parental involvement. *School Psychology International*, 30(3): 311-328.
- Krantz, M. (1994). *Child Development, Risk and Opportunity*. Florida: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Kwok, L., Ling, C., Leung, C. L. K., & Li, J., C., M. (2013). Fathering self-efficacy, marital satisfaction and father involvement in Hong Kong. *Journal of Child & Family Studies*, 22(8): 1051-1060.
- Lamont, A. & Van Horn, M. L. (2013). Heterogeneity in Parent-reported Social Skill Development in Early Elementary School Children. *Social Development*, 22(2): 384-405.
- Landale, N.S., & Oropesa, R.S. (2001). Father involvement in the lives of Mainland Puerto Rican Children: Contributions of Nonresident, Cohabiting and Married Fathers. *Social Forces*, 79(3): 945-968.
- Langa, M., & Smith, N. (2012). Responsible teenage fatherhood in a South African historically disadvantaged community. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 22(2): 255-258.
- Larocque, M., & Kleiman, I., & Darling, M. (2011). Parental involvement: The missing Link in School Achievement. *Preventing School Failure*, 55(3): 115-122.
- Loomis, C., & Akkari, A. (2012). From the Will to the Field: Parent Participation in Early Childhood Education in Madagascar. *African Development*, 37(3): 87-99.

- Lu, M. C., Jones, L., Bond, M. J., Wright, K., Pummpuang, M., Maidenbureg, M., Jones, D., Garfield, C., & Rowley, D.L. (2010). Where is the F in MCH? Father involvement in African American families. *Ethnicity & Disease*, 20: 49-61.
- Lubbe, C. (2007). Mothers, fathers, or parents: Same gendered families in South Africa. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 37(2): 260-283.
- Makusha, T., Richter, L., Knight, L., Van Rooyen, H., & Bhana, D. (2013). "The Good and the Bad?" Childhood experiences with fathers and their influence on women's expectations and men's experiences of fathering in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *Fathering*, 11(2): 138-158.
- Marsh, W., & Yiap, R. (2005). *Fathers in Families: Strengthening and supporting fathers and turning the tide of fatherlessness in Australia*. Retrieved from: <http://www.fatherhood.org.au/resources/> [Accessed 20 July 2015].
- Massoudi, P., Wickberg, B., & Hwang, C.P. (2010). Fathers' involvement in Swedish child health care – the role of nurses' practices and attitudes. *Acta Paediatrica*, 100(3): 396-401.
- McMillan, D. J. (2005). Close encounters: Issue in pre-school parental involvement in Northern Ireland. *Childcare in Practice*, 11(2): 119-134.
- Meier, A. (1999). *Social capital and school achievement among adolescents*. Paper presented at the 1999 American Sociological Association Annual Meeting in Chicago. Retrieved from: <https://www.ssc.wisc.edu/cde/cdewp/99-18.pdf> [Accessed 01 July 2015].
- Mishra, J. (2012). Parental involvement in early childhood care. *International Journal of Psychology and Behavioural Sciences*, 2(2): 22-27.

- Mohlala, B.K.F., Gregson, S., & Boily, M. (2012). Barriers to involvement of men in ANC and VCT in Khayelitsha, South Africa. *AIDS Care*, 24(8): 972-977.
- Morrell, R. (2006). Fathers, fatherhood and masculinity in South Africa. In L. Richter & R Morrell (Eds), *Baba: Men and fatherhood in South Africa* (13-25). Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Morrell, R., & Richter, L. (2006). Introduction. In L. Richter & R Morrell (Eds), *Baba: Men and fatherhood in South Africa* (1-12). Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Morell R., & Swartz S. (2012). *Fathers and other men in the lives of children and families*. Paper presented at the 'Towards Carnegie III conference held at the University of Cape Town from 3 to 7 September, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://carnegie3.org.za/docs/papers/> [Accessed 01 July 2015].
- Morgan, W.J. (2008). *Social capital, citizenship and continuing education: What are the connections?* Nottingham, UK: UNESCO.
- Morrow, V., & Richards, M. (1996). The ethics of social research with children: An overview. *Children and Society*, 10(1): 90-105.
- Nepomnyaschy, L., & Waldfogel, J. (2007). Paternity leave and fathers' involvement with their young children. *Community, Work & Family*, 10(4): 427-453.
- O'Donnell, J, M. (1999). Involvement of African American fathers in kinship foster care services. *Social Work*, 44(5): 428-441.
- Okeke, C. (2015). Achieving qualitative validity, reliability and generalisability. In C. Okeke & M.M. van Wyk. (Eds.), *Educational research: An African approach* (207-223). Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.

- Patacchini, E., & Zenou, Y. (2011). Neighbourhood effects and parental involvement in the intergenerational transmission of education. *Journal of Regional Science*, 51(5): 987-1013.
- Papatheodorou, T., and Potts, D. (2013). Pedagogy of early years. In I. Palaogou (Ed.), *The early years foundation stage: Theory and practice* (57- 72). New York: Sage.
- Pattnaik, J., & Sriram, R. (2010). Father/male involvement in the care and education of children: History, trends, research, policies, and programs around the world. *Childhood Education*, 86(6): 354-359
- Posel, D., & Devey, R. (2006). The demographics of fathers in South Africa: An analysis of survey data, 1993-2002. In L. Richter & R Morrell (Eds), *Baba: Men and fatherhood in South Africa* (38-52). Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Potter, C., Walker, G., & Keen, B. (2012). Engaging Fathers from disadvantaged areas in children's early educational transitions: A UK perspective. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 10(2): 209-225.
- Queensberry, A., Ostrosky, M. M., & Corso, R. M. (2007). *Fathers and father-figures: Their important role in children's social and emotional development*. New York: US Department of Health and Human Services.
- Rankin, K.N. (2002). Social capital, microfinance, and the politics of development. *Feminist Economics*, 8(1): 1-24.
- Rabe, M. (2007). My children, your children, our children? Fathers, female partners and household structures. *South African Review of Sociology*, 38(2): 161-175.

- Ratele, K., Shefer, T., & Clowes, L. (2012). Talking South African fathers: A critical examination of men's construction and experiences of fatherhood and fatherhood and fatherlessness. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 42(4): 553-563.
- Razmi, M. J., & Bazzazan, S. S. (2012). A review of the effect of social capital on human development in Iran. *International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues*, 2(4): 448-459.
- Richter, L., Desmond, C., Hosegood, V., Madhavan, S., Makiwane, M., Makusha, T., Morell R., & Swartz, S. (2012). *Fathers and other men in the lives of children and families*. Paper presented at the Carnegie III conference held at the University of Cape Town, 3-7 September, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www.carnegie3.org.za/docs/papers/> [Assessed 16/10/2014]
- Richter, L., Chikovore, J., & Makusha, T. (2010). The status of fatherhood and fathering in South Africa. *Childhood Education*, 86(6): 360-365.
- Rosenburg, J., Wilcox, W. B. (2006). *The importance of Fathers in the healthy Development of Children*. Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/fatherhood.pdf> [Accessed 16 January 2014].
- Rothmann, J. (2010). South African gay fathers' parenting practices: from pathology to 'normalisation'. *Acta Academica*, 43(1): 39-78.
- Roumeliotou, M., & Rontos, K (2009). Social trust in local communities and its demographics and socioeconomic predictors: The case of Kalloni, Lesvos Greece. *International Journal of Criminology and Sociological Theory*, 2(1): 230-250.

- Roy, K. (2008). A Life Course Perspective on Fatherhood and Family Policies in the United States and South Africa. *Fathering*, 6(2): 92-112.
- Sarantakos, S. (1998). *Social research* (3rd Ed.). Palgrave: Macmillan.
- Schwandt, T. (1994). Constructivists, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. New York: Sage Publications.
- Sheehy, S. (2004). *Supporting Men with Parenting*. Retrieved from: <http://www.wch.sa.gov.au/services/az/other/nwcfip/fatherhood/pdfs/> [Accessed 16 January 2014].
- Sheng, X. (2012). Cultural capital and gender differences in parental involvement in children's schooling and higher education choice in China. *Gender and education*, 24(2): 131-146.
- Slavin, R. E. (2012). *Educational Psychology: Theory and Practice* (10th Ed.). Chicago, USA: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Smith, N. (2012). Responsible teenage fatherhood in a South African historically disadvantaged community. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 22(2): 255-258.
- Sotuku, N., & Duku, S. (2015). Ethics in human sciences research. In C. Okeke & M.M. van Wyk. (Eds.), *Educational research: An African approach* (112-130). Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.
- Spjeldnaes, I, O., Moland, K, M., Harris, J., & Sam, D, L. (2011). Being man enough: Fatherhood experiences and expectations among teenage boys in South Africa. *Fathering*, 9(1): 3-21.

- Stevenson, M., & Ćrnic, K. (2013). Intrusive fathering, children's self-regulation and social skills: a mediation analysis. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 27(6): 500-512.
- Swartz, S., Bhana, A., Richter, L., & Versfeld, A. (2013). *Promoting young fathers' positive involvement in their children's lives*. Pretoria: HSRC.
- Swick, K. (2009). Promoting school and life success through early childhood family literacy. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 36(5): 403-406.
- Troilo, J., & Coleman, M. (2013). "I don't know how much more I can take": *How divorced nonresidential fathers manage barriers to involvement*. *Fathering*, 11(2): 159-178.
- Tshabangu, I. (2015). Interpretive research: Construction of meanings. In C. Okeke & M.M. van Wyk. (Eds.). *Educational research: An African approach* (39-56). Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.
- Tzanakis M. (2013). Social capital in Bourdieu's, Coleman's and Putnam's theory: Empirical evidence and emergent measurement issues. *Educate*, 13(2): 2-23.
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). (2009). *The State of the World's Children: Special Edition*. New York: Brodock Press.
- Van Wyk, M., & Taole, M. (2015). Research design. In C. Okeke & M.M. van Wyk. (Eds.), *Educational research: An African approach* (164-184). Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.
- Velser, V., & Orozco, P. (2007). Involving low income parents in the schools: community-centric strategies for school counsellors. *Professional School Counselling*, 11(1): 17-24.

- Wardle (2004). *Men in early childhood: Fathers & teachers*. Retrieved from: <http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/> [Accessed 16 January 2014].
- Wilson, F. (2006). On being a father and poor in Southern Africa today. In L. Richter & R Morrell (Eds), *Baba: Men and fatherhood in South Africa* (26-37). Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Wolhuter, C. (2015). Steps in the research process. In C. Okeke & M.M. van Wyk. (Eds.), *Educational research: An African approach* (148-162). Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.
- Wong, J.J. Roubinov, D.S. Gonzales, N.A. Dumka, L.E., & Millsap, R.E. (2013). Father enrolment and participation in a parenting intervention: Personal and contextual predictors. *Family Process*, 52(3): 440-454.
- Woolcock, M., & Narayan, D. (2000). Social capital: Implications for development theory, research, and Policy. *The World Bank Research Observer*, 15(2): 225-249.
- Young, C.Y., Austin, S.M., & Gowe, R. (2013). Defining parental involvement: Perception of school administrators. *Education*, 133(3): 291-297.

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE **REC-270710-028-RA Level 01**

Certificate Reference Number: OKE071SADA01

Project title: **Fathers' experience with involvement in the social development of their 0-6 year old children: A Social capital perspective and implications for early childhood development**

Nature of Project: PhD

Principal Researcher: Clyde Adams

Supervisor: Dr CIO Okeke

Co-supervisor:

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC) I hereby give ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project and research instrument(s). Should any other instruments be used, these require separate authorization. The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this certificate, using the reference number indicated above.

Please note that the UREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the document
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research

The Principal Researcher must report to the UREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually, and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.

Special conditions: Research that includes children as per the official regulations of the act must take the following into account:

Note: The UREC is aware of the provisions of s71 of the National Health Act 61 of 2003 and that matters pertaining to obtaining the Minister's consent are under discussion and remain unresolved. Nonetheless, as was decided at a meeting between the National Health Research Ethics Committee and stakeholders on 6 June 2013, university ethics committees may continue to grant ethical clearance for research involving children without the Minister's consent, provided that the prescripts of the previous rules have been met. This certificate is granted in terms of this agreement.

The UREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance Certificate if
 - Any unethical principal or practices are revealed or suspected
 - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented
 - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require
 - The conditions contained in the Certificate have not been adhered to
- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.
- In addition to the need to comply with the highest level of ethical conduct principle investigators must report back annually as an evaluation and monitoring mechanism on the progress being made by the research. Such a report must be sent to the Dean of Research's office

The Ethics Committee wished you well in your research.

Yours sincerely


Professor Gideon de Wet
Dean of Research

11 February 2015

DOH/REC/ETH/0
EAST LONDON
5209

APPENDIX B

30 SEPTEMBER 2014

THE DIRECTOR
THE STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY RESEARCH
BISHO

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON FATHERS' EXPERIENCES

I hereby request for permission, from your office, to conduct research on fathers at selected pre-schools. The responses will contribute towards the research that will be carried out by me for a research dissertation for a PHd qualification offered by the University of Fort Hare.

The title for the study is **fathers' experiences with involvement in the social development of their 0-6 year old children: a social capital perspective and implications for early childhood development**. All necessary documents in support of this application have been attached forthwith.

Yours faithfully,

CLYDE ADAMS

APPENDIX C



Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
EDUCATION

STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY RESEARCH AND SECRETARIAT SERVICES

Steve Vukile Tshwete Complex • Zone 6 • Zwelitsha • Eastern Cape
Private Bag X0032 • Bisho • 5605 • REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: +27 (0)40 608 4773/4035/4537 • Fax: +27 (0)40 608 4574 • Website: www.ecdoe.gov.za

Enquiries: B Pamla

Email: babakwa.pamla@edu.ecprov.gov.za

Date: 08 May 2015

Mr. Clyde Adams

11 Boeing Road

Buffalo Flats

East London

5209

Dear Mr. Clyde Adams

PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE A DOCTORAL STUDY: FATHERS' EXPERIENCE WITH INVOLVEMENT IN THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF SIX YEARS – A SOCIAL CAPITAL PERSPECTIVE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

1. Thank you for your application to conduct research.
2. Your application to conduct the above mentioned research in Primary Schools under the jurisdiction of East London District of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) is hereby approved based on the following conditions:
 - a. there will be no financial implications for the Department;
 - b. institutions and respondents must not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation;
 - c. you present a copy of the written approval letter of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) to the Cluster and District Directors before any research is undertaken at any institutions within that particular district;
 - d. you will make all the arrangements concerning your research;
 - e. the research may not be conducted during official contact time, as educators' programmes should not be interrupted;



- f. should you wish to extend the period of research after approval has been granted, an application to do this must be directed to Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation;
 - g. the research may not be conducted during the fourth school term, except in cases where a special well motivated request is received;
 - h. your research will be limited to those schools or institutions for which approval has been granted, should changes be effected written permission must be obtained from the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation;
 - i. you present the Department with a copy of your final paper/report/dissertation/thesis free of charge in hard copy and electronic format. This must be accompanied by a separate synopsis (maximum 2 – 3 typed pages) of the most important findings and recommendations if it does not already contain a synopsis.
 - j. you present the findings to the Research Committee and/or Senior Management of the Department when and/or where necessary.
 - k. you are requested to provide the above to the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation upon completion of your research.
 - l. you comply with all the requirements as completed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE document duly completed by you.
 - m. you comply with your ethical undertaking (commitment form).
 - n. You submit on a six monthly basis, from the date of permission of the research, concise reports to the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation.
3. The Department reserves a right to withdraw the permission should there not be compliance to the approval letter and contract signed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE.
 4. The Department will publish the completed Research on its website.
 5. The Department wishes you well in your undertaking. You can contact the Director, Ms. NY Kanjana on the numbers indicated in the letterhead or email nelisakanjana@gmail.com should you need any assistance.


 NY KANJANA

DIRECTOR: STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY RESEARCH & SECRETARIAT SERVICES
FOR SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL: EDUCATION

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Hello! My name is Clyde Adams, and I am a PhD student at the University of Fort Hare. I am doing research on fathers' experiences with involvement in the social development of their 0-6 year old children: A social capital perspective and implications for early childhood development.

Would you please be so kind as to introduce yourself.

Biographical and Geographical Information

Respondent: Father

Date of the interview: ____/____/____

Time: _____

Venue: _____

Interviewer: Adams C.G.G.

Interviewee: _____

Name: _____

Occupation: _____

Age: _____

Age of child: _____

Sex of child: _____

No of dependants: _____

Marital status: _____

I would like to assure you that everything you say or tell me will be treated in the strictest confidence. If at any time you wish to end this interview you may do so. I would like to tape-record this interview for precise recollection. Do you mind? Thank you for your willingness to share in this study.

QUESTIONS

1. These questions will explore fathers' understanding of their roles in the social development of their 0-6year children.

1.1 What is your understanding of the concept of social development?

1.2 How would you describe your role as a father in the social development of your child? Do you feel that you can be more involved? How?

2. These questions will investigate how fathers can get involved in the social development of their 0-6year children.

2.1 Does your child's school offer any programs that targets fathers' involvement? Elaborate? If they do not have any, what would you like to see them do?

2.2 Are you, in any way, actively involved in any programs at your child's school? If yes, tell me about your involvement. If no, how would you like to be involved?

3. These questions will probe the challenges confronting fathers towards their involvement in the social development of their 0-6year children.

3.1 It is perceived that mothers are more involved with their 0-6 year children.
Do you agree or disagree? Kindly elaborate.

3.2 What would you say are inhibiting fathers to become more involved?

4. These questions will explore possible implications for early childhood education.

4.1 What can schools do to involve fathers more in their programs?

4.2 Do you think that the Department of Education can do more to involve fathers in early childhood education?

5. Do you have any other thoughts about these issues?

Thank you for your participation. God Bless

APPENDIX E

118 BOEING ROAD
BUFFALO FLATS
EAST LONDON
5209
12 MAY 2015

The Principal
School
EAST LONDON

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON FATHERS' EXPERIENCES

I hereby request for permission, from your office, to conduct research on fathers at your pre-school. The responses will contribute towards the research that will be carried out by me for a research dissertation for a PhD qualification offered by the University of Fort Hare.

The title for the study is **fathers' experiences with involvement in the social development of their 0-6 year old children: a social capital perspective and implications for early childhood development**. Permission has been granted by the Department of Education and a copy of the letter is hereby attached. It would be greatly appreciated if you could avail this letter to the fathers at your pre-school. I will contact you at a time that is suitable for you in order to receive the contact details of possible participants.

I can assure you that your school, parents or learners will not be negatively affected and all information will be treated confidentially.

Yours faithfully,

CLYDE ADAMS

APPENDIX F

I, _____ father of _____
a pre-school learner at _____ , hereby give permission to
Mr. Clyde Adams to interview me for the purpose of fathers' experiences with
involvement in the social development of their 0-6 year old children: a social capital
perspective and implications for early childhood development

APPENDIX G

23 Elfin Glen Road, Nahoon Valley Heights, East London, 5200



To whom it may concern:

This document certifies that the doctoral thesis whose title appears below has been edited for proper English language, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and overall style by Rose Masha, a member of the Professional Editors' Group whose qualifications are listed in the footer of this certificate.

Title:

**FATHERS' EXPERIENCES WITH INVOLVEMENT IN THE SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF SIX YEARS:
A SOCIAL CAPITAL PERSPECTIVE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR EARLY
CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

Author:

CLYDE ADAMS

Date Edited:

28 January 2016

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rose Khanyisile Masha".

Rose Khanyisile Masha

(040) 402 2345 or 082 770 8892