

**The emotional involvement of teenage fathers in their children's primary care at  
the University of Zululand**

by

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## **Declaration**

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Psychology at the University of the Zululand, KwaDlangezwa Campus. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

Yolisa Mgebhozi

24 April 2017

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yolisa Mgebhozi', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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## **Dedication**

To my late mother, Mrs D. A. Mgobhozi, who will not see the end of this project. Thank you, mama, for my life and all your contribution to absolutely everything concerning me, my academics and my son.

## **Abstract**

The current study aimed to explore the emotional involvement of teenage fathers in their children's primary care at the University of Zululand, Dlangezwa Campus. Twenty teenage fathers were recruited and interviewed individually using open-ended questions. Data was analysed using Creswell's analytical approach. The seven themes that developed when data was analysed were 1) involvement of the father, 2) the pregnancy of the partner, 3) family relations, customs and traditions, 4) relationship with partner, 5) teenage fatherhood and academics, 6) impact of fatherhood on teenage father's life, and, lastly 7) prevention of teenage pregnancy. Results indicate that teenage fathers are involved in their children's lives despite the many challenges that impede them. Conclusion: teenage fathers are involved in their children's primary care.

## **Definition of terms**

**Baba:** addressing a father in isiZulu.

**Children's primary care:** children's basic needs and care in general and not the medical care, including the child's rearing and caring activities as well as responsibilities.

**Emotional involvement:** due to the fact that teenage fathers may be incapable of financially supporting their children, the research study will be looking at other areas of the child's life they can be involved in, ranging from spending time with the child in different ways such as babysitting, feeding, putting child to sleep, bathing, changing diapers and the like, as well as taking the child to the clinic/hospital for various purposes and playing with the child.

**Inhlawulo:** in the Zulu culture *inhlawulo* refers to damages paid to the family of the woman who became pregnant out of wedlock by the father of the future child.

**Ingezamuzi (cleansing of the household):** a goat that is slaughtered to cleanse the household of the out-of-wed-lock-pregnancy.

**Teenager:** an individual who is between the ages of thirteen (13) and nineteen (19) years of age.

**Teenage father:** a male individual who became a father during his teenage years (13-19 years).

**Umqhoyiso:** a cow or money for the mother of the pregnant girl.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Society at large has been fixated with young girls' care when they encounter teenage parenting to the extent that young men have been side-lined. As far back as over twenty-five years ago, many programs have been initiated to help young mothers and their infants. However, little attention has been directed towards understanding the teenage father (Hardy & Duggan, 1988; Barret & Robinson, 1982). Frequently teenage fathers are seen in a negative light, as irresponsible, immature and delinquent, as opportunists, womanizers, predators, absent, or uncaring (Kirven, 2014). According to Landers (2014), there is a well-established relationship between adolescent fatherhood and delinquent behaviour.

In other research studies that have been conducted the aggressive, truant and law-breaking behaviour of young men who became fathers in their teen years have been investigated (Dearden, Hale, & Woolley, 1995, p.551). The core dynamics of the teenage fathers as individuals and as a group of fathers has been an area that has not been given much attention. There is rarely a holistic interpretation of what they encounter in the new roles they acquire as fathers, which may be a great determinant of their participation in raising their children. This research study sook to explore the teenage fathers' involvement or lack thereof in their children's primary care. For the purpose of this study, primary care is not intended to be a medical term, rather; it refers to the rearing of the child and the child's life in general. The researcher acknowledged that teenage fathers may not be able to personally contribute to their children's needs financially. Nonetheless, there is more to fatherhood than financial support. That is where emotional involvement assumes a role to fathering and being involved in the child's life.

Teenage parenthood and teenage pregnancy have become a common phenomenon in most areas around the world. In the United States the rate of teenage childbirth

increased by three percent from previous years (Sipsma, Biello, Cole-Lewis & Kershaw, 2010), whilst considerable research has been done on teenage pregnancy in South Africa (Marteletto, Lam & Ranchhod, 2008; Langa & Smith, 2012). South Africa was found to be characterized by low fertility levels relative to other African countries, even though adolescent fertility rates are relatively high (Marteletto et al, 2008). As teenage pregnancy proved to be a crisis across the country with escalating numbers of pregnancies, the focus has always been directed towards the teenage mother and not the teenage father (Miller, 1997; Quanlivan & Condon, 2005; Hosegood & Madhavan, 2012; Scott, Steward-Streng, Manlove, & Moore, 2012) both at the micro and macro levels of the social system.

The study, *Teenage Tata* conducted by Swartz and Bhana (2009), was conducted on impoverished teenage fathers in Cape Town as well as in Mayville, an informal settlement in Durban on 27 teenage fathers. The study has provided a wealth of informative knowledge on teenage fathers with respect to factors and features that are associated with young men's maximum participation in parenting their children, and those forces which hinder their participation. This research study has recently given South African teenage fathers a platform to voice some of their impediments and delights of fatherhood. Young as the participants of this study were, they showed a keen interest in and mature approach to being fathers despite how they are perceived within their communities and in society. The majority of the teenage fathers in the study, Swartz and Bhana (2009), described the characteristics of a good father as being there, being present, and supporting the child. The teenage fathers who were unemployed in the same study reported not feeling like a father since they could not provide financially for their children. Some of the fathers had casual jobs to help support their children whilst at school still. According to the participants, being there with the child had a heroic connotation to it. It comprised of being involved in the child's daily activities practically such as playing, spending time with the child, changing nappies, having physical affection and caring for the child.

Acknowledging that teenage fathers may not be able to support their children financially, the current research study focuses mostly on the emotional involvement of the teenage

father. The emotional involvement of the teenage father removes the financial aspect of contributing to the child's needs and focuses more on the child's day-to-day care activities that parents undertake in raising children. Emotional involvement centres on the child's overall well-being and focuses on aspects that the teenage father may engage in whilst involved in his child's upbringing.

## **1.2 Teenage fathers within the community**

'Baba' is a term used to address fathers amongst Zulu speaking people in South Africa. According to Richter and Morell (2008), the term 'baba' has a connotation of respect attached to a highly valued social role and age. Baba does not only address a biological father but is also directed to a male person fulfilling a respectable and dignified role within a family or the community such as pastors in the church arena. Baba is also a respectable way for a wife to address her husband. From the researcher's point of view, a father is an individual with heroic associations; they tend to be valued and idolized when they carry out duties and expectations that indicate they are fulfilling their roles. This is the reality at the community level as well as universally as fathers may be highly valued by their children as well as their wives, extended family members and community members. True as this may be, one wonders if teenage fathers are associated with the rest of the fathers within the community. It is this study's interest to explore if teenage fathers are fulfilling their roles as fathers. It is of interest to find out if they are worthy to be called and associated with this term despite their age but in relation to their responsibilities and involvement as fathers. It is also unknown if they refer to themselves as fathers to their offspring.

When teenagers become fathers they may or may not be included in this category as people to be respected in the same way as the older fathers. They may or may not be fulfilling their roles as fathers. They may or may not be worthy to be called by and associated with this term. Their ages may or may not hinder their responsibilities and involvement as fathers. They may or may not refer to themselves as fathers to their offspring. It is said that age can influence the circumstance under which men become

fathers and the way in which they are involved in fathering (Hosegood & Madhavan, 2012). The younger the father is at the time of a child's birth, the less likely he is to become, and remain, involved with the child (Robbers, 2009). Where then does this leave the teenage father? This study explored the extent to which teenage fathers are involved in their children's lives as well as what being involved means to them.

It is said that the risk factors associated with teenage fatherhood are similar to those associated with teenage motherhood (Paschal, Lewis-Moss & Hsiao, 2011). For this reason it would be preferable for teenage fathers to get the same attention as the teenage mothers have received over the years. According to Sipsma et al. (2010), adolescent parenthood can negatively affect young parents and their offspring. Both adolescent mothers and fathers are prone to limited educational achievement and therefore vulnerable to lower economic opportunities than their peers who have delayed childbearing. Teenage parenting may also affect normal psychological functioning negatively. Some of the risks of teenage fatherhood are increased poverty and increased risk of incarceration (Anderson, Kohler & Letiecq, 2002). Teenage parenthood is an important social issue with distinct medical consequences. Infants born to adolescent mothers are at risk of low birth weight, neurodevelopmental delay and death by first year of life (Rhein et al., 1997). These children's childhood is most likely faced with poverty, educational under achievement and inadequate health care. These risk factors may be prevented or alleviated if teenage fathers are given as much attention as teenage mothers in all levels of the social system. Their children may stand a chance of breaking the cycle of adverse circumstances should teenage fathers be a group that is followed to understand their current as well as future course of life.

In this research study, the researcher has explored teenage fathers' involvement in their children's primary care. The fathers in this study have been able to stay in school and are now in a tertiary institution, the University of Zululand, despite the high level of school drop-out rates associated with teenage fathers. Twenty six percent of South African teenage fathers are still in school. Young men in the previous study displayed strong emotions around having to abandon their education, or having to watch as their partners abandoned theirs (Swartz & Bhana, 2009). Using the qualitative method of

research, the teenage fathers were interviewed in order to capture their experiences of parenting, their personal livelihood, family support systems, peer relationships and social support systems. For those fathers who are involved, the researcher explored their experiences as young fathers. The depth to which they are involved was the interest of the study. For uninvolved fathers, the researcher explored their circumstances that lead to non-participation in the overall lives of their children.

### **1.3 Significance of the study**

Public service employees have been accustomed to multiple teenage mothers entering service delivery institutions or staying at home with their children in the absence of the teenage father. It is rare for a teenage father to accompany his partner and child or to be seen to have an active role in the child's life. The researcher presumes there may be unvoiced envy from other teenage mothers when a teenage father does participate in the activities regarding his child. The teenage mother may even be accused of using traditional medicines to keep the father in the relationship. The staff members in service delivery institutions, at times, take note, comment and congratulate the young couple. It is also rare to see a teenage father single-handedly care for his child whereas teenage mothers find themselves caring for their children at full capacity with the help of their family. There must be underlying motivations and issues that distinguish an involved teenage father from the non-involved teenage father. There is, therefore, a need to explore these underlying factors in this research study. Hollander (1996) states that the fact that teenage fathers do not often contribute financially to their children's care giving does not imply a lack of interest in parenting. He believes that with adequate employment training and opportunities young fathers may be assisted in transforming their early interest in their children to long term support in child care.

Under the heading of Teenage Pregnancy, Statistics South Africa only exhibits teenage mother statistics. There are no records of teenage fathers (Langa & Smith, 2012). This then means the necessary sectors in the country may not be able to easily track these fathers and be able to attend to their needs and challenges as is done with their counterparts, the teenage mothers. Until recently in South Africa, the father's details

were mostly not included in the child's birth certificates at Home Affairs when registering birth, especially for unmarried couples. This further opened the gap for teenage fathers to be statistically invisible. In the United States, though, it is estimated that in 1996 nine percent (9%) of young men became fathers before they reached the age of twenty (Scott et al., 2012). Statistics of teenage fathers have been captured in the United States as far back as twenty years ago. These statistics may make it possible for interventions to surface in order to assist the teenage fathers with their challenges. The mere existence of these statistics brings these teenage fathers a recognisable platform. Once cognizance of their existence is recognized, they become part of society's priorities and hence support systems are bound to surface.

In the current research study, the researcher gave the teenage fathers a platform to personally share the dynamics and experiences of being a teenage father and their involvement in their children's upbringing and lives. The fathers were interviewed on their involvement in the primary care of their children. They were given a platform to share the nature of their fatherhood experiences, including what it is they participate in regarding their children and what motivates them to be involved or not involved in parenting. Now that the teenage fathers will be voicing their experiences and paint a current and relevant picture of teenage fatherhood, it is hoped that they can be understood and assisted where there are shortfalls. Interventions may be made on the facts they have mentioned.

At the community level, teenage fathers need not be harshly judged but could rather be accommodated and be given a chance to rectify their mistakes. If we get these young men talking now, we stand a good chance of helping them eradicate the social ills that statistically await them as previous research has proven the path and outcomes of their lives from a negative point of view. We can also assist them in their new roles for their own benefit as well as that of their children as it will be indicated in this study the importance of the roles that fathers should play in their children's lives. The community, schools, clinics, churches and other similar structures should learn to shy away from previous biased perceptions of teenage fathers and adopt a new perspective according to the findings of this research study.

This study anticipates to collect current information regarding the teenage fathers. The findings of this study may assist decision makers in drawing conclusions about the particular problems with which the teenage fathers are dealing (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). In this case psychologists and other professionals will be knowledgeable about teenage fathers and therefore be able to intervene appropriately to help them and those around them to adjust to parenthood. This research intends to assist policy makers to create programmes for teenage fathers so that they get to be involved in raising their children as early as possible, and also to get the community involved in terms of the cultural, traditional and social issues pertaining to these young fathers.

#### **1.4 Conclusion**

Teenage fathers have generally been a population that has been given little if any attention over the years. Although adolescent pregnancy is now recognized as a social problem of growing proportions, consideration of the teenage father is virtually absent from the literature as well as from the planning and implementation of social programs (Barret & Robinson, 1982) and (Scott, et al, 2012). The teenage fathers have been a notorious group in most communities around the world. This has resulted in stereotyping these fathers. It may also be shielding the positive aspects or attributes this group of fathers may have nowadays. This study was conducted to give the teenage fathers a platform to report on their involvement in their children's primary care. This study was motivated by negative perceptions that are inferred towards teenage father throughout different communities, locally in South Africa and internationally. Also, the researcher was interested in how teenage fathers engage with their children. Furthermore, the researcher needed to explore what motivated the teenage fathers to be involved as well as what was the driving force of non-involvement for those who reported to be un-involved.

Chapter one above was an introduction of the research study that was conducted on teenage fathers on their involvement in their children's primary care. Chapter two



contains the literature review which sets the groundwork for this research study. Chapter three follows describing the data collecting procedures and methods that were followed in this research study. Chapter four is data analysis where the research results will be presented and discussed. Chapter five, the final chapter, will outline the concluding remarks of the research study, the limitations and recommendations made for future research on the topic of teenage fathers.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

Historically studies that have researched father involvement have outlined a picture of fathers who have a hands-off role. Focus has been on father absence rather than the involvement of the father (Saracho & Spodek, 2008). More than anything, the teenage father is supposed to be a self-centred and irresponsible male who takes advantage of young women without thinking of the consequences of his behaviour (Barret & Robinson, 1982). His disappearance shortly after the pregnancy is expected, despite the fact that in many cases his girlfriend's parents prevent him from becoming more involved (Connolly, 1978). If society seeks these young men out at all, it is usually with a punitive and judgemental intent (Barret & Robinson, 1982). Whatever rights they have or part they are entitled to play in the decision making about their child are generally ignored - except for their financial responsibility (Johnson & Staples, 1979). Teenage fathers have had this notorious reputation for many years and seemingly society continues to describe or perceive them in this way. More recently, father involvement is still an area that needs attention, more so that of teenage fathers. Some research findings have continued to outline the negative outcomes of adolescent parenting, such as the high rates of school dropouts, increased poverty, low income jobs, and behavioural problems (Harris, 1998; Quanlivan & Condon, 2005). Frequently teenage fathers are seen in a negative light as opportunists, womanizers, predators, absent, or uncaring (Kirven, 2014), whilst others have had more positive feedback on teenage father involvement (Swartz & Bhana, 2009; Langa & Smith, 2012).

The involvement of fathers with their children is a topic of growing concern among policy makers and the public (Kalil, Ziol-Guest & Coley, 2005). The government policies and programs put in place in an attempt to increase connections between fathers and their children are much needed in South Africa and perhaps elsewhere in the world. It is the limited knowledge base about the factors that contribute to father involvement or the lack of father involvement that delays initiation and implementation of these policies and

programs. It was stated that approximately 2 468 000 children are paternal orphans in South Africa (Ratele, 2012). For this reason steps need to be taken to strengthen and provide fathers' involvement in their children's lives. Father absence is said to vary across racial groups; in 2002, for instance, fewer than 40% of black children ages 15 years or younger lived with their fathers, compared to almost 90% of white and Indian children (de Marco, 2010). In South Africa it is mostly black, impoverished teenagers who become teenage parents, whilst African women are more likely to become pregnant while attending school (Marteleto, et, al, 2008).

Studies on African American teenage fathers state that teenage males who become parents experience developmental double jeopardy as they try to cope with the normative biological, social and psychological changes and challenges of adolescence, as well as those associated with normative father development (Paschal et al, 2011). The same predicament occurs to teenage fathers across the world, including those in South Africa. National data indicates that in 1984 approximately three percent of all live births in the United States were fathered by teenagers. Of these fathers, 232 were young adolescents aged 14 or below (Hardy & Duggan, 1988). Such statistics need to be available in South Africa as well as the rest of the other countries to better manage the crises that present themselves regarding this group of fathers.

## **2.2. The teenage years**

Adolescence is a period of significant physical, cognitive and socio-emotional changes (Lerner & Steinberg, 2009). Teenagers go through significant changes and transitions physically and biologically. Adolescence is a challenging period for the individuals comprised of peer pressure, sexual curiosity, academic expectation and multimedia platforms (Kirven, 2014). Adolescents are also faced with adapting to familial, communal and societal norms which can be contradictory to how the adolescent views and encounters life subjectively. Erikson (1964), as cited in Sigelman & Rider (2012), describes adolescence as a stormy and stressful phase in a person's development. Teenagers may encounter situations that require decision-making skills for situations

that may land them in compromising positions. At times mistakes may result from poor decision making, such as teenage pregnancy. Erickson (1964) described the teenage stage as the 'identity versus role confusion' phase. At this stage the teenager questions himself/herself about diverse entities about themselves and their lives. Whilst other teenagers succeed in forming their identities, others are faced by role confusion where the teenager is confused about who they are or what they value in life. Teenage fathers are no exception to this process.

Universally the teenage years are a time when teenagers explore themselves, who they are and who they want to become (Sigelman & Rider, 2012). In varying parameters, parents give them a platform, an opportunity and freedom to 'find' themselves. In many South African households boys who have come of age are placed in outside buildings in an attempt to give them 'space' to become the men they want to be and the men society expects them to become. The widespread practice of moving African boys, of all social classes, out of the main house into a room with a separate entrance is an indication of parental acknowledgement of the need to provide opportunity for this (Jewkes, Morrell & Christofides, 2009). The authors mentioned afore, acknowledge that this is practiced at all social levels of society hence teenage fatherhood exists in all social class levels, although mostly dominant in the black, impoverished population. During this time, the teenagers are bound to experiment with sex, especially because there may be no monitoring of who accompanies the teenager in the outside room. It is this sexual experimentation that may lead to teenage pregnancy and therefore teenage parenting.

Parents find it difficult to initiate the topic of sex with their children which results in them seeking information elsewhere (Delius & Glaser, 2012). Most parents shy away from sex talk or education in their households, leaving the teenagers to decide for themselves or with their peers as to how to proceed with sexual exploration. In other instances parents leave the topic to be addressed by teachers at the schools. The effect or impact of this can be varied depending on the teenager. Other teenagers may be educated sufficiently and decide to be responsible in sexual practices, or, as parents and other adults would prefer, would abstain from sexual practices. Other teenagers on the other hand may disregard the knowledge or advice they receive from school. Other

teenagers, may at first, be responsible at an individual capacity but become easily influenced by peers (peer pressure) or their sexual partner to be irresponsible. The plight therefore continues on where and how teenagers are informed and are knowledgeable about sexual practices.

Predominant areas of interest for school going boys appear to revolve around academic achievement and heterosexual experiences outside school (Langa, 2010). In a study in the UK, Haywood and Mac and Ghail (1996), found that a real boy is one who engages in risk-taking behaviours, such as smoking, drinking, and having sex with multiple partners. The study reported that the boys interpreted academic achievers and heterosexual experiences as that of immature peers. Frosh (2003) found that the experience of social class, ethnicity and race play an important role in the concept that adolescent boys develop their masculine identities.

According to Kohut (1984), as cited in Schultz & Schultz (2005), the adolescent stage is a time when teenagers develop a sense of self, a nuclear self. The nuclear self is the foundation of becoming an independent person, capable of taking the initiative and integrating ambitions and ideas. Self-objects (parents and/or older siblings) facilitate the development of the self as they provide the necessary relationships and the environment for this to occur. They are the people who play a vital role in our lives so much so that as children we believe they are part of ourselves (Schultz & Schultz, 2005). According to this theory, as the teenage boys develop a sense of self, they mature in thoughts and in actions. Therefore, when fatherhood presents itself to them, they are capable of making a choice of deciding what to do about the situation they are encountering, which is fatherhood. The choice they make, however, is highly influenced by their families as they form part of their lives and lifestyles. As both the teenage mother and father are still under the care of their parents, the parenting of the child will greatly involve the grandparents and the wider family system in all respects of the child.

Rogers (1959), as cited in Schultz & Schultz (2005), introduces the process of the formation of the personality. Rogers saw the importance of an autonomous self in the formation of the personality (Schultz & Schultz, 2005). In this instance, the teenager has the freedom to make a choice whether to take part in the child's life or not. Rogers

developed a method to discover healthy and constructive behaviour versus unhealthy and destructive behaviour. In this case, the involvement of a teenage father in the child's life may be regarded as a healthy and constructive behaviour for all parties involved (mother, father, child and their families), that is, if his involvement is healthy, responsible, constructive, and is in the best interest of the child. In this situation, the father has a relationship with the child and he fulfils his responsibilities towards the child. The mother also has the emotional support from the father despite their ages and residential locations. It is widely believed that fathers can play a very positive role both in socializing their children to life-affirming values and in creating a family environment that specifically empowers women and girls (Richter & Morrell, 2006). Fathers play a pivotal role in their children's lives and research over the years has proved this to be true. According to Ratele (2002), studies serve to powerfully idealize the impact of the present father, and include lower psychological distress for sons, reduced likelihood of engagement in risk practices in adolescence, and positive outcomes for daughters who are close to their fathers, among other positive outcomes brought about by the presence of a father. It appears that even though teenage fathers may not be full time fathers, they nonetheless still have a role to play in their children's lives that is attributable to the developmental and success of their children's mental health and well-being.

In his research, Rogers (1959) then investigated a child's background and had the child rated on factors he believed would influence behaviour. The factors he researched included family environment, health, intellectual development, economic circumstances, cultural influences, social interaction and level of education. These factors are said to form part of the external environment people encounter as individuals. He also examined potential internal influences, which are the child's self-understanding or self-insight. Self-insight is the acceptance of self and reality and a sense of responsibility for the self (Schultz & Schultz, 2005). Rogers found no valid external factors that influence the outcome of behaviour. There are, therefore, no external factors that can hinder a teenage father from being involved in his child's life. In actual fact, Rogers is saying that the teenage father being involved in his child's life is dependent on his own frame of mind, his self-insight and his reality formation and conceptualization of the reality at

hand that is, being a father. It is therefore his choice to be involved or not in the parenting of his child.

As much as Rogers included culture in his analysis as a factor that cannot influence behaviour, he may not have taken into consideration the different non-Western cultural aspects of different individuals and communities. In the African culture, as far as the researcher knows, *inhlawulo* (damages) must be paid by the unmarried father of a child as a peace-offering to the family of his partner for impregnating their daughter. *Inhlawulo* is the entry point for the father to gain access to his child and the maternal family of his child. *Inhlawulo* consists of *umqhoyiso* which is a cow for the mother of the pregnant girl. There is also the cleansing of the household, *ingezamuzi*, to cleanse the household of the shame brought to the family by the out-of-wedlock-pregnancy. *Inhlawulo* is paid either in the form of cattle (traditionally) or money (contemporary). In the past, paying damages involved handing over livestock, but today in modern society paying damages involves the exchange of money. For most families, the amount ranges from R1 500 to R2 000, but this differs from one family to another and some families may demand more than this (Swartz & Bhana, 2009). If this ritual is not performed, then the father is not officially entitled to the child. The child may even carry forth its maternal surname and hence belong to its maternal grandparents. Nowadays, though, some families do overlook these traditions and let the father be involved in the child's life despite not having paid this debt. Other families, however, do not by-pass their traditions and, unless the father does right by them, he has no access to the child. He is considered disrespectful in this case. Both the mother and the father of the child have no voice regarding this matter. The elders from both families negotiate the arrangements of *inhlawulo* in the absence of the couple involved even for unmarried adults. Therefore, unless the teenage father is assisted by his family in paying this debt, he may not be able to partake in his child's life. This research study investigated whether this factor was an obstacle for the teenage fathers.

Teenage fathers may also face customary issues that obstruct their ability to be involved fathers (Wambugu, 2007). Some teenage fathers are stopped from seeing their children by the parents of the child's mother until certain customs and rites have been

performed like paying damages. The issue of *inhlawulo* in South Africa plays a prominent role in a father having access to his child. For men it may bring him a sense of manhood for having paid his debt and being accepted by the maternal family. *Inhlawulo* has, however, lost its cultural significance as an apology to the girl's family because of the high cost among contemporary black communities (Swartz & Bhana, 2009). The custom is also no longer as popular in the urban context as compared to rural areas because of some neglect of cultural practices in townships families as well as in some suburban households. The lack of fathers and/or close relatives such as uncles to negotiate the damage money has also contributed to *inhlawulo* not being so prominent anymore (Langa, 2012). Although this may be true, many communities still practice this tradition even in black suburban families. Maternal parents are often unsupportive of the teenage father when he is unable to provide towards the child's financial needs (Speak, 2006). Failing to pay damages may be the first hindrance for a father to have access to his child. If he cannot pay this money, then he supposedly cannot support the child in any way.

### **2.3. Fatherhood in the pre-industrial era and in the apartheid era**

According to Hewlett and Macfarlan (2010), ethnographers have noted high levels of father-child care in pastoral groups. It is noted, however, that fewer researchers have examined the quality or quantity of father-child interaction in these cultures. This directs the researcher into investigating father involvement patterns before the apartheid era, namely in hunter-gathering, pastoral and farming (pre-industrial communities). Research on fathers in such communities and cultures focuses mostly on their economic and caregiving roles (Hewlett & Macfarlan, 2010). Father involvement did vary within tribes and cultures depending on the tribal proceedings. The hunter-gathers were more involved in their children than the farmers and pastoralists because of various reasons. These included lower population densities, females contributed to family diet, husbands and wives participated in similar activities (sleep, subsistence, eat together), polygamy rates were low, matrilocality was common because residence patterns were flexible, warfare was less frequent and they did not accumulate land,



cattle, wealth or any material resources. It is indicated here that father involvement was centred on factors surrounding the father, his communal responsibilities in his tribe as well as his cultural practices. It appears that father involvement conditions date back to ancient times as is still evident nowadays although such conditions have evolved from those of previous times and circumstances.

South Africa has a historical record of absent black fathers due to the apartheid era. The absence of biological fathers in South Africa has been constructed as a problem for children of both sexes (Ratele, 2012). South African black fathers worked in the cities, mostly in the mines, and hence were not involved in the socialization of their children on a regular basis. Of the South African men who are estimated to be fathers, approximately 50% do not have daily contact with their children (Ritcher & Morrell, 2008). The traditional Zulu family role of the father became primarily that of a breadwinner as the father was physically absent from his family for lengths of time. The authority of the father, however, continued to play an important role in the development of a child (Mzulwini, 1996). The father role became that of financial provider and disciplinarian and not of being emotionally attached to children for the majority of those fathers who resided away from home. In this regard more and more children experienced fatherhood through social fathers (uncles, stepfathers and male relatives) rather than their biological fathers (Ratele, 2012). According to Richter et al. (2003), South Africa has extreme levels of absent fathers compared to elsewhere in Africa. There are dispiriting, in some cases worsening, disparities between racial groups within South Africa (Delius & Glaser, 2012). Father absenteeism, poverty and other negative elements of livelihood appeared to be concentrated more on the black population. Now post-apartheid fathers are still not as present as we would like them to be. Most fathers are in the shadow years after South Africa became a democratic country and fathers were no longer estranged from their families.

Families in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa show high levels of residential separation between biological fathers and their children (Jones, 1993). In cases where the adult parents of a child are unmarried the child usually resides with the mother and most of the time both father and the paternal family do acknowledge the child's paternity

(de Marco, 2010). Studies in rural areas of South Africa have reported that less than half of all children co-reside with their biological fathers when they are born (Hosegood, McGrath, Bland & Newell, 2009a). Qualitative studies reporting on men's own accounts of their involvement in their children's lives show involvement in a wide range of traditional and non-traditional roles, namely intimate physical care, education, play, emotional engagement, organisation and monitoring (Swartz & Bhana, 2009). Mothers, however, report less involvement of the father compared to that reported by the fathers themselves. The extent of the father's involvement with his children is said to be largely determined by his residential status (Landers, 2014). Being within the same household permits the opportunity to be more closely involved because of close proximity to engage in activities with the child.

According to Madhavan et al. (2008) qualitative research in rural South Africa has shown that even though the father does not reside in the same household as his children he belongs to the household, is more available and does engage in his children's lives compared to those fathers who do not belong to the same household as the child. In most instances father involvement is measured by the financial needs of the child such as food, school fees, school uniform and clothing.

Many of the young fathers themselves were born of young parents. This has led to some research establishing that the intergenerational practice of young parenthood is culturally entrenched to the point that young fathers may interpret their fatherhood as normal and not a hindrance to their education, career and other prospects for the future (Gohel, Diamond & Chambers, 1997). This may be true in the sense that the terms or conditions under which an individual grows up may become their norm as that is the way they have been accustomed to as well as the way that they experience life.

#### **2.4. The teenage father**

Fatherhood is a consequence of a series of decisions and interactions such as the initiation and maintenance of sexual activity, the use and non-use of contraceptives and the pregnancy period to full term (Thornberry, Smith & Howard, 1997). It is therefore an unconscious social process that begins months or years before the child is born.

Parenthood results from unsafe sexual practices, as well as from a polygamous sexual lifestyle, typical of the lifestyles that some teenagers engage in (Spingarn & DuRant, 1996). Often times, teenage pregnancies and parenthood are perceived as a mistake that occurred during an irresponsible and casual sexual practice. It is often not accepted as a conscious practice that the teenage couple were engaging in and therefore were aware of its consequences.

A longitudinal study held at two Baltimore clinics, over two years, found that the teenage couples had been engaging in sexual activity for a median of 12 months before the pregnancy (Hollander, 1996). When the two year follow up was done, it was found that forty eight percent of these couples were still involved since enrolling in the study, and in all but one case the teenage couple was still engaging in sexual intercourse. Thirty one percent of the relationships lasted for twelve months into the study, half way to the two year interview. Nine percent of the relationships continued for only six months into the study. Fourteen percent of the relationships did not reach the first six months in the active phase. Sixty five percent of the young mothers who had carried their pregnancy to term were still involved with the father of the child at the two year follow up interview, compared to the 34% that had an abortion and the relationship did not survive. The above shows the decisions that the teenagers embarked on and the consequences of the decisions. The study reports that the majority of the teenagers stayed together and we anticipate that the fathers were involved in child care and in raising the children one way or another having decided to stay in the relationship with the mother of his child.

This study contradicts societal connotations associated with teenage fathers running away from parenting and leaving the teenage mother with the responsibility of the child. The study does not reveal if these fathers were involved in raising the child or not and in what manner or to what degree but the fact that they were in the teenage mother's life after two years may be an indication that the picture that is painted regarding teenage fathers may need to be revised. Although the pregnancies were not planned, the majority of the teenage fathers did not disappear and neglect their girlfriends who were now the mothers of their children.

Teenage parenthood is often viewed as a mistake and resulting from reckless behavioural acts. It is seldom thought that the practice was intentional. It is possible that when teenagers misuse contraceptives or do not use them at all that they intentionally want to become parents. This is particularly true for teenagers who come from impoverished backgrounds and so have few options for their future; they may view becoming a father as a positive occurrence (Deslauriers, 2011). Deslauriers (2011), further states that some teenage fathers are not ashamed of their paternity as it brings them an adult status and it proves their fertility. The perception of teenage parenthood being a mistake is challenged by this view of teenagers embracing parenthood. Society sees this as a social problem whereas some of these fathers may intentionally want to be parents for social reasons they comprehend. This was revealed by the study conducted in Canada, which showed that some young fathers desired to become fathers. When their children approached their first birthday, they expressed positive experiences of paternity. The majority of the young fathers did not regret the abrupt end of their youth but rather believed it was a time to do something constructive (Deslauriers, 2011). The fathers were willing to take on the responsibility of fatherhood; they felt mature and had the ability to work to meet the needs of their children. The young men who had unfavourable lifestyles saw fatherhood as an opportunity to start over and offer a better life to their children. They felt they benefitted from this change by finding employment and quitting substance use for a healthier lifestyle for themselves and their children. Ten out of sixteen of the couples in the study decided to live together with their child. The paternal role seems to have given the young fathers an important and positive change in the way they viewed themselves in society.

A disadvantaged social context often results in early parenthood as is the reality in South African impoverished communities. Teenage fathers from these backgrounds are known to be unsupportive, neglectful, unable to provide for and abandon their children (Langa & Smith, 2012). The study conducted by Langa and Smith explored the meaning of teenage fatherhood in a historically disadvantaged South African community. The study interviewed sixteen teenage fathers aged between sixteen and twenty one (16-21) years. The current study is similar to this study in that teenage fathers were selected using the snowballing sampling technique, open—ended individual interviews were

held. Both studies researched teenage fatherhood involvement in varying degrees. The two studies differ in sample size. The current study has a slightly greater sample size of 20 participants compared to the earlier study. The current study has a sample of university students, whereas the earlier study has a sample of high school participants. The current study also has varied socio-economic backgrounds and the earlier study consisted of participants with a long-standing history of socio-economic disadvantage.

The abovementioned study found that those teenage fathers (16-21 years) who had a history of absent fathers in their own lives sought to be good parents to their children. Good teenage fathers in this study were those who rectified their fathers' mistakes in parenting. They are said to have embraced the diverse roles of fatherhood in their society, families and to their friends. The fathers are reported to have been emotionally invested in wanting to be caring and loving fathers despite being unable to financially support their children. They resorted to spending time with their children instead. They did report not being good-enough fathers because they relied on their parents for their own financial needs as well as those of their children. According to Diamond (1986 as cited in Langa & Smith, 2012), some men approach the birth of their children filled with fantasies and fears about their own childhood. Fatherhood may therefore allow them to resolve intrapsychic conflicts and early childhood memories of a father role model they were denied in the past. According to Garbarino, (1999) teenage fathers who grew up without positive male role models or father figures were more likely to become poor male role models themselves. The teenage fathers in this study did mention that they were unprepared for the parenting roles; however, they rose to the occasion and were reported to have been better fathers to their children by investing in emotional involvement as they could not at this time contribute to the financial needs of their children. They were able to provide for their children what they did not receive from their own fathers in their own childhood. The study found that the age of the father, his level of education and his employment status influenced the parenting success. The younger the teenage father is, the more challenging it is to have an active, participative role in the child's life. This can be due to his incapacity to relate to the role of being a father when he is still in need of being parented himself. Trying to navigate through new

fatherhood and their future aspirations can cause these young men to shut down emotionally (Kirven, 2014).

A young father's willingness or ability to take responsibility for his child may be influenced by his own age, socio-economic status, education, self-image, coping system, self-expectations, and perceptions of fatherhood (Wiemann, 2006). This indicates that there are varied external and internal factors that come into play that are a determinant of the teenage father's involvement in parenting. As a group, teenage fathers are perceived in a negative way which hinders them from an individualistic point of view. As a collective the teenage fathers may not be the same as in individual cases and often times this factor is not considered. The duration and stability of the father's relationship with his child's adolescent mother and his involvement in pregnancy planning and decision-making also influence his commitment to parenting (Elster & Kimmerly, 1989). Involvement of the teenage father prior to the birth of the child creates greater chances that he will continue to be involved post birth. This may be due to the fact that he is already mentally preparing himself for the role of parenthood as well as learning about children and parenting. Family disapproval or emotional distancing may discourage an otherwise interested father from having an ongoing relationship with his child and the mother (Wiemann, 2006). Because the teenage father is a minor and cannot provide financially towards the child's needs, this could cause him to be sidelined by his partner's family. This may be aggravated if his family cannot step in on his behalf and take on the responsibility. Apart from regular frequent child responsibilities, the issue of *inhlawulo*, as discussed earlier, has potential to disfavour the teenage father and he may find himself being forced to be uninvolved in the child's life.

A longitudinal study was conducted to evaluate young fathers' involvement with their children within the scope of a teenage parenting program in Arlington County, Virginia. The respondents were young, mainly Hispanic fathers who come from lower socio-economic groups. The results of the study support the notion that fatherhood involvement curricula have the potential to positively influence young fathers and keep them involved with their children (Robbers, 2009). The program focused on locating fathers and conveying the importance of father involvement and parenting through

classes, activities and counselling from 2003 till 2007. The program also facilitated fathers getting involved with their children. The study examines fatherhood involvement longitudinally, which may provide a more accurate picture of involvement among this group of Hispanic young fathers. The program also had pre-natal father involvement as research has stated that involvement prior to the birth of the child is a strong predictor of long term father involvement. The study had a larger sample than most studies on teenage fathers and therefore generated a wealth of information.

This current study has generated data from only black, South African teenage fathers whilst the abovementioned study has varied ethnic populations. The study inquired about the activities that the teenage fathers engage in with their children. The study will also explore how the teenage father is involved during the pregnancy as the above study stipulates that prenatal father involvement predicts long term father involvement. The abovementioned study does not specify what the fathers are doing with their lives, whether they are in school, have dropped out of school or are perhaps employed, whereas it is stipulated in the current study that the teenage fathers are at a tertiary level of education at the University of Zululand. The abovementioned study can be commended for its in-depth research method and the large sample size.

A close father-child relationship requires fathers to spend enough time with their children to develop sensitivity to their needs, acquire the necessary skills, and gain confidence in their parenting (Wilson & Prior, 2010). The quality of time that fathers spend with children is significant in the child's life. The 'how' aspect of spending time with the children is important for both the child and the father. Father engagement that is high in both quality and quantity is desirable for optimum well-being of the child and the father's competence in parenting (Kahn, 2006). The father needs to be both available and accessible to their children and, when present, the father is to be responsive to the child's needs, desires, and is engaged in taking an active and hands on role through both interacting and listening (Lamb, Pleck & Levine, 1987). According to George, Cummings and Davies, (2011) parenting practices associated with positive child development include: nurturing behaviours (emotional security), structure (setting boundaries and guiding behaviours), recognition (the child needs to be respected and

acknowledged by parents/mutual understanding) and empowerment (combining a sense of personal control with the ability to affect the behaviour of others). The quality of engagement is beneficial to both the father and the child. The father does not only get to bond with the child emotionally but also becomes better in the parenting experience and practice in general. As he becomes attentive to the child and the child's needs, he is able to cater for the child's needs consistently thereby raising a child who will be emotionally mature and stable. This parenting aspect bares no financial connotations and would therefore not cause a disadvantage to the teenage father for whom financial hindrances seem to be the greatest challenge. One would, however, dispute the quality of engagement that a teenage father would provide for a child. As a teenager the time he would spend with the child may lack emotional depth depending on his own emotional experiences. On the other hand, other teenage fathers may be able to provide sufficient quality time for the child's well-being as well as his own in and through parenting.

Teenage fathers may lack confidence in being described as role models to their children. These fathers may dwell on their ages and think their contribution to the child's life may be insignificant. Teenage parents have limited resources to be parents at full capacity. They rely on family and, most recently in South Africa, on the child grant, to help raise their children. It has been suggested that parents are the most important teachers and every day they help children learn new information, skills and behaviours (Hart & Risley, 1995). Every interaction with a child is a learning curve for them. They are excited by the novelty of objects, sounds, colours and different stimulants. Teenage fathers need to be aware of such information so that they gain confidence in parenting their children. Periodical interaction of the fathers with their children, in whatever positive form, contributes positively to the child's well-being. Fathers typically, as opposed to mothers, push their children to take risks, establish boundaries and reach for their physical, cognitive, and emotional limits during play which can aid development (Paquette, 2004). This shows that fathers have a particular and significant role in their children's upbringing which is compromised should they be absent from the child's life for any reason.



Current research and theory on father involvement among young unmarried parents is characterised by financial, behavioural and emotional components (Kalil et al, 2005). This research shows that non-residential fathers who provide for their non-residential children are most likely to visit, engage in care taking activities and take responsibility for parenting decisions. A significant amount of financial support does not come from the formal child support system but comes from an unreported, irregular and in-kind assistance in the form of voluntary child care and meeting immediate child needs such as diapers. Father involvement patterns show varying degrees of instability. A study by Coley and Chase-Lansdale (1999) as reported by Kalil et al, 2005 showed that 30% of fathers were highly involved whilst 29% had low involvement rates between birth and preschool years. Furthermore, 18% showed increases in involvement whilst 23% declined in their parental involvement. Though these are not teenage fathers, their education levels are rather low, employment may be scarce for them and father involvement is low. As with teenage fathers, slightly older fathers who are not married to the mother of the child have barriers as well. Living conditions or proximity contributes to involvement patterns. A father who lives closer to the child's mother may be slightly more involved in parenting than the father who lives far from them.

There is good evidence that the levels of psychological symptomatology in pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers are higher than those observed in older pregnant women and mothers (Quanlivan & Condon, 2005). In the study there was acknowledgement that there was no data on the levels of psychological symptomatology experienced by teenage fathers. In this study, the mean age of the teenage fathers was 20.7 years. There was no significant racial difference, as is the case as in the current study. The educational background of the teenage fathers was significantly lower, whereas in the current study the teenage fathers are continuing with their studies and are all in a tertiary institution with the intent of completing their studies for better job opportunities. Teenage fathers were significantly less likely to have plans for a job in the future be it in an unskilled, semi-skilled or professional capacity. In the current study, the teenage fathers being in a tertiary institution creates greater aspirations of employment for the fathers.

## 2.5. Paternal-maternal influences and family structure

It is believed that paternal participation may directly influence a mother's ability to parent her child through shared care taking of responsibilities. The provision of financial support may indirectly influence this ability through decreased maternal stress and improved maternal satisfaction (Wiemann, 2006). According to Rhein et al. (1997) paternal involvement affects children directly through the father-child relationship and indirectly through the paternal influence on maternal behaviour. It appears paternal involvement lends emotional support to the mother and is associated with maternal role satisfaction and self-esteem as well as personal satisfaction for the father (Kalil et al, 2005). Also, the relationship between the child's parents seems to be a determining factor in father involvement. The fathers have been found to be non-involved in cases where there is a hostile relationship between him and the mother. Also father involvement may be prevented by the parents of the teenage couple. Furthermore, when there is a hostile relationship, the mothers tend to block the fathers from their children

In other places in the world, the nuclear family is the most common structure of the family. This family consists of a mother, father and their children only. The African family structure, on the other hand, is based on a collective, group-oriented structure and is concerned with the welfare of the community (Maluleka, 2012). Africans believe in the phenomenon of *Ubuntu*, (I am what I am because of who we all are). The majority of black Africans also believe "it takes a village to raise a child". This is possible because of the extended family dynamics present in the African culture. With customary pragmatism and in keeping with a culture that views children as belonging to broader families and communities rather than the individual, African teenage girls are rarely expected to raise their children alone (Jewkes et al., 2009). Children are raised by maternal grandparents, other relatives and the mother for the majority of their lives. It would be preferred that the teenage father, therefore, fits within the structure of his child's life regardless of the family support his partner has from her family. The village that is said to raise a child, includes him as well. Also, more and more families are currently operating under the nuclear family structure even though the principle of

raising children still exists as more or less as before. The teenage father therefore still has an obligation to fatherhood. Fathering roles are influenced by sub-cultural norms and familial support which could explain the greater tendency for African-American adolescent fathers as compared to white fathers to remain in and complete high school (Hardy & Duggan, 1988). Their parents usually take over the caring of the child, whilst the teenage parents go back to school to continue with their studies. This practice of the child being the responsibility of the grandparents goes beyond the African continent. It proves to be a practice of most black populations.

## **2.6. Barriers to teenage fathers**

Existing information suggests that teenage fathers are at considerable disadvantage as compared with older fathers when their children are born (Hardy & Duggan, 1988). The disadvantage is brought about by the factors of lack of experience for the young father. He may not be able to fulfil his role and his responsibilities due to age factors, living arrangements and financial barriers. The overall decrease in regular contact between unmarried couples who are parents can be attributed to the failure of medical and social service providers to engage the adolescent father actively (Earls & Siegel, 1980). The young couple often live separately, each with his/her own family. Once the pregnancy is known to the parents they may forbid the couple to have any contact; others though, may not go to those extremes. The social agencies do not persist in attempts to reach these young men (Barret & Robinson, 1982). Teenage fathers usually do not go to service delivery institutions on their own to seek information or utilize the services that may be there. Most report that they fail to go to these agencies due to feeling left out (Barret & Robinson, 1982). They have doubts that the institutions will facilitate their needs or will be willing to pay attention to their concerns. This may be the chief reason that the young fathers do not accompany the young mothers to service delivery institutions. They are avoiding being ridiculed by the staff. They may not know what to expect in such an environment. These facilities have the potential to re-victimise the young fathers as they already experience negativity from the immediate community. Research suggests that fathers' skills and access to resources increase the likelihood

and consistency of paternal involvement (Kalil et al, 2005). Teenage fathers therefore need to be aware of the services available to them and utilize them to their advantage as well as that of their children and all those involved in their lives.

A study was conducted to explore adolescent fatherhood from the perspective of the teenage father, teenage mother, paternal grandmother and maternal grandmother. The study intended to identify perceived barriers to and recommendations for the enhancement of teen father participation in child rearing (Rhein et al., 1997). A total of 61 teenage parents were interviewed and 54% of teenage fathers met the definition of involvement in child rearing. Being uninvolved in child rearing was attributed to disinterest. The fathers, however, voiced that it was not disinterest that caused them to be uninvolved but rather the maternal grandparents. The study used focus groups, adolescent research assistants, community recruitment and personal interviews. The results of the study state that the fathers were less likely than the mothers to plan to return to school. At the time of the pregnancy of the first child, the fathers reported they were less likely to have wanted the child; however, they were less likely to have considered abortion. Fewer than 58% of teenage fathers believed they were expected to attend the delivery, provide financial support, feed the child, play with the child or take the child to clinic visits. These activities were, however, expected of them by the teen mothers, maternal grandmothers and paternal grandmothers. The teen mothers reported that the fathers were involved at least weekly with dressing (65%) and playing (74%) with their child. Half to a third of teen fathers reported sporadic involvement. Teen mothers reported that 70% of the fathers never fed their children, while 73% of teen fathers reported feeding their children at least weekly.

The barriers to teen father involvement in childrearing as perceived by both teenage fathers and mothers are paternal disinterest, maternal resistance, relationship problems, maternal grandparent resistance, lack of time, lack of money, drug involvement, disbelief that child is theirs, child opposite sex than desired, lack of knowledge of child care as well as no father role model for the teenage father. Some of these barriers are within the control of the teenage fathers while others are beyond their personal capacity to be involved in the children's lives. Often times research is conducted in a one sided

manner, however, the abovementioned study collected comprehensive data by interviewing both the teenage mothers and fathers so as not to get a one sided view of the potential barriers that the teenage fathers encounter with regards to their involvement in parenting. Rather, both parties had an opportunity to speak on their experiences of father involvement. We can see from the differing responses that there are differences in opinions with regard to father involvement. The differences in opinion may be caused by the fact that teenage fathers are seldom involved before the child is born and may have not fully grasped the demands of parenting as much as the teenage mother has come to comprehend and practice regularly. The barriers are wide in scope and each teenage father may encounter more or less of these hindrances in effectively being involved in his child's life.

Teenage fathers may also face customary issues that obstruct their ability to be involved fathers (Wambugu, 2007). Some teenage fathers are stopped from seeing their children by the parents of the child's mother until certain customs and rites have been performed, like paying damages, as discussed previously.

## **2.7. The role of a father in a child's life**

The role that fathers play in the development and lives of their children differs across cultural groups and generations, (Robbers, 2009). Social fathers have surfaced in some communities and families in the absence of biological fathers. Social fathers are said to play the role of the father. The social father could be an uncle or any other male figure in a child's life who contributes to the child's physical as well as emotional needs. According to Robbers (2009), sociologist Queniart wrote in 2004 that the conceptualization of fatherhood has changed dramatically over the years. Literature continuously states that a present father yields positive cognitive, social and emotional development for his child. It is widely believed that fathers can play a very positive role both in socializing their children to life-affirming values and in creating a family environment that specifically empowers women and girls (Richter, 2006). Research

indicates that the best predictor of father involvement is accessibility, or the father's residential status (Nelson, 2004).

Fathers play a pivotal role in their children's lives and research over the years has proved this to be true and reliable. According to Ratele (2002), studies serve to powerfully idealize the impact of the present father, and include lower psychological distress for sons, reduce likelihood of engagement in risk practices in adolescence, and positive outcomes for daughters who are close to their fathers, among other positive outcomes brought about by the presence of a father. Age plays a vital role in father involvement. Circumstances in which older men become fathers or are involved in fathering may be different to those of younger men (Hosegood & Madhavan, 2012), Robbers (2009) cautions that the effects of fatherhood or the lack thereof can have a multi-generational impact resulting in a social issue. As said, teenage fatherhood is a social issue. Teenage fathers and the reputation they uphold in society attract bad publicity to these youngsters.

Father involvement and nurturance are positively associated with children's intellectual development, social competence, internal locus of control and ability to empathize (Flouri & Buchanan, 2002). Children whose fathers are closely involved with them demonstrate greater social engagement, have relationships with extended family and friends, and later in life are more likely to earn higher wages than children whose fathers are less involved (Nelson, 2004). Father absence, though, is a factor contributing to lower well-being and academic attainment of children in mother-only families. Father involvement during childhood is positively related to adult daughters and sons' educational and occupational mobility and their psychological adjustment and well-being (Amato, 1994).

Prenatal studies on teenage father involvement conducted much earlier found that the father was most likely to stay involved in parenting when he was given a platform to contribute to parenting decisions made during the pregnancy (Elster & Lamb, 1982). The current study questioned the teenage fathers about their involvement prior to the birth of their children to assess the relevance of the abovementioned factor in the current period and year. In a more recent study (pre-natal involvement of adolescent

fathers) it was discovered that involvement of the teenage father increased when the father was employed, remained romantically involved with the mother, had high levels of empathy and there was a high ratio of children born out of wedlock to friends of the mother (Fagan, Barnett & Whiteman, 2007). The current study involves tertiary students who are studying towards a qualification which will equip them for employment.

A study was conducted to examine the attributes of the father and the relationship characteristics associated with low financial, informational, and emotional support at the time of delivery of the child. Fathers of babies born to African-American mothers were most likely to be enrolled in school at the time of delivery, to be a member of a gang, to use alcohol or marijuana regularly and to be in jail (Wiemann, 2006). Several characteristics of the relationship between the mother and father were significantly associated with low father support. Low father support was associated with a relationship of 12 months or less, a current relationship described as non-romantic, infrequent contact with the father and perceived abandonment of the father upon learning that his partner was pregnant. Also the limited experience as a couple prior to conception, along with poor interpersonal and couple-level communication skills, may prevent the type of dialogue and accompanying behaviours that would foster a higher level of involvement. The adolescent mother's parents were found to prevent contact of the father with his child. This is because these mothers frequently live with their families during the first few years following birth. Some families do not encourage father involvement (Wiemann, 2006). Some families' prospective fathers are perceived as threatening to the newly found family closeness that the pregnancy has spawned (Cervera, 1991). The teenage mother is therefore left with having to choose between her parents and the father of her child for support. The current study questioned the relationship of the teenage father with the maternal family. Research suggests that fathers' skills and access to resources increase the likelihood and consistency of paternal involvement (Kalil et al, 2005).

## **2.8. Conclusion**

Fathers generate positive social development when they are actively involved in their children's lives (Kirven, 2014). Even though the situation is not easy and ideal for the young fathers, a great degree of involvement in his child's life seems to be a crucial and much needed practice. Financial support is a major necessity in a child's life; however, as teenage fathers may not be in a position to fulfil such a role, their involvement in their children's lives is still a great responsibility that they need to become aware of this. Helping teenage fathers identify their internal strengths and motivation from within will make them responsible fathers with strong self-worth directed towards the future. Young fathers should not only look at external supports for validation, but also consider an optimal worldview in looking at internal strengths, such as being part of a new life coming into the world, having a healthy baby, reassessing personal values, having a new purpose in life and being a proper role model (Kirven, 2014).

The literature review in this chapter has set forth the ground work for this research study. The next chapter, chapter three, will discuss the research method used for this research study.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Introduction and overview**

In chapter two the researcher presented a literature review on teenage fathers' involvement with their children. In this chapter the researcher unpacks the research method as well as procedures that were used in the study. The study was conducted using a qualitative research method. Qualitative methods allow the researcher to study selected issues in depth, openly, and in detail as they identify and attempt to understand the categories of information that emerge from the data (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). This is a descriptive study, describing the emotional involvement of the teenage fathers in their children's primary care as well as the many facets that lead to teenage father involvement or the lack of involvement. Descriptive research seeks to provide an accurate description of observations of a phenomenon. Most qualitative research investigates patterns of interaction, seeks knowledge about a group or a culture or explores the life world of individuals (Creswell, 2003). In this study, the teenage fathers are the group of interest. In this chapter the researcher discusses the rationale for the use of the qualitative research method chosen for this study, the selection of participants, the ethical considerations followed in order to successfully conduct this study, the data collection method and procedures as well as the data analysis method and procedure undertaken in this research study. Furthermore, the limitations of the study are discussed as well.

#### **3.3.1 Overview**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the emotional involvement of teenage fathers in their children's primary care. The emotional involvement became central based on the notion that teenage fathers may not be able to contribute to their children's needs financially. Existing literature describes an adverse picture of the teenage fathers, (Wambugu, 2010). The teenage fathers have voiced not feeling like competent fathers due to not being able to contribute or support their children financially (Swartz & Bhana, 2009). In the current study the teenage fathers' involvement was thus measured from

the perspective of emotional primary care participation. Existing research has often been conducted on high school teenage fathers and not on fathers not in a high school setting. The findings of teenage fathers with regards to school achievements and completion have indicated elevated school drop-out rates with teenage fathers. The latest statistics by Swartz and Bhana (2009) revealed that only 26% of teenage fathers are still in school. This study recruited participants who have completed their secondary schooling and are now enrolled at a tertiary learning institution, the University of Zululand.

The research questions that this research study aimed to respond to are as follows:

- a) How are teenage fathers involved in their children's primary care?
- b) What are teenage fathers' experiences of parenthood?
- c) What influences teenage fathers to be involved in their children's lives?
- d) What makes teenage fathers uninvolved in their children's lives?

### **3.3.2 The rationale for using the qualitative research method**

According to Blanche et al. (2006), qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviour and social context of a particular population, in this case, that of the teenage fathers. Qualitative research is more commonly used to inductively explore phenomena, and to provide 'thick' descriptions of phenomena (Creswell, 1998). The phenomenon of interest in this study is the emotional involvement of the teenage father in his child's life. The researcher was interested in the personal, interpersonal, communal and cultural aspects that influence teenage father involvement. According to Hakim (2000), qualitative research provides the individuals' own accounts of their attitudes, motivations and behaviour, which is the central purpose of this study as we explore teenage fathers with regards to being involved in their children's lives.

In a qualitative approach the researcher often makes claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives which include the multiple meanings of individual experiences which may be socially and historically made (Creswell, 2003). The

constructivism paradigm was followed for this study. This worldview is of the idea that human beings construct their own social realities with other people in their surroundings (Creswell, 2003). The researcher therefore anticipated gaining the participants' views of their parental roles and activities. Social constructivist assumptions held are that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. From that notion subjective meanings of their experiences are derived. The meanings are varied and multiple which leads to complex analysis of the categories and ideas. The goal of research is to rely on the participants' views of the situations being studied. Historical and cultural norms are noted.

The framework used in this research study is that of phenomenological research, which allows the researcher to identify the essence of human experience. The focus of such a study is to focus on the participants' perceptions of the event or situation (Williams, 2007). According to Creswell (1998, p.52), the main purpose of a phenomenological study is to search for the central underlying meaning of the experience and emphasise the intentionality of consciousness where experiences contain both the outward appearance and inward consciousness based on the memory, image and meaning. In this study, the researcher hoped to capture both the inward as well as the outward consciousness that the teenage fathers presented regarding their involvement in the lives of their children.

### **3.2. Research sample**

In this research, the population of interest were the teenage fathers. These are male participants who have fathered a child in their teenage years, between the ages of thirteen (13) and nineteen (19) years. The inclusion criteria requires that the teenage fathers must be currently enrolled students at the University of Zululand, KwaDlangezwa Campus. The University of Zululand was developed in 1960 and is located within the Mhlathuze Municipality. This former rural-based institution is the only comprehensive tertiary education institution in Northern Zululand, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. The university is located in Dlangezwa, a rural area where cultural practices

remain intact, an area also rich in symbolism and tradition. The university strives to produce graduates with high-level knowledge and skills who have been educated for citizenship and for active participation in society. The university offers approximately 252 accredited degrees, diploma, and certificate courses across its faculties. The university student population is 16 118 inclusive of 14 819 undergraduates and 1 299 postgraduate students. The university enrolls international students from Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zimbabwe and other neighbouring African countries. Other international students are from Asia, South America, Australasia and Oceania. The university's female student population is 10 426 whilst the male population is 5 676, with 16 students unspecified.

The University of Zululand was chosen for this study particularly because existing research has proved the high rates of high school drop-out rates among teenage fathers (Swartz & Bhana, 2009; Langa, 2012). This study focussed on the teenage fathers in a tertiary learning institution as most research conducted on teenage fathers is done with high school enrolled teenage fathers. The researcher sought to gather father involvement patterns for the teenage fathers in this setting

The earliest age of entry into a university is likely to be seventeen (17) years of age. The researcher therefore enrolled male students from seventeen (17) years to nineteen (19) years of age provided the individual was a teenage father. The researcher would have preferred a mixed race sample but found that the student population in the campus generally consisted mainly of black African people.

The sample size of the participants was twenty (20) teenage fathers in total. This population (teenage fathers) is in the minority and is therefore not readily available for research purposes. It was thus rather difficult to find teenage fathers which resulted in a limited sample size. The method of data collection also favoured a limited sample size as individual interviews were held with the participants. Open-ended questions were asked and the participants answered as freely as they could to the questions brought to them by the researcher.

The researcher utilised the convenience purposive sampling as well as the self-selection technique to select the participants. This was due to teenage fathers being a scarce population to find in general. According to Magnani et. al, (2005) snowball sampling entails identifying an initial number of sub-group members from whom the desired data is gathered and whom then serve as the starting point of recruitment. These respondents then help to identify other sub-group members to be included in the sample. These individuals in turn were asked to provide information on other sub-group members, and the process continues until either a sample target sample size has been reached or the sample has become saturated. The snowball sampling technique is a chain referral technique that recruits participants by other such similar participants as well as the researcher searching the scarce sample (Creswell, 2003). This sampling technique works in finding and recruiting hidden populations such as teenage fathers. The participating teenage fathers were initially recruited by word of mouth by the researcher. Thereafter the rest of the participants were referred by other teenage fathers and through personal acquaintances of the researcher. The disadvantage of utilizing the snowball sampling method is that it does not recruit a random sample (Sadler, Lee, Lim & Fullerton, 2010). The teenage fathers were not recruited into the study by chance and therefore the outcomes of the study may be biased. Another shortfall of the snowball sampling method is that there is no statistically reliable way to estimate whether saturation of the sample has been reached. Another factor may be that participants may not contact other participants for the study due to possible disclosure issues depending on the content of the research being conducted (Sadler et al., 2010).

### **3.3. Overview of information needed**

The participant's family background and circumstances were not considered in the recruitment process but were factors paid attention to in the analysis stage. This was due to previous studies proving that teenage fathers usually come from impoverished backgrounds (Swartz & Bhana, 2009). The teenage fathers in this study are university

students in spite of the high school drop-out rate associated with teenage fathers. The school drop-out rate further escalates the cycle of poverty from which some of the teenage fathers are growing within. It is anticipated that this group of teenage fathers, on this study, will break the cycle of poverty as they are still pursuing their career dreams. It is expected that the participants come from different geographical places as universities enrol different people from different places. Some of the teenage fathers may therefore be from Dlangezwa and others from neighbouring cities or towns. Some of the teenage fathers may be living in the university's residences and others may be living with their families and travelling to campus daily. The residential nature of the teenage father may have a great impact on his involvement with his child. For this reason, involvement was measured based on how the teenage father was involved in his child's life based on their interaction when with the child. There were five categories that the teenage fathers reported on with regard to their involvement with their children. The study searched for both the quantity as well as the quality of their involvement regardless of their living arrangements.

The teenage fathers were also interviewed on the following factors:

**a. Involvement of the father**

- Meaning of involvement to teenage father
- Pre-birth involvement
- Involvement of teenage father to own child
- Involvement of teenage fathers' father in his life

**b. The pregnancy of the partner**

- Reaction to pregnancy
- Coping with the pregnancy

**c. Family relations, customs and traditions**

- Own family
- Maternal family
- Customs and traditions

**d. Relationship with partner**

- Current relations with mother of child

**e. Teenage fatherhood and academics**

- Thoughts of dropping out of school due to pregnancy
- Current academic state

**f. Impact of fatherhood on teenage father's life**

- Current social standing within the community and family as a teenage father

**g. Prevention of teenage pregnancy**

- How the teenage father thinks teenage pregnancy may be combated in our society

**3.4. Research design overview****3.4.1. Description of procedures***3.4.1.1 Ethical considerations*

The researcher initially submitted a proposal to conduct the research study to the Ethics Committee of the University of Zululand. An ethical clearance certificate was issued to the researcher by the Ethics Committee to conduct the research study. Permission was requested from the Vice-Chancellor to conduct the research on the premises of the University. Permission was also requested from the co-supervisor to collect data in the psychology seminar room. The interviews were held in the psychology seminar room over three days. The seminar room is a private space that allowed the participants the confidentiality and privacy that was stated in the informed consent. The participants were made to feel at ease by explaining the study, the purpose of the study as well as the rationale for conducting such a research study. The voluntary nature of participating in the study was highlighted. The informed consent was read with the participants and then signed by the participants. All ethical procedures were followed including giving the participants the supervisor's contact details in case they had concerns or further inquiries regarding the research study. It was mentioned to the participants that if they felt that the study was evoking uncomfortable, emotional feelings, psychotherapy would be available to them at the Community Psychology Clinic on the premises of the

University of Zululand. Participants were also informed that they could choose to stop participating in the study at any time with no repercussions thereafter.

#### *3.4.1.2. Data collection*

The researcher conducted individual in-depth face-to-face interviews with the participants. Interviews are a popular mode of data collection in qualitative research (Blanche et al, 2006). The informal interview is modelled on the conversation and is a social event with two people (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2011). The interview was based on a interview schedule which was created specifically for this research study. The questions were semi-structured because the researcher wanted to engage in a discussion with the teenage fathers and leave room for other information the participants might raise that the researcher might not have thought to include in the questionnaire. The research questionnaire was prepared and developed in English; however, at times the participants had a choice to respond in isiZulu. The responses that were given in isiZulu were transcribed. The responses/words of the participants have not been altered in the presentation of results. Where participants responded in isiZulu, the researcher, being a first language isiZulu speaker, allowed for such responses. Translations were made and are available. The interviews were therefore in mixed languages, English and Zulu, although they were mostly in English. The researcher made notes during the interviews.

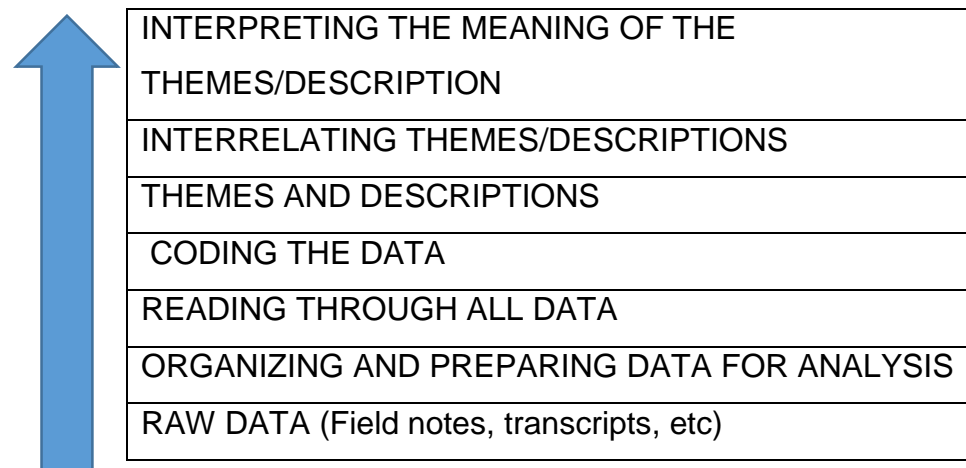
#### *3.4.1.3. Data analysis*

Data analysis is a process of placing real-life events and phenomena into some kind of perspective from the data/pieces of information that was collected (Blanche et al, 2006). Data was analysed by selecting the different patterns and themes that arose to determine the relationships that have risen from the participants' responses regarding father involvement or non-involvement. The responses were organised into the appropriate categories as well to determine the relationships that were eminent in the data. According to Creswell (2009, p. 183) data analysis involves preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper into understanding



the data, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data.

Figure 1



Analysis in Qualitative Research: Creswell, 2009

The researcher unpacked the data in a manner that has yielded a holistic analysis of teenage fathers' involvement in fatherhood. Data was analysed using tables to categorise the findings.

### 3.5. Trustworthiness of the research study

The trustworthiness of a qualitative study is measured by the following four criteria according to Cuba in Shenton, 2004. The criteria are as follows:

a) Credibility: This research study utilized the snowball sampling method which is a credible method in existing research studies. The researcher was familiar with the culture and social interaction of the participants prior to data collection. The participants in this research study had the autonomy to participate in the study and informed consent forms were signed. Peer scrutiny of this research project is welcome.

- b) Transferability: To assess the extent to which the findings of this research study may be true of teenage fathers' involvement in their children's primary care in other settings, the same methods used in this project may be utilized.
- c) Dependability: This research study was conducted using the qualitative method of data collection. Individual interviews were held with the participants
- d) Confirmability: The researcher's bias in this research study was minimized by reporting on the participants' responses verbatim with no changes or alterations from the researcher.

### **3.6. Limitations of the research study**

Some of the limitations that have been noted in this research study are as follows:

- a) The most significant limitation of the study was the sample size. The study was based on a limited sample of twenty participants from the University of Zululand. The findings of this study cannot be generalized across all teenage fathers in South Africa due to the limited sample size. Despite this limitation, which is very common in many qualitative studies, the study has generated a wealth of information on teenage fathers' involvement in their children's primary care.
- b) The teenage fathers were interviewed by a female researcher. From this notion, the participants may have approached the interview with a defensive attitude knowing how they are already perceived in society. They may also have provided exaggerated or minimal realities of their experiences instead of the true nature of events concerning their involvement in their children's lives.
- c) The sampling technique employed in this research study, snowball technique, may be a limitation due to the non-random nature of the sampling. The participants who referred other participants did not have any selection criteria; rather they used their own selection intuition.

- d) Another limitation arises around how the data was analysed and interpreted. The researcher hopes that the results and arguments presented fall short of biased interpretations.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

The qualitative method of data collection has made it possible for the researcher to collect the rich data that we have from this research study. The snowball sampling data collection technique was successful in recruiting the participants in spite of the sample being a scarce population to detect. All ethical considerations and obligations were followed in this research study. Data was analysed using Creswell (2009) and the results are discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The aim of the study was to explore the involvement of teenage fathers in their children's primary lives. Chapter two presented a literature review on teenage fathers and their involvement in parenting from diverse points of view. In this chapter the researcher presents a detailed discussion on the outcome of data analysis. The interviews that were conducted are used to present the results as supporting evidence from the field notes that were recorded during the interviews. The results are presented in the themes and sub-themes that emerged and then discussed in depth. The qualitative nature of the research has necessitated that supportive evidence be incorporated in the discussions presented below. Corrections were not made to the responses from the participants. Their raw responses are used as this is their personal experience of father involvement and fatherhood. The phenomenological approach was used in this study. In this framework, understandings of the participants' lived experiences are gathered (Creswell, 2003). The teenage fathers' interviews outline their reality of being teenage fathers. Their experiences are outlined as well as their thoughts on involvement as well as the circumstances surrounding their social lives. These are discussed below.

#### **4.2 Background information**

Individual face-to-face interviews were conducted with the participants. The interview schedule was developed in English; however, the participants had an opportunity to respond in Zulu where they felt they wanted to express themselves better in their vernacular language. Where Zulu was spoken, the researcher has translated the narrative. Due to the researchers' proficiency in isiZulu, both English and isiZulu were used in the interviews. All participants in the research study were teenage fathers. They were also students at the University of Zululand, main campus. No names were mentioned in the presentation of the findings; rather the participant's coded numbers

were used when their responses were presented in the findings. The participant's biographical information was tabulated and then discussed below.

#### 4.2.1 Biographical information

*Table 1*

*Title: Biographical information of the participants*

Participant	Age when first child was born	Current age of the teenage father	Age of child	Gender of the child	Highest Level of education achieved	Level of study
1.	19	19	6 months	Male	Grade 12	UNIZULU Student
2.	18	18	10 months	Female	Grade 12	UNIZULU Student
3.	17	19	24 months	Female	Grade 12	UNIZULU Student
4.	16	19	36 months	Female	Grade 12	UNIZULU Student
5.	19	19	10 months	Female	Grade 12	UNIZULU Student
6.	17	19	24 months	Male	Grade 12	UNIZULU Student
7.	17	18	15 months	Female	Grade 12	UNIZULU Student
8.	17	19	24 months	Male	Grade 12	UNIZULU Student
9.	18	19	12 months	Female	Grade 12	UNIZULU Student
10.	19	19	8 months	Male	Grade 12	UNIZULU Student

11.	16	19	42 months	Male	Grade 12	UNIZULU Student
12.	17	19	24 months	Female	Grade 12	UNIZULU Student
13.	16	19	RIP	Male	Grade 12	UNIZULU Student
14.	19	19	6 months	Male	Grade 12	UNIZULU Student
15.	18	19	12 months	Male	Grade 12	UNIZULU Student
16.	17	18	12 months	Male	Grade 12	UNIZULU Student
17.	18	19	18 months	Male	Grade 12	UNIZULU Student
18.	16	19	36 months	Female	Grade 12	UNIZULU Student
19.	18	18	6 months	Male	Grade 12	UNIZULU Student
20.	19	19	4 months	Male	Grade 12	UNIZULU Student

All the participants recruited in this research study were teenage fathers. They each had a child in their teenage years. The youngest teenage father amongst the participants fathered a child at the age of sixteen years. The participants were still teenagers ranging between the ages of eighteen and nineteen years at the time of the interview. All the participants recruited for the study were black South Africans. All the participants' highest level of education was grade 12. They were all registered students at the University of Zululand, KwaDlangezwa campus. The participants' children ranged from

four months to forty-two months. Only two of the participants in this study had more than one child.

### 4.3. Themes and sub-themes of the findings

*Table 2*

*Title: Dominant themes of the findings*

<b>THEME</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
<b>1) Involvement of the father</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaning of involvement to teenage father</li> <li>• Pre-birth involvement</li> <li>• Involvement of teenage father to own child</li> <li>• Involvement of teenage father's father in his life</li> </ul>
<b>2) The pregnancy of the partner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reaction to pregnancy</li> <li>• Coping with the pregnancy</li> </ul>
<b>3) Family relations, customs and traditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Own family</li> <li>• Maternal family</li> <li>• Customs and traditions</li> </ul>
<b>4) Relationship with partner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current relations with mother of child</li> </ul>
<b>5) Teenage fatherhood and academics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thoughts of dropping out of school due to pregnancy</li> <li>• Current academic state</li> </ul>
<b>6) Impact of fatherhood on teenage father's life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current social standing within the community and family as a teenage father</li> </ul>
<b>7) Prevention of teenage pregnancy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the teenage father thinks teenage pregnancy may be combated in our society</li> </ul>

### 4.4. Discussion of the findings

## **THEME 1: Involvement of the father**

### **Sub-theme 1a: Meaning of involvement to teenage fathers**

The teenage fathers were asked what being involved in a child's life meant to them from a general point of view. The teenage fathers mostly mentioned being present, being there and being part of the child's life as well as having a bond with the child. Financial support was clearly an important aspect of involvement for the teenage fathers even though they acknowledged that some of them cannot personally fulfil this position as they are still students themselves. The teenage fathers are themselves still reliant on their families for financial support as well as the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). Only two of the teenage fathers had part-time jobs and were contributing financially to their children's needs. Acknowledging the pregnancy and the payment of damages were also mentioned as part of the father being involved in the child's life. According to the teenage fathers, being involved in the child's life entailed showing love and care for the child, knowing the child was safe, making sacrifices for the child, the child's happiness, making sure that the child's needs were taken care of, when the child can identify the teenage father and being happy to be with him as well as seeing him. One of the teenage fathers mentioned being there for the child's mother (his partner) so that she is able to care for the child was an important way of father involvement to him. The teenage fathers appeared to be making their children a priority in their lives although they fell short of other aspects of being fully involved fathers in their children's lives.

The financial aspect appears to be the greatest hindrance to father involvement which is the reason this study focused on emotional involvement from the teenage fathers as they may be financially unable to support their children's needs. The second hindrance to full time involvement of the teenage fathers in their children's lives was that some of the teenage fathers did not reside in the same geographical vicinity as their children. Some of the teenage fathers resided in the campus residences or were renting private accommodation just outside the university as their family homes were away from the university. For the teenage fathers who lived in the same area as the child, the



hindrance to full-time involvement was that the child resided with their maternal families. Only four of the children resided with their paternal families.

Some of the teenage fathers' responses on what involvement is are listed below:

**Participant 4:** *"I save for her, she is the first priority in everything, financially, socially and emotionally. Black fathers are not involved, culture stipulates that the father provides financially, other avenues are for mothers. My personal belief: we should be involved in all situations and all levels of the child's upbringing".*

**Participant 6:** *"Knowing the birthday, being there for the child, being there through the milestones, those are special moments. Having the child being able to identify me as her father and being happy to see me. Able to take her to and from school, able to take responsibility on a daily basis. Fathers can be involved if they are given a chance. Parents (mothers) do not give us that chance to know the children and get close to them".*

**Participant 13:** *"For now sisi (sister), being involved means that I am part of her life, spending as much time with her as I can, spending the little money I can on her. I need to bond with her that she knows that I am always there for her. Availability is key. Later on I should be able to be more involved in all spheres of her life, fully and completely".*

**Participant 19:** *"Involvement means that I am present in his life with everything that I can offer him. I don't have much at the moment. I am relying on my parents and the other family to care for the child's needs but as soon as I can, I will take over from them".*

The teenage fathers had varied ideas of being involved in a child's life. Their subjective ideas of involvement showed their take on the importance of father involvement as well as what involvement is to each of them.

### **Sub-theme 1b: Teenage father ante-natal care involvement**

Of the participants recruited in this research study, 9 of the teenage fathers were involved in ante-natal care when their partners were pregnant with their child. 11 of the teenage fathers who were uninvolved prior to the birth of the child reported their reasons were based on cultural factors. They reported it was culturally forbidden for a man to be involved in the ante-natal care of the child. They said it would make them less of the man they were. Others were not involved due to unpaid damages. The family of the teenage father's partner did not want him near the pregnant girl as he had not done right by them as yet. Other teenage fathers were not involved due to the distance between him and his partner. For other teenage fathers it was the mere fact that they did not think it was expected of them as the partner never requested their company when they went for their ante-natal care appointments. The literature review indicated that father involvement prior to the birth of the child was a great indicator of continued involvement post birth of the child (Robbers, 2009).

**Participant 1:** *"Aybo sisi ngiyokwenzan nje lapho (Oh no sister, to do what there) No way, it is no place for a man. I did however give her transport money to go to the clinic. I shared my pocket money with her for her needs and cravings".*

**Participant 4:** *"No, culturally it is not allowed, it would make me less of a man".*

**Participant 6:** *"No, her family made sure they accompanied her so as to prevent me from seeing her".*

The 9 teenage fathers who participated in ante-natal care with their partner were involved because they wanted to know what was going on with the pregnancy. For other teenage fathers it was protecting his partner from the clinic staff personnel as they tend to be highly opinionated with pregnant young girls. For other teenage fathers:

**Participant 10:** *"Yes, I was there even though she did not want me to go, I insisted".*

**Participant 12:** *"Yes, it was the right thing to do. I also wanted to know what was happening during the pregnancy".*

**Participant 13:** *“Yes for both of our children, we went to the clinic together. I didn’t want the nurses treating her badly because (pause) you know how they can be with young girls in the clinic. We both missed school on those days”.*

Although the teenage fathers who were involved in the ante-natal care visits were fewer than those who were not involved, the gap between the two groups is not too great.

### **Sub-theme 1c: Involvement with your child**

This study intended to measure emotional involvement of the teenage father from a primary care point of view with the knowledge that this group of fathers may not be capable of supporting their children financially. More often than not, it was the teenager’s parents who took responsibility of the child, especially with regards to financial needs. It became apparent, though, that 2 of the teenage fathers had part-time jobs and therefore did support the child financially to some extent. Involvement of the teenage father was measured by being there which relates to the quality of time and relationship between the child and the father. In other research conducted on this topic, the fathers placed more emphasis on the amount of time spent with their child and less on the economic support and legal endowment of their children (Martin, 2001). Also, it has been reported that low-income fathers are more likely to emphasize the nurturing role because of their economic challenges (Paschal et al, 2011).

Table 3

*Title: Activities that the teenage father engages in with his child*

Participant	Independent baby sitting	Supervised babysitting	Hospital/clinic visits	Social interaction	School/pre-school	Financial/other
1.	X	X	-	-	-	
2.	-	X	-	X		
3.	-	X	-	X		X
4.	-	X	X	X	X	X
5.	-	-	-	-	-	-
6.	-	-	-	X	-	-
7.	-	-	-	-	-	-
8.	X	X	X	X	-	X
9.	-	X	-	X	-	X
10.	X	X	X	X	--	-
11.	X	X	-	X	-	-
12.	X	X	X	X	-	X
13.	X	X	-	X	-	-
14.	-	X	-	-	-	-
15.	X	X	X	X	-	-
16.	-	X	X	X	-	-
17.	X	X	X	X	-	-
18.	X	X	X	X	X	-
19.	-	X	-	-	-	-
20.	-	-	-	-	-	-

There were six categories of father involvement that the teenage fathers had to report on which were indicative of their involvement with their children. Involvement was

determined by being involved in three or more of the categories stipulated. The categories were a) independent baby-sitting, b) supervised baby-sitting, c) hospital/clinic visitation, d) social interaction, e) pre-school/ school involvement and f) financial/other.

The teenage fathers were asked how involved they in their children's primary care. The following activities dominated, independent baby-sitting entailed the teenage father single-handedly looking after the child in the absence of other people. During this time he has to take responsibility for the child's needs including feeding, bathing, changing nappies, playing, putting to sleep and other such activities. Only 9 of the teenage fathers reported to have independently baby-sat their child. Supervised baby-sitting is when the teenage father is looking after the child in the presence of someone else or multiple other persons. In this role, he also fulfils the abovementioned responsibilities in varying degrees. While 16 of the teenage fathers reported to have been involved in supervised baby-sitting of their children. They reported to have engaged in various activities with their children with the help of the other person present at that time.

The category of hospital/clinic visits comprises of the teenage father having taken his child to the clinic or the hospital for immunizations, health check-ups, illness or any other need a child would require to be taken to these facilities. The teenage father may have taken the child independently or accompanying someone else. Only 8 of the teenage fathers were involved in their children's hospital/clinic visitations. The hospital/clinic visitations were for the abovementioned reasons.

The social interaction category entails spending time with the child beyond their daily routine activities. In this category activities such as playing, watching television, taking a walk, going to the beach/park/mall and other such activities. 14 of the teenage fathers reported to be socially involved in their children's lives. Although their children are fairly young, the teenage fathers with the older children - 12 months and older - are able to engage more socially with their children compared to the fathers with younger children.

Only 2 of the children were in pre-school already at the time of data collection. This category entails paying school fees, buying uniform and lunch, dropping off and

collecting the child from school, attending school activities and events, assisting with homework and other such school related activities.

The last category, which is the financial and other category, was added in case the teenage father is able to support his child financially or there is another area in which he is involved in the child's life. Only 5 of the teenage fathers were involved in their child's financial needs; however, no other activities surfaced in the 'other' category.

#### **Sub-theme 1d: Involvement of teenager's father's father in his life**

We consider absent fathers to refer to fathers who are absent through death, absence with occasional contact, absence with regular contact and absence with no contact at all (Swartz, & Bhana, 2009). Absence (physical or emotional) of the biological father is sometimes experienced as a loss (Ratele, 2012). In other studies conducted on fathers, the results indicated that the majority of young fathers were found to be involved significantly in the lives of their children, despite their own struggles (Glikman, 2004). Of the twenty teenage fathers who were interviewed, twelve of their fathers were present and involved in their lives. The present and involved fathers had close relations with their sons. The remaining eight teenage fathers had absent fathers. The absence of the biological father from the home is a major risk factor for early sexual activity as well as teenage pregnancy (Ellis et al., 2003).

**Participant 1:** *"Own father was absent, but I have to support my child and give my child the love I did not get from my father. I experienced the pain of not having a father and that motivated me to involved in my child's life".*

**Participant 15:** *"I was raised by my father as my mother left us. I want to be like my father, never abandon my children, raise them up with everything I can"*

**Participant 18:** *"My father passed away when I was eight, my mother has always told me how great he was as a husband and a father. I also remember him as a great man. Although he is no longer around, I have good memories and reminders of him".*

These new teenage fathers, who may have grown up without a father, need to know what they mean and how does one become a positive dad (Kirven, 2014). Furthermore, enhanced initiative, purpose, maturity, responsiveness and interpersonal ties are all noted strengths derived from father presence and involvement, but it is the internal values and strengths that define who the new father is or who he will become (Kirven, 2014). Father's support is positively related to the psychological well-being of adolescent boys and its provision can make an important contribution to individual student well-being (Ellis et al., 2003).

Langa & Smith (2012), came to the conclusion that despite the lack of positive fathering experiences, the teenage father participants in their study, were emotionally invested in being good fathers. The current study shows similar results by the teenage fathers which is contrary to the held assumptions about teenage fathers who have had no positive father/father role models in their lives.

## **THEME 2: Reaction to the pregnancy and coping mechanism for the teenage father**

### **Sub-theme 2a: Reaction to the news of the pregnancy**

Although young men experiencing unplanned fatherhood feel scared, frustrated and ashamed, they most keenly express high levels of responsibility and a strong desire to love, invest in and provide for their children (Swarts & Bhana, 2009). The teenage fathers in the current study had varied reactions when they found out about the pregnancy. The majority of the participants reported to being in disbelief. Other participants reported reactions ranging from indifference, shock, scared, thought of running away, it was a joke, rejecting the pregnancy, relief, not an impossible outcome, to guilt and hanging up the phone only to call back again a few seconds later.

**Participant 1:** *"I was indifferent, happy I had helped bring someone into the world. The reality though is that I was not going to be a full time father".*

**Participant 6:** *“To run away and not be around. The mother’s family was very strict. How will I support my child coming from an impoverished household of a single parent”.*

**Participant 16:** *“She had been ill and when she tested positive in the pregnancy, I was relieved for her, at least now we knew what was wrong. I was shocked though, it was highly unexpected”.*

**Participant 17:** *“It wasn’t an impossible thing, since we are sexually active, however, it was just unexpected then”.*

### **Sub-theme 2b: Coping with becoming a teenage father**

Once the child is conceived, the future teenage father can often feel alone, as if he does not belong, increasing the risk of him not taking responsibility and staying involved (Kirven, 2014). The teenage fathers need to come to terms with becoming a father, together with all the other situations and events that are taking place in their personal as well as their social and career lives. Similar to teenage mothers, fathers may have high levels of unrecognized psychological symptomatology (Quanlivan & Condon, 2005). The teenage years are clearly challenging years without the added dilemma of fatherhood added to them. The teenage fathers in this research study experienced the pregnancy in various ways and therefore had differing coping ways. It is clear that these fathers found this time to be highly challenging; however, they appeared to take the challenge with both hands. They were not all in total dismay as some of them quickly made preparations to save money for the unborn child. Others decided not to think too much about it but rather take each day as it presented itself to them and their situation.

**Participant 7:** *“It was difficult as I had to have enough money all the time. We needed to prepare ourselves”.*

**Participant 14:** *“I worried about the child being born by two unemployed parents. We could not solely care for our child. I found comfort in knowing our parents were willing to help. I am also working hard here at school so I can get this degree and be employable”.*



**Participant 16:** *“Yhooooo...it got me thinking a lot about the rest of my schooling and life ahead. I was under pressure to perform well and succeed”.*

**Participant 20:** *“Clearly I was cut off from the child and mother. I had to accept my reality and just work hard that I will be able to provide for him later on in life if possible”.*

As much as other teenage fathers were stressed and afraid because of the huge responsibility that was about to become theirs, they took it within their strides to cope and manage themselves as well as the situation they were in.

### **THEME 3: Role of the maternal and paternal family as well as customs and traditions**

#### **Sub-theme 3a: The teenage father’s family**

The teenage fathers came from varied family backgrounds, family situations and socio-economic statuses. Eleven of the teenage fathers interviewed were raised by single parents. Of the single parents, there was one single father household. The single mother household was a result of the passing away of a father, a father who was there in close proximity to the teenage father but was not involved in his life and upbringing as well as estranged fathers whom the teenage father has never known or was present initially but disappeared in the teenage father’s childhood.

Seven of the teenage fathers interviewed were raised in a household with both parents. The teenage fathers reported that it was the presence of their fathers in their lives that motivated them to be involved in their own children’s lives. Two of the teenage fathers were raised by neither of their parents. This was a result of the passing away of the parents as well as the absence of one parent in the teenage father’s life.

**Participant 13:** *“I had no parents, mother passed away when I was thirteen years and my father was absent”.*

### **Sub-theme 3b: The maternal family of the child**

Family relationships and dynamics between mothers and fathers as well as their extended families are central processes through which young unmarried parents negotiate their new family roles (Kaplan, 1997). The relations of the teenage father with the family of the teenage girl could be great predictors of fathering patterns of involvement in the long term of parenthood.

Fifteen of the teenage fathers reported to having an active relationship with the maternal family of their child. Even though damages were not paid for some of the children, the teenage father still had a healthy relationship with his partner's family. One of the teenage father's partner had passed away and he still has a good relationship with his child's grandparents and is still able to see his child. The other three of the teenage fathers did not have a relationship with the grandparents of their child. The reasons for not having good relations were due to unpaid damages, feuds between the grandparents of the child and the teenage father being scared of his partner's family.

**Participant 17:** *"We are not the best of friends but we tolerate each other as much as we need to. I can just say we respect each other".*

**Participant 3** *"No, I only liaison/speak to the child's mother. I'm still scared of them even now".*

**Participant 6:** *"No, I would have to pay the Nhlawulo first for them to consider me as a human being. Right now they see me as a thug".*

**Participant 2:** *"Yes, they saw the changes I've been making with my life and they respect me".*

**Participant 1:** *"Yes, since the pregnancy we had communicated with them on what to do and how to follow certain things. There are respectful dealings between the two families".*

The paternal grandmother often plays a role in supporting father involvement, perhaps because her acceptance of the grandchild encourages the father to take part in the child's life (Kaplan, 1997).

### **Sub-theme 3c: Customs and traditions**

By custom, the girl's family has to go to the boy's family to report the pregnancy once it is discovered so that the boy's family pays *inhlawulo* (damages) if the boy accepts paternity (Langa & Smith, 2012; Swartz & Bhana, 2009).

*Inhlawulo* (damages) were not inquired of only three of the twenty participants. For the other seventeen participants, *inhlawulo* was inquired of the teenage fathers. Seventeen of the teenage fathers had not paid the damages as per the Zulu custom. The remaining three teenage fathers had partially paid the damages with the help of their parents/guardians. For all the teenage fathers of whom *inhlawulo* was inquired, it was negotiated that the teenage father would pay the damages when he would be able to afford to pay the required amount. The teenage fathers found this decision to be fair as they currently could not afford to pay the required amount. Some of their families could not afford to pay on their behalf either due to low economic circumstances. It appeared that even those families that could afford to pay the damages on behalf of the teenage father paid only partially. These families paid *ingezamuzi* which is the cleansing of the household of the pregnant girl out of wedlock. The remainder of the debt the teenage father would pay in his own capacity.

**Participant 3:** *"I owned up to the pregnancy so the damages had to be paid, it's the right thing to do".*

**Participant 5:** *"I don't think I will pay even when I am working. We had a mutual understanding of what we were doing with the mother of my child".*

**Participant 6:** *"I would not be allowed to see the child until I had paid. I was ashamed for myself and for my mother. It is tradition so there is nothing that I could have said or done to change their minds".*

**Participant 13:** *"Hehe! sisi (sister), they want what belongs to them, what they are entitled to. My uncle said he would cleanse the household (ingezamuzi) only on my behalf, the rest I would have to pay when I could. They accepted that".*

#### **THEME 4: Current relationship status of teenage father with partner**

The relationship between the mother and the father appears to be an important issue in supporting or discouraging consistent paternal involvement (Kalil et al., 2005). Older adolescent fathers and mothers are more likely to think about long-term relationships with each other (Quanlivan & Condon, 2005). Also many young parents plan to marry their partners (Fagan et al, 2007).

Out of the twenty teenage fathers, eleven (55%), reported to be in relationship with the mother of the child. The teenage fathers reported to loving and caring for the mother of the child still. Some of the relationships date back to high school and seem to be still stable. The one couple had lost their first born child and have another child together. The teenage fathers were keen on raising their children with their partners in the future.

Six (30%) of the teenage fathers were no longer in a relationship with the mother of the child. The reasons for breaking up were related to *inhlawulo* not being paid, cheating of either partner, partner committing to a different lifestyle (Christianity) as well as death of the partner. Two (10%) of the teenagers reported the relationship to be complicated due to distance and familial interference related to *inhlawulo* not being paid. One (10%) of teenage father's partner was deceased.

**Participant 1:** *"Yes, we still in this thing called love".*

**Participant 6:** *"No, she could not stand up to her family about our relationship. She let them take control of everything".*

**Participant 20:** *"Honestly I am not sure. We have not seen each other in over a year now. We talk over the phone but there is evident strain on the relationship".*

The majority of the teenage fathers were in committed romantic relationships with the mothers of their children. The teenage fathers seemed to be in the relationships because of love and appreciation of the partner contrary to the belief that teenage fathers disappear when a child comes into the picture. For the relationships that were

not continuing, the pregnancy or the child was not the reason for the break-up; rather other factors contributed to the termination of the relationship and not the child directly. The teenage fathers also had not paid the damages and others had only partially paid; however, for the 55% it did not seem to put a strain on the relationship. A continuing romantic involvement was seen to be a contributing factor to the teenage father being involved in his child's life.

## **THEME 5: Teenage fatherhood and academics**

*Table 4*

*Title: Sub-theme 5a: Teenage fathers' thoughts about dropping out of school due to the pregnancy*

Thought of dropping out of school	45%
Did not think of dropping out of school	55%

According to Swartz and Bhana (2009), 26% of South African teenage fathers are still in school whilst 40% are unemployed. Evidently teenage fathers drop out of school which puts them in a vulnerable position of being unemployable without the minimum educational requirements. Dropping out of school is associated with poverty stricken backgrounds which force these young people to seek employment to be able to support the children as well as themselves and sometimes their families. Male partners involved in teenage pregnancy have typically achieved a lower level of education, have higher rates of unemployment, are more financially dependent, are lower in socio-economic status, have more behavioural problems such as smoking, drinking and illicit drug use, have more simultaneous sexual partners and sexually transmitted infections, engage in more aggressive behaviour and have more adverse early life experiences (Quanlivan & Condon, 2005). A strong link between a lack of education and

employment stability and lower levels of paternal involvement was found (Landale & Oropesa, 2001).

The teenage fathers were asked if the news of the pregnancy gave them a reason to drop out of school. Of the twenty participants interviewed, nine participants thought about dropping out of school. These participants thought they would have to drop out of school so they could seek employment to be able to support the unborn child. These fathers are faced with poverty stricken households as well as parent death.

Eleven of the teenage fathers did not think about dropping out of school. Their reasons included that they were already in grade 12 and were close to finishing school. Others were even more motivated to continue with school so that they would be better able to support their children in future. Some of the teenage fathers did not view parenthood as a reason to drop out of school. These fathers found the need to be in school and continue to pursue their career goals now with a direct purpose in mind. They had a need for their children to see them as better people in future who are able to provide for them.

One teenage father did not think of dropping out of school but he had fears that he would not be enrolled into university with fatherhood facing him. Another teenage father went on ahead and applied for university with fatherhood upon him. It did not cross his mind that fatherhood would be a reason to be out of school.

**Participant 8:** *"No, on weekends I work so I had money and would be able to support my child".*

**Participant 9:** *"No, if I dropped out I would be cancelling out my career. My family had agreed to help with the child so I can continue with school".*

**Participant 12:** *"Yes, my mother would not be able to support both me and my child".*

**Participant 13:** *"Definitely sisi wam' (my sister). I had a child on the way. I thought my uncle would send me to work to support the child. To my surprise I was encouraged to go to school now with a purpose. To become a father my child would be proud of".*

Although some of the teenage fathers thought about dropping out of school, none of them dropped out. Instead they were encouraged to continue with their academics. Even those who were in high school at the time of the pregnancy did not drop out. Those who faced fatherhood whilst at the university reported focusing more on their studies so they could take over the child's responsibilities from their parents who were taking on the responsibility whilst the fathers were still in school.

### **THEME 6: Impact of fatherhood on teenagers' social, family communal and personal life**

Involvement with children may help to promote psychological well-being. Investment in the role of a father may act as a protective factor against further delinquent behaviour (Landers, 2014). As adolescents assume more adult responsibilities, delinquency declines (Landers, 2014). Of the twenty participants in the study only four (20%) reported that their lives continued as before the pregnancy or the birth of the child. The rest (80%) of the participants reported that their social lives and lifestyles were impacted by fatherhood.

The impact of fatherhood for these young men seems to be of a positive nature. They report to focusing more on their studies so that they become employable and be able to take over from their parents in supporting their children. Other teenage fathers reported to minimizing their social interactions with friends and making time to spend with the child. The young men assumed more responsible roles in being fathers as well as in their social and personal lives. While others minimized alcohol intake, others began focusing on one romantic partner compared to prior to the pregnancy and the birth of the child when they had multiple partners.

Other teenage fathers report having a direct purpose and focus on life. When initially being in university was about owning fancy clothes and cars, some of the teenagers now focused on getting through school for the sake of their children. Whilst other teenage fathers took a responsible role within their communities, others gained more adult treatment within their households. The teenage fathers made certain their

reputation within the community was opposed to what is already a social stereotype. They assumed socially desirable roles and behaviours contrary to popular belief. The teenage fathers also had to change their financial habits and spending. They were now “*saving for rainy days*” and “*giving up on money wasting habit...*” It can be concluded that fatherhood for these teenage fathers had a positive impact on their lives. They became ‘grounded’, ‘focused’, ‘found direction’, and thought about the child’s future which they would have to work hard to support.

**Participant 6:** “*Yes I was interested in a thug life and when he was five months, I changed. I registered at the university, wanted to make his life more simple than mine*”.

**Participant 8:** “*No I have continued with my life as planned*”.

**Participant 13:** “*Oh yes sisi (sister), it did. During the holidays I would go home and chill with my friends. Now I divide my time to share it between my daughter and them. my spending habits have also changed in the past year. I am a father now. I have to prioritize, putting my daughter’s needs first*”.

**Participant 16:** “*Being a father changed my life focus. Actually, it kind of guided my next moves... It kind of structured my path... I had to make sacrifices, go home every month to see my son instead of being on campus with the guys doing silly*”.

Teenage fatherhood for these teenagers caused the fathers to be socially responsible. They presented a positive attitude towards being fathers. They aspired to be involved in their children’s lives and they longed to contribute to the children’s needs financially.

## **THEME 7: Teenage pregnancy prevention**

### **Sub-theme 7a: How can teenage pregnancy be prevented?**

Teen parenthood is primarily conceptualised from a deficit perspective; adolescent parents are characterised by the extent to which they do not meet the ideal conditions for pregnancy and parenthood (Paschal et al, 2011). It is therefore necessary to have preventative measures for the youth of our country as well as abroad. The teenage



fathers were asked how they thought teenage pregnancy could be prevented from their own perspectives:

**Participant 6:** *“Women need to be strong and strict towards their children. Mothers need to express love and attention towards both sexes. Children are desperate for love and attention and end up falling in the trap of teenage pregnancy”.*

**Participant 14:** *“We as youngsters need to learn from each other’s mistakes and stop thinking we are above everything. It is this stubbornness that gets us into hot water”.*

**Participant 12:** *“Ey sisi... when I look back to how I became a teenage father, I see how I thought it was not possible for me to get my girlfriend pregnant. When it happened, I got a wake-up call. I guess more education on sex and contraceptives must be enforced on both genders. We as guys think we won’t be fathers until we hear about the pregnancy, lapho sekushubile strong sisi wami (at that point, it is very difficult my sister)”.*

**Participant 17:** *“Teenagers need to stop fooling themselves that they are well experienced with sexual activity and will not fall pregnant. Condoms must be our friends and we must not be ashamed to buy them since we don’t want Choice”.*

Some teenage fathers approached this question from a realistic and personal point of view. By their responses it is evident that they are aware of the preventative methods and measures that are available to them; however, the thought of fathering a child was far-fetched for most of them hence the shock, disbelief, fear and guilty feelings they experienced when the pregnancy was announced to them.

The teenage fathers emphasised condom usage by the youth taking into consideration that teenagers are engaging in sexual activities. It was mentioned that the emphasis of contraceptives be directed towards both genders as we know that the majority of the time it is the females to whom these conversations are directed. Some suggestions were directed towards community campaigns with contraceptives as central ideas to be held more regularly and be directed to both female and male youth. The age of initiating

sexual activity conversations was suggested to begin much earlier than it is usually done to give the teenagers information before they engage in sexual activity.

Even with the awareness of sexual activity practices amongst the teenagers, there were suggestions of emphasizing abstinence as a preventative measure of teenage pregnancy. One teenage father was of the idea that teenagers need to get love and attention from their mothers so that they do not search for it outside their households and end up being teenage parents.

One teenage father was of the opinion that no preventative measures are possible at this stage as the teenagers are at a stage of participating in practices that lead to unsafe and risky behaviours.

Another teenage father spoke from his personal experience. He mentioned that now he is aware of the consequences of unprotected sex as well as being stubborn which resulted in teenage parenthood for him, he would preach the gospel of safe sex and taking advice from elders. He acknowledges how both he and his girlfriend were naïve and how the results of their acts have ended up for them. As a result of their parenthood, they now use condoms and the girlfriend is also on the pill.

Other opinions that surfaced are that prevention is a personal matter. Preaching the gospel of prevention will not work unless and until teenagers make a personal decision to use the preventative methods set in place for them.

The notion of learning from others' mistakes was also mentioned a couple of times. The teenage fathers stated that teenagers need to stop fooling themselves that they are above everything and everyone thereby not taking advice as given. It was mentioned that teenagers need to stop fooling themselves that they are well experienced with sexual activity and that they will not fall pregnant.

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

The findings of the research study have been presented and discussed as they have been analysed and interpreted. Seven themes became evident in data analysis with their sub-themes that were discussed above. Whilst some of the findings are supported by previous research, some of the findings in this study seem to contradict what is known. The next chapter will draw conclusions and highlight some guidelines, limitations and suggestions for future research

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

Presented in this chapter are the summarised steps that were followed in this research. Recommendations and guidelines will then be outlined for future researchers of this topic. Qualitative research was conducted to explore the emotional involvement of teenage fathers in their children's primary lives at the University of Zululand, Dlangezwa campus. The researcher used a qualitative research design. The snowball and the self-selection sampling techniques were used to select the participants who were believed to be experiencing the topic under discussion, the involvement of teenage fathers in their children's primary care.

Twenty teenage fathers were interviewed to gather data on their involvement in their children's primary care as well as their experiences as teenage fathers. Twenty three questions were asked which yielded data to answer the research questions. Creswell's (2003) method of data analysis was used to assist the researcher in reducing the massive data into relevant themes and sub-themes.

The research questions for the study were:

- a) How are teenage fathers involved in their children's emotional primary care?
- b) What are the experiences teenage fathers have of parenthood?
- c) What influences teenage fathers to be involved in their children's lives?
- d) What makes teenage fathers to be uninvolved in their children's lives?

#### **5.2 Summary of the findings**

The literature reviewed outlined the historical as well as the recent findings on teenage fathers. They have a long standing history of negative perceptions attached to them. Recent findings, however, have changed from those of the hands off teenage father to those of participation in their children's lives (Saracho & Spodek, (2008); Swartz &

Bhana, 2012). This study further supports the view that the teenage fathers are more involved with their children than in the past. The teenage fathers in this study were involved in their children's lives in various aspects of the children's lives, namely independent baby-sitting, supervised baby-sitting, hospital/clinic visitation, social interaction, pre-school/ school involvement and financial category. Although the financial aspect of involvement is the most challenging one for the teenage fathers, they continue to strive academically so that they get employment at the completion of their degrees and are able to carry forth the financial expenses of their children.

It has been reported that teenage fathers are prone to dropping out of school in order to work and be able to support their children (Swartz & Bhana, 2012). None of the teenage fathers in this study dropped out of school; in fact, all the teenage fathers were recruited at a tertiary institution of learning. It is noted that some of the teenage fathers did consider or had thoughts of dropping out when they thought of their home economic situations or when they thought of their parents' reactions to the news of a pregnancy. For some of these teenage fathers the pregnancy became a greater indicator and motivator to continue with school and do well as there was an individual to work and provide for.

None of the teenage fathers in this study had paid damages to the families of their partners. Only a fraction of the teenage fathers' parents had partially paid some of the damage debt on behalf of the teenage father. The rest of the teenage fathers were granted the option to fulfil the customary tradition once they were able to afford it. It is speculated that this agreement came easily to the girl's family due to the high probability that the teenage fathers would soon be employed as they were students at the University. Paying damages seems to be a prominent customary practice that must be fulfilled by the teenage father to the family of the pregnant unwed girl, (Speak, 2006; Langa, 2012; Swartz & Bhana, 2012). Although not all the teenage fathers were prepared to pay damages, the majority of them knew the obligation still awaiting them. They were appreciative of the opportunity they were given by their partners' families to pay at a later time as well as being allowed to be part of their children's lives even though they had not paid the outstanding customary debt.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

Teenage fathers have been a neglected group for the longest time in relation to social as well as communal interventions to assist them with their new and unexpected roles of fatherhood. It will be of benefit not only to the teenage father, but also to all individuals impacted and affected by the teenager now becoming a teenage father to have interventions in place for their support. With the right resources, support structures and positive guidelines for teenage fathers, involvement in their children's lives may be optimized. Recently in South Africa more and more father involvement campaigns and television programs are mobilizing. Fathers are gaining a voice and are advocating for their role within the family and the community. Teenage fathers also need such resources at hand so that they do not remain invisible but are also present within the communities from which they come.

### **5.4. Limitations**

Some of the limitations that have been noted in this research study are as follows:

- a) The most significant limitation of the study was the sample size. The study was based on a limited sample of twenty participants from the University of Zululand. The findings of this study cannot be generalized across all teenage fathers in South Africa due to the limited sample size. Despite this limitation, which is very common in many qualitative studies, the study has generated a wealth of information on teenage fathers' involvement in their children's primary care.
- b) The teenage fathers were interviewed by a female researcher. Based on this, the participants may have approached the interview with a defensive attitude knowing how they are already perceived in society. They may also have provided exaggerated or minimal descriptions of their experiences instead of the true nature of events concerning their involvement in their children's lives.

- c) The sampling technique employed in this research study, the snowball technique, may be a limitation due to its non-random nature of sampling. The participants who referred other participants did not have selection criteria to guide them; rather they relied on their own selection intuition.
- d) Another limitation arises around how the data was analysed and interpreted. The researcher hopes that the results and arguments presented fall short of biased interpretations.

## **5.5 Future research**

There are several possible directions for future research emerging out of this study. It would be interesting to conduct a similar study that would recruit teenage fathers from different racial groups to assess how the role of race, class and ethnicity influences the involvement of teenage fathers in their children's lives in the South African context. It would also be worth conducting a longitudinal study with the teenagers to assess the sustainability of teenage father involvement in his child's life. It would also be worthwhile to include the partners of the teenage fathers in the study. Their views on the teenage fathers' involvement needs to be explored in order to assess the credibility of the teenage fathers' reports on involvement. Lastly, it would be plausible to collect a greater sample size of participants to generate a broader view on teenage father involvement.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### INFORMATION SHEET

**Purpose of the research:** To investigate the emotional involvement of teenage father's in their children's primary care.

**What you will do in this research:** if you decide to volunteer, you will be asked to participate in one interview. You will be asked several questions. Some of them will be about your involvement in your child's upbringing and life. Others will be about your experiences as a father with regards to family, friends, school and the cultural aspects of being a father. With your permission, I will tape record the interview so I don't have to make so many notes. You will not be asked to state your name on the recording.

**Time required:** The interview will take approximately 1 hour

**Risks:** Some questions may cause discomfort or embarrassment.

**Benefits:** This is a chance for you to tell your story about your experiences concerning fatherhood.

**Confidentiality:** Your responses to interview questions will be kept confidential. At no time will your actual identity be revealed. You will be assigned a random numerical code. Anyone who helps me transcribe responses will only know you by this code. The recording will be destroyed as soon as my dissertation has been accepted. The transcript, without your name, will be kept until the research is complete.

The key code linking your name with your number will be kept in a locked file cabinet in a locked office, and no one else will have access to it. It will be destroyed once my dissertation has been accepted. The data you give me will be used for the research study and may be used as the basis for articles or presentations in the future. I won't use your name or information that would identify you in any publications or presentations.

**Participation and withdrawal:** Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study without penalty or loss of benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled. You may withdraw by informing the experimenter that you no longer wish to participate (no questions will be asked). You may skip any question during the interview, but continue to participate in the rest of the study.

**To contact the Researcher:** If you have questions or concerns about this research, please contact: Yolisa Mgobhozi, University of Zululand, KwaDlangezwa Campus. Cell no. 082 446 0036, e-mail: [ymgobhozi@yahoo.com](mailto:ymgobhozi@yahoo.com).

Whom to contact about your rights in this research, for questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints that are not being addressed by the researcher, or research-related harm:  
University of Zululand Research Ethics Committee [UZREC], Research and Innovation Office:  
035 902 6887 or the researchers Department/supervisor.

## APPENDIX B

### INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

#### (PARTICIPANT)

Project name: **THE EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT OF TEENAGE FATHERS IN THEIR CHILDREN'S PRIMARY CARE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND**

Yolisa Mgobhozi from the Department of Psychology, University of Zululand has requested my permission to participate in the above-mentioned research project.

The nature and the purpose of the research project, and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose of the research project is to investigate the involvement of teenage fathers in their children's primary care.
2. The University of Zululand has given ethical clearance to this research project and I have seen/may request to see the clearance certificate.
3. By participating in this research project I will be contributing towards the field of psychology learning about teenage fathers and their emotional involvement in their children's primary care.
4. I will participate in the project by being interviewed about being a teenage father and my involvement in my child's primary care.
5. My participation is entirely voluntary and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.
6. I will not be compensated for participating in the research, but my out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.
7. There may be risks associated with my participation in the project. I am aware that
  - a) The following risks are associated with my participation: emotional arousal regarding the nature of fatherhood.



- b) The following steps have been taken to prevent the risks: psychological counselling at the University of Zululand Psychology Clinic.
- c) There is a 10% chance of the risk materialising.
- 8. The researcher intends publishing the research results in the form of a report. However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained and that my name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conduct of the research.
- 9. I will not receive feedback/will receive feedback in the form of e-mail/text message regarding the results obtained during the study.
- 10. Any further questions that I might have concerning the research or my participation will be answered by Prof. J. D Thwala, number (035 9026602).
- 11. By signing this informed consent declaration I am not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.
- 12. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record.

I, ..... have read the above information / confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all questions that I wished to ask and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurised in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above mentioned project.

.....

**Participant's signature**

.....

**Date**

## APPENDIX C

University of Zululand

PO Box X1001

KwaDlangezwa

3886

Vice Chancellor

University of Zululand

29 August 2014

### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a registered Master's student in the Department of Psychology at the University of Zululand. My supervisor is Prof. D.J. Thwala.

The proposed topic of my research is: The emotional involvement of teenage fathers in their children's primary care at the University of Zululand . The objectives of the study are:

- (a) To explore the emotional involvement of teenage fathers in their children's lives.
- (b) To investigate teenage father's experiences as parents
- (c) To explore what motivates them to be involved or not in their children's lives

I am hereby seeking your consent to interview the relevant students for the research study. To assist you in reaching a decision, I have attached to this letter:

- (a) A copy of an ethical clearance certificate issued by the University
- (b) A copy of the research instruments which I intend using in my research

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor. Our contact details are as follows:

Researcher e-mail: [ymgobhozi@yahoo.com](mailto:ymgobhozi@yahoo.com)

Cell no. 079 517 9645

Supervisor e-mail: [thwalaj@unizulu.ac.za](mailto:thwalaj@unizulu.ac.za)

Phone. 035 902 6602

Upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide you with a bound copy of the dissertation.

Your permission to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yolisa Mgobhozi', written in a cursive style.

Yolisa Mgobhozi

(Student psychologist)



## ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Certificate Number	UZREC 171110-030-RA Level 02 PGM 2014/130									
Project Title	The emotional involvement of teenage fathers in their children’s primary care at the University of Zululand									
Principal Researcher/ Investigator	Y Mgobhozi									
Supervisor and Co-supervisor	Prof JD Thwala					Mr. VC Mathe				
Department	Psychology									
Nature of Project	Honours/4 <sup>th</sup> Year			Master’s	x	Doctoral		Departmental		

The University of Zululand's Research Ethics Committee (UZREC) hereby gives ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project proposal and the documents listed on page 2 of this Certificate.

**Special conditions:**

- (1) The Principal Researcher must report to the UZREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.
- (2) Documents marked "To be submitted" (see page 2) must be presented for ethical clearance before any data collection can commence.
- (3) Research involving minors non-therapeutic, ministerial consent form was filled

The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this Certificate, using the reference number indicated above, but may not conduct any data collection using research instruments that are yet to be approved.

Please note that the UZREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the documents that were presented to the UZREC
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research

**Classification:**

Data collection	Animals	Human Health	Children	Vulnerable pp.	Other
X			X		
Low Risk		Medium Risk		High Risk	
				X	

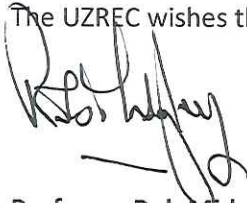
The table below indicates which documents the UZREC considered in granting this Certificate and which documents, if any, still require ethical clearance. (Please note that this is not a closed list and should new instruments be developed, these would require approval.)

Documents	Considered	To be submitted	Not required
Faculty Research Ethics Committee recommendation	X		
Animal Research Ethics Committee recommendation			X
Health Research Ethics Committee recommendation			X
Ethical clearance application form	X		
Project registration proposal	X		
Informed consent from participants	X		
Informed consent from parent/guardian	X		
Permission for access to sites/information/participants	X		
Permission to use documents/copyright clearance			X
Data collection/survey instrument/questionnaire	X		
Data collection instrument in appropriate language		Only if necessary	
Other data collection instruments		Only if used	

The UZREC retains the right to

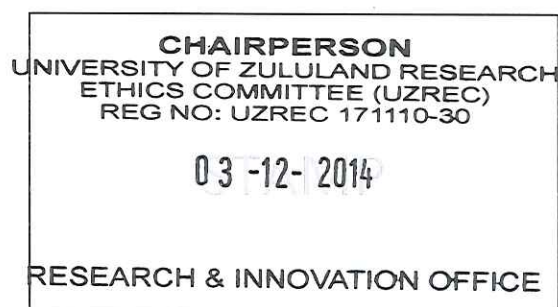
- Withdraw or amend this Certificate if
  - Any unethical principles or practices are revealed or suspected
  - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented
  - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require
  - The conditions contained in this Certificate have not been adhered to
- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project

The UZREC wishes the researcher well in conducting the research.



**Professor Rob Midgley**  
**Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation**  
**Chairperson: University Research Ethics Committee**  
 03 December 2014

Y Mgobhozi- PGM 2014/130



8 Nahoon Valley Place

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15 December 2015

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I hereby confirm that I have proofread and edited the following master's thesis using the Windows "Tracking" system to reflect my comments and suggested corrections for the student to action:

*The emotional involvement of teenage fathers in their children's primary care at the University of Zululand* by Yolisa Mgobhozi, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the Master's Degree in Counselling Psychology in the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Arts, at the University of Zululand.

BkCarlson

Brian Carlson (B.A., M.Ed.)

Professional Editor

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Disclaimer: Although I have made comments and suggested corrections, the responsibility for the quality of the final document lies with the author in the first instance and not with myself as the editor.

BK & AJ Carlson Professional Editing Services

# PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT



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---

29 January 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

**Re: Mgobhozi, Y - *The involvement of teenage fathers in their children's primary care at the University of Zululand***

The abovementioned thesis was run through Turnitin and the similarity results are 19%, falling within the required maximum of 24%.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Dr. C. Hermann  
(PS0111120)