



**EXPLORING THE INVOLVEMENT OF NON-RESIDENT FATHERS AND THEIR  
PERCEPTION OF PARENTING CHILDREN AGED 0-3 YEARS FROM SINGLE  
MOTHER HOUSEHOLDS IN ETHEKWINI, SOUTH AFRICA.**

By

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## DECLARATION

I, Samkelisiwe Ngubane declare that: The study on **EXPLORING THE INVOLVEMENT OF NON-RESIDENT FATHERS AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF PARENTING CHILDREN AGED 0-3 YEARS FROM SINGLE MOTHER HOUSEHOLDS IN ETHEKWINI, SOUTH AFRICA** is my own work but constituted by the knowledge of books and journals that relates to the topic of the research, and all the literature contained by the research is in accordance with the academic rules and ethical conducts of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. All the sources consulted, used or quoted are reliable sources and that this work has not been previously submitted at any other institution.

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## ABSTRACT

Many South African children are raised in single-mother households with the limited and sometimes no involvement of their fathers. With not more than 29% of young African children live with both biological parents and 46% live with their mothers only but not their fathers. These figures emphasize the limited presence of biological fathers in the lives of their children at young age. Additionally, their participation in parenting children aged 0-3 years was found unsatisfactory compared to older children. Evidence from research confirms that children aged 0-3 years are most vulnerable, and this is a substantial period for a child to respond to the environment, affectionateness, and responsive interactions with adults. Therefore, non-resident fathers' involvement in this significant stage of the child's development is significant.

Other view suggests that regardless of many fathers being absent in residences where their children are residing, they are involved in their children's lives. Hence the study investigated their involvement. The study explored the involvement of non-resident fathers and their perception of parenting children aged 0-3 years from single mother households in eThekweni, South Africa. This qualitative study recruited fifteen non-resident fathers as participants through purposive sampling. The data was gathered using telephonic semi-structured interviews. The audio-taped data was transcribed, coded and interpreted to generate themes, categories and sub-categories.

The results of the study indicate that the provider role was a dominant responsibility which connected non-resident fathers to their children. However, interacting with their children and spending quality time with the child was perceived by the non-resident fathers as their primary responsibility. Therefore, both non-financial and financial roles were perceived as active ways through which non-resident fathers participate and remain involved in parenting. Regardless of the physical distance between the child and the non-resident father, father's involvement was playing their roles and responsibilities should always remain. This study recommends that coordinated efforts by the government, traditional authorities, non-resident fathers, single mothers, extended families and the community at large is needed to encourage the involvement of non-resident fathers in parenting their children from single mother households. Moreover, a healthy relationship and communication between biological mothers and non-resident fathers is critical in encouraging fathers' involvement.

**KEYWORDS:** Non-resident father, single mother households, involvement, perception, parenting

## **DEDICATION**

**I dedicate this study to all children and youth raised in single mother households in South Africa.** Children and youth that have strived above all challenges and stressors to find their resilience despite being raised by separated parents. May all the communities that interact with the individuals from the broken backgrounds be tolerant to them and acknowledge their resilience above their failures.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

ADAPT	Agisanang Domestic Abuse Prevention Training
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CDG	Care Dependency Grant
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CSG	Child Support Grant
DSD	Department of Social Development
FSO	Fathers Speak Out
FSG	Foster Care Grant
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
KEH	King Edward Hospital
KZN	Kwa-Zulu Natal
MACE	Mother and Child in the Environment
MAP	The Men as Partners
NFP	National Family Policy
OrCHID	Optimum Child growth and development
PBFIIP	Play-Based Father-Infant Interaction Programme
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme

# CHAPTER 1

## SITUATING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

In the past decades, non-marital childbirths in South Africa and children raised in single-parent households have increased (Prioreshi, 2020). Consequently, many children are raised in single-mother households with the limited and sometimes no involvement of their fathers (Statistics South Africa, 2019). According to Castillo, and Fenzl-Crossman (2010), literature related to the involvement of fathers has increased. However, limited attention has been given to non-resident fathers' perceptions in parenting their children and the extent of their involvement (Trivedi and Bose, 2018).

The perceptions of non-resident fathers is essential to give insights into the nature and extent of the involvement. This study explores non-resident fathers' involvement in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), Durban, and their perceptions in parenting their children in single-mother households. The study focus is on exploring the roles and responsibilities of non-resident fathers' parenting. Another angle of this research will identify factors that influence lack of involvement and factors that can strengthen non-resident fathers' involvement.

### 1.2. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

#### 1.2.1. Background and Rationale of the study

Fathers' absence in parenting has dominated fatherhood literature in South Africa for a long time and some have critiqued this discourse (Salami and Okeke, 2018). The alternative view suggests that despite many fathers being unable to share residence with their children, they are involved in their children's lives. More involvement has been observed in the provision of financial support (Freitas, Silva, Coelho, Guedes, Lucena, and Costa, 2009). A study conducted by Raniga, Boecker, and Mthembu (2019) revealed that more than 80 percent of single mothers who participated in their study said they received monthly maintenance payment from their children's biological fathers. This has a positive impact for child development as well as the mother. Despite the financial support, the extent of their involvement remains unclear.

The participation of fathers in their children has a significant role in the wellbeing and health of children from birth (Van den Berg and Makusha, 2018). Evidence from research confirms that children aged 0-3 years are most vulnerable, and this is a substantial period for a child to respond to the environment, affectionateness, and responsive interactions with adults (Easterbrooks and Goldberg, 1984; Pancsofar and Vernon-Feagans, 2006; Del Carmen Huerta, Adema, Baxter, Lausten, and Waldfogel, 2013). Therefore, non-resident fathers' involvement in this significant stage of the child's development must be encouraged (Astone, and Peters, 2014; Makusha, 2018). Positive father-child interactions are associated with reducing cognitive delay, child weight gain, and early language skills development (Ellis, Kahn, Harris, McWilliams and Converse, 2017). Older children, are less likely to drop out of school or engage in risky behavior during adolescence if fathers are involved. This indicates the positive fathers' influence on the child's academic pathway and well-being (Anthes, 2010).

In South Africa, a significant number of children are raised by single mothers. In KwaZulu-Natal, 49,8% of children are raised by single-parent mothers (Hall and Sambu, 2019). The Situation Analysis Report (2016) indicates that Durban has the highest percentages of non-marital childbirths and the highest percentage of children living in single-parent mother households without the involvement of fathers. Single mother households are associated with lower educational levels and unemployment; consequently, they have an increased risk of poverty and poor mental health (Subban and Theron, 2016). This may impact the availability of resources for children's education, childcare, and health care needs (Jackson, Choi, and Preston, 2019). The effect of these challenges may cause children to feel unworthy, unloved, and unwanted, which may result in social isolation, loneliness, and aggressive behaviour as they grow older (Foster, Levine, and Williamson, 2005). Furthermore, the long-term impact of such childhood experiences might include criminal behaviour, unplanned pregnancy, and substance abuse (Peterson, 2009).

In single-mother households, fathers' support such as finances, emotional and active parenting can improve children's positive developmental outcomes, cognitive development, and reduce children's ill-behavior (Astone, and Peters, 2014). Children's development is influenced by multiple factors such as environment, nutrition, health care, and social factors such as protection from abuse and neglect, nurturing parenting. Involved fathers can play a protective role in their children's lives. With high rates of non-marital childbirths in South Africa, it is critical to understand how fathers who do not share residence with the mother support the

mother and the child despite the mother-father relationship status. Moreover, the available literature suggests that fathers' involvement in parenting appears to be less in young children (Opondo, Redshaw, Savage-McGlynn and Quigley, 2016).

### **1.2.2. Research problem statement**

Globally, fathers' involvement in parenting appears to be limited (Barker, Levtov, and Heilman, 2018). Most research tends to generalize to refer to fathers' involvement in parenting children, thereby indicating any child under 18 years. However, the first 1000 days of the child's life are critical as they shape the child's future development and belief systems (Rivkees, 2019; Pérez-Escamilla, 2013). Moreover, their participation in parenting children aged 0-3 years was found unsatisfactory compared to older children (Statistics South Africa, 2016). This finding suggests that a child's age may influence paternal involvement. The historical inheritance that women mostly care for children from birth and the general belief that women are natural caregivers has defined women as more involved than men in parenting (Heilman, Levtov, van der Gaag, Hassink and Barker, 2017).

With these findings of the previous researchers, the researcher of this study intends to examine the perceptions of non-resident fathers towards parenting and to explore their parenting roles, responsibilities and activities for children aged 0-3 years. According to Makusha, Richter, and Chikovore (2012), psychological non-readiness or financial constraints, poverty, and age influence the level of fathers' involvement in actively playing a role in child care and parenting.

As highlighted earlier, the stage of 0-3 years is mainly a critical and vulnerable period for children's development and father-child bond (rivkees Makusha, 2018). Most research tends to generalize to refer to fathers' involvement in parenting children, thereby indicating any child under 18 years. However, the first 1000 days of the child's life are critical as they shape the child's future development and belief systems (Rivkees, 2019; Pérez-Escamilla, 2013). Early development is a sensitive stage for parenting and laying ideal foundations for optimum health, cognitive development, productivity, and amicable relationships with others (Britto, 2017). The quality of the relationship between the non-resident father, mother, and their extended families is associated with the father's involvement in the child's life (Ryan, Kalil and Ziol-Guest, 2008).

The construction of men as financial providers is a dominant discourse in the literature, and it gives an obscured view of the father's parenting role. Furthermore, it undermines non-financial child caregiving roles, and responsibilities fathers fulfill (Van den Berg and Makusha 2018). With the high unemployment rate in South Africa, many men are unable to meet this financial dependent responsibility and may try to avoid criticism by distancing themselves from their children (Khunou, 2018).

It is essential to describe the nature and the multidimensional ways of parenting beyond financial support from the fathers themselves. With many children in South Africa raised in single-mother households, how fathers maintain and support their children, is important to explore.

### **1.2.3. The focus of the study**

This research was nested in the “Optimum child growth and Development- Building thriving communities through risk reduction from impacts of nutrition, environment, and social constructs” study. The OrCHID flagship intends to implement a series of interventions; including neurocognitive stimulation, dietary interventions and locally developed nutrition strategies, parental support programmes, as well as the development of smartphone applications that will allow communities to understand their environmental exposure and take appropriate action to reduce exposure. Researches that are conducted within the OrCHID project explores household factors that influence nutrition and dietary choices and approaches to parenting; particularly the role of the father through focus groups. The researches create a multidisciplinary study that brings all the different aspects together instead of them being broken up into silos. OrCHID plans to achieve all of this by using their two existing cohorts; their almost six-year-old Mother and Child in the Environment (MACE) cohort that looks at ambient pollution and child respiratory health, as well as the SONKE cohort (based in northern KwaZulu-Natal) that focuses on antenatal pesticide exposure and its neurobehavioral health outcomes on offspring. A total of 300 children from these two cohorts participates in the engagement of child, mother, parental, household and community levels.

The recruitment of this study was conducted through King Edward Hospital where the main study was based at. King Edward Hospital is a tertiary hospital situated under the eThekwinidistrict of KwaZulu-Natal. The study focused on non-resident fathers to children of unmarried single mothers who participated in the main study which was based in King Edward Hospital.

Participants of this study were recruited from the list of fathers to children of unmarried single mothers who participated in the main study.

### **1.3. THE RESEARCH SETTING**

Because this research is nested in the “Optimum child growth and Development- Building thriving communities through risk reduction from impacts of nutrition, environment, and social constructs” study, recruitment was conducted through King Edward Hospital where the main study is based at. The geographical demarcation of this study is Durban at King Edward Hospital which is a tertiary hospital situated under the eThekweni-district of KwaZulu-Natal in Umbilo, Ward 33. The hospital serves more than 22 000 outpatients from the surroundings monthly and has 852 beds to accommodate inpatients.

The study focused on non-resident fathers to children of unmarried single mothers who participated in the main study which was based in King Edward Hospital. Participants of this study were recruited from the list of fathers to children of unmarried single mothers who participated in the main study.

### **1.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main aim of this study was to examine the involvement of non-resident fathers and their perception in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households. The study has 5 main research objectives which are:

- 1.4.1. Examine the perceptions of non-resident fathers towards parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households.
- 1.4.2. Explore the roles that non-resident fathers have in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households.
- 1.4.3. Explore the responsibilities that non-resident fathers have in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households
- 1.4.4. Identify factors influencing non-resident fathers' lack of involvement of children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households.
- 1.4.5. Identify factors that can strengthen the involvement of non-resident fathers in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households.

The above objectives were achieved by answering the outlined key research questions, using non-resident fathers as participants.

## **1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- 1.5.1. What are the perceptions of non-resident fathers towards parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households?
- 1.5.2. What are the roles that non-resident fathers have in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households?
- 1.5.3. What are the responsibilities that non-resident fathers have in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households?
- 1.5.4. What are the factors that influence non-resident fathers' lack of involvement of children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households?
- 1.5.5.** What are the factors that can strengthen the involvement of non-resident fathers in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households?

## **1.6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

To understand the involvement of non-resident fathers and their perception of parenting children aged 0-3 years from single mother household in eThekweni, the Social constructionism theory underpinned this study. This theory was introduced by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman who were inspired by several thinkers, including Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and George Herbert Mead in 1966 (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Social constructionism places great emphasis on everyday interactions between people and how they use language to construct their reality. It regards the social practices people engage in as the focus of enquiry (Andrews, 2012).

**Diagram 1:** The Social Construction of Reality: A schematic diagram representing Social Constructionism Theory by Berger and Luckmann.

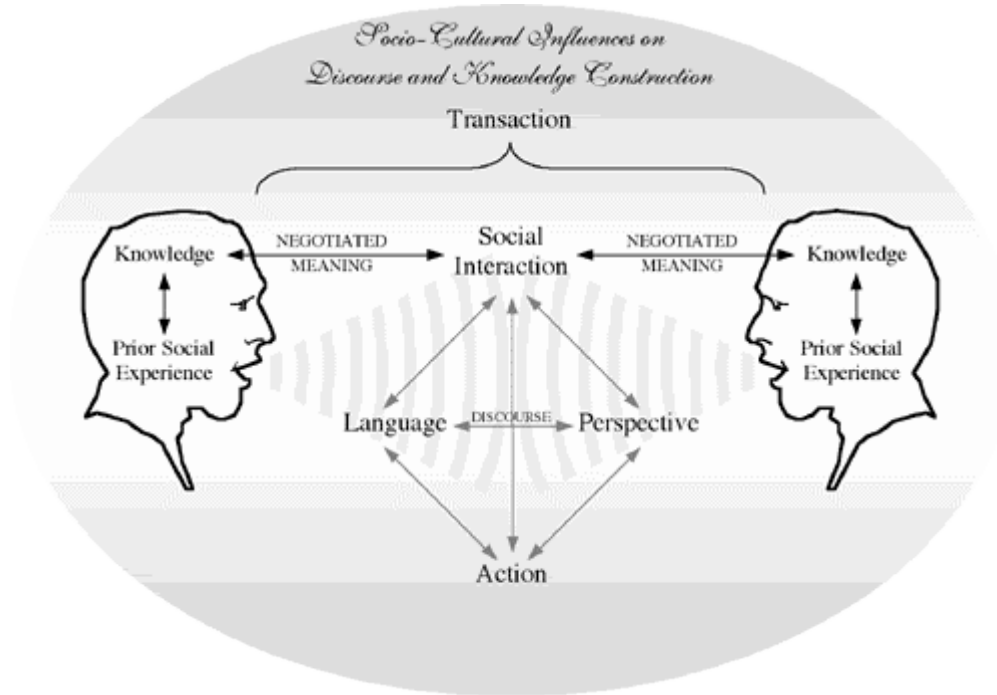


(Source: Adapted from Berger and Luckmann, 1966)

The above diagram explains the Social Constructionism theory. The understanding, significance and meaning are created not within the individual, but in coordination with other human beings.

This theory is relevant for this study since the nature and form of parenting is socially constructed. The theory provides a theoretical lens to analyze father's social and cultural parenting practices.

**Diagram 2:** The socio-cultural influences on discourse and knowledge construction



(Source: <http://sarezy.blogspot.com/2007/03/social-constructivism.html>)

According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), what we believe is real is shaped by our social interactions and our life experiences with other people. In relation to this study, how non-resident fathers' perceive parenting is shaped by their lived experiences and social interactions. Therefore, the researcher intends to understand better the perceptions of non-resident fathers that resulted from each of their lived experiences and how this has contributed to their parenting and involvement towards children from single-mother households.

The researcher also intended to get a clear insight on the social interaction process which influences the overt behavior and the state of mind of the non-resident father through Social Constructionism theory. Using this theory, the researcher aimed to associate non-resident fathers' interactions with other individuals, groups and culture with how they participate in parenting their children from single mother households.

## **1.7. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS**

In this section the researcher discuss the research design which consist of the research paradigm, the research approach and the research strategy. The section will further entail the research method which comprises of the study population, sampling, data collection, data analysis and ethical consideration.

### **1.7.1. Research design**

According to Polit and Beck (2008) a research design is a technique or a general plan used to describe procedures and structure a study in order to gather and analyze information in a systematic method. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) emphasized the importance of clearly formulating the research problem prior selecting the best design that will respond to the research questions. In this study a qualitative research approach was used. Qualitative researchers strive to make sense of feelings, experiences, social situations, or phenomena as they occur in the real world and therefore want to study them in their natural setting (Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter, 2006). The research design for this study was exploratory considering the nature and the focus of the study. Semi-structured interview questions were used to explore the limited qualitative literature on non-resident fathers' participation in parenting their children from single-mother households.

#### **1.7.1.1. Research paradigm**

According to Kuhn (1970) the research paradigm is a set of common beliefs, viewpoints or general framework shared between social scientists about how the research problems should be understood and addressed. Interpretivism paradigm was used in this study. The ultimate proposal of interpretivism research paradigm is that "the meaning of the objected reality can be created, negotiated, sustained, and modified" (Schwandt, 2003). This mean beliefs and attitudes are shaped by what is happening in reality and with time to time, the beliefs and attitudes can be changed if the influence of the surroundings changes and can be maintained if the surroundings remained the same. What the researcher tried to do in this study was to find out about the reality of non-resident fathers where they live in and how their beliefs and thoughts have been shaped towards parenting and to which extent they are involved in parenting their children from single mother households.

### **1.7.1.2. Research approach**

In this study, a qualitative, exploratory research design was used to explore the depth and complexity inherent in a phenomenon (Polit and Beck, 2008). A qualitative research approach was chosen since it is perceived as a realistic action that is performed in a real-world setting (Burns and Grove, 2005). Exploratory lens of it aimed to gain new insights, discovering new ideas and increasing knowledge pertaining the involvement of non-resident fathers in parenting their children from single-mother households (Patton 2002).

### **1.7.2. Research methods**

This study used the qualitative research method for data collection. A qualitative research method aims to understand the daily perceptions and experiences of people about the studied phenomenon. Below is discussion of the research methods of this study which includes the study population, the sampling of participants, the preparation of data collection and data collection method, data analysis, the trustworthiness as well as the ethical considerations of the study.

#### **1.7.2.1. Study population**

The population is a theoretically identified combination by which our sampling elements are drawn and to which we want to generalize our findings (Babbie and Mouton, 2012). The population of this study is non-resident fathers of children aged 0-3 years. The target population of this study is non-resident fathers to children aged 0-3 years whose partners attended phase one of the flagship project at King Edward Hospital (KEH). King Edward Hospital is a tertiary level hospital that services the whole of Kwa-Zulu Natal and other part of Eastern Cape. This hospital situated in Umbilo area, ward 33 under eThekweni-district of KwaZulu-Natal.

#### **1.7.2.2. Sampling**

Purposive sampling was used to ensure that the researcher selected participants with specific characteristics that were needed by the researcher. The characteristics included being a non-resident father to a child aged 0-3 years of an unmarried mother who attended phase one of the flagship project at King Edward Hospital. Out of 50 participants who met the criteria, the

research assistant managed to reach at least 15 participants who agreed to be contacted by the researcher, while the other 35 participants were not reachable telephonically. 15 participants were then telephonically recruited to participate in the study. The sampling was done to explore the involvement and the perceptions of non-resident fathers in parenting their children from single-mother households. Once the data was gathered, it was coded to identify emerging themes and also to establish how the data relate to the objectives of the study.

#### **1.7.2.3. Preparing of data collection and data collection method**

In this study, the researcher prepared and utilized semi-structured interviews to understand the involvement and the perceptions of non-resident fathers in parenting their children. The interviews were prepared in English and isiZulu to accommodate participants who preferred sharing information in their mother tongue. The researcher conducted telephonic interviews with a total number of 15 non-resident fathers between the ages of 24 and 42. Interviews were audio-recorded.

#### **1.7.2.4. Data analysis**

All interview audios were translated into English version and transcribed. The researcher then assigned preliminary codes and categorized data according to themes that were the true reflection of the study objectives across the different interviews. Under each theme, more headings and subheading were formulated to align data on the right category.

Chapter 3 of this dissertation further sets out the research design and methodology.

#### **1.7.2.5. Ethical considerations**

In following research ethical norms, the researcher is expected to suggest a set of moral principles which defines behavioural expectations of all research stages (De Vos, 2005). In this case, the researcher suggested informed consent, access and acceptance, privacy and confidentiality.

## **Informed Consent**

The researcher telephonically informed all research participants the study purpose of exploring the involvement and perceptions of non-resident fathers in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households in eThekweni, South Africa. Prior starting each interview, the researcher sent through the consent forms through emails and WhatsApp that explains the duration of the study, potential risks and benefits to the research participants. Participants were then requested to sign informed consent forms to give their consent and send them back to the researcher.

### **1.7.2.5.1. Access and acceptance**

The ethical consideration of granting the permission before conducting the study was respected. The researcher honored all the steps of applying for ethical clearance and submitted to the study supervisor. The ethical clearance was granted which allowed the researcher to proceed with collecting data of this study.

### **1.7.2.5.2. Privacy**

In protecting participants' right to privacy during telephonic interviews, the researcher assured the participants that all data that they have contributed and recorded will be kept in a safe place where no one would have an access to it. Participants were also assured that information that they have shared will be kept confidential between the researcher and the participant and will not be shared outside the study unless they have given consent for it to be shared. Participants were also told to disclose only the information that they feel comfortable with sharing.

### **1.7.2.5.3. Confidentiality**

The researcher kept all the participants' identities confidential. The device used to record the interviews was protected by the user password to prevent anyone from accessing it. All hard copies (notes) of data that was collected during the interviews was kept in a safe cabinet that was locked at all times. The researcher further used anonymities instead of real names to ensure there is no data that can be linked with the study participants.

#### **1.7.2.6. Trustworthiness of the study**

To ensure credibility of the study, the researcher used member-checking. The researcher contacted twelve out of fifteen participants to validate and comment on the themes and categories that were read to them through telephonic conversation. None of the research participants was interested in receiving the findings.

To ensure transferability, the researcher provided a clear research methodology that was used and detailed characteristics of the participants to allow the potential user to judge transferability if the study were to be repeated using the same methodology and characteristics of the research participants.

To ensure dependability, the researcher has documented a solid of data that was collected to be used over time and in differing conditions. The solid data includes translated and transcribed semi-structured interviews. All recording are kept in safe place for referencing as well.

To ensure confirmability of this study, no stone was left unopened from the purpose of the study up to data analysis processes to allow the auditor to validate the final stage of dependability which establishes the confirmability of the inquiry. An adequate audit trail is left to enable the auditor to determine if the conclusions, interpretations, and recommendations can be traced to their sources and if they are supported by the inquiry.

### **1.8. DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

Defining concepts in research is very useful. The necessity of it, is to develop the common understanding of key concepts used between the research and the reader, avoid any unnecessary uncertainty and misconception (Maree, 2010). The researcher will define the key concepts with the aim of avoiding any misinterpretation of the concepts.

#### **1.8.1. Non-resident father**

Non-resident fathers are defined as biological fathers of children with whom they do not share the same home address. As well as those fathers who are divorced or separated and those who were never married to (or have never lived with) the child's mother, this potentially includes those who are incarcerated, and those who are refused contact with their children because of

court orders (Jenkins, and Lyons, 2006). Van den Berg and Makusha (2018) defined “Non-resident fathers” as considered by Statistics South Africa to be those who are away from home for four or more days per week and they may still be involved in a child’s life. In this study, non-resident father refers to a biological father who does not live with his child in the same premises.

### **1.8.2. Father involvement**

Father involvement was first developed by Lamb and colleagues, who identifies three key components of father involvement. The three components are accessibility, engagement, and responsibility. Accessibility/availability refers to time that fathers dedicate to their children, this also includes indirect interacting; engagement/interaction refers to time that fathers dedicate to physically spend with their children; and responsibility refers to assisting in arranging resources and activities for children (Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, and Levine, 1985). Two years later, Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, and Levine (1987) further expanded availability from only physical but also to psychological availability of fathers, and further expanded responsibility explanation to the emotional engagement of fathers with their children.

Van den Berg and Makusha (2018) defined father involvement in two different ways. Firstly, it was defined as “the practical, financial or emotional engagement of a father in the life of his children. Parents may be involved in positive ways such as providing care, or negative ways such as harsh parenting.” Secondly, it was explained as “Involvement is used as an overarching term for several categories of interaction between fathers and children that include but are not limited to emotional support, communication, financial support and caregiving.” In this study, father involvement refers to direct participation in the child's various activities, playing with the child, communicating with the child, responding to emotional, health, safety, nutrition and educational needs of the child such participating in school-related activities and being in contact with the school.

## **1.9. THESIS OUTLINE**

The structure of this research report comprises the following five chapters:

### **Chapter 1: Situating the research problem**

The first chapter of this report presented an introduction and general orientation which entails the background and rationale of the research report. The problem statement, focus of the study, aims and objectives, research questions, the research setting and theoretical framework is also introduced. Chapter 1 further explain the research design and methods which comprises of the study population, sampling of participants, preparing of data collection and data collection method, method of data analysis, trustworthiness and the ethical considerations in the study. Lastly, this chapter defines the concepts and an outline of all the chapters of this dissertation.

### **Chapter 2: Literature review: Involvement of non-resident fathers and their perception in parenting children 0-3 from single mother households**

This chapter introduce and highlights the review of the existing literature on the involvement and perceptions of non-resident fathers in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households. The researcher presented the review in the following subheadings:

- International perspectives on father involvement in parenting
- Involvement of non-resident fathers and its impact on children's well-being
- Intervention programs that seek to support and encourage father's involvement in parenting
- Participation of fathers in parenting very young children
- Education and children in single-mother households
- Child discipline
- Patterns of non-resident father involvement in parenting (involved fathers; absent fathers; undisclosed and unwanted fathers)
- Social welfare history on the involvement of non-resident fathers
- The legislative framework that promotes the involvement of non-resident fathers in South Africa

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

This chapter discussed in detail the research paradigm, research design, sampling strategies, data collection instruments and data collection process. It further discussed data analysis, measures that were used to ensure ethical consideration and trustworthiness of the study.

### **Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation**

The fourth chapter of this dissertation focuses on the research process and data analysis. The biographic information of the participants was detailed to clarify all the demographic characteristics. Data findings were further interpreted and presented through thematic analysis and tables. Furthermore, the conclusion remarks of this chapter were also presented.

### **Chapter 5: Conclusion, recommendations and limitations**

The last chapter of this dissertation presents the overall conclusion that is made based on the data findings. It further provides the recommendations by the researcher and discuss the limitations of the study.

#### **1.10. CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented an introduction, background and rationale of the study as well a summary of methods used to conduct the study. This chapter presents highlights: the research problem; the research setting, the aims and objectives of the study; the research questions; the theoretical framework; the research design and methodology. It also has the dissertation outline and the definition of key concepts.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

In this section, I present a critical review of literature about the fathering in single mother households and the role fathers play in child caregiving. In line with social constructivism theory, a theoretical framework for this study, parenting is seen as social constructed. The researcher observe social interactions of non-resident fathers and how they shape their thoughts and attitudes towards parenting their children who live in single mother households. With the choice of this theory, the researcher aimed to understand better how other individuals, groups and culture of non-resident fathers can influence them in behaving a certain way towards parenting. To achieve this, I critically discuss the factors that limit the participation of fathers in parenting, factors that encourage fathers' involvement, as well the legislation that relate to parenting.

In South Africa, the dominant discourse is that fathers especially African fathers are absent from their children's lives (The Situation Analysis Report, 2016). The view that fathers are not physically or emotionally involved in their children's lives has been labelled the deficit paradigm (Smit, 2004). This view has been criticized for failing to recognize various ways fathers participate in their children's lives (Richter, 2003). Parenting is influences by a range of social, cultural, religious and economic factors. The counter argument is that many fathers are involved in parenting, however, more research must be conducted to explore various ways through which fathers participate in their children's lives (Henwood and Procter, 2003).

There is also limited data on African father's perception towards parenting and understanding their roles in parenting (Levtov, Barker, Contreras-Urbina, Heilman, and Verma, 2014). However, Mercer (2015) argued the discourse is changing and there is a recognition that fathers do participate in parenting. Non-resident father's participation has been proven through the National Income Dynamics Study data analysis shows that 46% of children receive financial support from non-resident fathers (Hatch and Posel, 2018).

Many of the fathers believe that they have a role to play in the child's upbringing, however, they are not very clear about what specific roles and responsibilities they have (Bhana, and

Nkani, 2014). Therefore, research focusing on the involvement of fathers and their roles in child development is needed to establish an evidence-based argument for policy reforms and social programs that support and strengthen the involvement of non-resident fathers (Trivedi and Bose, 2018).

## **2.2.INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON FATHER INVOLVEMENT IN PARENTING**

According to De Wit, Louw, and Louw (2014), “The concept of father involvement is regarded as a multidimensional construct that includes affective, cognitive and ethical components, inclusive of indirect forms of involvement”. Involvement of a father refers to quality relationship with the child that strengthens emotional and physical engagement between the father and the child (Kruk, 2010). Lamb, Pleck and Levine (1986) further explains father involvement in three basic components which are potential availability for interaction, interaction in direct contact and responsibility of ensuring that resources of nurturing the child are available. Öztürk and Aksoy (2020) conducted a study to observe the effects of father involvement through the Play-Based Father-Infant Interaction Programme (PBFIIIP) on the interactional behaviour of fathers and infants. The research findings suggested that when fathers and children are given a chance to interact, children benefits as their affective-responsive behaviour increase while their negative behaviour decrease.

Globally, the perspective about the role of fathers and their involvement in the separated families have changed over the past few decades. Developing literature has tried to discover the practice of co-parenting through identifying the diversity of separated parents and the perspectives of non-resident fathers (Wilson, 2006). This is a result of a drastic increase in numbers for children who live in single-parent households around the world and psychosocial concerns in children such as their behaviour in relation to this transformation after mother - father separation (Allan, Hawker, and Crow, 2001). Developing polices has emerged to prioritise child’s best interest through co-parenting, while the operational laws and systems encourages healthy communication between parents who are co-parenting. The legal knowledge of co-parenting suggest that children should be in contact with their non-resident fathers if they want to, provided their contact has no form of abuse that may negatively affect children. Unhealthy communication has been associated with selfishness and bitterness which may have negative outcomes on the child’s upbringing (Bronte-Tinkew, and Horowitz (2010).

Irrespective of operational laws that enforces non-resident fathers to remain involved and play their roles as biological father, their involvement is still found limited. The limited involvement has been associated with fighting an unescapable pain of being separated with their children. Some non-resident fathers may try to deal with their emotional stressors of separation by avoiding any form of contact with their children which may remind them of their ex-partners (Lund, 1987). Braver, and O'Connell's (1998) investigation identified single mothers as "controlling freaks" and "gatekeepers" who also deprives non-resident fathers from continuing to play their roles as biological fathers. Men hate being controlled, especially by single mothers. The sense of being controlled makes them feel powerless and may try to escape this kind of feeling by avoiding contact with their children who live in single-mother households (Trinder, Beek and Connolly, 2002). Another concern from non-resident father's point of view which limits them from taking accountability of fulfilling their children's needs has been the uncertainty if mothers do disclose to their children about the financial support that they provide for their children and if the money is used for the good reasons (Bradshaw, Stimson, Skinner and Williams, 1999).

Research on three measures of non-resident fathers' involvement, maternal parenting and child development in low-income single-mother families by Choi, Palmer, and Pyun (2014) and the study on non-resident fathers' relationships with their secondary school age children, determinants and children's mental health outcomes conducted by Flouri (2006) are some of the studies conducted to explore the extent of non-resident father's involvement in a child's life.

Globally, the perspective of father involvement may be interpreted in many different ways. Father involvement goes beyond the provision of only financial needs, but emotional and physical engagement in a child's life. Fathers who does not afford to provide material things may still be involved in other parental responsibilities of fatherhood. The following topic will engage fathers' involvement in parenting, specifically very young children.

### **2.3.PARTICIPATION BENEFITS OF FATHERS IN PARENTING VERY YOUNG CHILDREN**

According to Barker, Levtov, and Heilman, (2018) children whose fathers are involved in their care from an early age have secure attachments to them. Bowlby, (1969); Harlow, (1958) and Lorenz, (1935) explained this using Evolutionary theory of attachment. They suggest that children come into the world biologically pre-programmed to form attachments with others, because this will help them to survive. This theory also suggests 0-5 years as a critical period for developing an attachment and if an attachment has not developed during this period, then the child will suffer from irreversible developmental consequences, such as reduced intelligence and increased aggression.

Although mothers seem as the primary attachment figures to their children, children have the ability to establish attachment to different caregivers at once (Mesman, Minter, and Angged, 2016). The second most important attachment figure to a child is the father. This attachment is mostly demonstrated through play interactions which plays a magnificent role in encouraging the infant's exploration (Grossmann, Grossmann, Kindler and Zimmermann, 2008). The role of the father in child development have been observed slightly moving from being a breadwinner through gender-role model to the nurturing figure to the child (Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid and Bremberg, 2008).

There is greater influence and more benefits when fathers are involved in nurturing the infant and development of psychological security. Children raised under involved fathers are well in handling problematic situations, respond more maturely to unfamiliar people, are better solvers of worrying situations, are more interested in exploring new environments, and more confident in branching out in them (Brown, Schoppe-Sullivan, Mangelsdorf, and Neff, 2010). An attachment serves four functions in a toddler's life, which are providing sense of security, regulating sense of arousal, promoting the expression of feelings and communication, and serving as a base for explorations (Davies, 2010).

The involvement of fathers from a very young age comes with benefits. Children with involved fathers experience overall life satisfaction and they are less likely to experience stressors that might cause depression, emotional drains, anxiety, fear, and guilt (Jones and Mosher, 2013). Children of involved fathers are more tolerant of stress-related issues. They grow up with more

problem-solving skills, friendly to others, adapt quickly in unfamiliar places, and have higher emotion management skills (Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklais and Bremberg, 2008). Panter-Brick, Burgess, Eggerman, McAllister, Pruett, and Leckman, (2014) ascertain that children with involved fathers are more likely to believe they have full control of their lives and have greater ability to minimize life challenges. For these reasons, it is thoughtful for non-resident fathers to prioritize spending quality time with their children and be more involved in parental activities to contribute to the development of children (Kılıç and Şahin, 2018).

The above literature has discussed how fathers' participation in parenting benefits young children's upbringing from different countries. The next paragraph discusses the participation of fathers specifically in South Africa.

#### **2.4.THE PARTICIPATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN FATHERS IN PARENTING YOUNG CHILDREN**

Richter and Morrel (2006) suggested in their study South Africa as one of the countries with a large number of absent fathers with minimal involvement and fewer contact with their children. According to Statistics South Africa, in 2017 South Africa had almost half of homes with children aged 0-4 years whose biological fathers were non-residents. With a number of historical factors contributing to this discourse, socio-cultural, labour migration, oppressed political system, colonialism and apartheid were the main roots of father's limited involvement (Ramphela 1993). Over the years, these factors has deteriorated the respect and authority that African men had within their families (Lesejane, 2006). Furthermore, Hosegood and Madhavan (2010); Richter, Chikovore, and Makusha (2010) associated the roots of limited involvement with death, low rates of marriage, cultural, maternal and circumstantial gatekeeping.

Historically and traditionally, African culture has long observed fathers as respected figures in the families (Lesejane, 2006). They have fulfilled numerous roles including those of a breadwinner and a protector of women and children (Tanfer and Mott, 1997). They have been physically present to provide financially but emotionally absent when they are found to be lacking a parental attachment with their children (Clowes, Ratele and Shefer, 2013). Continuously, their involvement and participation has been largely perceived and framed around provision of material things such as maintenance payment (Raniga, Boecker, and Mthembu, 2019). In poor communities with very limited resources, they command respect

because of their ability to provide (Lindsay and Miescher, 2003). When they fail to provide for their children, their involvement is discouraged and they are pushed away (Roy, 2004). Other fatherly involvement such as showing care, involving in recreational activities and spending time with the child are given less importance (Mavungu, 2013).

Non-resident fathers' involvement has been largely associated with the consequences of dissolution for previously cohabitant relationships (Jenkins, 2009). Gibson-Davis, Edin and McLanahan (2005) suggested that many children born out of wedlock will live apart from their fathers regardless of attempts by either parents or initiated government programs that encourage the involvement of non-resident fathers. Affirming to that, three years later, Richter and Morrell (2008) made an estimation of 50 percent of South African men who have children out of wedlock and do not have daily contact with their children. Makusha, and Richter, (2016) conducted a study that further associated the roots of contact between the non-resident father and the child with the biological mother of the child. It was evident from this study that Zulu mothers can be facilitators of non-resident fathers' involvement and contact with their children. Non-resident fathers who had a good relationships with the mothers of their children have a good access to their children and have all the authority to be involved in parenting their children. Unlike non-resident fathers who had bad relationships with the mothers of their children, struggled to access their children.

In African ethnic groups, non-resident fathers' involvement has also been associated with fulfilling some of the cultural practices so they can be recognised as legitimate fathers to their children (Makusha, Richter and Bhana, 2012; Makusha and Richter, 2016). Fathers who have not fulfilled the cultural practices such is Inhlawulo/Ilobolo, are deprived paternal involvement and accessing their children (Richter and Morrel, 2006). The majority of South African children has not been introduced to their paternal families, this becomes a challenge to the South African cultures who believe that a child need to be formally introduced to the paternal family so the child can be fully recognised by the father for any kind of involvement such as financial maintenance, parental visits and other basic needs. In such instances where mothers have not introduced children to their fathers, children remains unrecognised and in instances where mothers have not disclosed biological fathers to their children, fathers remains unknown (Manyatshe 2013).

Extended family especially in rural areas continues to practise the collective fatherhood in parenting (Gallinetti, 2009). Traditional African culture is rooted in an organic relationship and communal life where people treat others as members of their own families. The saying “*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*” originated from the Zulu African village which explains how cultured people live a collective life which naturally oblige you to take care of other people who does not belong to your own family (Mkhize 2006). In South African culture, fatherhood role has always been exercised not only by the biological father but also economic and social fathers in situations of formal and informal adoption (Beardshaw, 2006). Many instances are observed where social fathers step in to become active in fulfilling the expected child-rearing roles of a father including responsibilities and duties (Sullivan 2000; Bzostek 2008). Many children have significant relationship with these ‘social fathers’ such as uncles, stepfathers, aunts, grandfathers and other relatives who fulfil the role of father than their biological fathers (Mkhize, 2004). In other instances, not only the extended family that fulfil the expected child-rearing roles, but the community as well. Teachers and priests are observed being available as father-figures where fathers desert their children without even bothering about the consequences of their absence (Denis and Ntsimane, 2006).

Over the years, developing literature has observed an improvement in the participation of fathers in their children’s lives. They have been participating in educational needs such as paying of school fees (Wanjohi, 2007). Slogrove, Esser, Cotton, Speert, Kollmann, Singer and Bettinger (2017) observed the involvement of non-resident fathers in clinic visits and availing themselves at birth of their children. However, there’s limited literature specifically on South African ‘non-resident’ father’s role in parenting young children (Levtov, Barker, Contreras-Urbina, Heilman, and Verma, 2014). De Wit, Louw, and Louw (2014) suggests that regardless of the fathers’ absenteeism in the household where their children are residing, their involvement and contact remains. Some non-resident fathers who are also non-custodial fathers are reported to desire active involvement in the daily care of their children (Enderstein and Boonzaier, 2015). This was contrary to the suggestion by Williams (2010) that the majority of men lack the skill, time, and motivation to be active fathers and are less than willing to be involved in the lives of their children. William’s suggestion was congruent to Morrell and Richter (2006) who suggested most South African fathers are not proud to be fathers and are not willing to participate in the lives of their children.

With all the literature provided above regarding the participation of South African fathers in

parenting, it shows that the involvement of fathers contributes to the child's health and wellbeing. It also shows that children are negatively affected when their fathers are not involved. The researcher made use of social constructionism in looking how non-resident fathers use language to construct their reality in parenting children from single mother households. The lens on how they engage on social practices as the focus of enquiry was also observed (Andrews, 2012). On the next topic the literature will enlighten how does the level of involvement of fathers affect their children's well-being.

## **2.5. INVOLVEMENT OF NON-RESIDENT FATHERS AND IT IMPACT ON CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING**

Department of Social Development (2012) ascertains the absence and limited involvement of non-resident biological fathers as the primary concern in many households of South Africa. The concern is around the negative effect this may pose as father involvement and support has been linked to healthy development in children, positive mental health, social competence, self-esteem, academic achievement, and healthy peer relationships (McNeely and Barber, 2010). In this study, the involvement of fathers in parenting entails direct participation in the child's various activities, playing with the child, communicating with the child, responding to emotional, health, safety, nutrition and educational needs of the child such participating in school-related activities and being in contact with the school. Using the social constructionism theory that underpins this study, the researcher learns more about social practices that fathers engage in as the focus of enquiry as the literature ascertains their absence and limited involvement in many households. Brown and Roman, (2019) conducted a study on primary caregiver's (mothers and grandmothers) perceptions of fathers' role and involvement in provision of care to their children, but fathers were not interviewed in order to understand their perceptions regarding related matters.

A large body of research has documented the disadvantages of children raised in single-mother households without the involvement of fathers' relative to children raised in two-parent homes (Barajas, 2011). The effects of growing up in single-mother families appear to go beyond economics, increasing the risk of children dropping out of school, disconnecting from the labour force, and becoming teen parents (Mather, 2010). The needs of children raised under these circumstances tend to be neglected by non-resident fathers. They may suffer from numerous difficulties such as anxiety, dejection, trauma, psychological, social, and emotional

needs (McLanahan and Sandefur, 2009). Opondo, Redshaw, Savage-McGlynn and Quigley, (2016) suggested that not the amount of time that fathers are engaged in childcare or domestic tasks in the household but the psychological and emotional aspects of paternal involvement in a child's infancy that is more powerful in influencing later child behaviour. Although there are extensive social changes that have emerged because of evolution in the past decades, children from both intact and divorced families reported that the highest levels of father involvement were in instrumental functions (Finley and Schwartz, 2006; Choi, Palmer and Pyu, 2014; Helman, Malherbe, and Kaminer, 2019). Below different patterns of father involvement will be discussed.

### **2.5.1. Involved fathers**

The legacy of apartheid and labour migration have had a major influence on the patterns of family formation and involvement of fathers as men become highly mobile and becomes non-residents (Hosegood and Timaeus, 2005). Most of the literature that was reviewed tend not to clarify the involvement of children according to age groups. Fathers' involvement patterns appear to be described using the blanket term of 'children' and does not categorise them by age, gender, culture and social class. Trivedi and Bose (2018) conducted a study exploring fatherhood and roles of a father in children's upbringing. The findings suggest leisure as an important tool in strengthen the relationship between the non-resident father and the child. Models such as the standard contact, fifty-fifty care, daytime-only contact, holiday-only contact are used by involved non-resident fathers who have interest in spending time with their children (Ferro, 2004; Ricci, 1980; Caruana and Smyth, 2004).

However, there is evidence that suggests fathers tend to be involved more when children are older compared to when they are young (Heilman, et al 2017). Not more than 29% of young African children live with both biological parents and 46% live with their mothers only but not their fathers. These figures emphasize the limited presence of biological fathers in the lives of their children at young age (Hall and Sambu, 2019). Demography of South Africa's children suggest that fathers who live with their children are more involved in their children's daily activities than those who do not live with them. Those who live with them can enhance their children's cognitive development and self-discipline (Cabrera, Ryan, Mitchell, Shannon, and Tamis-LeMond, 2008). With the non-resident fathers, the family provision of resources is set to be an instrumental and primary role (Lewaks, Rich, and Roman, 2018). If this role is

effective, it has the potential to enhance the socio-economic wellbeing of the child and family. Instrumental roles are concerned with the provision of physical resources such as food, clothing, and shelter (Peterson, 2009). Choi, Palmer, and Pyu (2014) suggest that parenting and financial support from a non-resident father can have a good impact on a child's intellectual development.

### **2.5.2. Absent fathers**

The explanation of who is the absent father in the South African context can be very complicated. The explanation has been complicated by who migrant labour system that forced men to be away from their homes whereas fathers who are not part of the same household as their children are regarded as being absent (Posel and Casale, 2003). The consequences for children living in households with a migrant parent goes beyond having emotional and behavioral problems, they are also more likely to experience frequent illnesses, chronic illness, compared to children living in households where both parents are present (Heymann, Flores-Macias, Hayes, Kennedy, Lahaie and Earle, 2009). “The legacy of apartheid, unemployment, poverty and inequality in post-apartheid South Africa, gender inequality, and the burden of HIV/AIDS and violence-related mortality may have negatively affected family and parental practices with a significant number of children growing up without biological fathers either through premature death or abandonment” (Ratele, Shefer, and Clowes, 2012). Many other factors contributing to father absence in early childhood development includes separation, divorce, maintenance, race, unplanned pregnancy and lack of fathering skills (Madhavan, Richter, Norris and Hosegood, 2014; Salami and Okeke, 2018; Van den Berg and Makusha, 2018; Hall and Posel, 2019).

Fathers' education, mental state and age may not be ruled out of the factors that affects father's involvement and enacting their roles as care givers (Trivedi and Bose, 2018). Non-resident fathers reports higher depression symptoms during this period (According to Garfi eld, Duncan and Rutsohn, 2014). Black fathers may be at higher risk of depression and other poor mental health outcomes caused by different experienced stressors during the transition to fatherhood, this may result to them having a limited involvement in parenting (Anderson, Kohler, Letiecq, 2005). According to Morrell (2006) fathers are referred as absent when they are present but not caring. The African man is expected to be engaged and take responsibility in child care during the rearing period of his child.

Limited involvement is also associated with material, structural, cultural and relational factors. The non-resident fathers' role is often perceived within the lens of financial provision (Helman, Malherbe, and Kaminer, 2019; Williams, 2010). Non-resident fathers may view financial and material provision as fulfilling their fatherhood role, as this is socially perceived by the society (Khunou, 2008). Now that men are not the only people who contribute with material and financial provision, Dowd (2000) redefined fatherhood roles from being a "male breadwinner" to becoming more involved in "nurturing" children. Fathers who fail to provide for their children are deprived from accessing and interacting with their children (Patel and Mavungu, 2016). Experiencing parental divorce during childhood is very common disruptive stressor in many countries (Munson and Sutton, 2006). Previous research also demonstrated the negative impact of this transition for children who become more likely to demonstrate psychological, behavioral, social, and academic problems compared to children raised in two-parent families (Kelly, 2000).

The nature of the mother-father relationships is identified as one of the factors that affect the involvement of non-resident fathers in their children's lives. Peltzer, Mlambo, Phaswana-Mafuya, and Ladzani, (2010) investigated the impact of involvement from the non-resident father during prenatal and postnatal period. They suggested that the positive support and involvement from the non-resident father is associated with improved prenatal and postnatal clinical programmes which strengthen bearing on pregnancy and the health care of new-born. Non-resident fathers who are in a romantic relationship with the child's mother are more likely to be highly involved with their children and less likely to be involved when mothers' re-partners (King, Harris, and Heard, 2004). A positive relationship with less conflicts between the father and mother has also been shown to improve parenting (Tach, Mincy and Edin, 2010). This suggest that a non-resident father who is separated from the mother of his child, but has a healthy relationship with the mother, is more likely to be involved in parental duties and to spend time with his child. The child is more likely to be psychologically and emotionally healthier (Rosenberg and Wilcox, 2006). This implies that the father-child relationship and the involvement of non-resident fathers depend on how parents ended their relationship and the relationship between their families.

Physical involvement of non-resident fathers highly matters in early childhood development (Heilman et al, 2017). Their absence may lead to a lack of emotional and psychological

involvement with their children (Ratele, Shefer, and Clowes, 2012). Cultural expectations of paying *inhlawulo* and *ilobola* plays a massive role in allowing the involvement of non-resident fathers. Paying *inhlawulo* indicates the acknowledgment of paternity and failing to pay it might reflect as the denial of paternity while *ilobola* signifies the intentions of marrying the mother of child and not paying it portrays less interest in marrying the mother of the child (Makusha and Richter, 2016). The effectiveness of these expectations has denied many non-resident fathers' access to their children and has deprived their rights to parental involvement (Bennet, 2004). A father who fails to pay *inhlawulo* may be denied access of visiting and spending time with his child where the child is residing (Makusha, Richter, and Bhana 2012). The high cost of *inhlawulo* and *ilobola* also played a huge role in disengagement of non-resident fathers (Patel and Mavungu, 2016).

### **2.5.3. Undisclosed and unwanted fathers**

Another literature suggest that undisclosed and unwanted fathers may not be able to be involved in the lives of their children to fulfill their fatherhood roles (Padi, Nduna, Khunou and Kholopane, 2014). Unknown fathers refer to those whom their children had no knowledge of and unwanted fathers refers to those whom mothers did not disclose any information or provided incorrect information about them (Atobrah, 2004; Nduna and Jewkes, 2011). Some of these fathers may be unaware that they have impregnated if the mother decided not to disclose that information (Rabe, 2016). Padi et al (2014) further subcategorized unknown fathers to “unknown and undisclosed” and “known but undisclosed”. Clowes, Ratele and Shefer, (2013) suggested that sometimes children not knowing their fathers not always mean they completely have no knowledge about them, but might have insufficient knowledge about their whereabouts or identity. Langa, (2014) also conducted a study exploring young adolescent boys' narratives and lived experiences of growing up without fathers. The findings suggested that most children grow up without knowing their fathers. Some single mothers are overwhelmed about living with a child who does not know his/her biological father and some of the reasons why they don't disclose father's information is protect their children from too painful information such as denied paternity and history of abusive fathers (Nduna and Manyatshe, 2014).

Concluding from the above highlighted literature, there are so many disadvantages that are brought by minimal participation and involvement of fathers in parenting their children. The above literature has critically discussed the involvement of non-resident father and its impact

on the child's wellbeing. Different patterns of non-resident fathers' involvement in parenting their children were also discussed. Hereafter, the ruling government introduced different programs that encourages father's involvement in parenting. These intervention programs are discussed on the next paragraph.

## **2.6. INTERVENTION PROGRAMS THAT SEEK TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE FATHER'S INVOLVEMENT IN PARENTING**

Cowan, Cowan, Pruett, Pruett, and Wong (2009) argue that a well-designed parenting program that focuses on parental childcare cooperation; regardless of parents' relationship and marital status; can achieve multiple constructive results for children considering that children need both parents during the developmental phase. Parenting for Lifelong Health for Young Children well known as Sinovuyo Kids in South Africa, is the first parenting programme for parents of young children that has been designed and implemented for the purpose of strengthening parental involvement, reducing child maltreatment, focusing on building a strong parent-child relationship and equipping both parents with positive discipline strategies. (Cluver, Meinck, Steinert, Shenderovich, Doubt, Romero, Lombard, Redfern, Ward, Tsoanyane and Nzima, 2018). McNeely and Barber, 2010 conducted a study evaluating how parents make their children feel supported and loved. Their findings demonstrated that different parenting behaviors can have the same meaning. For example, support for education and spending quality time together reinforce the same message that the parent is investing valued resources in the child.

There are also many social and economic policies that have been developed to increase father's involvement with their children. These policies encourages the establishment of organisations, programmes and trainings that promotes father involvement (Mavungu, Hayley and Mphaka, 2013). For an example, the civil society organisations such as Fathers Speak Out (FSO), Agisanang Domestic Abuse Prevention Training (ADAPT), The Men as Partners (MAP) are promoting father involvement and responsible fatherhood regardless of their relationship status with the mother of the child (Peacock & Botha, 2006). The government has also made use of social policies in engaging fathers to their children's lives. For an example, once a father acknowledges his children through registering their birth certificated using his surname, the state requires him to financially support them (Giese and Smith, 2007). In instances where non-resident fathers fail to support their children financially, the state remains the solution through

social grants to most families (Patel, 2015). The Constitution of South Africa, section 27(1)(c), says that “everyone has the right to have access to social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents, appropriate social assistance” (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Through this, the Department of Social Development (DSD) has also implemented Child Support Grant (CSG), Foster Care Grant (FCG), and the Care Dependency Grant (CDG) to respond to the financial burden of parents which includes fathers who do not afford to provide for their children's basic needs.

The most critical era that has been highlighted by the literature with the intensive need for both parents involvement is the development stage of the child. The participation of both parents has been associated with the enhanced academic achievement. Bellow the literature highlights the relationship between education and children that lives in single mother households. The literature further highlights academic advantages of non-resident fathers' involvement in parenting children from single mother households.

## **2.7. EDUCATION AND CHILDREN IN SINGLE-MOTHER HOUSEHOLDS**

The involvement of both parents in children's education is associated with higher educational achievement and fewer complications on career paths. Literature reveals single mother parenting without the father's involvement, as one of the components that may negatively influence the child's educational goals. Family structure is a factor that affects the level of educational achievement (Gounden, 2016). Children whose fathers are not involved commonly do not reach their optimal potential in school activities (Makgopa and Mokhele 2013; Gershoff, Aber, Raver and Lennon 2007). Children who are raised in single-mother households without the involvement of their fathers are more likely to have poor school attendance, which results in failing and repeating grades (Myers and Myers, 2015). They demonstrate many behavioural problems and poor competence and adaption in distance education at a younger age with higher levels of economic and educational achievement, career success, occupational competency, and psychological wellbeing (Garg, Melanson and Levin, 2007).

Where fathers are highly involved, children appear to have increased abilities for handling ongoing stressors related to schooling and are more patient as compared to those children with less involved fathers. In general, mothers focus more on nurturing while fathers spend more time engaging in stimulating playful activities and promoting the independence of a child

(Ellis, 2017). When fathers are involved in the early stages of their children's lives, those toddlers develop better abilities to start school with higher levels of academic readiness and throughout development. They show more cognitive ability on academic assessments, desire to engage in school activities, and participate in extracurricular activities (Garg, et al 2007). Children of involved fathers are more likely to demonstrate more cognitive competence in standardized intellectual assessments. They are more likely to enjoy school, have better attitudes toward school, participate in extracurricular activities, and graduate (Leman, 2015).

The above literature has provided an insight that the need for both parents in raising the child does not only stresses on basic needs that are needed by the child, but also on grooming the child's character, behaviour in terms of discipline, respect and appropriate language for the child to use. The following paragraph will discuss the importance of non-resident father's participation in disciplining the child.

## **2.8. CHILD DISCIPLINE**

Father involvement has many needed significances for the well-being of children with regards to issues of parenting behaviours such as discipline (Yogman, Garfield, and Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, 2016). The success of children raised from single-mother households relies on the cooperation of the single mother and the non-resident father in implementing the stipulated coping mechanisms (Mather, 2010). If not, the child will face significant challenges in making the transition to adulthood. The cooperation of both parents does not only contribute to a sense of being responsible but also lay a very dignified foundation of grooming a child in a supportive family system (Gerson 2009). Golombok and Badger (2010) revealed being a strict single parent with children as one of the effective coping mechanisms that are used to deal with children's attitudes and parenthood problems from early development. The disciplinary approach decreases conflict between single-parent mothers and their children when non-resident fathers are involved. A strong parent-child communication and a network of community support was also mentioned as the other coping mechanism that sustains children raised in single-mother households (Barajas, 2011).

With all being said about cooperation of both parents in grooming the child, the pattern of non-resident fathers' involvement in parenting also plays a huge role in determining to what extent a father can be involved. The next paragraph highlights the history of social welfare and how

South African government has been responding in financial burden of children from single mother households and for those whose fathers are unable to support them.

## **2.9. THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK THAT PROMOTES THE INVOLVEMENT OF NON-RESIDENT FATHERS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **2.9.1. Children's Act no.38 of 2005**

The children's Act serve as a legislative framework that relate to the child's care and protection. The formation of this Act is of best interest of child paramount. In relation to Social Constructionism theory that grounded this study, the Act acknowledges the importance of culture and the role played by collective fatherhood through extended families. It is evident that the involvement of the father in a child's life is of utmost importance and more efficient ways are still needed to promote the involvement of fathers in their children at an early stage of life. However, the subject of fathers has not been given any serious attention in the draft of a National Family Policy by the Department of Social Development further than the general trend of criticizing them as absence fathers and agents of violence in the families (Hochfeld, 2007). South African laws, policies and legal systems are still unfriendly to fathers. For an example, when parents separate, the court usually award the custody to the mother (Khunou, 2008). Cultural practices need to develop in cooperation with the revolution in our societies (Rich and Roman, 2019). In South Africa, men are not appropriately involved in parenting and childcare and their lack of involvement poses several implications and challenges for children and mothers who live with them (Van den Berg and Makusha, 2018).

### **2.9.2. Children's Act: Section 21: The rights of unmarried and married fathers.**

The Children's Act Section 21(1) clarifies the rights and responsibilities of non-resident fathers, which include providing care, maintenance, and general support (Children's Act no. 38 of 2005). The South African Constitution clearly articulates the rights of children to parental care and protection. Therefore, both parents have a joint responsibility to care and support their children regardless of their marital status or nature of their relationship. Some of the challenges in the implementation of this Act includes the legal routes that are taken by the unmarried father in applying for an access, custody and guardianship of the child. The application requires an in-depth review of the father-child relationship and how the father has been involved in

childcare and maintenance. The Act still does not give the unmarried father full rights as the mother but mostly frame the father's role around the provision of material. Other forms of interaction that might benefit the child such as showing care, involving in recreational activities and spending time with the child are given less importance in this Act (Mavungu, 2013). Seepamore (2016) suggests that social workers need to make communities aware of the abnormality of this situation and engage with communities to lobby for family-friendly legislation that keeps the issue of distance fathers as the national issue.

## **2.10. CONCLUSION**

The literature highlight that the previous researchers associated children raised without the involvement of their fathers poorly. Whilst there is information in the literature about children raised in single-parent families, most literature highlights adverse child outcomes. Various social, psychological, family, and cultural factors appear to inhibit the involvement of fathers in parenting. In this study, the voice of non-resident fathers will be sought to understand various ways in which they participate in their children's lives. The next chapter will discuss the methodology and all the processes that were involved during this research.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2006), the research methodology considers and explains the logic behind research methods and techniques. This study used qualitative research methods to collect data. According to Fouché and Delpont (2002) qualitative research method aims to understand the daily perceptions and experiences of people about the studied phenomenon. In this research, non-resident fathers' involvement and their perception of parenting children aged 0-3 years from single mother households was explored.

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the study research paradigm, research design, participants' recruitment strategies, data collection techniques and methods of data analysis. Furthermore, methods used to ensure the trustworthiness of the study and ethical considerations are discussed in detail.

This study is a sub-study of a flagship project titled "Optimum child growth and Development-Building thriving communities through risk reduction from impacts of nutrition, environment, and social constructs" (OrCHID). The bigger study aimed to change the trajectory of the African child which is characterized by poor child health outcomes as a result of the interception of environment, nutrition, social and health factors that affect child development and well-being. In relation to the flagship project, this study explores the role fathers can play in single mother households to improve care and support for children.

#### **3.2. RESEARCH PARADIGM**

As mentioned in page 8, Kuhn (1970) defined the research paradigm as a set of common beliefs, viewpoints or general framework shared between social scientists about how the research problems should be understood and addressed. These beliefs and agreements can be characterized by the way scientist respond to the three basic questions which are ontological, epistemological and methodological (Guba, 1990). According to Babbie (1998) the social scientists can use any number of paradigms to answer the three basic questions in order to

shape, understand and ground the assumptions behind the nature of the reality. This study used the interpretivism paradigm which focuses on the process by which meanings are created, negotiated, sustained, and modified (Schwandt, 2003). The interpretivism paradigm was relevant to the study as it set out the discovering of the subjective experiences and interpretation of the social factors (Creswell and Poth, 2016). Using this method, the researcher explored the experiences of the participants and establish an understanding of the studied phenomenon. Therefore, the interpretative approach of it was subjected to non-resident father's perceptions and experiences around the aspects that affect the environmental systems of their children.

### **3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010) the research design is a general plan that describes the procedures for conducting the study. Fouché and Delpont (2002) explained the difference between two research designs which are qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative research designs focuses on understanding people's daily lives and the meaning that people gives to their lives because of their experiences, whereas the quantitative research designs focuses on the objectivity in measuring and describing phenomena such as variables, measurements and casual relationships. Qualitative researchers strive to make sense of feelings, experiences, social situations, or phenomena as they occur in the real world and therefore want to study them in their natural setting (Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter, 2006). The research design that was used for this study is exploratory considering the nature and the focus of the study. There is limited qualitative literature on non-resident father's participation in parenting from fathers themselves.

#### **3.3.1. Research Approach**

According to Polit and Beck (2008) a qualitative research approach was used to explore the depth and complexity inherent in a studied phenomenon. This approach allowed for expression of the subjective experience of barriers, challenges and coping measures in parenting children from single-mother households (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative research design is perceived as a realistic action that is performed in a real-world setting that the researcher attempts to make sense out of the interpreted phenomena of the participant (Patton 2002). Non-resident father's perceptions were examined regarding parenting children from single-mother households. Qualitative methods allowed the researcher to find out how non-resident fathers perform their

roles and responsibilities despite not living with their children. Identified the factors that influence their lack of involvement and factors that strengthen their involvement.

### **3.3.2. Exploratory research design**

According to Burns and Grove (2005), exploratory research is a research that is conducted for the purpose of gaining new insights, discovering new ideas and increase knowledge of a phenomenon. The exploratory research designs aim to investigate the full nature of the phenomenon (Polit and Beck 2008). In this case, more research has been conducted around the non-resident fathers, but little was known about their involvement as well as their perception in parenting 0-3 year's children who live in single mother households in eThekweni. This presented a need to investigate the in-depth nature, gain new insight, advance knowledge, discover new ideas and expand the understanding of their involvement as well as their perception in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single mother households.

## **3.4. SAMPLING STRATEGIES**

### **3.4.1. Sampling techniques**

A sample refers to units or elements of the population that are included in a study whereas sampling is the process used by the researcher to select the sample from the population in order to obtain information regarding the phenomena (Babbie and Mouton, 2012; Brink, Van De Walt and Van Rensburg, 2006). In qualitative research we have two types of sampling approaches, which are probability and non-probability sampling.

#### **3.4.1.1. Non-probability sampling**

According to Burns and Grove (2005) and Streubert Speziale and Carpenter (2003) a non-probability sampling is a process of selecting participants for the study with fewer chances of obtaining a representation sample. This is done based on participants' availability and their first-hand experience with the phenomena of interest. Non-probability sampling was used in this study. This process includes various techniques that are used to assist in the selection of the sample such as a purposive, convenience and snowball sampling.

### **3.4.2. Purposive sampling**

In qualitative research, purposive sampling is used to maximize the range of specific information that can be obtained from and about that context by purposely selecting locations and participants that differ from one another (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). In this study, the researcher used purposive sampling because of the specific characteristics of participants that were needed by the researcher. As mentioned on page 28, this study was part of a larger study titled “Optimum child growth and Development- Building thriving communities through risk reduction from impacts of nutrition, environment, and social constructs” which aimed to change the trajectory of the African child which is characterized by poor child health outcomes as a result of the interception of environment, nutrition, social and health factors that affect child development and well-being. Therefore participants were recruited from the existing cohort of parents whose children were participating in the main flagship.

The researcher recruited 15 non-resident fathers to children of unmarried mothers whose children participated in the main study. This recruitment process was done with the assistance of the research assistant from the main flagship project. The main study has 50 participants who met the criteria of this study. The research assistant tried to approach all of them telephonically to introduce the study and to request whether they would like to know more about the study, explore possibilities of participating in the study and requested them to participate in the study. The research assistance managed to reach at least 15 participants who agreed to be contacted by the researcher, while the other 35 participants were not reachable telephonically. 15 participants were then telephonically contacted by the researcher to explain this study and to seek consent for participation in this study

### **3.4.3. Eligibility criteria**

According to Pilot and Hungler (2004) the eligibility criteria can be regarded as the inclusion principles for selecting participants in the sample of the study. The submitted list of non-resident fathers met the eligibility set for the study. For fathers to be eligible to participant in the study, the respondents had to be:

- A non-resident fathers to children of unmarried mothers.

- Unmarried mothers who attended phase one of the flagship project at King Edward Hospital.
- A father to a child aged 0-3 years.

### **3.5. DATA COLLECTION**

In qualitative research, data collection is the process that used to collect and gather data from the identified participants of the study. This process may include focus group discussions, case histories, participants' observations, individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and surveys, documents of records, and oral histories (Burns & Grove 2005). Prior data collection, letter of invitation was written and read for participants telephonically to request for their participation in the study (Appendix 4). Permission was granted from each participant.

#### **3.5.1. Data-collecting instruments**

Data-collecting instrument refers to a tool or device that is used to collect or gather data from the participants (Polit & Beck 2008). This study used semi structured interview guide as a tool of collecting data. During the interviews, the researcher was translating interview guide questions to Isizulu for those who needed some clarity and for those who preferred being interviewed in Isizulu. The second tool that was used to collect data is CallApp Contact version 1.646 that was downloaded in a smartphone Huawei P40 lite for interviews that were conducted telephonically for record-keeping, quality control, and preparation of data analysis.

This was done because of the coronavirus disease outbreak. The South African government set some regulations within the Disaster Management Act to address, prevent and combat the spread of coronavirus. International Air Services Act, 1993 (Act No. 60 of 1993), and Amendment of Regulations issued in terms of Section 27(2) restrict unnecessary engagement of people and movement of air travel. In respecting these regulations, the researcher planned to only conduct semi-structured individual interviews telephonically. 15 interviews were conducted telephonically.

### **3.5.1.1. Semi-Structured individual interviews**

A semi-structured individual interview can be defined as a data-collection technique that the researcher uses to elicit information from one participant for the purpose of understanding the participants' point of view or situation (Bell, 2005). This study gathered qualitative data through semi-structured individual interviews with fifteen non-resident fathers who are parenting children 0-3 years from single mother households. The aim of the semi-structured interviews with non-resident fathers was to provide more detailed information and a greater knowledge and insight about their perception in parenting children that does not live with them. The participants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide. Semi-structured interviews have features of both structured and unstructured interviews and therefore use both closed and open-ended questions. In order to be consistent with all the participants, the researcher had a set of pre-planned core questions for guidance to cover the same areas with each participant.

#### **3.5.1.1.1. Preparing for semi-structured interviews**

In preparing for the semi-structured interviews, the researcher sent the informed consent forms to all participants who agreed to be interviewed telephonically and requested forms to be signed and returned prior the scheduled interview date. Prior the scheduled time, researcher firstly conducted two demo interviews with male colleagues who met the demographic profile of the potential participants. The purpose of a demo interview was to note down questions that could be difficult for participants to answer so they can be corrected and be written in a simpler way. After conducting demo interviews, the researcher noted that two questions from the interview guide were leading questions and not easy for the participant to understand. The researcher refined these questions to open-ended questions that were easy for the participant to understand.

The researcher then sent out the proposed dates for telephonic interviews. All participants responded according to their availabilities and participants who were not available on the proposed dates, were able to suggest their preferred dates. Interview guides were also printed for preparation of the interviews and the researcher managed to conduct all 15 interviews telephonically.

### **3.5.1.1.2. The semi-structured interview procedure**

The researcher conducted 15 telephonic interviews. Historically, the telephonic qualitative interviews has been used for collecting data that is emotional, person-orientated and focuses on the individual experiences (Trier-Bieniek, 2012). In relation to this study, the researcher also intended to get an insight in relation to participant's experiences. However, a number of issues were of researcher's concern. For an example, the lack of face-to-face contact affects the researcher's ability to build and maintain rapport with the participant (Holstein and Gubrium, 2003). This may limit obtaining rich data from the participant and the opportunity to allow the participant to engage better during the interview (Fontana and Frey, 2005).

The researcher conducted one telephonic interview per participant. Interviews lasted between 35 minutes and 1 hour 9 minutes. Prior the agreed time, the researcher made a check-up call to remind the participants about the interview. The purpose of the check-up call was to make sure the participant is in a quiet, relaxed, and conducive environment for the interview. The check-up calls also assisted the researcher to test the CallApp Contact recorder if it was recording perfectly and to test if the sound is set up fine. Through check-up calls the researcher encountered problems such poor network connection especially with participants who reported to be in deep rural areas, noisy backgrounds and cellphones that were on voicemail. The researcher would then reschedule the interview until the environment is convenient for both the researcher and the client.

Assurance of a telephonic favorable atmosphere was prioritized throughout the interviews. This was done through greeting and appreciating the participant for agreeing to be part of the study. The researcher introduced herself to the participant, explained the informed consent form (Appendix 2), the topic of the study as well as the reason to why and how they were chosen to participate in this study. The researcher explained the nature of the semi-structured interview and how important it is for the participant to respond with broadly detailed answers rather than one-word answers or short sentences. At the end of the interview, the researcher thanked the participant for agreeing to participate and all the time and effort that was contributed.

Once the interview was done, the researcher will send the voice recordings to her personal email address for secondary safe record keeping. This was done to prevent losing data should the smartphone get lost or damaged.

### **3.5.1.1.3. Post-semi-structured interviews procedure**

Soon after completing the interview, the researcher replayed the recording to check audibility and completeness of the information. This enabled the researcher to immediately reconstruct the identified gaps and ambiguities of the interview. This also allowed the researcher to critique her own interviewing style to avoid the repetition of errors and mistakes on subsequent interviews. Soon after replaying and reconstructing the recordings, the research prioritized sending them to her personal email for safe record-keeping to avoid losing data should the data-collecting instrument get lost or damaged. The researcher transcribed the recorded interviews verbatim. Data was translated from IsiZulu to English before the data analysis could begin.

## **3.6. DATA ANALYSIS**

De Vos et al (2011) assert that qualitative data analysis is, first and foremost, a process of inductive reasoning, thinking, and theorizing which differs from structured, mechanical, and technical procedures. In qualitative research, data analysis requires that the researcher become immersed in the data so that the uniqueness of each participant's lived experience can be preserved while permitting an understanding of the phenomenon under study. The process includes listening to the participant's description, reading and rereading the verbatim transcriptions identifying themes, categories and subcategories and extract significant quotations/statements made by the study participants.

### **3.6.1. Method of data analysis**

The researcher used thematic analysis to explore the involvement of non-resident fathers and their perception of parenting children aged 0-3 years from single mother households in eThekweni, South Africa. The researcher translated and transcribed the recorded telephonic and face-to-face individual interviews. This process allowed the researcher to realm the uniqueness of each participant's lived experience by listening to each description while facilitating an understanding of the phenomenon under study. The researcher then revised the verbatim transcriptions which enabled a deeper engagement that allowed the researcher to identify the themes, categories and subcategories that come up repeatedly from the data to establish how the data relate to the objectives of the study. The data collected using semi-structured interview

schedules also allowed the researcher to extract significant quotations/statements made by the study participants.

### **3.6.2. The data analysis process**

According to De Vos, Straydom, Fouche & Delport (2002) proposed eight steps to be used in data analysis. The use of these steps enables the researcher to present adequate data findings. In this study, the researcher reflected in these steps as stated below:

- The researcher firstly familiarized herself with data by reading through all the transcriptions.
- The researcher started taking notes of different ideas that came to mind while reading through the transcriptions. This was done using the mind map.
- The researcher then started assigning preliminary codes to describe the content of the research.
- After assigning preliminary codes, the researcher categorized data according to themes across the different interviews. This included points that were similar to be associated under one study objective.
- Themes were reviewed and labeled according to their unique topics. For an example, those who were related to perceptions were grouped together, those who were related to roles were grouped together and those who were related to responsibilities that non-resident fathers have in parenting were grouped together.
- The researcher then converted similar/related topics into categories. The process involved the indication of interrelation between the topics that were converted to categories.
- The abbreviation of each category was made, and the preliminary codes were arranged alphabetically to perform the preliminary analysis.

### **3.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

The researcher was expected to be professional and make use of ethical conduct and principles, and not cross boundaries or be biased. The researcher was abided by a set of moral principles including informed consent, voluntary participation, access and acceptance, privacy, and confidentiality to respect and maintain ethical principles of research (De Vos, 2005).

### **3.7.1. Informed Consent**

The principle of informed consent emphasizes the right to freedom and self-determination to the participant (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2009). Informed consent may determine the decision for participants to choose to participate in the study or not. The elements that contribute to informed consent involve competence, voluntarism, full information, and comprehension. According to Babbie and Mouton (2011) not even a single time where the participants may feel forced to be part of the study, they should always be voluntary. In this research, the researcher firstly explained the purpose of the study to participants telephonically and thereafter, asked the participants if they were willing to participate or not. Because of COVID-19 lockdown regulations, informed consent forms were discussed telephonically for those who agreed to conduct telephonic interviews, and consent given verbally. Those who had means to print forms, agreed to receive them via emails, signed them and sent them back.

### **3.7.2. Access and Acceptance**

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) argue that before conducting the study, access to the institution where the research will be undertaken must be sought. In this study, the researcher made use of this ethical consideration by applying for an ethical clearance through the Research Ethics Committee before the commencement of data collection. The permission was granted which allowed the researcher to proceed with data collection.

### **3.7.3. Privacy**

The right to privacy is the individual's right to decide when, where, to whom, and to what extent his/her attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour will be shared to others (De Vos 2005). In this study, participants were assured that any data contributed by them will be kept privately and can be revealed or disclosed according to the participant's wish. During the transcribing process, the researcher removed all the real names of the participants that were noted on the recordings during the interviews.

### **3.7.4. Confidentiality**

Confidentiality means that no personal information that the participants divulge is made public or available to others (Brink, Van De Walt and Van Rensburg, 2006:35). Respecting the participant's confidentiality, anonymity, and how the data is stored is very crucial when conducting the study (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:121). The researcher ensured that confidentiality was maintained by practising ethical values such as respecting participants' information by avoiding using their real names on the transcripts, treated participants with dignity and respect. During the interviews, participants were informed about their right not to disclose information that they felt was too confidential to be shared with anyone. All hard copies that contained data were kept in a safe cabinet that was only accessed by the researcher. Soft copies were kept in a researcher's laptop that is protected by the password. Any other related soft copy data was only accessible to the supervisor. To further ensure confidentiality, participants were given pseudonyms to safe keep their identities.

## **3.8. TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY**

Validity in qualitative research corroborate whether the data collected by the researcher certainly corresponds with the conclusions of the study (Recker, 2013). According to Polit and Beck, (2008), trustworthiness exists if the findings of a qualitative study reflect accurately the experiences and the viewpoints of the participants and not the perception of the researcher. In this study, the researcher referred to four criteria of trustworthiness, which are credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

### **3.8.1. Credibility**

According to Shenton (2004), credibility deals with the question: "How congruent are the findings with reality?" Credibility is a quality assessment of whether the data convincingly describe the phenomenon under study. The study findings should reflect the context of where the study was conducted (Hollaway, 2005). To ensure credibility, the researcher used member checking discussed below:

### **3.8.1.1. Member checking**

Member checking allows the participants to verify the data for adequacy and validate the information that the researcher has conducted. In this process the participant gets a chance to eliminate information that is not an accurate reflection of the findings (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). In this study, the researcher referred the analyzed data back to the participants for review, validation, and comments as well as corrections on the themes and categories. In respecting COVID-19 restriction regulations to avoid further engagement, participants were updated about the findings telephonically. The researcher managed to contact twelve out of fifteen participants. They were able to validate and comment on the themes and categories that were read to them. They were asked if they are interested on receiving the findings via emails and none of them was interested. The other three participants were not reachable telephonically, their numbers were always on voicemail.

### **3.8.2. Transferability**

In qualitative research, the obligation for demonstrating transferability depends on the potential users. Findings are not generalised (Babbie and Mouton 2001). According to Streubert Speziale & Carpenter (2003) only the potential user, not the researcher, can determine whether the findings are transferable or not. This is to ensure that if the study was to be repeated under similar circumstances or context, it would yield the same results. In this study, the researcher provided a clear detailed literature review to present what is already known to be compared with the research findings. The researcher further provided a clear research methodology and characteristics of the participants to allow the potential user to judge transferability if the study was to be repeated.

### **3.8.3. Dependability**

Dependability refers to the solidity of data collected over time and in differing conditions (Polit and Beck, 2008). Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduced an inquiry audit, a concept which challenges researchers to have evidence to provide its audience and auditors so they can examine the documentation of data, findings, interpretations, and recommendations. In this study, the researcher has provided a clear steps and descriptions of how the study was conducted. The researcher has also documented transcribed interviews and raw recordings of

data for checking by the research supervisor. The semi-structured interview guides were presented to research supervisor for review. Where applicable, modifications were made based on the feedback given by the researcher supervisor before the study was conducted. Furthermore, findings were validated by the participants who confirmed the findings as the reflection of their experiences.

#### **3.8.4. Confirmability**

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) confirmability refers to the degree to which the research findings can be confirmed to the product of the raw material and not of the biases of the researcher. An inquiry audit that is properly managed, can be used to determine dependability and confirmability at the same time. Confirmability refers to the final stage of dependability which establishes the confirmability of the inquiry. An adequate audit trail should be left to enable the auditor to determine if the conclusions, interpretations, and recommendations can be traced to their sources and if they are supported by the inquiry (Babbie and Mouton 2001).

In this report, a clear report of how the research was conducted from the purpose of the study, the methodology that was used in collecting data, interpretations, and discussions on how conclusions were drawn for each category were presented. The protection of participants, and the storing of data is provided. This will allow the audience and auditors to have a clear understanding of every step that was taken.

### **3.9. CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided a discussion of all the methodological steps that were followed by the researcher in conducting this study. The study examined the involvement of non-resident fathers and their perception in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households using the interpretative and exploratory research design that was qualitative in nature. The participants were recruited using non-probability and purposive sampling. The processes of data collection and analysis were discussed as well. Semi structured interview guide was used to conduct telephonic semi-structured interviews with non-resident fathers. During the collection of data ethical conducts and study principles were observed in protection of the study participants. The data that was collected was transcribed, translated from IsiZulu to English language and coded using thematic analysis to stand out themes and categories. To

ensure trustworthiness of the study, the researcher adhered to the required principles and standards. In the next chapter, I discuss the data analysis process.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the research design and methodology to conduct this study was discussed. In this chapter, data generated through the fieldwork relating to the involvement of non-resident fathers and their perception of parenting children aged 0-3 years from single mother household is analysed and presented in terms of the themes and sub-themes as depicted in Table 1 below:

**Table 1:** Schematic presentation of the findings

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
<b>Perceptions</b> of non-resident fathers towards parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Being a protector and a provider</li><li>• Establishing father-child bond</li></ul>
<b>Roles</b> that non-resident fathers have in parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial maintenance</li><li>• Interacting with the child through parenting activities</li><li>• Providing non-financial support</li></ul>
<b>Responsibilities</b> that non-resident fathers have in parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Basic needs</li></ul>
Factors that limit the involvement of non-resident fathers in parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poverty and unemployment</li><li>• Payment of damages</li><li>• Poor mother-father relations</li><li>• Limited parental knowledge</li><li>• Proximity to the child distance</li><li>• Undisclosed father</li></ul>

Factors that can strengthen the involvement of non-resident fathers in parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy communication with the mother or maternal family of the child</li> <li>• Living with the child</li> </ul>
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**Table 1** indicates that the analysis of the individual interviews generated six major themes, namely: Perceptions of non-resident fathers towards parenting; Roles that non-resident fathers have in parenting; Responsibilities that non-resident fathers have in parenting; Factors that limit the involvement of non-resident fathers in parenting and Factors that can strengthen the involvement of non-resident fathers in parenting.

Before the findings of the study can be discussed, it is important to first look at the biographical profile of the participants.

#### 4.2. BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

Tables 2 depict the biographical profile of the research participants. Please note that pseudonyms have been used as names for the participants.

**Table 2:** biographical profile of non-resident fathers in a relationship with the child's mother

Pseudonyms	Age	Marital status	Race	Location	Involvement in a child's life	Employment status
Participant 1	35	Single	Colored	Went wood	Yes	Employed
Participant 2	37	Single	Black	Clairwood	No	Unemployed
Participant 3	32	Single	Black	Mlazi V	Yes	Employed
Participant 4	37	Single	Black	Mashu	Yes	Unemployed
Participant 5	35	Single	Black	Nyuswa	Yes	Employed
Participant 6	27	Single	Black	Pinetown	Yes	Employed
Participant 7	24	Single	Black	Ntshongweni	No	Employed
Participant 8	25	Single	Black	Mlazi W	Yes	Unemployed
Participant 9	38	Married	Black	Harmasdale	Yes	Employed

Participant 10	31	Single	Black	Ndwedwe	Yes	Employed
Participant 11	33	Single	Black	Clairwood	Yes	Unemployed
Participant 12	29	Single	Black	Nqethu	Yes	Employed
Participant 13	42	Single	Black	Embo	Yes	Unemployed
Participant 14	36	Single	Black	Pinetown	Yes	Employed
Participant 15	39	Single	Black	Ntshanga	Yes	Employed

**Table 2** indicates 15 non-resident fathers who participated in the study. Their age ranged between 24 and 42 years old with ten participants who in their 30's, four participants who are in their 20's and one participant who is in his 40's. Five participants were not employed, one participant depends on piece jobs and four participants still depends on money provided by their family members. Ten participants were employed and could afford their basic needs. Only three participants who had professional and formal employment and seven participants had informal and unprofessional employment.

### 4.3. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

As stated above, the findings of this research relate to the involvement of non-resident fathers and their perception of parenting children aged 0-3 years from single mother households in eThekweni, South Africa. The themes and sub-themes that emerged during the analysis of the data gathered for this study will be discussed in detail below.

#### 4.3.1. Theme 1: Perceptions of non-resident fathers in parenting

Lindsay & Norman (2013) defined perception as the process by which a person confronts a situation and interpret it to produce something meaningful to him or her based on the previous experiences. However, what the person interprets may be noticed to be different from what is actual happening in reality. Understanding people's perceptions is essential for understanding their behaviour and developing effective management strategies to maintain, preserve and improve biodiversity, ecosystem services and human well-being (Shackleton, Richardson, Shackleton, Bennett, Crowley, Dehnen-Schmutz, Estévez, Fischer, Kueffer, Kull, and Marchante, 2019). Although the study seeks to explore the involvement of non-resident fathers in parenting, their perceptions in parenting were found to play a crucial role in their level of

involvement. According to non-resident fathers, how they perceive parenting, affects their level of involvement in the lives of their children from single mother households.

**Table 3:** Perceptions of non-resident fathers

Theme	Sub-theme
Perceptions of non-resident fathers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being a protector and a provider</li> <li>• Establishing father-child bond</li> </ul>

In this study, perceptions of non-resident fathers towards parenting were used to understand better what it mean to be a father to them, what comes into their minds when they think of the name “father”.

#### **4.3.1.1. Sub-theme 1: Being a protector and a provider**

It was noted that even though non-resident fathers do not reside with their children, they are very concern about the wellbeing, safety and health of their children who reside in single mother households. Non-resident fathers who participated in the study indicated to the researcher that their children need to be protected against different conditions including unfavorable weather, diseases and injuries. This was supported by their following statements:

“A good father is the one who can protect his child from any form of shame such as wearing torn clothes when playing with other children whereas the father is still alive” (Participant 4).

In this study, being a father was also strongly associated with the role of a provider for your children. The participants perceived being a parent with the provision of financial assistance to meet different financial needs of their children. The participants further elaborated on the impact that providing for their children has. Non-resident fathers who participated in the study indicated being a provider as an essential element of parenting. It was clear that they understood the emotional impact of providing or not providing essential needs for their children. Normally when non-resident fathers provide essential needs for their children, mothers allow them to have a full access and spend more time with their children. This allows them to develop a strong

bond and gain physical recognition from their children. Even though the main perception from non-resident fathers is in line with what has already been published by the previous researchers about how fathers see themselves, this is the dominant perception of masculinity that most fathers have. Fathers often and has always seen themselves within the masculine role of being a provider and a protector within their families (Tanfer and Mott, 1997; Lesejane, 2006).

“To me, what makes a good father is being able to provide basic needs for your child even if you don’t have money to provide expensive things but you must have a solution to your child’s daily needs so that your child can grow up trusting you as a father” (Participant 9).

“As a father you have to make sure that you provide them with clothes and food and be always up to date about the wellbeing of your child” (Participant 5).

“Being a good father means your are able to provide what is needed by your child especially when they are young. Even if you are not present, you can still provide solutions to problems that are experienced by your child on a distance” (Participant 12).

“From what I know and my perception towards parenting is raising a child With a firm hand and feeding the child” (Participant 8).

Non-resident fathers who participated in this study pointed being a protector and a provider as the main perception that they have in parenting. They further pointed the second one as establishing father-child bond, which is been discussed below.

#### **4.3.1.2. Sub-theme 3: Establishing father-child bond**

Almost all non-resident fathers who participated in the study perceived parenting as establishing father-child bond through spending quality time with their children. Non-resident fathers indicated that spending quality time with children is a sign of showing interest, support and love to them. Although this was not a practical and possible thing for every participant to do, but they all believed spending quality time with their children is very important to

strengthen the bond, trust and to create a sense of belonging. Participants also indicated that spending quality time with their children has a very good impact on the wellbeing of the child as they grow up knowing they have someone to rely on. The study participants mentioned the creation and developing of a strong bond as one of the greatest effect that spending quality time with children has.

One of the non-resident fathers (Participant 14) who participated in the study indicated how he enjoys spending time with her daughter when his child pays a visit at his place. He mentioned the void that he feels when many days passes without seeing his child. He also mentioned the precious memories that are created when they are together. Non-resident fathers' values time spent with their children who live in single-mother households. Almost all of them wished they were staying together with their children.

“My daughter giggles and smile whenever she sees me, this is because I spend most of my time with her and she can easily recognize me”  
(Participant 15).

“The most important thing is to bond with him, make him happy and talk with him, I mean get him to talk and show him love, spend time with him and establish that bond with my child because a child doesn't know if there are any expenses needed for him to get food and clothing. All he needs is pure love, a child deserves unconditional love” (Participant 2).

“In order to support my child, I need to be there for him whenever he needs me. In that way he can get bond with me, get used to me and grow up knowing that I care for him” (Participant 1).

“The father need to be closer to the child and spend more time with the child from an early age to make sure that the child easily recognize the father. Because if they are not used in spending time together, the child may cry around the father” (Participant 6)

“A child also needs love from his parents. You can show him by playing with him, establish that bond, perhaps take him for a walk to the shop and

buy him some sweets and a child can be happy that way” (Participant 3).

Based on these findings, spending quality time with the child, playing with the child, being a protective parent, providing for your children, being present and being able to establish father-child bond, characterize what fathers perceived to be important in building a relationship and the strong bond with the child. The findings of this study has enlighten the massive historical change in the system of patriarchy. Back then, the African cultural system insisted high respect for fathers from their children which prevented them from having any bond or close relationship (Masenya, 2004). It was not easy for children to spend more quality time with their fathers and to have any close relationship with them. Children will be seen to scamper when the father enters the gate to avoid more contact and interaction (Lesejane, 2006).

The next theme aims to explore the roles that non-resident fathers have in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households.

#### **4.3.2. Theme 2: Roles that non-resident fathers have in parenting**

Participants of this study indicated the provision of financial support as the most essential role that a non-resident father have in parenting. That believe all other roles can follow after this one, especially if the non-resident father has means to provide the child with the necessities. Participants further indicated the provision of physical support as the second role and showing love as the third role that the non-resident father have in parenting children that live in single-mother households.

**Table 4:** Roles that non-resident fathers have in parenting

Theme	Sub-theme
Roles that non-resident fathers have in parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial maintenance</li><li>• Interacting with the child through parenting activities</li><li>• Providing non-financial support</li></ul>

In this study, theme 4 represented roles that participants were fulfilling towards their children who live in single mother households. Their responses did not only clarify the roles that other general non-resident fathers play, but they were so specific with their interaction and involvement with their children.

### **Sub-theme 1: Financial maintenance**

In this study, the researcher noted that almost all participants who participated in the study believed that financial maintenance is the most essential role that non-resident fathers have to fulfil in parenting. Even participants who are not working, they believed that it is a father's role to make sure that child's financial needs are met.

“Yes, financial support is very important, because it helps to take care of the child's needs” (Lesly).

“It could be paying maintenance fee, make sure that they get enough food and clothing, and maybe to give them extra cash to cover their medical expenses” (Participant 6).

“The first role that the father has is provision of child maintenance. The fathers should make sure is well taken care of with food, clothes and safe shelter which is a good environment for the child's growth (Participant 9).

“The role that I have as a father is to support my child financially and to nurse his needs or to pay damages” (Participant 2).

Based on the findings, financial maintenance was the key role of the non-resident father. The need for providing was to respond to basic needs of their children. The general sentiment that men should maintain their children financially to fulfil their basic needs has remained. Men has always been labelled as financial providers. Even migrant fathers always had an obligation to send the money back home to fulfil their children needs in their absentia (Rabe, 2006).

The next sub-theme to discuss is interacting with the child through parenting activities.

#### **4.3.2.1. Sub-theme 2: Interacting with the child through parenting activities**

Non-resident fathers who participated in the study indicated to the researcher that apart from financial support, a non-resident father still has a role of interacting with the child physically through activities. This can be displayed through visits, spending much time with the child and being available for the child whenever needed. The study participants were asked to share the kind of activities that they do with their children in order to understand better the level of interactions that non-resident fathers do when they engage with their children. Almost all non-resident fathers agreed that they have specific activities that they do with their children. Main activities that showed their involvement were associated with spending leisure time together. This was noted from their responses about the type of activities they engage in with their children.

“I do shopping with him just to get to know him and what he likes”  
(Lesly).

“When we meet, it’s always a must that I try to make time to spend with her, trying to bond with her. It can be indoors activities where we play puzzles, singing, dancing , some sort of karaoke. Or we go to the park to play with the ball. We can play soccer, netball and any other sports that accommodates her as a girl. Or we go out to restaurants like Spur where she also play at the playing area” (Participant 10).

“I play him music on my phone, make him watch a video on my phone, play games with him and get him to play the game” (Participant 2).

“We normally ride his bike, play soccer and ride a bicycle. He loves his bicycle” (Participant 8).

One of the study participants (Participant 1) who stays near where his child is staying, mentioned that he get to spend time by going to the park to play soccer with his child every day when he is around. He further mentioned the great co-parenting relationship that he has with the mother of his child which makes it easier for him to be with his child whenever he gets time.

Considering that most of the fathers who participated in this study come from low-social economic groups, for them to maintain interaction with the child through activities such as shopping can be more challenging. Activities that are financially demanding might as well strain instead of developing the father-child relationship. As a result, fathers were found to spend more time on less costing activities such as playing music on the phone, riding the bike and playing soccer.

The next sub-theme to discuss is providing non-financial support.

#### **4.3.2.2. Sub-theme 3: providing non-financial support**

The researcher noted that some of the study participants were not sure which role that non-resident fathers have in parenting was more important than the other between the provisions of financial support and showing love to your child. One of the non-resident fathers (Participant 8) who participated in the study indicated that as much as financial support seem to be more important, he still believes provision of non-financial support such as showing love to your child is more valuable, than the financial support. This was supported by the following words from him:

“If you are a father, you don’t only provide money to your child, but you also make sure that your child receive your love. You have to be there for your child as well to witness all the developmental stages and make sure your child is taught well” (Participant 9).

“If the father has means of visiting the child, even if they don’t have money to buy danone, showing up for a visit means a lot to the child” (Participant 6).

“I believe that a good father is one that gives his child love, one that raises his child with respect, other than providing for his child” (Participant 8).

“In order to support your child you need to be there all the time for your child” (Nicholas).

Other participants who also valued the role of providing non-financial support to their children from single mother households shared the following statements:

“As the father, I think they need me to be there for them as a father; give them love and financial support because money is the most important thing but I think love comes first, then money follows. Should the child get sick and requires to see a doctor and things like that, most importantly the medical. Not to mention buying basic needs such as nappies, food, etc.” (Participant 7).

“A father has a role of grooming the child with love from a very young age and be there for a child to witness all the developmental stages. If you are a father, you don’t only provide for financial needs, but you provide love even before your child starts opening the eyes. There is no moment where the child must feel the absence of the father so that your child will grow up knowing that you exist in his life” (Participant 9).

“Yes, because a child doesn’t know if there are any expenses needed for him to get food and clothing, all he needs is pure love, a child deserves unconditional love” (Participant 11).

Two of our study participants (Participant 9 and 15) felt that amongst non-financial roles that non-resident fathers have in parenting, “guidance” in terms of disciplining, teaching of respect and a manner of approach should be prioritized at all times. They highlighted this role as the most significant one at a very young age as it lays a foundation of discipline to the child. Participants’ responses presented how important it is for their children to have a relationship with regardless of their financial status.

Based on these findings, spending quality time with the child, playing with the child and loving the child characterize what fathers perceived to be important in building a relationship and a strong bond with the child. In South Africa we are facing a very high unemployed rate especially amongst males. It is very encouraging to see that even though fathers do not have money to give their children, but they understood that they have a responsibility to participate in parenting at least by contributing with non-financial support. For particularly unemployed

fathers, money in scarce and failing to provide may push them away from their children (Morrell, 2004). This was congruent to what was said by Hunter, 1936 cited in Reynolds, 1984 that fathers also are often devoted to their children, and make much of them when they are small, carrying them about in their arms, fondling them and playing with them. Apart from providing money, they understood that they may still participate in a child developmental stages, grooming the child and disciplining the child.

The next theme aims to explore the responsibilities that non-resident fathers have in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households.

### 4.3.3. Theme 3: Responsibilities that non-resident fathers have in parenting

In this study, participants who participated indicated provision of basic needs such as health care; education; shelter; clothing; food and cognitive development as the responsibilities that the non-resident father have in parenting.

**Table 5:** Responsibilities that non-resident fathers have in parenting

Theme	Sub-theme
Responsibilities that non-resident fathers have in parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic needs</li> </ul>

Theme 3 represented what participants of this study perceive as responsibilities of a non-resident father in parenting children from single mother households. Their responses were not based on what they are doing, but what they think is a responsibility of any other non-resident father. The purpose of this theme was to gain an insight of what non-resident fathers perceive as parenting before getting into how participants are involved.

#### 4.3.3.1. Sub-theme 1: Basic needs

Participants of this study indicated basic needs which are health care, education, shelter, clothing, cognitive development and food as key responsibilities that non-resident fathers have in parenting. This was noted from their responses regarding the roles that they think fathers have in parenting. Non-resident fathers expressed the following views:

“Is to make sure that your children’s basic needs are taken care of such as food and clothing, and also to ensure the wellbeing of the child, to make sure that your child is healthy enough” (Participant 6).

“Is to make him happy, satisfy his needs, perhaps getting him toys to play and buying him food, and be always be there for him so that he will know he has his father’s back”... “Even if you are not working and you don’t have money to provide for your child, you can even ask your close family members to buy clothes for your child so that your child can feel warm and be protected from flue during cold times” (Participant 12).

“It could be making sure that they get enough food and clothing, and maybe to give them extra cash to cover their medical expenses” (Participant 3).

“Being a good father also means you are able to provide necessities to protect you child such as clothes, medical care and food for your child. Imagine priding yourself as a father whereas your child play outside barefooted on unfavorable weather conditions” (Participant 13).

“Such as ensuring that the child goes to school, that he is healthy and makes sure he is in a safe place and fulfill his needs” (Participant 2).

Based on these findings, a good father has been associated with someone who does his utmost best in ensuring that basic needs of the child are met, characterize what fathers perceived to be the main responsibility that non-resident fathers have in parenting. Participants viewed children’s’ needs holistically. From their health care, education, shelter, clothing, food and cognitive development. Historical, South African fathers especially in Umlazi, Durban are well known as neglecters of their parental responsibilities. They don’t only neglect their responsibilities when they cannot afford, but even if they can (Meyer and Bartfeld, 1996). They are mostly paying child’s maintenance through court orders while some fathers withdraw from paying maintenance because of having conflicts with mothers of their children (Morrell and Richer, 2006).

From this study, participants acknowledged basic needs of their children as their basic responsibility, regardless of how their financial status. One of the participants, Participant 12

even mentioned “even if you are not working and you don’t have money to provide for your child, you can even ask your close family members to buy clothes for your child so that your child can feel warm and be protected from flue during cold times. Answers from the participants were not based on what they actually do as fathers, but to share what they think is the actual responsibility of non-resident fathers to their children.

The next theme aims to identify factors that limit the involvement of fathers in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households.

**4.3.4. Theme 4: Factors that limit the involvement of non-resident fathers in parenting**

During data collection through semi-structured interviews, it was noted by the researcher that most participants of the study are not certified with their level of involvement in parenting children aged 0-3 from single mother households. Participants were able to share with the researcher all the factors that influences their lack of involvement.

**Table 6:** Factors that limit the involvement of non-resident fathers in parenting

Theme	Sub-theme
Factors that influence non-resident fathers' lack of involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poverty and unemployment</li> <li>• Payment of damages</li> <li>• Poor mother-father relations</li> <li>• Limited parental knowledge</li> <li>• Proximity to the child distance</li> <li>• Undisclosed father</li> </ul>

**4.3.4.1. Sub-theme 1: poverty and unemployment**

Some participants of our study had experienced a situation where they were not working and they couldn’t afford to support their children. This affected their level of involvement and they wanted to be financially involved but they couldn’t. This is supported by the following statements that were extracted from their interviews with the researcher:

“Yes, I have encountered such a situation especially when the mother was

still pregnant. I wanted to support her, but I couldn't because I didn't have the money to. And the time when the baby was born because at that time I was staying at home and not studying but now I can provide for my child due to the financial support I get from NSFAS" (Participant 8).

"When we were told that all informal vendors are allowed to operate, I had to stay at home and there was no income. I could not send any money to support my child until we were allowed to go back and work" (Participant 11).

"Its been a very hard year I may say. As much as I am not working, I have Never failed to provide for my child. But this time government forced us to Sit at home instead of hustling as usual. I could not even send the child maintenance for the child" (Participant 13).

One of the study participant's lack of involvement was not the result of unemployment but a result of unaffordability. His explanation gave a researcher an insight that it possible for a non-resident father who is employed to be in situations where he cannot support his child from a single-mother households. This was supported by the following statement:

"I was working by that time, but when you are working you find yourself having a very tight budget and be unable to cover other expenses due to many deductions, and in that situation, I would just ask them to borrow the money and promised to replace it the following month" (Participant 3).

Non-resident fathers who were not providing for their children felt they are deprived to develop and have an emotional bond with their children because they don't provide for them. This was also blamed by the lack of provision which is caused by poverty and unemployment. Mothers of their children do not allow them to have access to see their children and spend time with them. This is supported by the following statements:

"I am not even allowed to see her since I don't afford to provide for her needs" (Participant 2).

“The mother of my child only allows me to see my child when I have to provide essential needs for my child” (Participant 7).

#### **4.3.4.2. Sub-theme 2: payment of damages**

In this study, the researcher noted that cultural practices such as Inhlawulo/Isiphandla has only affected the involvement of non-resident fathers whose partners are from deep rural areas where they still believe a father who have not paid for Inhlawulo/Isiphandla should not be part of the child. This was supported by the following statement from one of the participants:

“I am not aware if my child is schooling or not, and you know what happens is that we have a boundary or barrier with us as Africans because your family in law doesn't give you full access to your child unless you have paid all the damages. For instance, in my culture, I don't have access to take a full responsibility in raising my child and to protects his rights as you have just mentioned them. I am fully aware that I have a responsibility of taking care of his basic needs, such as buying him clothes and food, but there is a barrier when you haven't paid for inhlawulo. You are not supposed to do that for your child, the maternal takes a full responsibility in your child's life because the child still belong to them” (Participant 2).

“I do believe in cultural practices especially Inhlawulo as a sign of acknowledging and admitting that you've impregnated someone's daughter out of wedlock. It becomes problematic if you don't afford to pay because they deprive you from seeing your child. For me, I am not allowed to see my child but they demand me to send money to cover all the child's necessities whereas I cannot pay for the child that I am not allowed to see”

#### **4.3.4.3. Sub-theme 3: Poor mother-father relations**

During the interviews with the participants, non-resident fathers raised unhealthy relationships with the mother of the child as one of the reasons that limit their level of involvement in parenting their children.

“I don’t have a good relationship with the mother of my child, we don’t even talk about issues around the child and she does not even notify me when my child is sick. This has prevented me from playing fatherly roles and responsibilities to my child” (Participant 6).

“The relationship between me and the mother of my child is not good, sometimes I wish I could spend some time with my daughter but it becomes a challenge because her mother will raise issues that will prevent me from seeing the child. So my relationship with her mother has an impact on how I often see my child” (Participant 9).

“I really don’t get along with the mother of my child. There is no conversation that makes sense between us. I think she is still bitter that we got separated. This has affected how often I check on child” (Participant 7).

“I have accepted that we will never get along with the mother of my child. Now I don’t even bother calling her because I know we will fight over nothing. If I want to know about the wellbeing of my child, I communicate with her family, especial her sisters. Sometimes I don’t get hold of them, because they are not always at home and no one updates me about the wellbeing of my child” (Participant 11).

“The relationship between me and the mother of my child is very bad. We can’t even discuss serious issues concerning the child such as clothes and education. It breaks my heart that her friends are always telling me that my child does not have clothes but I cannot fix that because we can’t have a proper communication with her” (Participant 14).

#### **4.3.4.4. Sub-theme 4: Limited parental knowledge**

One of the study participants highlighted limited knowledge about parenting as one of the factors affecting him in responding to his fatherly duties. His background did not allow him to

understand what is expected from a father as he grew up without a father. He explained to the researcher how clueless he is about parenting. This was supported by the following statement:

“Since I haven’t grown that much, I don’t know much about being a good father. In fact, I know nothing about children. It is very difficult for me to know what is expected from a father because I do not even know my father. So I am not aware of many fatherly roles and responsibilities”  
(Participant 13).

#### **4.3.4.5. Sub-theme 5: Proximity to the child distance**

The data gathered for this study indicated that distance is one of the factors that limit the involvement of non-resident fathers in parenting children from single mother households. This factor is hardly avoidable for participants who are financially struggling. The researcher noted that the distance that limit the non-resident fathers’ involvement is caused by different reasons such as being hospitalized far from the child, studying far from the child, working far from the child and staying far from the child.

“I will be honest with you; I do not have any relationship with my child. I saw him for the first-time last year, and he was walking already because I was away in traditional healers. So, I found him so grown up, and when I try to bring him close, he will just reject me and wants to go back to his mom. I didn’t mind that though because I could see that he does not know me” (Participant 2).

“This is kind of funny, but distance has played a significant role in failing to establish a good relationship with my son. Yes, we are far from each other, and another problem is that I am not working at all, and I never worked since I was discharged from the hospital. So, last year I would just bump into the mother of my child, perhaps when she was taking the child to pre-school, and I would try to take him but you could see that he is not used to me therefore not feel comfortable being close to me. Maybe this is because they also kept them indoors at school and would like to run around

and be playful when they release them to go home. So, what makes me not to bond with the child is the fact that he is very far from me” (Participant 12).

“I can say distance prevented me because I’m studying far from home at oNgoye (University of Zululand), which prevented me because I couldn’t travel home frequently” (Participant 8).

“We are far from each other, and another problem is that I am not working at all, and I never worked since I was discharged from the hospital. So, seeing my child is always a mission impossible” (Participant 3).

One of the study participants (Participant 1) mentioned a distance caused by a long hospitalization as one of the reasons that has previously prevented him from seeing his child.

“When I was in hospital for an operation for a long time, I couldn’t see my kids” (Participant 1).

#### **4.3.4.6. Sub-theme 6: Undisclosed father**

One of the participants who participated in our study (Participant 6) was deprived from his rights of knowing that he has impregnated the mother of his child. At the beginning, the mother of his child pointed a different person as the father of her child. During that period, Participant 6 did not know that he has a child. A year later, the mother then came back to Participant 6 and told him he was the father of the child. This was supported by the following statement from the participant:

“The mother of my child started by pointing my child somewhere else, but I knew the child was mine and I kept on telling her that her child is my blood. It was very hard to know that I have a child that I can not support And take care of” (Participant 6).

Based on these findings, socio-economic class, cultural implications, limited knowledge on fathers' roles, proximity to the child's distance and undisclosed children can limit fathers from engaging and being involved in their children's lives.

The next theme aims to identify factors that can strengthen the involvement of non-resident fathers in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households.

#### 4.3.5. Theme 5: Factors that can strengthen the involvement of non-resident fathers

During data collection through semi-structured interviews, participants of the study were able to share with the researcher factors that influences their lack of involvement in parenting children aged 0-3 from single mother households. Having a healthy communication with the mother of your child and living with the child were indicated as the main factors that has the ability to strengthen the involvement of the non-resident father in the child's life.

**Table 7:** Factors that can strengthen the involvement of non-resident fathers

Theme	Sub-theme
Factors that can strengthen the involvement of non-resident fathers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy communication with the mother or maternal family of the child</li> <li>• Living together with the child</li> </ul>

##### 4.3.5.1. Sub-theme 1: Healthy communication with the mother or maternal family of the child

In this study, non-resident father's involvement was strongly associated with the healthy communication with the mother or maternal family of the child. Participants who did not have healthy communications with either the mother or other member of the maternal family found very hard to keep in contact with the child. The importance of maintaining healthy communication is supported by the following statements that were extracted from their interviews with the researcher:

“I am no longer communicating with her, we really don't respect each

other when we are talking. Now all our communications go via her family. Her family is accessible, I have a good relationship with them. Everything that relates to the child, I communicate it with her family. As I have said that her family are the only people that I communicate with regarding the child, they are the only reason that I am still communicating with my child as well” (Participant 9).

“I have a very healthy relationship with the mother of my child now. I can say at first it was very difficult, until she accepted that I have moved on. Now she does not give me a hard time if I want to communicate with my child or when I ask for my child to visit me. Same thing applies with her parents, after I separated with their daughter, they told me to visit the child anytime when I feel like doing so” (Participant 15).

#### **4.3.5.2. Sub-theme 2: Living together with the child**

Most non-resident fathers who participated in the study believed that taking their children to live with them can strengthen their involvement in parenting. They indicated that distance between them also affect their involvement and quality time spent with their children. Through distance, they don't get enough time to witness all the developmental stages of their children and bond with them.

“Maybe if I get a place to stay, my own place. Now I stay with my mother so if I get my own place, I'll be able to have more time alone with my children” (Participant 1).

“According to me, I wish my child can just come and live with me, this can strengthen the relationship with my child and make it easier for me to play my fatherly roles. Currently I cannot play any role because I don't get along with the mother of my child” (Participant 6).

“Ey it's a tough one. According to my wish, I wish my child can grow up with my other children. It was my wish from the beginning not to have a child out of wedlock, but life happened and I have one. I wish my child was

staying with me and other her siblings so they can have a full bond with my children from marriage” (Participant 9).

The findings of this study pinpointed the inner void that non-resident fathers have for not staying with the children. They foresee better commitment to their parental duties compared to distant participation as they believe it can also limit parental conflicts between them and mothers of their children. A father’s significance and involvement can be classified in the existence of a healthy relationship with the mother of the child (Gadsden, Fagan and Davis, 2004). Mother’s attitude towards the father can catalyze and improves father’s involvement (Lewis and Lamb, 2004)

#### **4.4. CONCLUSION**

This chapter discussed the research findings on the involvement of non-resident fathers and their perception in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single mother households in Ethekwini, South Africa. The biographical profiles of participants were discussed and also explained in the form of tables (see Tables 2). From the research findings, five themes that related to the involvement and perception on non-resident fathers towards parenting were generated. These themes were: Perceptions of non-resident fathers towards parenting; Roles that non-resident fathers have in parenting; Responsibilities that non-resident fathers have in parenting; Factors that limit the involvement of non-resident fathers in parenting and Factors that can strengthen the involvement of non-resident fathers (see Table 1). The themes yielded sub-themes which were discussed.

The next chapter, Chapter 5 contains a summary of the findings of this study. The limitations of the study and recommendations for policy and research are also discussed in this chapter.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS**

#### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter presented the findings of this study in detail. The purpose of this chapter is to provide the conclusions of the study by summarizing its findings. Chapter 5 also mentions recommendations for policy and for future research and explains the limitations of this study.

#### **5.2. SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The broader purpose of this study was to gather information on the involvement of non-resident fathers and their perception in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households.

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Examine the perceptions of non-resident fathers towards parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households.
2. Explore the roles that non-resident fathers have in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households.
3. Explore the responsibilities that non-resident fathers have in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households
4. Identify factors influencing non-resident fathers' lack of involvement of children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households.
5. Identify factors that can strengthen the involvement of non-resident fathers in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households.

In this qualitative study, purposive sampling was used to select the research participants namely, non-resident fathers. The main data-collection methods that were used to gather information from the non-resident fathers were semi-structured individual telephonic, which were guided by a semi-structured interview schedule. The interview of this study were tape recorded then transcribed and translated by the researcher from IsiZulu to English.

The analysis of data generated findings that can be summarized by explicitly detailing five study objectives. The summary will be derived from five different themes which are: Perceptions of non-resident fathers towards parenting; Roles that non-resident fathers have in parenting; Responsibilities that non-resident fathers have in parenting; Factors that influence non-resident fathers' lack of involvement and Factors that can strengthen the involvement of non-resident fathers.

### **5.2.1. Study objective 1: Examine the perceptions of non-resident fathers towards parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households.**

The perceptions of non-resident fathers towards parenting were identified in two sub-themes namely: Being a protector and a provider and spending quality time. How non-resident fathers perceive parenting has emotional and health impact to their children.

As mentioned in Chapter two it has been highlighted that there is a limited data on African father's perception towards parenting and understanding their roles in parenting. In examining these perceptions, non-resident fathers were individually interviewed. In the literature view, Brown and Roman, (2019) conducted a study on primary caregiver's (mothers and grandmothers) perceptions of fathers' role and involvement in provision of care to their children, but fathers were not interviewed in order to understand their perceptions regarding related matters.

The study findings revealed that non-resident fathers are concerned about their children's protection. The majority of non-resident fathers believed that a lack of their children's safety, health and dignity reflects on their personalities as irresponsible fathers. In this study, the need for protection was shown through the provision of clothes that are in good condition. The provision of clothes was seen as an essential that needed to be fulfilled by the non-resident fathers to protect their children from unfavorable weather conditions and to make children feel presentable and accepted when they are with their peers. This corresponds with what Van den

Berg and Makusha, (2018) stipulated when they highlighted that participation of fathers in their children has a significant role in the wellbeing and health of children from. The provision of clothes also aimed to reflect the participation of fathers in their children's lives even if they don't live with them.

The study findings revealed that non-resident fathers perceive parenting as being agents of financial and material providers. The study participants view provision of financial support to their children as the key value of acknowledging fatherhood. Out of 15 non-resident fathers who participated in the study, 7 of them were unemployed. All 7 unemployed non-resident fathers were also found to be true believers of being financial providers to their children. They stated that providing for their children remains their duty whether they are working or not.

According to the findings of the study, non-resident fathers who are providers are concerned about the wellbeing of their children. Their provision benefited the wellbeing of the child physically and health wise. Fathers who were providing for their children were permitted by biological mothers to spend time with their children whereas those who did not afford to provide had a limited or no access to their children. These results were also congruent with the study done by Makusha, and Richter, (2016) revealing that Zulu mothers can be facilitators of non-resident fathers' involvement and contact with their children. Fathers also see themselves as primary providers. The historically and traditionally phenomenon that fathers have been regarded as mainly providers has instilled much expectations from mothers too, hence single mothers of this study expected fathers to be main providers and excluded those who could not afford without suggesting alternative non-financial parental involvement (Mvungu (2013).

The study findings revealed that non-resident fathers perceived parenting as establishing father-child bond through spending quality time with their children. They were found to be fascinated about spending time with their children as they believed this allows them to bond and be easily recognized by their children. A lack of time spent together was found to have a negative impact in the relationship of the father and the child. Fathers who spend more time with their children had a strong bond with their children compared to those who spend less time with their children. Spending quality time allowed fathers to observe and be part of all the developmental stages of their children. The quality time spent also allowed fathers to learn and understand characters of their children better as they become aware of their children's likes and dislikes.

The findings further revealed that children who are used in spending time with their non-resident fathers displayed signs of happiness such as smiling and giggling when they meet with their fathers. And children who are not used in spending time with their fathers displayed signs of sadness such as crying and frowning they meet with their fathers. The expression of displeasure from these children becomes a threat to their adulthood. According to the study conducted by Utting (2007), the quality of parent-child relationships appears to remain influential into adulthood for social and behavioural outcomes.

### **5.2.2. Study objective 2: Explore the roles that non-resident fathers have in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households.**

The conclusions for study objective 2 pertain to exploring the roles that non-resident fathers have in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households (see Table 4). Three emerging roles were noted by the research participants are financial maintenance, interacting with the child through parenting activities and providing non-financial support.

The study findings revealed that both employed and unemployed non-resident fathers believes in the maintenance payment for their children for the purpose of responding to the children's needs. 13 participants of the study confirmed that they are providing support to their children. However, the provision was based on what they can afford, not what is expected by the single mothers. The study participants also revealed that single mothers view fathers as the only people who are bound to pay for maintenance support for their children. Where fathers default from paying maintenance, they are easily excluded from their children's lives (Hunter, 2006). The topic of financial support was found as the main issue that most non-resident fathers and single mothers engages on when they are no longer in a relationship. These findings were congruent with the study done by Van den Berg and Makusha (2018) who commented that the construction of men as financial providers is a dominant discourse in South Africa.

Raniga, Boecker, and Mthembu (2019) commented that more than 80 percent of single mothers who participated in their study revealed that they received maintenance payment from the biological fathers of their children. The relationship between the non-resident father and the mother had an impact on how the father provides for the child. If the non-resident father is still in a relationship with the mother, the father did not stress on how the mother spends the money that is provided for the child. But when they are separated, how the mother spends the money

matters. Lack of trust after separation was reported, leading some of the non-resident fathers not providing financial support for their children. The participants of the study felt that there is a need for non-resident fathers to be addressed on how single mothers spend money that is provided for the child. Suspicions that some mothers are recklessly spending the child's money has also resulted some non-resident fathers withdrawing providing financial support for their children.

The study findings revealed that non-resident fathers have a role of interacting with the children physically. This can be displayed through visits, spending leisure time with the child and being available for the child whenever needed. According to Braver, Griffin, Cookston, Sandler and Williams (2002 cited in Jenkins and Lyons, 2006) the suggestion that negative perceptions of non-resident fathers are based on media representations that have little to do with the realities of what these fathers actually do for leisure with their children were in line with the findings of this study. Almost all non-resident fathers agreed that they have specific activities that they do with their children and spending leisure time together was found to be common in most non-resident fathers. The study findings also gave an insight on leisure activities that non-resident fathers engage in with their children. Fathers agreed that activities they do with their children included both indoor and outdoor activities such as athletics games, digital games, outings, shopping, singing and dancing. However, these findings were contrary with the suggestion by Mvungu (2013) that other fatherly involvement such as showing care, involving in recreational activities and spending time with the child are given less importance.

The findings of this study revealed that non-resident fathers has a role of providing non-financial support which is showing love to their children. The participants of the study further explained showing love as an expression of deep affection and a desire of caring for a child. Showing love was rated as the most important role that the non-resident father may play amongst them all. Ways of showing love were described as spending quality time with the child, being available for the child when the need arise, accompanying the child to health care facilities and disciplining the child. This corresponds with what Kılıç and Şahin, (2018) stipulated when they highlighted that it is thoughtful for non-resident fathers to prioritize spending quality time with their children and be more involved in parental activities to contribute to the development of children. The study participants revealed that they don't get enough time to show love to their children as they are not staying with them. Hence they believe if they can stay with their children, the bond and the relationship can be enhanced.

### **5.2.3. Study objective 3: Explore the responsibilities that non-resident fathers have in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households**

The conclusions for study objective 3 pertain to exploring the responsibilities that non-resident fathers have in parenting (see Table 5). Non-resident fathers regard basic needs which are health care, education, shelter, clothing, food and cognitive development of their children as major responsibilities that they have in parenting.

The study findings revealed that non-resident father's involvement pertaining their responsibilities takes many forms including health care, education, shelter, clothing, food as well as the cognitive development of a child at large. These different forms either demands the provision of financial support, availability of the non-resident father and showing concern on the overall upbringing of the child. It was apparent from the findings of this study that basic needs which are food, clothing and education were responsibilities that mostly demanded finances from the study participants. Participants that were unemployed emerged failing to fulfil these responsibilities and experience criticism of failing their children which resulted some of them being excluded from participating in their children lives.

Participants who believed that provision of safe environment and shelter was part of their responsibilities, mentioned that as much as they believe it's their responsibility, they have no control over it since they can't interfere on structures where maternal families lives in. This responsibility can only be fulfilled by fathers who resides with their children. However, the conclusion for study objective 3 of exploring responsibilities that non-resident fathers have in parenting seem to be contrary to Mvungu (2013) who find that other paternal responsibilities such as care giving, helping with education, involving in recreational activities with the child, or just being there were given less importance.

### **5.2.4. Study objective 4: Identify factors influencing non-resident fathers' lack of involvement of children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households.**

The conclusions for study objective 4 pertain factors that influence non-resident father's lack of involvement in parenting (see Table 6). Six emerging factors that were noted by the research participants are poverty and unemployment, payment of damages, poor mother-father

interactions, limited parental knowledge, proximity to the child distance and undisclosed fathers.

The study findings revealed poverty and unemployment as one of the factors that influenced non-resident father's lack of involvement in parenting. As previously stated in chapter 4, seven participants of this study were unemployed. Five of them were able to get money through assistance either from their family members, NSFAS, informal vending or piece jobs and send money for their children. This was not always practical to provide financial support on the monthly basis as they did not have a fixed monthly income to budget on.

Two of the study participants were totally not supporting their children as they did not have any means of income. According to the study findings, non-resident fathers who are unemployed and those who does not afford to provide necessities for their children, have a poor or no relationship with their children. Failing to provide any means of financial support made them to feel degraded to a position of inferiority to get closer to their children. These findings were also congruent with the study done by Khunou (2018) who suggested that with the high rate of unemployment in South Africa, many men are unable to meet this responsibility and may try to avoid criticism by distancing themselves from their children. This assertion is further supported by Makusha, Richter, and Chikovore, (2012) who notes that fathers' limited involvement is associated with financial constraints and poverty.

Culture practices still remains as a barrier for non-resident fathers to engage and be involved in parenting their children (Bennet, 2004). Inhlawulo has been identified by the study participants amongst the list of factors that limit their involvement in parenting. These study results were congruent with the study done by Makusha, Richter, and Bhana (2012) who noted that a father who fails to pay inhlawulo may be denied access of visiting and spending time with his child.

It was also noted that this practice is highly honored in rural areas compared to developed-urban areas. Non-resident fathers who had partners from and that were raised in township-urban areas did not have any problem in accessing their children whether they have paid Inhlawulo or not. Some of them were granted a full authority by the maternal families to access their children whenever they want to. Unlike in rural areas where they were not allowed to see or visit their children. This was supported by Mvune (2017 in Mkhwanazi and Bhana, 2017)

who note that it has been observed that some maternal families may allow a father full access even when *inhlawulo* has not been paid.

It was apparent from the study findings that some of the study participants did not have healthy relationships with mothers of their children. Most of the conflicts that caused poor relations resulted from non-resident fathers failing to fulfil some of their parental expectations such as maintenance. These study results were congruent with the study done by Pleck and Masciadrelli (2004) who noted that mothers may limit non-resident fathers' access if he is failing to fulfil certain parental expectations. Poor relations affected how the mother and the non-resident father communicate with each other and some of them end up not talking at all.

In this study the consequences of limited communication included the limited involvement of non-resident fathers in parenting. The findings were congruent with the statement noted by Walper and Krey (2009) who said conflicts between parents are a risk factor that threatens a nonresidential father's levels of contact, involvement and relationship with his children. Participants who were lucky to have cooperative and involved maternal family members resort to use them for updates concerning the child. Participants who had unhealthy relationships with the mother of the child and the maternal family as well, had no contact at all with their children.

A lack of parental knowledge also had psychological and social effects on non-resident fathers who participated in our study. The findings of this study revealed that one of the non-resident fathers who participated in the study had a very limited knowledge of what is expected from him as a father, which had a negative impact on the upbringing and development of the child concerned. The non-resident father blamed his overall involvement on his background that did not have any guidance of a father figure as he grew up not knowing his biological father. Apart from all what he does for his child out of consciousness, the main expected roles from him were still unknown.

Morgan, Nutbrown and Hannon (2009) commented that it is important to acknowledge non-resident fathers' existing knowledge and skills in understanding their perceptions rather than approaching fathers as parents who are not involved or not interested in parenting. What we know specifically about non-residents fathers' parental knowledge is limited. Alongside this strand, within a predominantly qualitative research tradition, research has provided evidence of men's subjective experience of non-residential parenthood (Dermott, 2016). For young and

new fathers, their inexperience, lack of knowledge of how to be a good father, and their lack of positive role models may also impact their ability to be involved fathers (Chikovore, Makusha and Richter (2013).

The findings of this study were congruent with the study done by Stright and Bales (2003) who suggested that some models of parenting have emphasized the role of parents 'experiences in their family of origin as a model of a style of interaction in their own parenting, and having inadequate knowledge of parenting will result in passing insufficient knowledge to children.

The findings for this study revealed that the distance between the non-resident father and the child is sometimes a factor that limits non-resident father's involvement in parenting. In this study, this factor was influenced by a temporal-long term fathers' hospitalization, studying far from the child, working far from the child and staying far from the child. All these reasons has prevented non-resident fathers from developing and strengthening good relationships with their children from single-mother households. Biological mothers of children from this study viewed non-resident fathers who struggled to visit or meet their children regularly with less interest in parenting. Financial hindrances for participants who were financial unfit made it more impossible for them to visit, meet and spend leisure time with their children more often.

According to Nduna and Jewkes (2011) an undisclosed father is one where the mother does not tell the child who the father is or provides incorrect information regarding the details of the biological father. In this study, one of the study participants was deprived his rights of knowing he has fathered. This was quoted from his words "The mother of my child started by pointing my child somewhere else, but I knew the child was mine and I kept on telling her that her child is my blood. It was very hard to know that I have a child that I cannot support and take care of". The reason the child's mother chose not to disclose the participant's identity seemed to result from fathers' inability to pay damages and the mother prevented this by directing a child to someone whom she trusted can afford the payment of damages (Padi, Nduna, Khunou and Kholopane, 2014). A year later, the mother then decided to redirect the child to the participant claiming him as the correct biological father to the child.

These findings were also congruent with the study done by Nduna (2014) who suggested that non-disclosure of the pregnancy by the mother to the child's father deprives the father of his right to know he has fathered a child and acknowledge his role as a parent to the child. This

causes complexity when a mother wrongfully mislead a father by saying he has fathered their child. The delayed disclosure period has also negatively impacted father's involvement in three basic components which are potential availability for interaction, interaction in direct contact and responsibility of ensuring that resources of nurturing the child are available (Lamb, Pleck and Levine, 1986).

#### **5.2.5. Study objective 5: Identify factors that can strengthen the involvement of non-resident fathers in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households.**

The conclusions for study objective 5 pertain factors that strengthen the involvement of non-resident fathers in parenting (see Table 7). Two emerging factors that were noted by the research participants are healthy communication with the mother and maternal family of the child and living together with the child.

The findings for this study revealed that a healthy communication between the father and mother contributed in strengthening the involvement of the non-resident father in parenting. Non-resident fathers who did not have a healthy communication with mothers of their children, resorted in using other members of the maternal family for any communication relating to the child concerned. According to Ryan, Kalil and Ziol-Guest (2008) the quality of the relationship between the non-resident father, mother, and their extended families are associated with the involvement of the father in the child's life. It is important to explore ways in which non-residential fathers engage in childcare. As non-resident fathers do not have daily contact with their children, they have to negotiate with the mother to gain access to their children (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor and Mphaka (2013). Maternal encouragement of the father being involved with his children through healthy communication has positive effects to the child (Fagan and Cherson, 2017). The necessity of maintaining a healthy communication between parents is to benefit the child because, unhealthy communication may affect the quality of the non-resident father-child relationship and level of involvement with the child (Austin et al. 2013)

According to Statistics South Africa (2017) the biggest barrier that is associated with non-resident fathers' involvement is the high rate of biological fathers who do not live with their children in almost half of single-mother households in which children aged 0-4 years. The findings of this study revealed that non-resident fathers suggest living with their children as a

solution in strengthen their level of involvement in their children's' lives. In seeking to understand the emotional and psychological impact of being non-resident fathers, almost all participants showed interest, excitement and eagerness if they were to live with their children.

### **5.3. RECOMMENDATION**

The study recommendations are built on the grounds of the study findings. These recommendations will benefit future research, policy development, single-mothers in understanding how non-resident fathers perceive parenting and equip non-resident fathers' knowledge on how they can strengthen their involvement in parenting their children age 0-3 years from single mother households.

#### **5.3.1. Recommendations regarding future research**

There is a need to investigate how extended families especially parental families contribute in encouraging non-resident fathers' involvement in parenting. Non-resident fathers who values advises from their family members has a potential of doing better in parenting if their families encourages them to be involved in parenting. Future research should focus on how parental families have been contributing for the past decades and what role they can plan in encouraging non-resident fathers moving forward. The challenges experienced by the paternal families especially grandparents in supporting children from single mother households and lasting solutions to address these challenges should be focused on.

#### **5.3.2. Policy recommendations to strengthen non-resident fathers' involvement in parenting**

Having mentioned several barriers that limits non-resident fathers' involvement in parenting, ruling policy has a power to expand the lens that the society uses to view non-resident fathers. The government should develop policies that encourages non-resident fathers to rise above all the barriers and commit themselves in meeting single mothers halfway in parenting. Current policy prioritizes financial provision and neglects non-financial support which is more important in parenting. The Maintenance Act does not encourage non-resident fathers' socio-emotional involvement which has a huge psychological impact in a child and a massive role in distancing fathers who cannot afford monetary needs. Policy development should

accommodates non-resident fathers who are willing to be involved in parenting regardless of their financial status and backgrounds.

Cultural practices still remains as a barrier for non-resident fathers to engage and be involved in parenting their children, especially in rural communities. South African policies should not sideline that South Africa is made of different cultures. There is a need for policy makers to involve traditional authorities that represent all cultures in policy development in order to accommodate culture while encouraging the involvement of non-resident fathers in parenting. Rural communities are mainly ruled by traditional authorities whom have the power to perpetuate a set of principles within communities. They have the ability to influence communities about government policies, hence their involvement in policy development can change non-resident father's perception towards parenting and promote their involvement.

Parental programmes that promotes the involvement of non-resident fathers should not only be introduced when males have reached fatherhood phase. The department of education should also add topics that promotes and encourages the involvement of fathers from an early stage in social subjects in schools. Schools are active centres that has a potential to enhance and diminish children's perceptions while teachers has a potential to nurture or inhibit inner thoughts. Social debates, oral shows and drama performances that teaches about roles and responsibilities of non-resident fathers should be initiated at the primary level. In doing so, children will grow up knowing what is expected from them when they become parents and the level of involvement that is expected from a person who is a non-resident, should they become them. The initiation of these topics at an early stage is very vital since children from primary schools have views on what they are expecting from their non-resident fathers due to their experiences.

#### **5.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

In chapter 3, having said that data collection was done during the coronavirus disease outbreak in chapter 3, when the South African government set some regulations within the Disaster Management Act to address, prevent and combat the spread of coronavirus. In respecting these regulations, the researcher did not conduct face-to-face interviews which might have affected the richness of the data findings.

The study was conducted in a small sample within the qualitative research paradigm and therefore findings cannot be generalized to the whole population. The perception of non-resident fathers may vary from one location to other due to different cultures, races, backgrounds, socioeconomic factors and community lifestyles. However, drawing conclusions based on generalization was not part of the study aim, but rather an understanding of the phenomenon from the perspective of the participants from the chosen location.

## **5.5. CONCLUSION**

The main study aims and objectives were met by the researcher, as the outcomes were able to examine the involvement of non-resident fathers and their perception in parenting, the roles and responsibilities that non-resident fathers have in parenting, factors that influence non-resident fathers' lack of involvement as well as factors that can strengthen the involvement of non-resident fathers in parenting. This chapter presented the overall conclusion of the study and also managed to get a clear insight on the social interaction process which influences the overt behavior and the state of mind of the non-resident father through Social Constructionism theory. According to the findings of the study, the barrier that prevented most non-resident fathers' involvement in parenting was unhealthy communication and unhealthy relationship between the father and the mother of the child. Single mothers and non-resident fathers should come together in promoting non-resident fathers' involvement. They must not use the child to fight their battles but should always fight for solutions that benefit the child. Extended families should always avoid taking sides during conflicts that arises between biological parents of the child, they should remain neutral and promote the involvement of both parents regardless of their differences.

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## **APPENDIX 1: Contract between Supervisor and Candidate**

**Student name: Ngubane Samkelisiwe**

**Student number: 220107794**

The relationship between a supervisor and a candidate for a research degree is one of mentorship. A supervisor should advise about the structure of the degree, should direct the candidate to sources and material, may suggest better forms of expression, but in the end the dissertation or thesis must be the candidates own work.

### **CORRECTION OF STYLE AND GRAMMAR**

A completed dissertation or thesis must be satisfactory as regards form and literary expression. Although the supervisor will point out any passages in it which are stylistically poor, or which are grammatically weak, a supervisor cannot correct great numbers of language errors, nor is it the supervisor's responsibility to do so. A student may, if necessary, and at his or her own cost, employ a copy editor to proofread the dissertation or thesis and correct errors of expression or style.

### **PLAGIARISM**

A candidate may not include in the dissertation or thesis any quotations from another writer, or adopt substantial ideas from another writer, without acknowledgment and reference to the source of the quotation. Direct quotations must be indicated by the use of quotation marks. All cases of plagiarism will be reported to the University Proctor for disciplinary action and may lead to the dissertation or thesis and the degree being failed.

## EXPECTATIONS OF SUPERVISOR AND CANDIDATE

Projected date for the submission of the research proposal:

- 28 April

Will the candidate be expected to attend group seminars?

- Not applicable

Approximate frequency of such seminars:

- Not applicable

How often will the candidate present written work? (E.g. monthly, quarterly, etc.)

- Monthly

How often will the supervisor and the candidate expect to meet? (E.g. monthly, every two months, etc.)

- Quarterly

Approximately how soon after submission of written work can the candidate expect comments from the supervisor?

- +/- 5 days

Any other special provisions agreed on?

- Not applicable

**Candidate**

**Supervisor**

Samkelisiwe P. Ngubane

M. Mthembu

Signed date

Signed date

30/05/2020

30/05/2020

Full Name: Samkelisiwe Purity Ngubane

Student number: 220107794

**NOTE:** The supervisor's consent is required to submit the completed dissertation or thesis for examination and no thesis will be accepted by the Faculty Office for examination without the supervisor's approval. The supervisor must see the final version of the thesis before submission. A candidate may, if he/she wishes, insist on submission without the supervisor's consent, but this fact will be noted in the supervisor's report.



**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES  
SCHOOL OF APPLIED HUMAN SCIENCES (SOCIAL WORK)**

**ANNEXURE 2 (A): INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

Title of the study: **Exploring the involvement of non-resident fathers and their perception in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single mother households in eThekweni, South Africa.** This study is part of the bigger study titled” *Optimum child growth and Development-Building thriving communities through risk reduction from impacts of nutrition, environment, and social constructs*”.

Dear possible participant

My name is **Samkelisiwe Purity Ngubane**, a Masters’ student from the Social Work Department at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (samkembuthu@gamil.com;0782142593).

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that seeks to explore the current involvement of non-resident fathers towards parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households and explore their roles and responsibilities of parental involvement. The study will also be looking at the factors influencing parental practices and those that can strengthen non-resident father’s involvement in Durban, South Africa. The aim and purpose of this research is to examine the involvement of non-resident fathers and their perception in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households. The study is expected to enroll 15 participants from the study site King Edward Hospital. It will involve the following procedures:

- 15 non-resident fathers to children of unmarried single mothers who are already part of the bigger study. The father may still be in a relationship with the mother or may be involved with someone else, but must still have the communication with the mother of his child, and have agreed to participate in this study.

- Telephonic interviews will be conducted to collect data and thematic analysis will be used to analyzed data. The data will be recorded and later transcribed. The interviews will be conducted either in isiZulu or English in line with each participant' language preference.
- An interview guide will be used to guide the interview (see appendix 5). The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be 1 day of telephonic interview which may last up to 60 minutes. The study is not funded by anyone.

**The study have psychological risks as a potential risk:** This highlight the possible negative effects that are likely to arise as the participants share their past experiences. This view is informed by the notion that, in order to better understand the perceptions and lived experiences of non-resident fathers whose partners are parenting children in single mother households, such fathers are anticipated to open up during interviews. In this regard, the emotions or thoughts of discomfort are viewed as likely be evoked as participants relieve the experiences and memories about their situations as they participate in interviews. The researcher is of the view that such experiences and memories may be overwhelming to some of the participants and that they may manifest themselves in various ways, namely through aspects like sadness and anger.

**To minimize this potential risk, the researcher will take the following steps:**

- a) The participants will be provided an opportunity to choose, not to discuss any issue, which they will feel uncomfortable to share.
- b) The participants will be reminded of the principle involving withdrawing from continuing in the study anytime where they feel uncomfortable to do.
- c) It is essential to make a remark that the researcher is a qualified social worker and that after each and every interview there will be debriefing to assessment the participant's condition. Each participant who asks or found to be in need of psychosocial support will be linked with a social worker in the nearest Service Office of the Department of Social Development for further intervention.

In this regard, each will be afforded an opportunity to consult the qualified social workers. In the therapeutic context, the participants will be afforded the opportunity for counselling, which may include venting the emotions that may have been kept at subconscious level for some time.

## CONSENT

I \_\_\_\_\_ have been informed about the study entitled: Exploring the involvement of non-resident fathers and their perception in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single mother households in eThekweni, South Africa by a researcher **Samkelisiwe Purity Ngubane**.

- I understand the purpose and procedures of the study. I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.
- I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any treatment or care that I would usually be entitled to.
- I have been informed about that my involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at [samkembuthu@gmail.com](mailto:samkembuthu@gmail.com) or 078 214 2593.
- If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

### BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

To confirm your official consent to take part in the study,

I will request you to sign below.

Signature of participant

Date

.....

.....

Researcher/Interviewer's name

Date

.....

.....

I can be contacted at:

Email: [samkembuthu@gmail.com](mailto:samkembuthu@gmail.com)

Cell: 078 214 2593

Office: 035 550 7525

If you wish to obtain information on your rights as a participant, please contact Ms. Phumelele Ximba who is based at Research Office at the University of KwaZulu-Natal on 031 260 3587.

**ISITHASISELO 2: IFOMU LOKUVUMA**

**Igama lesitshudeni: Ngubane**

**Samkelisiwe**

**(Zulu version)**

**Student number: 220107794**



**IKOLISHI LOBUNTU**

**ISIKOLE SOKUSEBENZISA ISAYENSI YABANTU (EZENHLALAKAHLE)**

**ISIJOBELELO 2 (B): IFOMU LOKUVUMA**

Isihloko socwaningo: **Ukuhlola ukuzibandakanya kobaba abangahlali nezingane kanye nokuqonda kwabo ngokuba wumzali kubantwana abaneminyaka emithathu nengaphansi abahlala nomama abangabodwa eThekwini, Eningizimu Africa.** Lolucwaningo luyinxenye locwaningo olukhulu igama laso” *Optimum child growth and Development- Building thriving communities through risk reduction from impacts of nutrition, environment, and social constructs*”.

Uyacelwa ukuba ubambe iqhaza ocwaningweni olwenziwa ngu **Samkelisiwe Purity Ngubane** ongumfundi wesifundo samakhosi ngaphansi komnyango wabezenhlalakahle eNyuvesi yaKwa-Zulu Natal. Lolucwaningo lufuna ukuhlola ukuzibandakanya kobaba abangahlali nezingane zabo ekubeni wumzali ezinganeni ezineminyaka emithathu kuya phansi ezihlala nomama abangabodwa bese sihlola amaqhaza kanye nezibopho zokuzibandakanya ngokuba wumzali. Lolucwaningo luzophinde lubheke izinto ezithonya imikhuba yabazali kanye nalezo ezingaqinisa ukuzibandakanya kobaba abangahlali nezingane zabo eThekwini, Eningizimu Africa. Imiphumela yalolucwaningo iyoba yinxenye yebika locwaningo. Ukhethiwe njengomuntu ongabamba iqhaza kulolucwaningo ngoba ungubaba ongahlali nengane yakhe, ingane yakho bese ihlala nomama ongayedwa osevele eyinxenye yocwaningo olukhulu. Kumele ube nakho ukuxhumana nomama wengane yakho, futhi kumele ukube uvumile ukuba yinxenye yalolucwaningo.

Mina \_\_\_\_\_ (Amagama aphelele obembe iqhaza) Ngitsheliwe ngalolucwaningo olubanjelwe esibhedlela i-King Edward Hospital ngumfundi weNyuvesi yaKwa-Zulu Natal ofeza ucwaningo lwesihloko esishiwo ngenhla.

Ngalokho, mina ngiyavuma ukuba yinxenye yalolucwaningo. Ngingathanda futhi ukusho ukuthi ngiyazi ngalokhu okulandlayo:

1. Uyinxenye ngokuzithandela.
2. Ingxoxo izobanjelwa ngocingo futhi ingathatha iskhathi esingangehora esikhathini sakho.
3. Ulwazi ozolunikezela luzogcinwa luyimfihlo futhi idatha izongcinwa endaweni ephephile bese iyabhujiswa emva kweminyaka emihlanu.
4. Ukhululekile ukuhoxa ocwaningweni uma isidingo siqhamuka.
5. Ukuzibandakanya kwakho kungokwezinhloso zokufunda kuphela, futhi ayikho imali etholakalayo ngokubandakanyeka.

Ukuqinisekisa ngokusemthethweni ukuvuma ukuba yinxenye yalolu cwaningo, ngizocela ukuba usayine lapha ngezansi.

Isiginesha yobambe iqhaza

Usuku

.....

.....

Igama lomcwaningi/okhulumisana naye

Usuku

.....

.....

Ngiyatholakala lapha:

Umyalezo kagesi: [samkembuthu@gmail.com](mailto:samkembuthu@gmail.com)

Umakhalekhukwini: 078 214 2593

Ehhovisi: 035 550 7525

Uma ufisa ukuthola ulwazi ngamalungelo akho njengobambe iqhaza kulolucwaningo, uyacelwa ukuba uxhumane no Nkosikazi. Phumelele Ximba ozinze ehhovisi loncwaningo eNyuvesi yaKwaZulu Natal ku 031 260 3587.

## APPENDIX 3: NON-RESIDENT FATHER INFORMATION SHEET

Student name: Ngubane Samkelisiwe

Student number: 220107794



### INFORMATION SHEET

Title of the study: **Exploring the involvement of non-resident fathers and their perception in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single mother households in eThekweni, South Africa.** This study is part of the bigger study titled "Optimum child growth and Development-Building thriving communities through risk reduction from impacts of nutrition, environment, and social constructs".

**Researcher:** Samkelisiwe Purity Ngubane

**Supervisor:** Dr Maud N. Mthembu

**Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:** This study seeks to explore the current involvement of non-resident fathers towards parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households and explore their roles and responsibilities of parental involvement. The study will also be looking at the factors influencing parental practices and those that can strengthen non-resident father's involvement in Durban, South Africa. The researcher is intending to publish the findings and recommendations in the journal so that the information is known and contribute to development to a wider body of knowledge and theory. This study will give a broader understanding of the perceptions of non-resident fathers concerning their involvement in parenting. The effects of less/more involvement will be examined and the conclusions that will be drawn from the examination will result in recommendations that will strengthen the involvement of non-resident fathers in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households.

**Outline of the Procedures:** Semi-structured interviews will be used in collecting data from the non-resident fathers facilitated by open-ended questions contained in an interview guide to gain a detailed picture of a participant's belief, challenges, and experiences about or perception of the studied phenomenon. Semi-structured individual interviews will be done with 15 individuals of fathers who meet the criteria of being non-resident fathers to children of unmarried single mothers who are already part of the bigger study. The father may still be in a relationship with the mother or may be involved with someone else but must still have the communication with the mother of his child. The status of their relationship must not be critical. The researcher is not intending to compensate any participants or give them any remuneration. The researcher will explain the purpose of the study at the beginning that it is voluntary.

**Risks or Discomforts to the Participant:** The researcher will ask questions that may trigger some of the participant's bad memories which can make participants to be more sensitive. The interview questions may also require the participants to share personal and confidential information which can make participants feel uncomfortable. Participants are free to refuse to share some of the information if they are uncomfortable doing so.

**Benefits:** There are no tangible nor financial benefits from this study. The researcher is aware that participants may benefit emotionally from sharing narratives and experiences that they had never shared with anyone. After analysing the findings, recommendations will be made to the local government on what can be done to strengthen the non-resident father's involvement with children aged 0-3 years living in single-mother households.

**Reason/s why the Participant May Be Withdrawn from the Study:** Participants have a right to withdraw if they are no longer comfortable to further participate in the study without any negative or undesirable consequences to themselves.

**Remuneration:** There will be no remuneration or reward that will be given to participants for participating in the study.

**Costs of the Study:** The participants are not expected to pay anything regarding the study. The researcher is not expected to request any money from the participants.

**Confidentiality:** All the information that the researcher will obtain regarding the participant's identity shall be between the researcher, participant, and the supervisor. To further ensure confidentiality, participants will be given pseudonyms to safe keep their identities. The information provided by the participant will be kept safe in a cabinet and make it available for inquiry audit and will be destroyed after 5 years. If the researcher happens to give or share the recordings with the supervisor as proof that participants took part in the research, the supervisor will destroy the recordings after checking it.

**Research-related Injury:** No risk or any harm anticipated by the researcher.

If you are interested in being part of this study, please complete the consent form with this information sheet.

If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the following people:

Supervisor: Dr. Maud Mthembu located at the College of Humanities, Howard College of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Email: Mthembum@ukzn.ac.za

Phone number: 031 260 2358

If you wish to obtain information on your rights as a participant, please contact Ms. Phumelele Ximba who is based at the Research Office at the University of KwaZulu-Natal on 031 260 3587.

Please find the attached assent form that you are required to sign and return to the researcher as a matter of priority.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project.

Kind regards

Samkelisiwe Purity Ngubane

Student Number: 220107794

Cell: 0782142593

Email: [samkembuthu@gmail.com](mailto:samkembuthu@gmail.com)



**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES  
SCHOOL OF APPLIED HUMAN SCIENCES (SOCIAL WORK)**

**ANNEXURE A: LETTER OF INVITATION FOR PARTICIPANTS**

Dear Mr .....

You have been contacted because you are a father of a child whose mother is participating in one of our studies. We are conducting a study to understand how you take care of your child. We will like to interview you telephonically for +/- 40 minutes. If you want to know more about the study, please send “please call me” to 0782142593 and we will call you back. Your call does not mean you are a participant, you can still refuse to participate if you feel you don’t like to.

Thank you.

**Researcher** can be contacted at:

Email: [samkembuthu@gmail.com](mailto:samkembuthu@gmail.com)

Cell: 078 214 2593

Office: 035 550 7525

**Supervisor:** Dr Maud N. Mthembu

If you wish to obtain information on your rights as a participant, please contact Ms. Phumelele Ximba who is based at Research Office at the University of KwaZulu-Natal on 031 260 3587.

**Interview schedule****Semi-structured interview****Introduction**

My name is Samkelisiwe Ngubane. I am studying at the University of KwaZulu Natal under the School of Applied Human Sciences. I am gathering information on the involvement of non-resident fathers in parenting children aged 0-3 years from single-mother households as part of the partial fulfilment of my Social Work Master's degree. I would like to find out from you about the perception of non-resident fathers towards parenting. The information you give me will only be used for this study.

**Section A: Biographical data**

Race	
Marital status	
Age	
Location (urban or rural)	

**Section B: Interview questions**

1. Tell me how many children do you have? Where they stay?
2. What roles and responsibilities do you think fathers should play in parenting?
3. When children are still young, what kind of support do you think they need?
4. At what age do you think fathers should be involved in their children's lives?
5. Tell me about your relationship with your children?
6. What has influenced your parenting?
7. What type of activities have you done with your child?

8. If the father has no money to provide for a child, what else can a father do to show support?
9. Have you been in a similar situation where you do not have money for your child?
10. Is there anything in the past that has prevented you from seeing your child and taking care of him/her?
11. If yes, what are those things?
12. How often do you see your child?
13. Have you done any cultural practices for your child such as inhlawulo or isiphandla?
14. Are you aware of your children's rights and your parental rights according to Children's Act section 21?
15. Identify if your child is using the maternal or paternal surname? Who decided which surname the child must use?
16. How can you describe the relationship between you and the mother of your child?
17. How is your relationship with the maternal family of your child?
18. What do you think can be done to improve your involvement in your child's life?
19. What do you think the government can do to enhance and strengthen your involvement and relationship with your child?
20. Are you satisfied with the roles and responsibilities you perform for your child?
21. What do you think makes a good father?



26 August 2021

Mrs Samkelisiwe Purty Ngubane (220107794)  
School of Applied Human Sc  
Howard College

Dear Mrs Ngubane,

Protocol reference number: BREC/00002923/2021

Project title: Exploring the involvement of non-resident fathers and their perception of parenting children aged 0-3 years from single mother households in eThekweni, South Africa.

Degree: Masters

**EXPEDITED APPLICATION: APPROVAL LETTER**

A sub-committee of the Biomedical Research Ethics Committee has considered and noted your application.

The conditions have been met and the study is given full ethics approval and may begin as from 26 August 2021. Please ensure that outstanding site permissions are obtained and forwarded to BREC for approval before commencing research at a site.

This approval is subject to national and UKZN lockdown regulations, see ([http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Libraries/BREC/BREC\\_Amended\\_Lockdown\\_Level\\_3\\_Guidelines.sfb.ashx](http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Libraries/BREC/BREC_Amended_Lockdown_Level_3_Guidelines.sfb.ashx)). Based on feedback from some sites, we urge PIs to show sensitivity and exercise appropriate consideration at sites where personnel and service users appear stressed or overloaded.

This approval is valid for one year from 26 August 2021. To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, an application for recertification must be submitted to BREC on the appropriate BREC form 2-3 months before the expiry date.

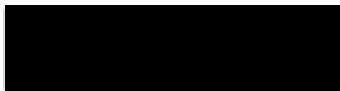
Any amendments to this study, unless urgently required to ensure safety of participants, must be approved by BREC prior to implementation.

Your acceptance of this approval denotes your compliance with South African National Research Ethics Guidelines (2015), South African National Good Clinical Practice Guidelines (2020) (if applicable) and with UKZN BREC ethics requirements as contained in the UKZN BREC Terms of Reference and Standard Operating Procedures, all available at <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/Biomedical-Research-Ethics.aspx>.

BREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-290408-009). BREC has US Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) Federal-wide Assurance (FWA 678).

The sub-committee's decision will be noted by a full Committee at its next meeting taking place on 14 September 2021.

Yours sincerely,



Prof D Wassenaar  
Chair: Biomedical Research Ethics Committee

Biomedical Research Ethics Committee  
Chair: Professor D R Wassenaar  
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building  
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000  
Email: [BREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:BREC@ukzn.ac.za)  
Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/Biomedical-Research-Ethics.aspx>

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

**INSPIRING GREATNESS**