

**EXPLORING THE USE OF TELEVISION FOR GUIDANCE  
TO EXPECTANT FATHERS**

*by*

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*Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree*

**MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS  
(EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY)**

*in the*

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**

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**OCTOBER 2005**

*To be the father of a nation is a great honour,  
but to be the father of a family is a greater joy*

*Nelson Mandela (cited in Hosking, 2004:7)*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**I would like to recognise and thank the following individuals for supporting me and contributing to the success of this dissertation. I offer my sincere appreciation and gratitude to:**

- Ronél Ferreira, my supervisor, for her continuous guidance, motivation, encouragement, support, patience, understanding and especially for having such confidence in me.
- Prof Kobus Maree, my co-supervisor, for his enthusiasm, guidance, encouragement, inspiration and most of all for his valuable contribution to this study.
- Grant, my husband, for his continuous support, love, motivation, patience and encouragement.
- My parents, Anne and Ernesto, for their guidance, love and endless support throughout my studies. Thank you for always believing in me and for helping me to achieve my dreams.
- My family and friends, for their positive enthusiasm, support and encouragement.
- St. Dunstan's College Preparatory School for their understanding and consistent support.
- Margaret Mtsweni at Walkabout Pictures, for her assistance with the television broadcast.
- Dr M J van der Linde and Mr S W Human in the Statistics Department at the University of Pretoria, for their assistance.
- The various midwives, doctors and clinics, for helping me to inform expectant fathers about the study.
- Clarisse Venter, for her assistance with literature references.
- Penny Kokot Louw, for the language editing.
- The expectant fathers who volunteered and helped to make this study possible.

## DECLARATION

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I, Chiara Dominique Hinckley (97081184) hereby declare that all the resources that were consulted are included in the reference list and that this study is my original work.

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Chiara Dominique Hinckley

October 2005

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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### CHAPTER 1 GENERAL ORIENTATION

---

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Page</i>
<b>1.1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1.1 Emphasis on preparing women for parenthood.....	1
1.1.2 Limited information available for expectant fathers.....	2
1.1.3 Exploring television as an alternate form of guidance for expectant fathers.....	3
<b>1.2 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.4.1 Primary research question .....	5
1.4.2 Secondary research questions.....	5
<b>1.5 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION.....</b>	<b>6</b>
1.5.1 Expectant father.....	6
1.5.2 Television as medium.....	6
1.5.3 Parent guidance.....	7
<b>1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN: A BROAD OVERVIEW.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.7 ASSUMPTIONS.....</b>	<b>9</b>
1.7.1 Personal assumptions.....	9
1.7.2 Epistemological assumptions.....	9

<b>1.8</b>	<b>LAYOUT OF THE STUDY.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1.9</b>	<b>CONCLUDING COMMENTS.....</b>	<b>12</b>

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

---

<b>2.1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1.1	Changing roles of parents .....	14
2.1.2	Need for further research and development.....	15
<b>2.2</b>	<b>PROCESS OF PARENTHOOD.....</b>	<b>16</b>
2.2.1	Pregnancy and birth.....	16
2.2.2	Transition to and expectations of parenthood.....	17
<b>2.3</b>	<b>PARENTING.....</b>	<b>19</b>
2.3.1	Aims of parenting.....	19
2.3.2	Parenting roles.....	20
2.3.2.1	Changing roles within the family.....	21
2.3.2.2	Fathers' parenting roles.....	22
2.3.3	Parenting styles.....	23
2.3.4	Tasks of parenting.....	24
<b>2.4</b>	<b>FATHERHOOD.....</b>	<b>25</b>
2.4.1	Terminology related to fatherhood.....	25
2.4.2	Changing roles of fathers.....	26
2.4.3	The role of the father in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century.....	27
2.4.4	Fathers' need for more information.....	28
2.4.5	The role of the father in child development.....	29
2.4.6	The father-child relationship.....	30
<b>2.5</b>	<b>PARENT GUIDANCE.....</b>	<b>32</b>
2.5.1	Fathers' need for support.....	32

<b>2.6</b>	<b>TELEVISION AS COMMUNICATION MEDIUM.....</b>	<b>33</b>
2.6.1	Parenting programmes on television.....	34
2.6.2	Expectant fathers and the mass media.....	34
2.6.3	Potential advantages of television as a medium for parent (father) guidance .....	35
2.6.4	Changing the public's perception of fatherhood .....	36
<b>2.7</b>	<b>CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>37</b>



## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

---

<b>3.1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>3.2.</b>	<b>PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE: COMBINING TWO PARADIGMS.....</b>	<b>38</b>
3.2.1	Interpretivist paradigm.....	38
3.2.2	Positivist paradigm.....	39
3.2.3	Combing the interpretivist and positivist paradigms.....	39
3.2.4	Mixed methods approach.....	40
<b>3.3</b>	<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND STRATEGIES.....</b>	<b>41</b>
3.3.1	Research design.....	42
3.3.1.1	Descriptive survey design.....	43
3.3.1.2	Case study design.....	43
3.3.2	Selection of participants (sampling) .....	45
3.3.2.1	Sampling participants for the first phase of the study (quantitative component) .....	46
3.3.2.2	Selecting participants for the second phase of the study (qualitative component) .....	47
3.3.3	Data collection strategies .....	48
3.3.3.1	Quantitative technique: Questionnaire .....	49
3.3.3.2	Qualitative techniques.....	50
i.	Face-to-face interviews.....	50
ii.	Field notes.....	51
iii.	Reflective journal.....	51
3.3.4	Data analysis and interpretation.....	52
<b>3.4</b>	<b>ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER.....</b>	<b>53</b>

<b>3.5</b>	<b>CRITERIA FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE.....</b>	<b>54</b>
3.5.1	Triangulation.....	54
3.5.2	Trustworthiness (reliability, dependability) .....	55
3.5.3	Validity.....	55
3.5.3.1	Credibility (internal validity) .....	56
3.5.3.2	Transferability / Generalisability (external validity) .....	56
<b>3.6</b>	<b>ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....</b>	<b>56</b>
3.6.1	Informed consent and voluntary participation.....	57
3.6.2	Protection from harm.....	57
3.6.3	Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity.....	58
<b>3.7</b>	<b>CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>58</b>

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

---

<b>4.1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>RESULTS OF THE QUANTITATIVE COMPONENT OF THE STUDY.....</b>	<b>59</b>
4.2.1	Descriptive statistics.....	59
4.2.1.1	Primary and secondary biographical data.....	60
4.2.1.2	Expectant fathers' views on their need for guidance.....	63
	i. Need for guidance for expectant fathers.....	64
	ii. General information required by expectant fathers.....	64
	iii. Greatest needs of expectant fathers.....	66
	iv. Greatest needs of expectant mothers.....	67
	v. Skills required by expectant fathers.....	67
4.2.1.3	Appropriate forms of media for guidance to expectant fathers.....	68
	i. Most suitable form of media for providing guidance to expectant fathers.....	68
	ii. Views regarding television as a way of providing guidance to expectant fathers.....	69
	iii. Hours that expectant fathers spend watching television.....	70
4.2.2	Inferential statistics.....	70
4.2.2.1	Statistical procedures applied to the data.....	70
4.2.2.2	Hypotheses.....	71
	i. Hypothesis testing.....	71
<b>4.3</b>	<b>RESULTS OF THE QUALITATIVE COMPONENT OF THE STUDY.....</b>	<b>75</b>

<b>4.4</b>	<b>INTERPRETATION AND SYNTHESIS OF THE QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA.....</b>	<b>78</b>
4.4.1	Triangulation of the data and literature control.....	78
4.4.1.1	Expectant fathers' views on their need for guidance.....	79
4.4.1.2	Nature of information required by expectant fathers.....	81
4.4.1.3	Television as a suitable medium for providing guidance to expectant fathers.....	82
4.4.1.4	Possible impact of providing guidance to expectant fathers.....	84
<b>4.5</b>	<b>CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>86</b>

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

---

<b>5.1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY.....</b>	<b>87</b>
5.2.1	Chapter one.....	88
5.2.2	Chapter two.....	88
5.2.3	Chapter three.....	88
5.2.4	Chapter four.....	89
5.2.5	Chapter five.....	89
<b>5.3</b>	<b>SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>5.4</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>5.5</b>	<b>CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....</b>	<b>92</b>
5.5.1	Challenges of the study.....	92
5.5.2	Limitations of the study.....	93
<b>5.6</b>	<b>POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY.....</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>5.7</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>94</b>
5.7.1	Recommendations for practice.....	94
5.7.2	Recommendations for training.....	94
5.7.3	Recommendations for further research.....	95
<b>5.8</b>	<b>CONCLUDING COMMENTS.....</b>	<b>95</b>
	<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>97</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

---

	<i>Page</i>
<b>FIGURE 2.1 SCHEMATIC OUTLINE OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>FIGURE 3.1 SEQUENTIAL EXPLANATORY DESIGN.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>FIGURE 3.2 SCHEMATIC PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>FIGURE 4.1 POPULATION GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS.....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>FIGURE 4.2 PERCENTAGE DISPLAY OF MARITAL STATUS.....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>FIGURE 4.3 WORK STATUS OF PARTICIPANTS.....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>FIGURE 4.4 PARTICIPANTS' PARTNERS' PHASES OF PREGNANCY.....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>FIGURE 4.5 SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDY.....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>FIGURE 4.6 EXPECTANT FATHERS' VIEWS ON THE NEED FOR GUIDANCE.....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>FIGURE 4.7 GREATEST NEEDS OF EXPECTANT FATHERS.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>FIGURE 4.8 SKILLS REQUIRED BY EXPECTANT FATHERS.....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>FIGURE 4.9 MOST SUITABLE FORMS OF MEDIA FOR PROVIDING GUIDANCE TO EXPECTANT FATHERS.....</b>	<b>68</b>

<b>FIGURE 4.10</b>	<b>PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS ON TELEVISION AS A MEANS TO GUIDE EXPECTANT FATHERS.....</b>	<b>69</b>
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## LIST OF TABLES

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	<i>Page</i>
<b>TABLE 4.1</b>	<b>THEMES IDENTIFIED WITH REGARD TO THE TYPE OF INFORMATION EXPECTANT FATHERS REQUIRE..... 65</b>
<b>TABLE 4.2</b>	<b>CONTINGENCY TABLE REPRESENTING PARENTAL STATUS OF EXPECTANT FATHERS AND THE POPULATION GROUP (P-VALUES FOR <math>\chi^2</math>)..... 71</b>
<b>TABLE 4.3</b>	<b>CONTINGENCY TABLE REPRESENTING THE PARENTAL STATUS OF EXPECTANT FATHERS AND THE MARITAL STATUS OF EXPECTANT FATHERS (P-VALUES FOR <math>\chi^2</math>)..... 72</b>
<b>TABLE 4.4</b>	<b>CONTINGENCY TABLE REPRESENTING THE POPULATION GROUP AND THE MARITAL STATUS OF EXPECTANT FATHERS (P-VALUES FOR <math>\chi^2</math>)..... 73</b>
<b>TABLE 4.5</b>	<b>CONTINGENCY TABLE REPRESENTING THE PARENTAL STATUS OF EXPECTANT FATHERS AND THE WORK STATUS OF EXPECTANT FATHERS (P-VALUES FOR <math>\chi^2</math>)..... 74</b>
<b>TABLE 4.6</b>	<b>THEMES AND CATEGORIES IDENTIFIED FROM THE INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS..... 76</b>



## LIST OF APPENDICES

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	<i>Page</i>
APPENDIX A	EXAMPLE OF PAMPHLET ABOUT THE STUDY..... A
APPENDIX B	EXAMPLE OF THE LETTER OF CONSENT AND DECLARATION FOR THE INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS..... B
APPENDIX C	RESEARCH PROGRAMME..... C
APPENDIX D	TELEPHONE QUESTIONNAIRE..... D
APPENDIX E	INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS..... E
APPENDIX F	EXAMPLES OF FIELD NOTES..... F
APPENDIX G	SELECTED REFLECTIONS TAKEN FROM MY REFLECTIVE JOURNAL..... G
APPENDIX H	CONTENT ANALYSIS AND THEMATIC CODING OF THE TRANSCRIBED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS..... H
APPENDIX I	ETHICS AND RESEARCH STATEMENT ..... I
APPENDIX J	ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE ..... J

## SUMMARY

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### EXPLORING THE USE OF TELEVISION FOR GUIDANCE TO EXPECTANT FATHERS

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The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the use of television for providing guidance to expectant fathers by determining whether or not the medium of television can be implemented to offer parent guidance to expectant fathers during the transition into fatherhood. Focus was therefore placed on gaining an understanding of the specific type of information required by expectant fathers, in conjunction with their perceptions of the most suitable form of media to provide such guidance. The study was conducted in terms of an INTERPRETIVIST-positivist paradigm and followed a mixed methods approach. A combination of a survey design and case study research design was employed. Both quantitative and qualitative data collection strategies were implemented during the two phases. Firstly, a telephone survey (questionnaire) was conducted with 65 participants. Secondly, four individual (face-to-face) interviews were conducted with expectant fathers, to obtain in-depth information. In addition, data was collected by means of field notes and a reflective journal. Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that expectant fathers have a clear need for information to help prepare them for their role as a father and require more knowledge regarding the topic of fatherhood and pregnancy. According to the findings expectant fathers also wish to receive guidance in order for them to develop certain basic childcare skills needed to fulfil their role and regard television to be the most suitable medium for providing them with the guidance they require. Fathers feel that television may assist them by providing the information they require, thereby directly addressing their needs.

## KEY WORDS / SLEUTELTERME

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Television	-	Televisie
Parent guidance	-	Ouerbegeleiding
Parenting	-	Ouerskap
Expectant fathers	-	Verwagtende vaders
Fatherhood	-	Vaderskap
Survey	-	Vraelys
Case study	-	Gevalstudie
Interpretivism	-	Interpretivisme
Positivism	-	Positivisme
Mixed methodology	-	Gemengde metode

## CHAPTER 1

### GENERAL ORIENTATION

---

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

Over the last few years there has been an increased demand for information relating to the topic of fatherhood, with a focus on encouraging fathers to become more actively involved in the parenting process. While many fathers have revealed an interest in sharing childcare, others have been forced to take over the parenting tasks for various reasons such as the death of their wife or unemployment. Fathers are often uninformed and uneducated about what is expected of a father. According to Hosking (2004), as a result of this lack of education many fathers tend to begin their fathering careers poorly.

##### 1.1.1 Emphasis on preparing women for parenthood

A great deal of parenting information is available to prepare women for motherhood in the form of books, magazines, advertisements, television talk shows, antenatal classes, support groups, internet web sites and visits to professionals. The majority of the literature available to parents focuses predominantly on providing information to the expectant mother.

Although this information is also accessible to fathers, many experience barriers to acquiring such knowledge, for example time constraints, illiteracy and financial constraints. In addition, the content is not always directly applicable to expectant fathers and often leaves them feeling frustrated. In a study conducted by Barclay, Donovan and Genoveses (cited in Finnbogadóttir, Crang Svalenius & Persson, 2003), results reveal that many first-time fathers experience confusion when noticing a change in their partners. In addition, expectant fathers discover that antenatal care neglects their needs and focuses primarily on their partner's role during labour and childbirth. When childbirth preparation is only aimed at the mother's needs it

appears to leave men feeling dissatisfied and may even cause a break in the couple's relationship (Hallgren, Kihlgren & Forslin, 1999).

### **1.1.2 Limited information available for expectant fathers**

The media has recently started to concentrate on providing more information on the father's parenting role through, for example, internet web sites, magazines and non-scientific books. However, the information available for expectant fathers compared to expectant mothers is still limited, and often does not meet the needs of the South African expectant father. If men are unable to find relevant meaning in the process of parenting, their roles as new fathers are negatively affected. This might cause them to disengage from the process of preparing to be a father, resulting in them being unable to discover and experience the agonies as well as the pleasures of fatherhood (BBC News report, 2000; Hosking, 2004).

According to a BBC News report (2000), a study conducted by the National Child Birth Trust revealed that many fathers with newborn infants feel that they are disregarded and ill-informed, and that there is a lack of support provided by health professionals. In addition, the findings indicate that fathers often feel that they are insufficiently informed about a wide range of important issues and require more knowledge on mood swings during pregnancy, what a father should expect during labour, how to cope with postnatal depression, what to do when babies cry, as well as breastfeeding and bottle feeding. One third of the fathers stated that they wished to be involved from the beginning of the pregnancy and that they wanted to continue to assist with the care of the infant after the birth.

Exploring the needs of fathers seems to have been neglected in scientific writing over the years. Bradley, Mackenzie and Boath (2004) point out that not much research has been done on exploring the experiences of first-time fathers and that it is uncertain how men perceive existing levels of support, and what other kinds of support they would appreciate. Highlighting the roles of expectant fathers seems to prepare them for parenthood by encouraging and empowering them, and promotes the development of healthy father-child relations. Furthermore, it seems necessary to examine the implementation of more practical forms of parent guidance to

facilitate optimal parenting among expectant fathers. This may be done by making use of popular forms of mass media.

### **1.1.3 Exploring television as an alternate form of guidance for expectant fathers**

As a result of the limited amount of literature and resources offered to expectant fathers, this study aims to explore the use of television as an alternate form of parent guidance to provide for the needs of expectant fathers. Mersham and Skinner (2001) state that in South Africa, more than four million households have television licenses and approximately 14 million adults view television everyday, making South Africa the country with the largest number of television viewers on the African continent. These figures highlight the importance of conducting research into the use of television as a means to provide guidance to the majority of expectant fathers in South Africa. There is a possibility that television could be used as an educational medium to assist fathers, for example, by providing them with practical examples of how to engage in active parenting.

## **1.2 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

According to Harrison (2004), 60% of all telephone calls received on the Love Life's parent information call line are made by fathers. This indicates a need for guidance to be provided for fathers. Such a request might be addressed by providing educational television programmes for expectant fathers to create a positive awareness about the importance of the parenting role of both parents. Although fathers are competent in performing childcare tasks, they may tend to relinquish control to their wives when they are not encouraged to display their abilities (Parke, 1995). However, the bond between a father and an infant is equally as important as the bond between a mother and a child. Furthermore, bonding should be encouraged as soon as the parents are informed that they are pregnant. Pregnancy and childrearing add an enormous amount of pressure to marital relationships, and it is therefore essential for both parents to be equipped with the tools necessary for effective childrearing.

Frank (cited in Simpson, 1997) reports on a study by Stanford University, revealing that about half of the television talk shows presented on childrearing issues contain a considerably higher percentage of practical information for parents than other sources of information, for example, the Internet. In this regard, numerous requests have been made to the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) to maximise the potential of television in resolving certain of the difficulties experienced within the South African context (De Beer, 1998).

Based on the preceding discussion, it seems clear that a need exists in South Africa to develop new, empowering parenting programmes for fathers. The aim of designing such a programme should be to guide the expectant father, as this is where the process of parenting begins. It is essential to explain the role of the father in parenting and to define his responsibility with regard to childcare. Although alternate forms of media are available, television has been selected as the medium to explore, as it seems to be able to accommodate the majority of the South African population. Furthermore, it provides for those expectant fathers who might be illiterate, or visually or hearing impaired.

The rationale for the study initially arose from my contact and informal conversations with a few expectant fathers known to me. During these conversations all of the fathers indicated their uncertainty and fears as to what they should expect during the months to come. In addition, I encountered a producer of a television programme (a father of one of the learners in my class) who indicated the same need. Based on these encounters I started enquiring about the literature available in this regard, but soon discovered a lack of sufficient literature on this topic and therefore realised that a definite need exists to provide guidance to expectant fathers.

### **1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

In light of the above, the purpose of this study is to explore and describe the use of television for providing guidance to expectant fathers. Limited research has been conducted with expectant fathers in South Africa and the information available on the use of television for guidance is relatively scarce. This study might provide the

opportunity for society to consider alternate forms of guidance for expectant fathers based on the findings regarding the type of information expectant fathers require, as well as their views regarding the use of television to provide such guidance.

The main objective of this study is to determine whether or not television could be implemented to guide expectant fathers, to provide support during the transition into fatherhood and to assist in promoting positive father involvement by providing basic knowledge.

## 1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### 1.4.1 Primary research question

Taking into consideration the needs of expectant fathers during parenting (including pregnancy and early stages of childrearing), this study is guided by the following primary question: ***How can the medium of television be used to provide parent guidance on pregnancy and childrearing to expectant fathers?***

### 1.4.2 Secondary research questions

In order to fully explore the primary research question, the following secondary questions were developed to guide the study:

- What are expectant fathers' views on the need for guidance?
- What information on pregnancy and early childrearing do expectant fathers require?
- To what extent is television regarded as a suitable medium to provide parent guidance to expectant fathers?
- What is the possible impact of providing guidance to expectant fathers on the wellbeing of the child and family?

These questions will guide me through the research process and assist in maintaining the focus on the study. In chapter four, the findings will be presented and the above questions will be answered.



## 1.5 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

To ensure a clear and uniform understanding, the key concepts of the study will now be conceptualised within the context of the study.

### 1.5.1 Expectant father

The concept “expectant father” is clarified in terms of the definitions “expectant” and “father”:

- Expectant – *excitedly anticipating something: excitedly aware that something is about to happen* (Encarta Dictionary, 2005).
- Father – *a male parent of a human being or a man acting as a parent, who brings up and looks after a child as if he were its male parent* (Encarta Dictionary, 2005).

For the purpose of this study the term “expectant father” refers to a father-to-be or a father who is awaiting the birth of a child.

### 1.5.2 Television as medium

The terms “television” and “medium” are clarified according to the following definitions:

- Television – *a system of sending and receiving pictures and sound by means of electronic signals transmitted through wires and optical fibers or by electromagnetic radiation* (Encarta Dictionary, 2005).
- Medium – *a means of communication: one of the means of mass communication such as television, radio or newspapers. A vehicle for ideas: a means of conveying ideas or information. Substance conveying something: a substance through which something is carried or transmitted* (Encarta Dictionary, 2005). *A means by which something is expressed, communicated or achieved* (Compact Oxford English Dictionary, 2005).

In this study television will be explored as a means of communication to guide expectant fathers. In order to address the needs of expectant fathers regarding parent guidance, I will explore the possibility of conveying information related to this topic by broadcasting television programme(s). The informative role of television in supporting the development of Africa's people often takes second place to its entertainment function (Mersham & Skinner, 2001). For the purpose of this study, however, the focus will fall on the possible educational value of television.

### 1.5.3 Parent guidance

The terms "parent" and "guidance" are clarified as follows:

- Parent – *mother or father: somebody's mother, father, or legal guardian* (Encarta Dictionary, 2005).
- Guidance – *advice or counselling* (Encarta Dictionary, 2005).

For the purpose of this study "parent guidance" refers to educating a mother or father. This study will focus on ascertaining what expectant fathers would like to know about parenting in order to design and eventually present information that meets their needs. For the purposes of this study, "parent guidance" therefore refers to guiding or educating expectant fathers with regard to childcare and parenting.

## 1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN: A BROAD OVERVIEW

Although a detailed description of the empirical component of the study will follow in chapter three, I will now provide a brief overview of the research methodology and strategies implemented in the study. The rest of the dissertation should be read against the background provided.

This study was undertaken from an INTERPRETIVIST-positivist paradigm, following a combined QUALITATIVE/quantitative approach. Although the main approach is interpretivism, positivist components are present due to the use of a questionnaire. In the first phase of the study I followed a positivist approach (quantitative

component) to inquire about the use of television for providing guidance to expectant fathers. The second phase of the empirical part of the study was conducted from an interpretivist paradigm (qualitative component), allowing me to interact closely with the participants to gain insight and form a clear understanding as to what expectant fathers require with regard to parent guidance; what forms of parent guidance they regard as most appropriate to address their needs; and how television could be implemented to facilitate the development of parenting skills in fathers.

The study followed a mixed methods approach by conducting a *descriptive survey* in the form of a (quantitative) telephone questionnaire and an *instrumental case study* comprising of face-to-face semi-structured interviews (qualitative), supported by field notes and a reflective journal. Sixty-five participants were involved in the first phase of the study (telephonic questionnaire) whilst in the second phase, individual interviews were conducted with four expectant fathers, each one representing a different ethnic group. All the participants involved in the study reside in Gauteng and are able to communicate in English.

Television was initially implemented to inform expectant fathers about the research. A short snippet was presented during a family programme, inviting expectant fathers to participate in the study. In addition to the brief broadcast on television, I also designed pamphlets about the study, which were distributed at various clinics, doctors' rooms, hospitals and via midwives, all situated within Gauteng. The pamphlets invited expectant fathers to contact me (the researcher) if they were interested in taking part in the study.

In accordance with the mixed methods approach, participants involved in the first phase of the study (quantitative component) were selected according to simple random sampling and purposeful sampling whilst only purposeful sampling was applied in the second phase of the study (qualitative component). Once all the data had been collected I began coding and processing the data. The quantitative data were captured and analysed with the aid of the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) software (SAS Institute, 1990). Individual interviews were audio-taped (after

obtaining informed consent from the participants), transcribed and then analysed thematically. Triangulation was employed to add to the rigour of the study.

## **1.7 ASSUMPTIONS**

An assumption is a statement made by a human being about an idea, which is based on personal experience and specific beliefs, and which is assumed to be true (Compact Oxford English Dictionary, 2005). It is not regarded as concrete or reliable until proven to be true. As a result, a hypothesis needs to be tested by conducting research to prove whether the idea is true or not. My assumptions that were taken into consideration during the study will now be discussed.

### **1.7.1 Personal assumptions**

I approached the study with the following personal assumptions:

- Expectant fathers will read the pamphlets and watch the snippet broadcast on the television programme, which aims to introduce the research and requests their participation.
- Expectant fathers will respond to the invitation and therefore volunteer to participate in the study.
- Expectant fathers will be keen to participate by willingly completing the questionnaires and participating in interviews.
- Expectant fathers will agree that they require assistance with regard to parent guidance and will provide me with the type of information they require.
- Certain expectant fathers will not be interested in participating in the study. They will regard the study as irrelevant and unimportant.
- Expectant fathers will regard television as a suitable form of media to provide them with information on fatherhood and childcare.

### **1.7.2 Epistemological assumptions**

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002:6) provide the following definition of epistemology: *Epistemology specifies the nature of the relationship between the*

*researcher and what can be known.* Epistemology forms one of the dimensions of paradigms that define the nature of the research enquiry. The positivist approach maintains that the researcher should accept an objective and detached epistemological attitude towards reality. A characteristic of the interpretivist approach is that the researcher takes on an intersubjective stance towards reality (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002). As a researcher, it is important to acknowledge that research is linked to understanding the world and that such an understanding is shaped by how the researcher sees the world, what the researcher regards understanding to be and what the researcher's view of the purpose of understanding is (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001).

With regard to epistemology, I assumed that:

- Human beings construct reality by learning from each other, instructing others and reflecting on their own understanding. Therefore social reality can be understood from both an external point of view as well as within certain levels of individual awareness (Cohen *et al.*, 2001).
- Knowledge is attained by transactional means. Communicating and interacting with a source in a bi-directional way is therefore a means to gaining knowledge. According to the transactional perspective, this indicates that knowledge might be regarded as hard, objective and concrete, therefore requiring the use of quantitative methods in my study (Cohen *et al.*, 2001).
- Knowledge can also be obtained through personal experiences that result from individual cognition. In order to discover the personal, subjective and unique nature of people's experience the researcher needs to apply a qualitative approach, as I have done in my study.
- All aspects of the environment have an influence on human behaviour, and the view exists that people and their experiences are products of the environment. However, the environment is also a result of people's effort and influences. In this study I propose that people are ultimately initiators of their own performances, which in turn, influence the status of the environment. Such a view permits a focus on issues within a flexible, personal and more human view of the social world.

The assumptions described above influenced the methodological choices I made and forced me to consider different research methods in order to fully understand the topic under discussion. It was therefore decided to make use of both quantitative and qualitative methods (mixed methods approach) in order to discover and understand this reality (Cohen *et al.*, 2001).

## 1.8 LAYOUT OF THE STUDY

- **CHAPTER 1: GENERAL ORIENTATION**

Chapter one provides a general overview of the study, including an introduction and background to the rationale of the study. This chapter contains the research problem, research questions, purpose of the research and definition of concepts, as well as a brief overview of the empirical component of the study.

- **CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework for the study by exploring the literature available regarding information on parenting, fatherhood and parent guidance. In addition, literature relating to the topic of television as medium is explored in this chapter.

- **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In chapter three the empirical study is discussed in detail, including a clear explanation of the research design, methodology and research process. All choices are justified in terms of the purpose of the study and the relevant research questions.

- **CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

Chapter four presents the raw data, an analysis of the data and the findings of the study. The results are triangulated and presented in accordance with both a survey design and case study design.

- **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Chapter five summarises the results of the study and presents conclusions drawn from the study. Limitations, possible contributions of the study and recommendations for additional research are also discussed in this chapter.

## **1.9 CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

In South Africa fathers are becoming more involved in raising their children and are constantly striving to be better fathers. According to Hosking (2004), fathers want to learn the basics of how to hold and dress a baby that feels like a living doll. A need has therefore arisen to provide fathers with the skills and guidance required in order to be optimal fathers. As Hosking (2004:43) puts it: *By getting involved with our children at the most basic level, though, we have the opportunity to bond with them in a unique way.*

Chapter one provided an overview of the study by introducing the rationale and a basic orientation to the research. In the following chapter, relevant literature will be explored to elucidate the theoretical framework of the study. This serves as background to the empirical study, presented in chapter three.

## CHAPTER 2

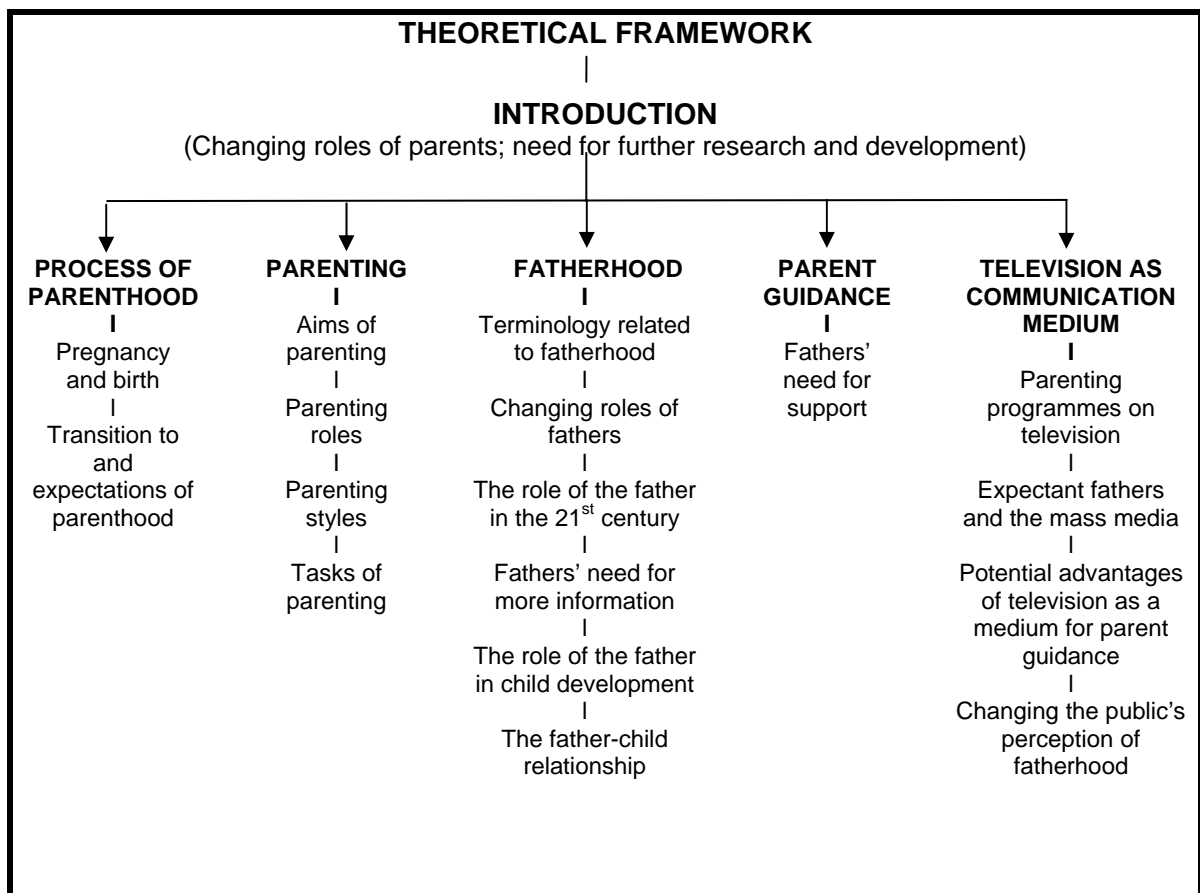
### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

*To become a father is not hard, to be a father is, however.*

Busch (cited in Hosking, 2004:55) (Researcher's emphasis)

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the theoretical framework for the study together with background information about the topic under discussion. As the theoretical framework unfolds, theory and existing knowledge relating to fatherhood and the importance of providing guidance to fathers will be explored, as will the possible use of television as a medium to provide such guidance to expectant fathers. Figure 2.1 provides an overview of the discussion that follows.



**FIGURE 2.1: SCHEMATIC OUTLINE OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY**



### 2.1.1 Changing roles of parents

In South Africa the roles of parents are constantly reshaping and changing. In modern times it is common for both parents to work in order to earn an adequate income. As more women enter the labour force, men are increasingly expected to help with the task of caring for the family. Fatherhood is no longer what it was many years ago. We are currently in a period where fatherhood is being reassessed and men are now being called to take charge of their roles as fathers. Many fathers are becoming more involved in domestic and childrearing tasks, taking more responsibility and spending more time organising and planning their children's daily activities (Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth & Lamb, 2000; Popenoe, 1996).

Fathers are a vital part of the family unit. Rohner and Veneziano (2001:386) emphasise the important role of the father in childcare in their statement that: *from the 1970's to today the ideal image of father is said to be one who is a coparent, sharing equally with his mate in the care of their children.* The family has been recognised as one of the most significant components of society in terms of people's wellbeing, particularly with regard to the care and protection of children. It is therefore essential that the topic of fatherhood be studied in more depth, with the specific need for it to be understood in context and time (Nsamenang, 2000).

As both parents are responsible for childcare, it is necessary to guide expectant fathers in order for them to take an active approach in parenting. However, there are very few guidelines for expectant fathers to follow. Lloyd (in Moss, 1995:xii) supports this by stating that:

*there is very limited debate within the media about fathers ... little comment about what fathers are supposed to be, no guidance about how to be a father in the 1990s, with any pointers faltering after breadwinner and the general call on men to 'take more responsibility'.*

Fathers need to be provided with guidelines in order to know how to be good fathers. They require encouragement to gain self-confidence to help with certain childrearing tasks, which are often primarily associated with the mother's role. Bradley *et al.* (2004:47) draw on the work of Turan, Nallbant, Bulut and Sahip by

stating that *involving men in antenatal preparation has been found to have a positive impact on support exchanged between partners*. In this regard, the use of media is considered to be a possible influential source for shaping ideas and current beliefs about fathers and fatherhood (Lloyd cited in Moss, 1995).

### **2.1.2 Need for further research and development**

Becoming a parent is an exciting time in an individual's life. However, parents often require support and guidance in order for them to adapt to these new roles. This new phase is a continuous process of learning and experiencing, which is characterised by the need to make certain adjustments and fulfilling many additional tasks.

To date, little research has been conducted with expectant fathers in South Africa regarding their views on the forms of guidance that are available and how television might be implemented as a medium to provide guidance. In South Africa it is even unclear as to how many men are also fathers, as no official surveys, including the census survey, have formulated a question relating to this topic (Morrell cited in Cullinan, 2004). Therefore no information concerning the status of South African fathers is available. Cohen (2001) explains that only a few psychologists have paid attention to researching fatherhood and suggests that Psychology should focus on studying fathers and fathering more than it has done in the past.

An example of a group that is currently following this recommendation and investigating fatherhood is *The Fatherhood Project*. This is an action research project initiated in 2004 by the Child, Youth and Family Development Programme at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). The project aims to increase men's involvement in childcare and the protection of their children. One of the goals of the Fatherhood Project is to create sufficient social impact by stimulating research on the effects of increased male involvement in childcare on men, children and families (Richter, Manegold, Pather & Mason, 2004).

Due to the sparseness of the literature available with regard to the expectant father, it seems evident that additional formalised research is needed in this regard. Literature shows that little attention has been paid to investigating alternate forms of parent guidance for expectant fathers in South Africa, despite the need that has emerged to consider such alternate forms of parent guidance. It seems clear that expectant fathers require more practical knowledge regarding childcare in order to help prepare them for their new roles and facilitate the transition into fatherhood.

For these reasons, I decided to focus on exploring the use of television as one possible means to guide expectant fathers. Television might facilitate this process by presenting alternative parenting strategies, which might in turn stimulate new ideas and accommodate most fathers in South Africa. Both parents should benefit from a uniquely designed television programme for expectant fathers, which might help to enhance parental relationships and eliminate certain stressors often caused by the changing roles of parenting.

## **2.2 PROCESS OF PARENTHOOD**

Pregnancy is regarded as the first phase of parenthood. During this time, the expectant mother and father will begin to experience a few of the changes that the new baby will bring to their lives. Both partners will learn to adjust to these changes, including the mother's physical state. Furthermore, both partners should start to prepare for the arrival of the baby (Brooks, 1991). The process of parenthood includes pregnancy and birth as well as the transition to and the expectations of parenthood. These aspects are explored further below.

### **2.2.1 Pregnancy and birth**

According to Cohen (2001), the key moments of pregnancy occur at about three or four months when the woman starts to feel the growing life inside her in the form of so-called butterfly movement. The father might also feel the movements of the foetus by placing his hands on the mother's stomach, which assists in him bonding with his unborn child and feeling involved from the beginning. In the first few weeks

after the birth, the role of the father is one of merely providing support for his partner (Brott & Ash, 1995; Stoppard, 1999).

Research indicates that if a father is involved with his partner's pregnancy, it might initiate a series of positive family interactions. For example, fathers who are supported and encouraged to share in the experience of pregnancy and the birth are likely to become more involved with their children (Cohen, 2001; Gottman & DeClaire, 1997; White, 2005). This benefits both the couple's relationship and helps to strengthen the father-child bond.

In the past, paternal care was measured by the father's presence or absence at the birth of his child (Snarey, 1993). The number of fathers who attend the birth of their children has increased significantly in the last few decades, from 21% in 1970 to 42% in 1980. In 2000, the National Childbirth Trust reported that 96% of all fathers in Britain attend the birth of their children. However, in a study conducted in South Africa, findings indicate that in the early 1990s, half of the 22 000 infants born at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital did not have any male support at the time of birth (Cullinan, 2004).

The majority of the men who are present at the birth of their children rate it as one of the greatest experiences of their lives, if not the peak experience (Burgess, 1997). Another study found that when a father is present and involved in the birth process, the mother reports experiencing less pain and a smaller amount medication is prescribed. Women also seem to be more positive about the birth experience when fathers are present, compared to those whose husbands do not attend the birth (Cohen, 2001; Gottman & DeClaire, 1997). It is therefore essential for fathers to be advised on how they can assist and support their partners throughout the process of parenthood, including during pregnancy and the birth.

### **2.2.2 Transition to and expectations of parenthood**

Each individual will experience the transition to parenthood differently. For some the transition may be easy, for others it might not be what they had expected and therefore might take a little longer to adjust to their new venture. Finding out that

one is going to be a father can produce conflicting feelings of happiness, anxiety and fear, as parenthood adds to the many pressures and demands that individuals face.

The feelings of an expectant father can be influenced by the man's relationship with the woman who is bearing his child. The transition to parenthood often has a significant effect on individuals and their relationships, and it is only natural that the parents' relationship will undergo some changes. The couple's relationship is, however, a key aspect in promoting adjustment. As part of the preparation for parenthood, it is therefore important for a couple to work through issues that may arise, to understand each other's feelings and to try to remain flexible throughout the transition (Cohen, 2001; Feeney, Hohaus, Noller & Alexander, 2001; Parke, 1995).

The journey of becoming a parent has been viewed as more challenging for today's parents than in former times, due to recent societal changes that have been made with regard to the roles of parents. Clear guidelines on parenting no longer exist and parents are deprived of a single universally accepted set of behavioural rules for parenting. Consequently, parents-to-be enter parenthood not knowing what to expect. The insecurity of this uncertainty may make the transition even more difficult (Belsky & Kelly, 1994).

According to Feeney *et al.* (2001), a person's expectations of parenthood are important in managing the process of transition. Even if both partners have similar expectations and values, certain expectations can influence the way the person adjusts to the situation. People often report a discrepancy between their expectations and their actual experiences of parenthood, which might be linked to people finding the adjustment to parenthood more difficult. For example, they may find that they spend more time than planned attending to the baby's needs and less time in leisure and social activities.

Turan, Nallbant, Bulut and Sahip (cited in Bradley *et al.*, 2004:47) provide the following summary on the adjustment to parenthood:

*It is feasible that the experience of the birth as a major upheaval or as a relatively smooth transition is related to preparedness, aspects of*

*the child's behaviour, the expectations of the parents, or to a sense of life purpose.*

To help prepare both partners, it is therefore vital for a couple to discuss their expectations before the infant arrives, to negotiate their roles regarding the household duties and for guidance to be provided regarding childcare.

## **2.3 PARENTING**

Parenting is a process that involves a continuous sequence of interactions between a parent and a child. It is regarded as a process that influences both parties. Parenting is referred to as the task of nourishing, protecting and guiding children on the path of development. With regard to childcare, parents' main tasks are to foster warm, nurturing emotional relationships with their children and provide opportunities for their children to develop competence and individuality (Brooks, 1991). Parenting consists of many facets that need to be understood in order to function effectively as a parent. The aims, roles, styles and tasks of parenting are discussed below.

### **2.3.1 Aims of parenting**

Parenting aims at guiding children, in order for them to be able to develop into responsible, independent, autonomous, self-sufficient adults who can care for themselves and others (Brooks, 1991). The parent can be regarded as the mediator between the child and the external world. All parents should incorporate the following building blocks of parenting to guide their children towards becoming self-actualised adults (Ginott, Gordon, Briggs & Dreikurs cited in Brooks, 1991):

- *Modelling:* Parents should model the characteristics they want their children to develop by providing personal examples and guidance for their children to learn from. To help children develop a positive approach to life, parents should convey warmth, happiness, consideration and show respect in the way in which they handle their children.
- *Trust:* Parents should adhere to the belief that by providing their children with adequate emotional support, their children should be able to cope with the demands made by the school, family, friends and society.

- *Respect*: It is important for parents to respect their children and to always remember that every person is unique, with individual needs and preferences.
- *Love and discipline*: Love forms the largest part of the parent-child relationship. Parents should remember that caring discipline is regarded as a form of love.
- *Communication*: It is important to discuss family rules and share different views with each other in a family. Communication is the key element to having a healthy relationship and can take the form of affection, smiling, talking and hugging while giving material rewards.
- *Honesty*: Parents should strive to be honest with their children. They should express their feelings as truthfully as possible while being specific and clear.
- *Positive statements*: Parents should avoid using negative terms that label a child and rather try to provide a positive statement about the child.
- *Time, attention and concern*: Parents should try to make time to play, talk and share experiences with their children. Parents need to find the energy and time to relate to their children on a regular basis.

In addition to the building blocks of parenting, parents should strive to provide their children with structure and nurturance. These are regarded as the two primary functions associated with the socialisation of children. The term *structure* refers to that which parents provide to their children upon which children's personalities can be formed. This involves teaching children about limits, setting personal boundaries and providing them with a sense of safety and security. *Nurturance* refers to parents' unconditional love for their children, which is necessary for any child's growth and wellbeing (Clark & Dawson cited in Bigner, 1998).

### **2.3.2 Parenting roles**

Becoming a parent poses many new and exciting challenges. It is important for both parents to have a clear understanding of what their parenting roles are within the family and how they aim to achieve their specific goals. Roles within a family system provide structure and guidelines for members of the family. A better

understanding of the roles within the family occurs when all the individuals within the family are aware of the behaviours and functions that are expected from the person assigned to a specific role (Bigner, 1998).

### **2.3.2.1 Changing roles within the family**

In the past, social roles within the family were defined strictly in terms of and based on gender. The husband-father role was regarded as an instrumental function, which included managing the family resources and providing for the family, whilst the wife-mother role was primarily regarded as an expressive function, which consisted of providing affection, emotional warmth and support to all family members (Bigner, 1998). However, in modern societies men are expected to be actively involved in childrearing tasks in the same way women are. As a result, roles are no longer clearly defined according to gender but are determined by the partners themselves.

Cabrera *et al.* (2000: 133) clearly explain the changing roles of parents:

*What once seemed a natural pattern - a parenting model in which fathers were viewed as "helpers" to mothers - is now yielding to new cultural ideals, such as coparenting.*

Coparenting refers to the equal involvement of both parents in all parenting tasks, which means sharing responsibility for the child. As such, mothers are no longer regarded as the primary caregivers, enabling them to assume other roles as well. Both fathers and mothers should have equivalent parenting roles. Parenting should be viewed as a true partnership, and as a joint venture between parents. All tasks should be shared and completed cooperatively by the husband and wife. Parents should both commit to performing an equal share of the parenting responsibilities regarding the raising of their children. Although partners might not be able to share parenting responsibilities equally, it is important for both partners to at least be involved in childcare activities (Cabrera *et al.*, 2000; Popenoe, 1996).



### 2.3.2.2 Fathers' parenting roles

Popenoe (1996) describes two primary goals of the father's parenting role with infants. Firstly, the father should construct a home environment that allows a strong mother-child bond. This attachment does, however, rely a great deal on help from the father, for example with feeding, bathing, dressing, playing and putting the children to sleep. Secondly, fathers of infants should secure and maintain a sound emotional bond with their children. Osofsky and Thompson (2000) support this idea by describing the father's parenting role as unique and beneficial in the lives of children. In addition, fathers should be helpful and communicative in their role as parents, in order to assist their partners (Bigner, 1998).

Lamb, Hopps and Elster (cited in Osofsky & Thompson, 2000) describe three ways in which fathers can become involved in the parenting role. Firstly, fathers should share specific childcare tasks and practices with mothers. This is regarded as the *interactive* component. Secondly, the *availability* component refers to the level of direct or indirect accessibility of the father with the child and thirdly, the *responsibility* component refers to the father's role as a provider, in which he ensures that his child's primary needs are met. The degree to which a father manages to integrate these components will be determined by the amount of support and guidance he receives from his partner, family, friends and society. Literature suggests that successful parenting by fathers is more reliant on a supportive marital relationship than maternal parenting (Lamb cited in Parke, 1995). Fathers therefore require certain techniques to guide them as to how they should fulfil this role. In addition, they need their partners' support to maintain their role as equal parents. Although 40% of all fathers would like to spend more time with their children, results of studies indicate that between 60% and 80% of women do not want their partners to be more involved than they already are (Parke, 1995).

In this manner mothers could play a gate keeping role, which might lead to them either supporting or inhibiting fathers' involvement with their infants. Despite men wanting to be more involved in fathering tasks and helping their partners more regularly, they are sometimes apprehensive to do so as they might encounter problems for trying to *take over part of the mother's role*. However, with regard to

parenting roles being shared, few differences seem to exist between the ways in which men and women fulfil childcare tasks. Furthermore, it is regarded as being good for babies to be exposed to a variety of caregiving styles (Ambert, 1992; Gottman & DeClaire, 1997). It therefore seems beneficial for both partners to share in childrearing responsibilities so that their child becomes accustomed to both parenting styles.

### 2.3.3 Parenting styles

Parenting styles determine the way in which parents raise their children and will inevitably have an influence on a child's behaviour. Pretorius (1999) distinguishes between eight basic forms of parenting:

- *Warm parenting*: Parents have a warm, loving approach towards their children. This parenting style offers a balance between providing support and setting boundaries.
- *Cold parenting*: Parents assume an unloving, harsh and rejecting approach towards their child. They are insensitive to the child's needs and feelings and sets high standards for the child.
- *Dominant parenting*: Parents aim to control, dictate and correct their children in all their actions. This style of parenting requires that the child perform according to the parents' high expectations. Parents often interfere with the child's interests and resort to punishment in order to maintain discipline.
- *Permissive parenting*: These parents tend to be warm and give their children a great deal of freedom, which results in spoiling. They have a *laissez-faire* attitude and an indulgent parenting style. They set few limits or boundaries and are accepting of their child's impulses.
- *Tolerant, democratic parenting*: This parenting style is a combination of both warm and permissive parenting. These parents are more flexible, they set limits for their children and accept the child as an equal individual. They are understanding and take the child's needs into account.
- *Intolerant, autocratic parenting*: This parenting style is a combination of cold and dominant parenting. These parents demand absolute obedience,

impose firm control and set restricting limits. They emphasise control in a power-oriented way without providing children with any explanations or support in order to achieve goals.

- *Involved parenting*: This parenting style includes both features of warm and dominant parenting. These parents have a good relationship with their child. However, they are often overprotective and restrict their child's exploration due to an excessive fear that something might happen to the child.
- *Indifferent parenting*: This parenting style includes aspects of both cold and permissive parenting. These parents tend to keep a distance from their child, they fail to attend to the child's need for love and warmth as well as guidance and security. This style of parenting can be regarded as a form of neglect.

According to Brooks (1991), parents who are accepting of their children provide the necessary structure and set reasonable limits for their children to develop into capable adults. Parenting styles will determine the way in which parenting roles and tasks are carried out and fulfilled by a parent.

#### **2.3.4 Tasks of parenting**

Parenting tasks change as an infant develops and reaches new developmental stages. For the first few months of an infant's life the parents' main tasks are to meet the infant's need for food, warmth, cuddling, interaction and constant contact. In order to meet these needs parents should observe their babies and be aware of their behaviour in order for them to become familiar to the baby's tempo and individual preferences. Parents should try to adjust their own rhythm of activities and anticipate their baby's needs so that they can encourage their baby to settle into a routine. As infants become more sociable and physically developed, parents need to find ways to stimulate their child in order to promote development. By performing such parenting tasks, parents interact with their infants and develop a strong bond that will assist in forming sound parent-child relationships (Bigner, 1998; Brooks, 1991; Feeney *et al.*, 2001; Stoppard, 1999).

One of the main themes highlighted throughout the literature on the various kinds of father-child interactions is the fact that fathers often seem to play more with their

infants and engage less in caregiving interactions than mothers (Clark-Stewart; Palm; Power & Parke; Yogman cited in Osofsky & Thompson, 2000; Parke & Tinsley cited in Delucchie, 1999). Lamb (1997:5) summarises this as follows: *studies have consistently shown that fathers tend to “specialize” in play whereas mothers specialized in caregiving and nurturance, especially in relation to infants.* Even though playing is just as important as caregiving for the physical and cognitive development of the child, fathers might wish to be more involved in caretaking tasks but feel more competent and confident in playing with their children as this comes naturally. Although adults might regard playing as an activity that merely fills time between activities, it is actually one of the most important activities for babies. Play is the way in which babies learn about their abilities and the world around them (Barker, 2001; Clark-Stewart; Palm; Power & Parke; Yogman cited in Osofsky & Thompson, 2000; Feeney *et al.*, 2001; Lamb, 1997).

## **2.4 FATHERHOOD**

According to Hosking (2004), fathers are expected to be as involved in the task of parenting as mothers, and the father-to-be is regarded as being equally important as the mother-to-be. However, existing literature as well as current trends in society often suggest that motherhood usually comes naturally whilst the skills associated with first-time fatherhood are often more difficult to attain and need to be learnt more formally. Brott and Ash (1995:192) justify this in the following statement: *It seems that we’ve confused men’s lack of training in childcare with a lack of interest in or concern about their children.* However, many of today’s fathers simply have no role models to learn from and therefore have no one to teach them the childcare skills they require (Brott & Ash, 1995). Fathers should therefore be provided with guidelines as to how they should approach childcaring tasks.

### **2.4.1 Terminology related to fatherhood**

Before the role of the father is discussed, a definition for the term “father”, as it is used in this study, is necessary. The term “father” is given to a man when he has his first child. It implies a fixed status because once a man becomes a father he is always a father. “Fatherhood” is often used interchangeably with the term

“fathering” and refers to the status achieved when having a child. This status is irreversible (unless an only child dies). “Fathering” refers to the tasks that go beyond procreation. It includes all the childbearing roles, activities, obligations and responsibilities that fathers are expected to fulfil (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 1998).

The definition of “fathering” has broadened over the past few decades as fathers prove their increasing eagerness to take part in a variety of tasks typically seen as components of mothering (Lamb, 1997). Gottman and DeClaire (1997:168) confirm this in the following statement: *Studies show that fathers - especially those in dual-career households - are providing more childcare than men did in past generations.*

#### **2.4.2 Changing roles of fathers**

Fatherhood has undergone a positive transformation over the last few years and continues to be reconstructed as the man’s role within the family constantly changes. There has been a tremendous change of heart for fathers as they strive to be more involved and included in the lives of their infants. The role of the father has shifted from being regarded solely as a protector and provider to playing a more active role in childrearing. However, Knijn (1995:1) believes that *fatherhood is in a state of crisis*. The word “crisis” refers to the fact that the fundamentals of fatherhood are constantly being challenged and the roles of a father continually change. This is concerning, as it could lead to uncertainty with regard to what is expected of a father and what fatherhood should entail. Although fathers are being challenged, there are still no viable alternatives for them to follow.

The expectations of what fathers should do, what they actually do, and the effects of this on their children should be viewed within the contexts of their families, cultures, communities and current histories. A single definition for the term “successful fatherhood” does not exist and an ideal father’s role cannot be described in definite terms. It is accepted as a universal idea. Cabrera *et al.* (2000) regard research on the development of fatherhood as very difficult due to the fact that no singular set of developmental tasks or endpoints can be identified that could serve to define

competent fathering. This idea is summarised in the words of Lamb (cited in Cabrera *et al.*, 2000:131):

*No researcher has described the paths that move boys to the practice of fathering, nor even constructed a unified theory explaining the complex set of developmental processes that give meaning to and shape the practice of fatherhood.*

Mkize (2004) emphasises the fact that most men learn how to fulfil their roles regarding position and power based on cultural prescriptions of manhood, which traditionally describes childcare as the responsibility of the mother, with the father not expected to be actively involved. However, this traditional perception of fatherhood has changed in recent years and men are now, more than ever, eager to be involved in childrearing. Smith (1995) presents findings that reveal an increase in fathers' involvement with infants. In the 1950s it was reported that only 38% of women received help from their partners with the care of their infants, as opposed to the 1990s, when 82% of women reported paternal involvement in the practical care of infants. Cohen (2001:5) agrees that *today, fathers are more involved with their children than ever before.*

Fathers' involvement in the practical care of their children has increased in accordance with the changing thoughts on the roles of fathers. Participants in the study *Yesterday, Today...Tomorrow (YTT)*, indicated a desire to be involved in the care of their infants to a higher degree (Smith, 1995). It seems to be important for fathers to practise caring for the infant in the early stages in order to acquire hands-on experience and gain confidence for the later stages of development.

### **2.4.3 The role of the father in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

In modern times, a father can be regarded as an involved individual who takes part in the day-to-day care and rearing of his children (Lamb & Oppenheim cited in Cath, Gurwitt & Gunsberg, 1989). Cohen (2001) elaborates on this by stating that fathers are more accountable for childrearing than mothers in about 4% of all families. Fathers are seen nowadays as unique contributors to their children and are expected to offer children guidance, education, support, encouragement, care and love. These actions are strongly linked to achieving successful child outcomes

(Popenoe, 1996). Moss (1995:xii) explains the role of the father in parenting as follows:

*The key requirements of fatherhood are being close, caring and emotionally involved, as well as actually sharing both the work and responsibility arising from the care and upbringing of children.*

Fatherhood consists of a number of multifaceted roles, including companion, care provider, spouse, protector, model, moral guide, teacher and breadwinner (Popenoe, 1996). Even though men can be equally competent as women as caregivers, they do not always have the skills to equip them for certain tasks. In the past the role of the father was clearly defined; now fathers are expected to be more involved in childcare but lack the proper guidelines as to what exactly is expected of them. Existing literature indicates a general concern that although modern society wants fathers to change, it is still unclear as to how fathers should behave and how they should provide support to their partners (Popenoe, 1996). However, it is also important to remember that fathers' roles vary from society to society and that these roles further differ according to time and culture (Lamb, 1997; Popenoe, 1996).

#### **2.4.4 Fathers' need for more information**

Although literature reports on the new roles of fathers, it fails to describe how fathers should go about fulfilling these roles (Popenoe, 1996). This is summarised in Beale's (1999:8) statement that *many fathers, though willing, are unprepared for this new and expanded parenting role.*

In a survey conducted with new fathers by the National Childbirth Trust, it was found that more than two-fifths of men require more information on issues such as mood swings of their partners, how to cope with a crying baby and sexual intercourse after the birth of a child (BBC News report, 2000). In addition, significant discrepancies seem to exist between the information that men require on pregnancy, birth and living with a new baby, and what they are actually able to find out. The survey further showed that most men's key resource for information related to pregnancy, birth and postnatal issues is women. It was found that 40% of all men often feel that the information available for them about what happens during pregnancy and birth is

limited, and that they require more content to help prepare them for their role and tasks as fathers (BBC News report, 2000; Singh & Newburn cited in Cohen, 2001).

Knijin (1995) explored the ways in which fathers deal with the changes brought about by fatherhood and discovered that some fathers simply try to be involved in all components of childcare by employing a trial and error approach. These men do not avoid changing nappies, they are interested in finding out more about a child's diet and help their partners by taking their children to health clinics. Fathers who try to assist by providing care to their infants often feel ambivalent and insecure (Lamb, Parke, Russell, Jackson & Lewis cited in Knijn, 1995). Such feelings may stem from the fact that they are not properly equipped to help or it may be due to the fact that caring fatherhood is still not completely acknowledged by society, as it seems to conflict with real masculinity (Knijn, 1995). According to McGrail (1996), men who participate in childrearing practices, and even those who accept the greater part of the childcare responsibilities, often feel excluded and experience a lack of recognition from the baby world. This idea on how society currently views the father's role can be summarised as follows: *In societies such as Australia, men, for the most part, are not actively supported by society or well prepared for their household and parenting roles* (Barclay, Donovan & Genovese cited in Barclay & Lupton, 1999:1019). Furthermore, if men feel discouraged and not supported by society, they may withdraw from the parenting process altogether (Brott & Ash, 1995).

#### **2.4.5 The role of the father in child development**

Fathers play a vital role in children's development. It is therefore essential for expectant fathers to be supported and encouraged by society from the initial phases of parenthood onwards (Finnbogadóttir *et al.*, 2003). The important role of the father is emphasised by Popenoe (1996:140), who believes that:

*It is a father's task to help raise his children so that they can be constructive members of society, to transmit to his children those cultural values they must have to succeed in life.*

The existing literature reveals that a father's absence from a family can be linked to poor school achievement by the child, reduced involvement in the labour force and



higher levels of risk-taking behaviour (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 1998). It has further been noted that boys who do not grow up with their fathers are prone to problems with sex-role and gender-identity development, scholastic functioning, psychosocial adjustment and self-control (Hetherington & Stanley cited in Cabrera *et al.*, 2000).

It is important for fathers to be involved in their children's lives from the time they find out that they are going to be fathers. Although first-time fathers might feel that they are not properly equipped for this role, they should remember that most of the skills needed to care for an infant are learnt by gaining hands-on experience through trial and error. Parents should guide each other to enable both the mother and father to learn about their baby together, make joint decisions and provide support for one another (Brott & Ash, 1995; Gottman & DeClaire, 1997; Stoppard, 1999).

#### **2.4.6 The father-child relationship**

Gottman and DeClaire (1997:175) remark that *fathers who want a solid relationship with their children should lay the groundwork during pregnancy and the baby's first months*. This important relationship between a father and his child can be explained in terms of bonding and attachment between father and child.

Bonding refers to close physical contact between a parent and a child, which helps to strengthen the attachment between the two parties (Brooks, 1991). De Witt and Booyesen (1995) describe bonding as an emotional attachment between two individuals. The term is normally used when referring to the type of bond that develops between a young child and his primary caregiver. Seifert and Hoffnung (cited in De Witt & Booyesen, 1995:56) provide the following holistic definition of attachment:

*Attachment refers to the intimate and enduring emotional relationship between infant and care giver during the infant's first year of life – a relationship that is characterised by reciprocal affection and a shared desire to maintain physical closeness.*

Bonding is initiated by touching, holding and talking to the baby as this gives the baby an opportunity to become familiar with the parent's face. Although emotional

bonding only starts to develop after initial contact, a baby's communication with the outside world already begins prenatally. It is never too early for parents to start bonding with their baby. Babies can, for example, start hearing sounds outside the womb from about five or six months after conception. Talking to a baby may encourage bonding with the parents while still in the womb. It is therefore beneficial for fathers to be involved from the beginning of pregnancy, to communicate with the infant and already establish a bond while the foetus develops (De Witt & Booysen, 1995; Stoppard, 1999).

Cohen (2001) encourages fathers to hold their babies often, as touching is regarded as one of the best forms of developing a bond with a baby. Before becoming fathers, men usually have not had much practice holding babies and are often apprehensive to hold their babies. By relaxing and overcoming this apprehension by learning to hold their babies, fathers promote the bonding process. It has been found that fathers who help with changing nappies, bathing, rocking and fulfilling the general caretaking tasks of their infants while still in hospital are more likely to continue assisting with such activities in the months to follow. This provides fathers and babies with a face-to-face opportunity to get to know each other's cues and to start developing a positive relationship (Gottman & DeClaire, 1997).

Dinkmeyer and McKay (1989) discuss four basic components of constructing positive relationships, namely, mutual respect for human beings, taking time to have fun, encouragement and communicating love to others. It seems evident that children who have good relationships with their fathers are likely to be more sociable and have better developed cognitive abilities. This might be associated with the fact that men tend to be more adventurous when playing with their infants, which facilitates development. Fathers who participate in taking care of their children are likely to be happier and healthier. Their marriages seem to last and they are less violent towards their partners (Cullinan, 2004).

According to Osofsky and Thompson (2000), most of the literature on parenting emphasises the mother-child dyad, suggesting that this relationship is the most important in the child's life. The inclusion of fathers within the discussion on parenting appears to be much less frequent. However, the dynamics of the father-

child relationship are unique and highly important to the child's overall development. Cohen (2001:24) emphasises the importance of the father-child relationship and reminds fathers that *your relationship with your child will probably be one of the longest of your life.*

## **2.5 PARENT GUIDANCE**

A modern view on parenting, and especially fathering, implies a need to guide and prepare fathers for their more comprehensive modern role. However, not many educational experiences of parenthood are readily available in society to help prepare parents. The lack of guidance offered by society on how to enhance successful parenting behaviour and experiences contributes to the difficulty of adjusting to first-time parenthood (Rossi cited in Bigner, 1998).

A study with new fathers indicates that the majority of men feel that there are no guidelines available for first-time fathers to follow. Only a small percentage of the participants revealed that they had role models from whom they could learn (Barclay & Lupton, 1999). Beale (1999) agrees that when it comes to fathers defining their parenting roles, not much guidance is provided other than the example offered by their fathers. In the past, people believed that parenting roles were passed down from one generation to the next and that suitable parenting behaviours were learnt naturally by being part of a family. However, this notion cannot necessarily be applied to the South African context, which is characterised by single parent families, mixed families and children living without father or mother figures due to socioeconomic pressures and phenomena like the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

### **2.5.1 Fathers' need for support**

Lamb (1997) identifies the following four factors that might influence the level of paternal involvement: motivation, skills and self-confidence, support, and institutional practices. All these factors need to be considered within the South African context. Furthermore, it seems critical that we consider ways of addressing such issues. Fathers need support through guidance to develop skills and confidence and improve their paternal involvement. Skill-oriented guidance should

increase the level of a father's involvement with his infant. Evidence indicates that fathers who have been educated in caregiving and/or playing activities also show an increase in other parenting skills. As a result, they usually display higher levels of involvement with their infants (Dickie & Carnahan; Parke; Hymel; Power & Tinsley; Zelazo Kotelchuck, Barber & David cited in Parke, 1995).

Expectant fathers should do a variety of things to be regarded as hands-on parents. These include activities such as attending antenatal classes and reading informative books and publications. However, according to Burgess (1997), fathers are seldom told how to accomplish any of these activities. The resources in a bookshop are a clear indication of men's general exclusion, as most of the publications on pregnancy are directed at women. During interviews conducted with fathers, it was found that men are generally pleased with the professional support they obtain but disappointed in antenatal classes (Bradley *et al.*, 2004). A need seems to exist for research with expectant fathers on dealing with fatherhood, the expectations as a new father and ways to provide support to their partners.

Simpson (1997) finds the media's implementation of parent education to be surprisingly narrow, unorganised and unsophisticated. It could, however, be used effectively to help foster social and political attitudes that would allow this field of parenting to develop and thrive. The media is a field with many practical possibilities that could be utilised to reach society at large, yet at present it does not seem to be used sufficiently for parent education. This indicates the necessity of designing and introducing a television programme that will involve fathers in parent education and provide them with the necessary skills, in turn empowering them in their role.

## **2.6 TELEVISION AS COMMUNICATION MEDIUM**

Television encourages both the viewers and those working within the field to become more actively involved in the process of watching television. Television has an all-encompassing effect on society and has been recognised as one of the greatest mediums of non-formal instruction (De Beer, 1998). Since television is regarded as one of the largest forms of mass media it is important to explore its use

with regard to parenting programmes, especially for expectant fathers, the advantages of using television as educational parenting tool, as well as how television could be implemented to change the public's perception of fatherhood. These topics are discussed in detail in the sections that follow.

### **2.6.1 Parenting programmes on television**

Public service broadcasters abroad have for several years offered formal, non-formal and informal educational programmes on television (De Beer, 1998). An example of such a programme is a twelve part interactive parenting programme hosted by Nova South-Eastern University professor Sally Goldberg in the United States of America, which is broadcast on local cable (Simpson, 1997).

However, in South Africa parenting programmes for expectant fathers are uncommon and limited. There are no educational parenting programmes specifically aimed at guiding expectant fathers. The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) provides a list of the services presented in the mid-1990s on an annual basis (De Beer, 1998). In this document no information is provided on the number of hours dedicated to parent (father) education programmes. Although mention is made of general documentary programmes, which might include parenting programmes, no specific focus is placed on parent guidance programmes as such.

### **2.6.2 Expectant fathers and the mass media**

Parenting programmes for expectant fathers and mothers are limited and the few that are presented are not easily accessible to the majority of South Africans. According to Simpson (1997), parenting programmes on commercial television and radio have been relatively uncommon in the past. As far as conveying parenting information via radio, television, video and computer technologies is concerned, none of these forms of media is as fully developed as the printed media.

Over the last few years, however, fathers have expressed their needs and feelings in the mass media, especially in television talk shows (Knijn, 1995). As a result,

these expressions have gained extensive interest. However, according to Simpson (1997), fathers appear to be one of the groups of the population that are disproportionately missing from mainstream media audiences. Quite surprisingly, however, results from an audience survey for local news stations revealed that topics related to the family ranked higher than sports or entertainment (Simpson, 1997).

Although inadequate information is provided for expectant fathers via television there are a number of books available for fathers. In addition, parenting magazines often focus on ways to involve fathers in the role of parenting and a few websites have been developed over the past few years to provide fathers with information. However, none of these forms of media are interactive or provide practical demonstrations and examples of how expectant fathers should care for their infants. Furthermore, advice on parenting issues in the mass media tends to vary widely from one source to another, leaving parents feeling confused and uncertain (Simpson, 1997). Television could be employed as a reliable source of information for parents by presenting a programme based on individuals' personal success stories and experiences, rather than merely representing conflicting opinions.

### **2.6.3 Potential advantages of television as a medium for parent (father) guidance**

Television is the most popular form of mass media in South Africa and is used primarily to inform, educate and entertain. Using television to guide expectant fathers holds certain advantages. Firstly, television is able to address and reach many people at the same time, and secondly, television can provide the viewer with a visual image of the content as well as an auditory explanation regarding the actions that are illustrated. Although television has certain limitations, it is a form of mass media that is readily available to the majority of South Africans. According to a report on the population and development in South Africa, there are 101 television sets per thousand people, 95 telephones per thousand people and only 32 daily newspapers per thousand people (Alsager School, 2005).

#### 2.6.4 Changing the public's perception of fatherhood

By broadcasting basic information on parenting to expectant fathers via television, more South Africans might begin to acknowledge and understand the comprehensive role that fathers can play in parenthood. This may assist in changing attitudes and views on fatherhood. In doing so, both men and women might be able to establish what can and should be expected of fathers.

Television is a powerful form of instruction and could be used successfully to promote positive fatherhood, by encouraging and directing expectant fathers with regard to their responsibility as active parents. Implementing television as a means to guide fathers may also create a public awareness about the importance of the first three years of life. As a result, television may indirectly assist in promoting healthy development of young children by involving their families (Simpson, 1997). As such, the goal of utilising television as a medium for parent guidance is twofold, as it will not only address the needs of expectant fathers but also provide guidance for those parents who are unsure of how to raise their children.

If a programme for expectant fathers in South Africa is developed, it could facilitate a social change by providing clarity and understanding on the role of the father. This in turn may create a ripple effect by spreading the word and providing guidance to fathers who are willing to be involved in parenting tasks. Belsky and Volling (cited in Jain, Belsky & Crnic, 1996) report on a study involving observations with infants aged one month, three months and nine months. Findings indicate that the only thing that fathers did more than mothers in their households was reading and watching television. This suggests that television may be well used in accessing fathers.

The above justification of the use of television for expectant fathers in South Africa is summarised by Knijn (1995:3):

*By watching television, we are all involved in an effort to develop a new 'communis opinio' on fatherhood; in this process men and women try to discover what can and should be expected of fathers. It is the process and to a lesser extent its outcome which is of importance to the transformation of fatherhood.*

## 2.7 CONCLUSION

Expectant fathers in South Africa seem to be in need of guidance and information related to the process of parenthood. Focus should be placed on finding ways to offer fathers the scaffolding that is needed to learn how to fulfil their roles as fathers, in order for them to be viewed as responsible members of society.

Bradley *et al.* (2004) report on the experiences of first-time fathers and recommend further research focusing on their experiences and needs. It seems clear that the primary focus in the existing literature is on defining the roles and needs of the **expectant mother**. Research is therefore needed to redress the neglect of the role of fathers. As a result of the identified need, my study aims to explore the use of television in order to assist and empower expectant fathers to become actively involved in the parenting process. Fathers need clarity on what is expected of them by society, and require guidelines to enable them to fulfil their expected roles.

This chapter provided the theoretical background to the study in terms of the need for more information on the topic of fatherhood and the changing role of the expectant father. These topics were explored with a view to providing guidance for new fathers. An explanation of television as the most powerful form of media followed. Chapter three focuses on a discussion of the empirical study into the use of a television programme for educating and supporting first-time fathers.



## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the theoretical framework for the study, providing an overview of the background information related to the topic under discussion. The existing literature reveals the need to explore alternate means of guidance for expectant fathers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Specifically, fathers could benefit from information and support on their role as fathers within the family and topics relating to childrearing.

In this chapter the paradigmatic approach of the empirical study, the research design, process of the study and the methods utilised are discussed in detail. An explanation of the selected procedures is provided, together with a relevant motivation for the choices.

#### 3.2 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE: COMBINING TWO PARADIGMS

Durrheim (2002a:36) explains paradigms as:

*systems of interrelated ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions. Paradigms act as perspectives that provide a rationale for the research and commit the researcher to particular methods of data collection, observation and interpretation.*

This research employs an INTERPRETIVIST-positivist paradigm, which combines both QUALITATIVE and quantitative approaches. Such an approach is referred to as mixed methods research.

##### 3.2.1 Interpretivist paradigm

According to the interpretivist paradigm, researchers aim to understand and make sense of participants' life worlds. This is done by interacting with participants so that the meanings they ascribe to their experiences are appreciated and clarified.

Throughout the research process of my study, I aimed to form a holistic view of the participants within their contexts by exploring their experiences, views and feelings regarding the current forms of support and guidance available for expectant fathers (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002; Wimmer & Dominick, 2000).

### **3.2.2 Positivist paradigm**

In addition to interpretivism, I also relied on a positivist paradigm. Neuman (2000:66) offers the following clarification of positivism:

*Positivism sees social science as an organized method for combining deductive logic with precise empirical observations of individual behaviour in order to discover and confirm a set of probabilistic causal laws that can be used to predict general patterns of human activity.*

### **3.2.3 Combining the interpretivist and positivist paradigms**

To summarise, positivist researchers prefer accurate quantitative data and often choose to conduct content analysis, surveys and experiments. On the other hand, interpretivists prefer to work with qualitative data and choose to conduct case studies, focus groups and/or intensive interviews (Neuman, 2000; Wimmer & Dominick, 2000).

These two paradigms (INTERPRETIVIST-positivist) were selected and combined in order to successfully address the purpose of the study and to answer the research questions. I chose these paradigms for this study as both approaches (QUALITATIVE-quantitative) represent complementary components of the research process. The quantitative paradigm, based on positivism, aims to evaluate the social world objectively and predict human behaviour. A qualitative approach, based on interpretivism, strives to comprehend how individuals in everyday settings construct meaning and explain the events of their worlds (Creswell cited in Fouché & Delport, 2002; Wimmer & Dominick, 2000).

An advantage of incorporating the selected paradigms is that some of the acquired meanings from the case studies (qualitative component) could be applied to understand and interpret the results obtained from the questionnaire (quantitative

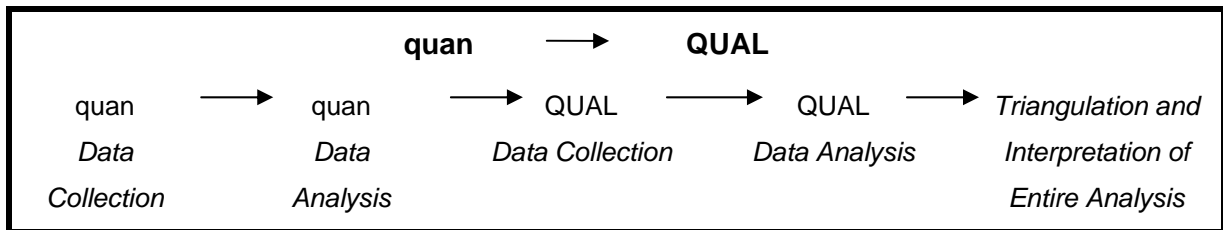
component) (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). Positivism is the oldest and most widely applied paradigm in mass communication research. However, the interpretivist paradigm is also increasingly utilised within mass media communication research (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000). It has become more popular and gained more ground over the last few years. As such, a combination of these two paradigms seemed a suitable choice within this field of research and within the context of the study as a means to explore and describe the possible use of television as a medium for providing guidance to expectant fathers.

### **3.2.4 Mixed methods approach**

As mentioned, my study combines the quantitative and qualitative approaches, using a mixed methods research approach (Creswell, 2003). Mixed methods research occurs when researchers combine or mix qualitative and quantitative methods. In this study a quantitative approach was employed for one phase of the research process and a qualitative approach for the other phase (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Wimmer and Dominick (2000) state that researchers often integrate quantitative and qualitative approaches to fully explore and understand the phenomenon being studied. Human sciences research in particular often applies both quantitative and qualitative methods, sometimes consciously and other times unconsciously (Fouché & Delport, 2002).

According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), the aim of mixed methods research is not for one method to take the place of the other but rather to include the strengths of each approach in order to minimise the weaknesses. The mixed methods approach is usually applied by researchers who tend to base knowledge on practical foundations in order to best understand research problems. The approach utilises strategies of inquiry where data collection can either occur at the same time or in sequence (Creswell, 2003). For the purpose of this study, the *Sequential Explanatory Strategy* was regarded as the most appropriate of the six major mixed methods models since the quantitative and qualitative data was to be collected in phases (sequentially). This strategy involves collecting quantitative data first, then qualitative data and then integrating all the data during the analysis and

interpretation phase of the study (Creswell, 2003). Figure 3.1 provides a diagram of the Sequential Explanatory design:



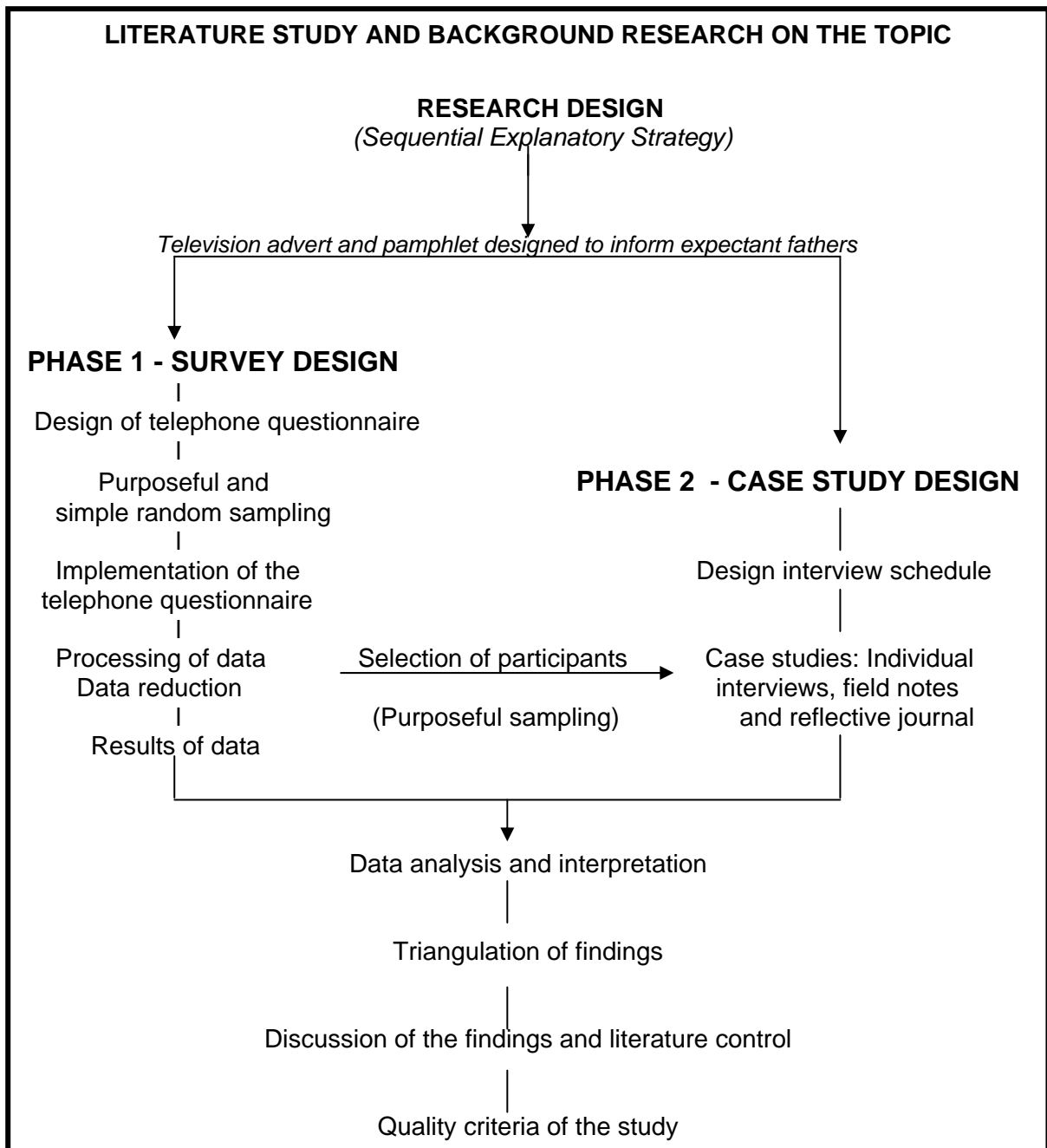
**FIGURE 3.1: SEQUENTIAL EXPLANATORY DESIGN**  
(Adapted from Creswell, 2003:213)

I decided to apply this model as the results of the qualitative component (case study) of the research could be used to explain and interpret the results of the quantitative component (questionnaire). In this way, the advantages of both qualitative and quantitative approaches could be optimally utilised (De Vos, 2002a).

A main strength of the mixed methods approach is that it is straightforward and easy to employ, as the various steps usually fall into obvious, separate stages. However, because the data collection involves using separate methods for the different phases, the time spent on data collection might be lengthy. This is regarded as a potential limitation of this strategy. Another advantage is that this approach allows the researcher to describe and report on the findings easily (Creswell, 2003). Furthermore, applying mixed methods to research can imply the possibility of improving insights into and understanding of the data, which might be missed when using a single method. Lastly, mixed methods can be applied to increase the generalisability of the results of a study (Johnson & Christensen, 2004).

### 3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND STRATEGIES

Strydom (2002b) states that an in-depth explanation of the research methodology applied in a study, enables the reader to gain a clear understanding of the strategies used. The research process of my study consisted of two sequential phases of data collection. Figure 3.2 provides a brief overview of the research process, followed by a discussion of the various components.



**FIGURE 3.2: SCHEMATIC PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS**

### 3.3.1 Research design

Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:46) define a research design as *the plan of how to proceed in determining the nature of the relationship between variables*. A survey design was selected for the initial phase of the study and involved the collection of quantitative data by means of implementing a standardised research instrument in the form of a questionnaire. A questionnaire was used to obtain answers to the

research questions, as well as to gather data to measure and analyse whether or not the predicted generalisations of the theory proved to be true (Creswell cited in Fouché & Delport, 2002). In the second phase of the study qualitative data was collected, relying on an instrumental case study design. Interviews with four participants were included to elaborate on the basic frame of reference provided by the extensive pool of participants consulted in phase one (survey component).

### **3.3.1.1 Descriptive survey design**

A *descriptive survey design* was selected for the quantitative component of this study, as such a design type assisted me to obtain information from various cases in the sample population, and allowed a focus on the exact characteristics under consideration (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995). According to Muijs (2004), survey research designs are relatively flexible and can therefore be presented in various forms. However, the collection of data should be conducted by means of a standard questionnaire administered with the aid of a telephonic, face-to-face, postal pencil-and-paper, web-based or email format. Babbie (cited in Creswell, 2003:154) summarises the purpose of a *survey design* as follows: *This purpose is to generalize from a sample to a population so that inferences can be made about some characteristic, attitude, or behaviour of this population.*

Mouton (2001) identifies the possibility of generalising findings to larger populations as a potential strength of the survey design, on condition that a suitable sampling design has been applied. In addition, a high measurement of reliability and validity should be evident if the questionnaires are properly constructed. However, a potential limitation of the survey design (quantitative component) is that a lack of depth and insider observation might lead to “surface level” analyses.

### **3.3.1.2 Case study design**

For the second phase of my study the *case study design* (qualitative component) was selected, in order to facilitate the acquisition of information and a clearer understanding of the social issues under investigation. The strength of a case study design is that it is very useful for learning about situations, which might be poorly

understood or about which not much is known, as in the case of expectant fathers and the lack of parental guidance available to them (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001).

An *instrumental case study* involves comprehensive and systematic investigation of a few cases, as done in this study (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995; Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Mark in Fouché, 2002; Stake, 2000). However, the cases might sometimes be restricted by time and activity (Stake cited in Fouché, 2002). Wimmer and Dominick (2000) view the case study design as advantageous to research as it provides a large amount of information and detail about the research topic, allowing the researcher to deal with a wide variety of raw data. In this study, the case study design provided multiple sources of information and facilitated a clear exploration and description of the phenomenon under investigation. I gathered in-depth information by applying a variety of data collection techniques over a sustained period of time, including methods for collecting both descriptive and explanatory data. Another advantage of the design is that it gives way for new ideas and hypotheses to surface from vigilant and detailed observation (Lindegger, 2002; Stake, 2000).

A case study design also implies certain limitations. Cases might lack scientific rigour and case studies may not be generalisable. This is, however, often characteristic of interpretivist studies and should not necessarily be regarded as a limitation. In addition, the implementation of a questionnaire (positivist component) might have addressed this potential limitation. Using a case study design may also be time-consuming and the research might generate large quantities of data that the researcher may find hard to analyse (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000). Furthermore, Lindegger (2002) states that problems might emerge with regard to the validity of the information and that causal relations are often hard to test. Once again, this often does not apply as a limitation to qualitative interpretivist studies and might have been addressed by including a positivist component.

I was aware of the limitations of the selected designs throughout my study and strived to prevent these challenges from affecting the quality of the study by, for example, eliminating bias views and continuously monitoring all interpretations. The aim of the qualitative interpretivist study is, however, not to generalise but to provide

rich descriptions of the participants' perceptions of their life worlds. Nonetheless, the generalisability of a sample may be increased by using multiple cases to assist researchers in establishing a range of views (Wisker, 2001).

The abovementioned designs provided me with a holistic view of real life events experienced by expectant fathers. From this, rich descriptions of the perceptions of expectant fathers with regard to parent guidance could be produced. I continuously strived to maintain a balance between the generalisability of quantitative data and the provision of in-depth descriptions of the perceptions of the participants, as obtained during the qualitative data collection process. To facilitate qualitative data analysis and interpretation, all interviews were audio-taped with the informed consent of the participants (Kanjee, 2002; Neuman, 2000). According to Oppenheim (2003), it is important to record exploratory interviews (case study design - phase two) to transcribe and later analyse the responses in detail.

### **3.3.2 Selection of participants (sampling)**

With regard to mixed method procedures, Creswell (2003) emphasises the need for researchers to understand that quantitative data collection often involves random sampling for the selection of participants, which provides each individual an equal probability of being selected and allows the sample to be generalised to the wider population. However, in qualitative data collection methods, purposeful sampling is used to ensure that individuals selected have experienced the phenomenon under investigation.

In accordance with the mixed methods approach, I applied both simple random (probability) and purposeful (non-probability) sampling to select participants. Purposeful sampling implies that the researcher handpicks participants based on specified characteristics, in order to develop a sample that is large enough yet possesses the required traits (Black, 1999), as discussed in sections 3.3.2.1 and 3.3.2.2.



### **3.3.2.1 Sampling participants for the first phase of the study (quantitative component)**

In the first phase of the study I used both simple random and purposeful sampling methods to draw an initial sample of participants from the population. The simple random method was chosen for this phase of the study in order to give every member of the population an equal chance of being selected for the study (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). In addition, purposeful sampling was implemented in this phase in order to obtain a sample of participants that represented the specific characteristics required for the study.

In order to obtain an initial sample, participants had to meet certain requirements during the first phase of the study (quantitative component). With regard to the specified criteria participants had to:

- be expectant fathers.
- reside within the region of Gauteng.
- have access to television viewing.
- have access to a telephone.
- understand and speak English.

In addition, the sample had to include participants' representative of different ethnic groups (Asian, Black, Coloured and White).

In the initial research plan I aimed to use television to inform expectant fathers about the research. After numerous meetings with various programme developers, a short snippet of this nature was broadcast once during the programme Family Years, which was shown on SABC 2 on Saturday 16 April 2005 at 12h30. The snippet invited expectant fathers to participate in the research by contacting me via short message service (sms), telephone or electronic mail (email) to provide me with a contact telephone number. The fact that the advert was only broadcast once resulted in a lack of sufficient awareness about the study and a poor response rate by potential participants. I therefore decided to design and distribute pamphlets to

inform expectant fathers about the study. Refer to **APPENDIX A** for an example of the pamphlet.

Pamphlets were distributed at 20 different venues such as clinics, doctors' rooms, hospitals and midwives' practices. Once approximately 50 participants had responded, I began to contact the volunteers. A survey in the form of a telephonic questionnaire was implemented (structured interview - phase one). The questionnaire included questions relating to the needs of expectant fathers, how they view television as medium for providing parent guidance, the most suitable day for broadcasting such a programme as well as appropriate viewing times for expectant fathers. Participants were requested to indicate whether or not they would be available for a follow-up interview.

I received 103 responses from expectant fathers who were willing to participate in the study. However, as this study is limited in nature and due to telephone call costs I only conducted 65 telephone interviews. After completing the survey, data were coded and given to the Statistical Department at the University of Pretoria in order to capture the raw data using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) software (Cohen *et al.*, 2001; SAS Institute, 1990).

### **3.3.2.2 Selecting participants for the second phase of the study (qualitative component)**

Once the first phase of the study had been completed and the quantitative data had been coded, participants for the second phase of the data collection process (qualitative component) were selected. The aim was to select four participants from the initial sample for the (semi-structured) face-to-face interviews, ensuring that each participant represented a different ethnic group and met the criteria for this phase, as stated below. Silverman (2000) regards purposeful sampling as suitable for a case study design as it allows researchers to select cases that show some feature or process, which they find to be interesting.

Purposeful sampling was used for this phase, drawing on the pool of 65 participants consulted in the telephone survey. Four participants were selected according to the criteria that they had to:

- be expectant fathers.
- reside within the region of Gauteng.
- have access to television viewing.
- have access to a telephone.
- understand and speak English.
- have indicated their willingness to participate in the individual interviews, during the telephone survey.
- have indicated television as the most suitable medium for providing guidance to expectant fathers during the telephone questionnaire.
- represent the following ethnic groups: Asian, Black, Coloured and White (one participant from each group).

Once the four participants had been selected for the second phase of the study, I contacted them and arranged to meet them for the follow-up face-to-face interviews. Each participant was presented with a covering letter and a declaration regarding the research process, together with an informed consent form (**APPENDIX B**). Individual interviews were between 30 and 60 minutes long and were based on open-ended questions, according to an interview schedule developed in accordance with the responses obtained from the telephone questionnaires. The aim of these interviews was to obtain more in-depth descriptions of the participants' perceptions of the educational needs of the expectant father with regard to birth and childcare. The interviews also aimed to ascertain whether or not television could be implemented to provide the knowledge required by expectant fathers. Refer to **APPENDIX C** for a summary of the research programme followed in the study.

### **3.3.3 Data collection strategies**

Both quantitative and qualitative techniques were utilised to collect data. An explanation of the techniques follows.

### 3.3.3.1 Quantitative technique: Questionnaire

The first phase of the study consisted of a telephonic survey, using a questionnaire (**APPENDIX D**). The content of the questionnaire was communicated verbally to participants and since it was a telephone questionnaire, observation of nonverbal communication was not possible. Telephonic surveys are regarded as a means to gather data quickly, permitting instant exploration of an event. It is often viewed as a convenient method of data collection, as the researcher can collect data without having to go out into the field (Delport, 2002).

Johnson and Christensen (2004) provide the following definition of a questionnaire: *A questionnaire is a self-report data-collection instrument that each research participant fills out as part of a research study.* In designing the questionnaire and conducting the analysis of data I relied on the assistance and guidance of the Statistical Department at the University of Pretoria. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions offer quantitative data and require the participant to make a choice from a limited number of possible responses. Open-ended questions obtain qualitative data and allow participants to respond freely (Johnson & Christensen, 2004).

One of the advantages of implementing a questionnaire in this study was that the telephonic questionnaire provided me with an opportunity to explain the research topic to participants. Secondly, it allowed for the data to be captured by a computer system (SAS), which saved time. In addition, the participants were not required to be literate and as a result of individuals volunteering to participate in the study, the response rate was high.

However, one of the disadvantages of using a telephone questionnaire, which I had to guard against, is that telephone questionnaires can be invasive and might lead to individuals refusing to participate (Delport, 2002; Muijs, 2004). Another limitation of the telephonic questionnaire is the cost involved for long-distance calls (Arkava & Lane cited in Delport, 2002), resulting in my decision to limit the study to 65 participants living in Gauteng. The fact that not all expectant fathers have access to telephones further limited the sample's representativeness. However, 50% of the

South African population have access to and can be reached via cellular telephone (Mia, 2005), although the cost of calls to cellular numbers implied further financial implications for the study.

### **3.3.3.2 Qualitative techniques**

The qualitative techniques that were applied during the second phase of the study will now be presented and discussed.

#### **i. Face-to-face interviews**

Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were conducted with four participants in order to elaborate on the quantitative data and generate qualitative data, representing detailed views and opinions regarding the possible implementation of a television programme for guiding expectant fathers. A set of predetermined, open-ended questions were included in an interview schedule (**APPENDIX E**) to guide the interviews. In line with Greeff's (2002) suggestions, participants were guided and encouraged to share their experiences and views on parent guidance and fatherhood, as well as the possible use of television in this regard. Semi-structured interviews were used to gain additional information and to elaborate on the qualitative data obtained. Holstein and Gubrium (2003) describe interviewing in qualitative studies as a unique form of conversation, which provides empirical data about the participants' social worlds simply by asking them to speak about their lives.

The advantages of individual interviews include the probability of obtaining in-depth information by means of probing. Secondly, participants had the opportunity to ask for an explanation if they did not understand any of the questions (Van Vuuren & Maree, 2002). An additional benefit of conducting face-to-face interviews is that it enabled me to gain participants' cooperation by establishing relationships with them, therefore facilitating high response rates (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). Establishing such relationships further enabled me to gain in-depth information and generate data to better understand and interpret the quantitative data collected during the first phase of the study (Creswell, 2003). Personal interviewing also implies potential

limitations, which needed to be kept in mind. Conducting individual interviews is usually time consuming and may be expensive. Furthermore, interviewers might influence the participants' responses, resulting in biased responses (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995; Van Vuuren & Maree, 2002).

I audio-taped all interviews and transcribed them *verbatim* before commencing with the data analysis. Handwritten notes were used to support the recordings. In addition, observations were noted during the interviews, especially with regard to nonverbal cues.

## **ii. Field notes**

Field notes were utilised during the research process, containing my reflections on conversations, interviews, moments of confusion, intuitions and new ideas stimulated during the study (Burns, 2000; Mayan, 2001). For the purpose of this study, my field notes included all observations noted during the interviews, as well as notes written at a seminar (Fatherhood Project, 3 June 2004), discussions with experts in the field, and any additional information provided by the participants during the implementation of the telephone questionnaire. According to Mayan (2001), field notes provide the researcher with the opportunity to gain a clear view of one's thoughts and can therefore be useful when planning the next step during the process of data collection. Refer to **APPENDIX F** for examples of field notes made during this study.

## **iii. Reflective journal**

Burns (2000:439) provides the following explanation of a reflective diary:

*The diaries used for research purposes include not usually those containing personal thought or shopping lists, but logs of professional activities, which give clear information about work patterns.*

A reflective journal was kept throughout the duration of the study. It contains ideas, thoughts and reflections on my experiences. Furthermore, I reflected on my own abilities (in order to adapt where necessary) as well as on the research process (in

order to make the necessary changes when applicable). Refer to **APPENDIX G** for selected reflections taken from my reflective journal.

### 3.3.4 Data analysis and interpretation

Mayan (2001:21) explains data analysis as:

*the process of observing patterns in the data, asking questions of those patterns, constructing conjectures, deliberately collecting data from specifically selected individuals on targeted topics, confirming or refuting those conjectures, then continuing analysis, asking additional questions, seeking more data, furthering the analysis by sorting, questioning, thinking, constructing and testing conjectures, and so forth.*

Data analysis in mixed methods research occurs within both the quantitative (mainly numbers) and qualitative (mainly words) approaches. In accordance with the *Sequential Explanatory Strategy* I analysed the quantitative data obtained in the first phase of the study to assist with the planning of qualitative data collection during the second phase. Both quantitative and qualitative data were interpreted together (triangulation) once all the data have been collected, captured, processed and results condensed (Creswell, 2003). Babbie (1995) regards the coding of open questions within a questionnaire as similar to content analysis. It is described as the task of reducing a wide variety of characteristic items of information into a more limited set of aspects composing a variable.

In this study, once all the questionnaires had been completed, the data needed to be converted into a suitable form for capturing by the computer system. The task of data reduction, which is referred to as coding, was employed to prepare the data for the analysis process (Babbie, 1995; Cohen *et al.*, 2001). For analysing the quantitative data, I relied on the expertise of my co-supervisor and a statistician. Before finalising the telephone questionnaire I met with the experts from the Statistical Department at the University of Pretoria to obtain their input, which was applied in designing the questionnaire. Quantitative data captured and analysed using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) permits inferences to be drawn from the data (SAS Institute, 1990). Inferential statistics were used to formulate deductions and estimate population parameters (Durrheim, 2002b). The statistics obtained

from the questionnaires were eventually integrated with the qualitative data gathered during the individual interviews, in order to answer the research questions.

The second phase of the study consisted of individual interviews being conducted, audio-taped and transcribed. As a researcher, I then immersed myself into the data to become familiar with the information. During this process I worked with all the collected data, including field notes, observations and interview transcripts, in order to form clearer understandings about the information. Qualitative data were coded using content analysis to recognise themes, concepts and meanings in the information supplied by the participants (Burns, 2000; Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002). Refer to **APPENDIX H** for the content analysis and thematic coding of the transcribed individual interviews.

Once all the data had been coded, I attempted to elaborate on the quantitative data in terms of the generated themes. Quantitative data were compared to the themes obtained from the qualitative data for the purposes of data interpretation (Creswell, 2003). This was done by formulating comparisons and contrasts, so that inferences could be made, confirmed and indicated (Burns, 2000). Identified themes were tabulated and the inferences evaluated in terms of the research question. These findings are systematically presented and discussed in chapter four.

### **3.4 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER**

My role as researcher was multifaceted and varied. Within the interpretative field of research, the role of the researcher entails taking an active and involved stance in interviewing, which is a vital part of qualitative data collection. However, in positivist research the researcher aims to remain objective and removed from the data (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000). As a result of my dual roles it was necessary for me to constantly remain aware of my participant bias, values and personal interests towards the research topic and process (Creswell, 2003). According to Stake (2000:372), the researcher needs constant participation *from conscience, from stakeholders and from the research community* in order to avoid ethical problems from arising.



Initially my role involved making telephone calls, meeting people to gain television media contacts, collecting source material and watching documentaries, all of which are common activities of a media researcher (Emm, 2002). In addition to this, I was involved in organising a brief snippet on a television programme to broadcast information about the study. I also designed and distributed pamphlets about the study to various clinics, doctors' rooms, hospitals and midwives' practices.

During the telephone questionnaire my role was to listen carefully and complete the participants' responses on the questionnaire. As an interviewer during the face-to-face interviews, my role was to observe and gain a clear understanding of the participants' responses. Furthermore, I had to follow up on responses and explore further where needed. Later, I fulfilled the functional role as transcriber and qualitative data analyst, and also had the task of triangulating the data. In addition, I took responsibility for designing and analysing the questionnaire quantitatively. One of my most important tasks as a researcher was to continuously abide by ethical guidelines and respect all participants.

### **3.5 CRITERIA FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE**

The strategies and criteria that were applied to the data in order to verify the results will now be discussed.

#### **3.5.1 Triangulation**

Stake (2000:443) provides the following explanation of the term triangulation: *Triangulation has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation.* Triangulation involves the process of combining quantitative and qualitative methods in order to observe something from several angles or to acquire multiple measures of the same phenomena by applying different research measures. The principle of triangulation relies on the convergence and collaboration of findings, which is usually useful in providing stronger proof for a conclusion (De Vos, 2002b; Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Neuman, 2000; Patton, 2002).

Four basic types of triangulation exist which can be employed within the research process. For the purpose of this study, both *data* triangulation and the triangulation of *methods* were implemented. Triangulation of this nature involves the interpretation of findings by mixing qualitative and quantitative styles of research and data collection procedures (Denzin cited in Kelly, 2002; De Vos, 2002b). I triangulated the findings from both the first and second phase, which included the telephonic questionnaire (survey design - quantitative component) and the face-to-face interviews (case study design - qualitative component) in order to verify and validate my findings. As such, a richer understanding of the phenomenon could be obtained.

### **3.5.2 Trustworthiness (reliability, dependability)**

The qualitative term *trustworthiness* refers to the way in which the inquirer is able to persuade the audience that the findings in the study are worth paying attention to and that the research is of high quality (Lincoln & Guba cited in Johnson & Turner, 2003). It correlates with the quantitative term *dependability*, which is explained by Durrheim and Wassenaar (2002:64) as referring to *the degree to which the reader can be convinced that the findings did indeed occur as the researcher says they did*.

During the research I aimed to achieve trustworthiness/dependability by employing member checking. In line with Creswell's (2003) suggestion, identified themes were discussed with the participants (of phase two) to ensure that they are accurate and dependable. In addition, I triangulated all the data collected during the research process, including the results of the questionnaire, interviews, field notes and research journal, in order to search for common themes and provide reliable findings. Furthermore, I strived to eliminate any bias that might have been brought into the study by constantly reflecting on the research process.

### **3.5.3 Validity**

Two main forms of validity are distinguished, namely internal validity (credibility) and external validity (transferability/generalisability).

### **3.5.3.1 Credibility (internal validity)**

Mayan (2001) describes internal validity as the accurate presentation of a particular context or event as described by the researcher. Durrheim and Wassenaar (2002) refer to credibility as the assurance that the researcher's conclusions stem from the data. Throughout the study I intended to establish credibility and identify discrepancies in the findings by applying triangulation to the methods of data collection and data analysis.

I aimed to produce findings that are believable and convincing, also presenting negative or inconsistent findings in order to add to the credibility of the study. The questionnaire was assessed by my supervisors (experts in the field) as well as by the University of Pretoria's Statistical Department to ensure content and face validity (in other words the document was adequate for measuring what it was supposed to measure).

### **3.5.3.2 Transferability / Generalisability (external validity)**

According to Durrheim and Wassenaar (2002), generalisability is the degree to which the data and context of the research study can be generalised to the wider population and broader settings, in other words how the findings can be transferred to other contexts. Rich, thick descriptions of the participants and their contexts were generated by supplying a large amount of clear and detailed information about expectant fathers' views on parental guidance and the use of television, as well as information on the setting in which they live and function. This is important to ensure transferability (Creswell, 2003; Mayan, 2001). However, as interpretivist studies aim at providing rich descriptions of the perceptions of selected participants, the main purpose was not necessarily to be able to generalise the findings of phase two of this study.

## **3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Strydom (2002a:63) draws on the work of Babbie in his discussion of ethical issues, and adds that *anyone involved in research needs to be aware of the general*

*agreements about what is proper and improper in scientific research.* It is essential that the researcher follows and abides to ethical guidelines throughout the research process. I conducted my research according to the Ethics and Research Statement provided by the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria. Refer to **APPENDICES I** and **J** for the Ethics and Research Statement and the Ethics Clearance Certificate provided by the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria, where written permission was obtained to conduct the study. Ethical principles relevant to this study will now be discussed in more detail.

### **3.6.1 Informed consent and voluntary participation**

Expectant fathers were contacted telephonically after I received a short message service (sms), telephone call or electronic mail (email) from participants, declaring their willingness to participate in the study. At the beginning of every telephone conversation with participants, I briefly explained the nature and purpose of the research and emphasised that participants may withdraw from the study at any time. I obtained verbal informed consent from the volunteer participants before implementing the questionnaire. In addition, I ascertained whether or not the volunteers were available and willing to participate in follow-up interviews at a later stage (Strydom, 2002a).

During the follow-up (face-to-face) interviews I presented the participants with a letter of consent and declaration, which describes the research process (**APPENDIX B**). I requested that the participants read the letter, ask questions to gain clarity and sign the consent form if they were willing to be involved in the research. At this stage participants were once again reminded that they could withdraw themselves or their contributions from the process at any time.

### **3.6.2 Protection from harm**

I ensured that participants were not exposed to any undue physical or psychological harm (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). During the study I strived to be honest, respectful and sympathetic towards all participants. I debriefed participants after interviews if

needed or made the necessary referral to a professional who could provide such a service.

### **3.6.3 Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity**

According to Burns (2000), both the researcher and the participants should clearly understand the confidentiality of the results and findings of the study. All the information and responses shared by the participants in this study were and will be kept private until this study is finalised, after which the raw data will be destroyed. Results are presented in an anonymous manner in order to protect the identities of the participants. All audiocassettes will also be destroyed as soon as the study has been completed (Burns, 2000; De Vos, 2002a).

## **3.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided a description of the research process, design, procedures and methods applied in the study. The paradigmatic perspective was explained, as well as all relevant methodological choices. The selected research design, data collection techniques, as well as data analysis and interpretation strategies were justified in terms of the research questions and purpose of the study, as formulated in chapter one. Finally, my role as researcher, quality criteria and ethical considerations were clarified.

In chapter four I present the results and findings of the study. Findings are related to the research questions initially posed in chapter one. In addition, findings are compared with existing literature in order to substantiate them. Attention is paid to both correlating and contradicting indications, as revealed in this study.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

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#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter described the research design, methodological approach and the process followed in the study. This chapter presents the quantitative and qualitative data gathered by means of the survey and case study designs. The data are triangulated, analysed and interpreted in conjunction with existing literature. The findings of the study are then presented according to the initial secondary research questions as formulated in chapter one.

The research was directed and guided by the following primary research question: ***How can the medium of television be used to provide parent guidance on pregnancy and childrearing to expectant fathers?*** This chapter presents a synthesis of the research findings to answer the secondary research questions, thereby addressing the primary research question.

#### 4.2 RESULTS OF THE QUANTITATIVE COMPONENT OF THE STUDY

In the first phase of the study data were collected by means of 65 telephone questionnaires answered by expectant fathers. All responses were coded and analysed with the help of the Statistical Department at the University of Pretoria. The quantitative results are presented below in two categories, namely descriptive and inferential statistics.

##### 4.2.1 Descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics provided in the paragraphs below reflect the results and observations obtained from the single variables used in the telephone questionnaire (Durrheim, 2002b). Results will be presented schematically, followed by relevant discussions.

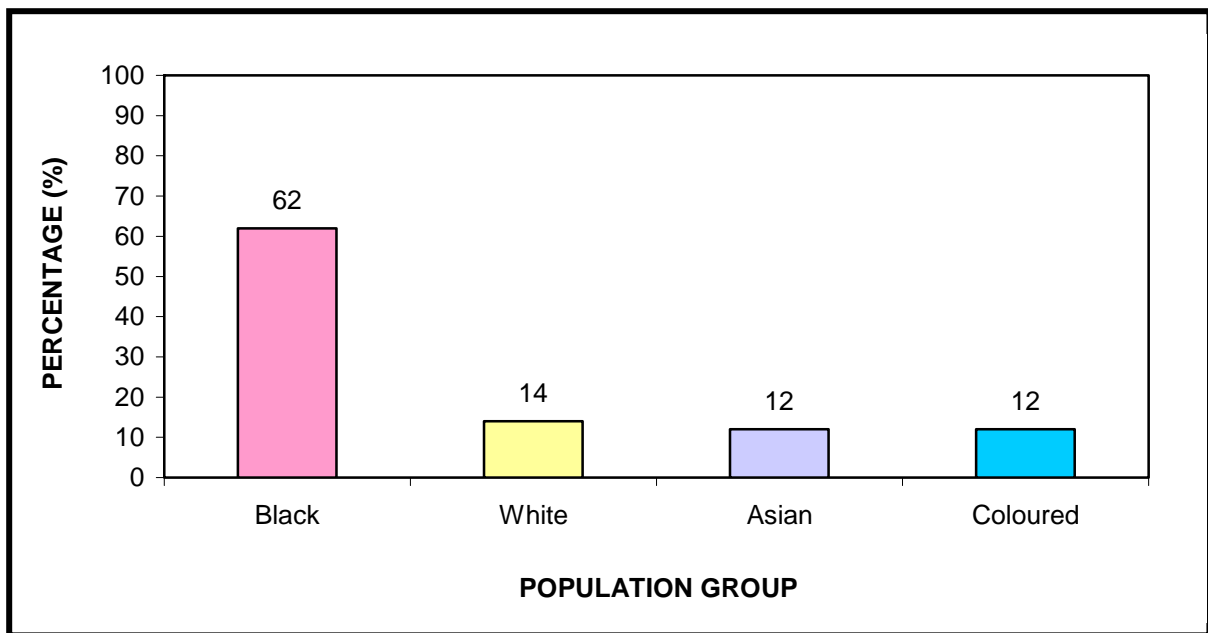
#### 4.2.1.1 Primary and secondary biographical data

The following biographical information was obtained from the telephone questionnaire:

- Marital status of the expectant father.
- Place of residence.
- Parental status of the expectant father.
- Access to television.
- Age of expectant father.
- Population (ethnic) group of expectant father.
- Work status of the expectant father.
- Trimester of partner's pregnancy.
- Source of information about the study.

Sixty-five (n=65) participants were involved in the telephone survey employed for the first phase of the study (quantitative component). At the time of the study, all participants were expectant fathers residing in Gauteng who have access to television and are able to communicate in English. Participants' ages ranged from 20 to 54 years and the sample consisted of representatives from the Asian, Black, Coloured and White racial groups (Refer to figure 4.1). Participants' partners' pregnancies ranged between all three trimesters. Figures and tables representing the data will now be presented.

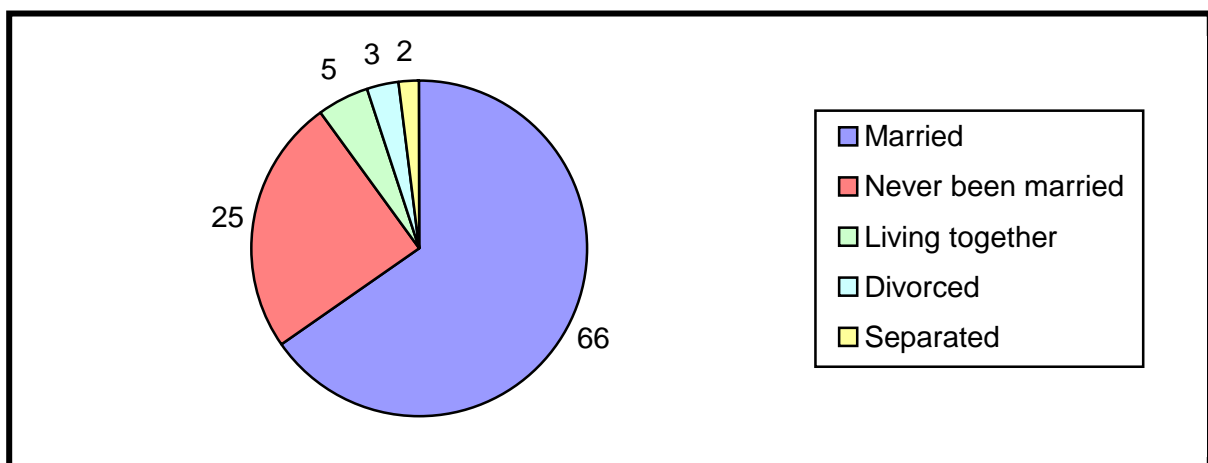
Figure 4.1 represents the population group of participants.



**FIGURE 4.1: POPULATION GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS**

Forty of the 65 (62%) telephone questionnaires were completed by Black expectant fathers, 9 (14%) by White expectant fathers and 8 (12%) by Asian and Coloured expectant fathers respectively.

Figure 4.2 shows the marital status of the participants involved in the study.



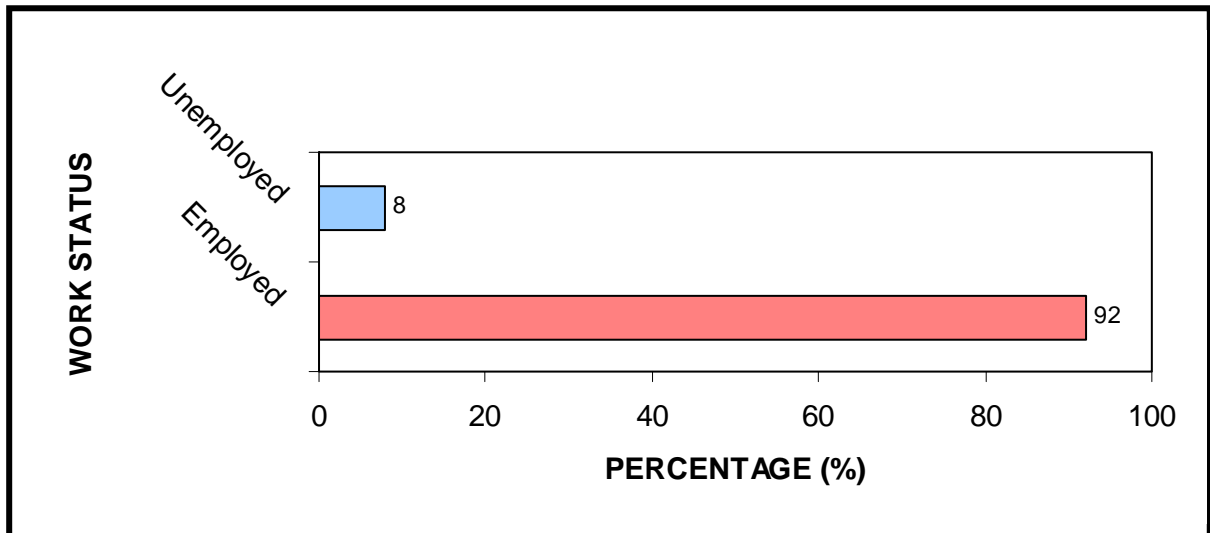
**FIGURE 4.2: PERCENTAGE DISPLAY OF MARITAL STATUS**

Figure 4.2 shows that 43 of the 65 (65%) participants were married, whilst 16 (25%) have never been married. Only a small percentage of participants were either living together, divorced or separated, at the time of the study.



Investigation into the parental status of the expectant fathers revealed that 45% of the participants in the study already have children while 55% are expecting their first child.

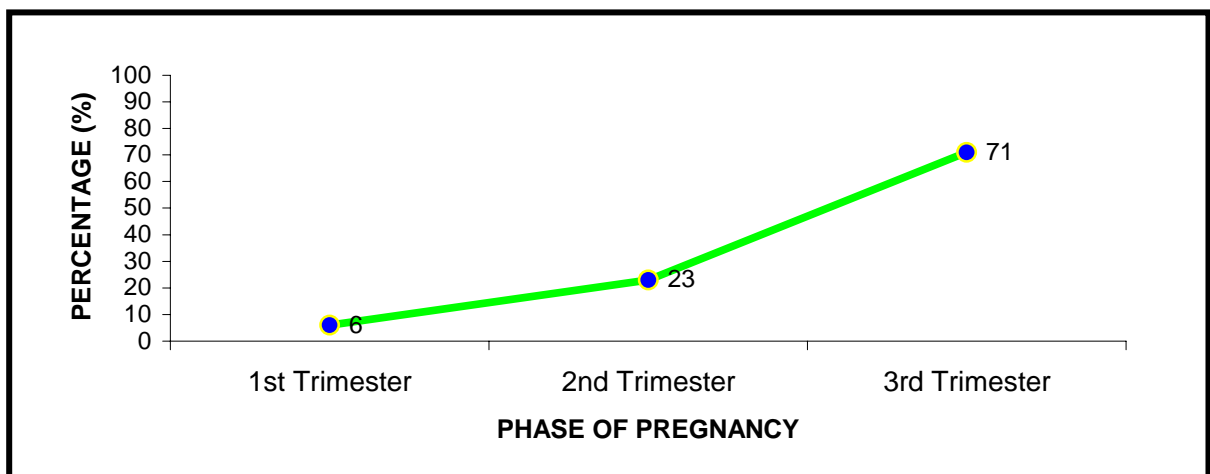
Figure 4.3 represents the work status of the participants.



**FIGURE 4.3: WORK STATUS OF PARTICIPANTS**

From the information presented in figure 4.3 it is evident that a large majority of the expectant fathers involved in the study were employed at the time of the study. A small percentage of the expectant fathers currently unemployed explained that they were either studying or seeking employment.

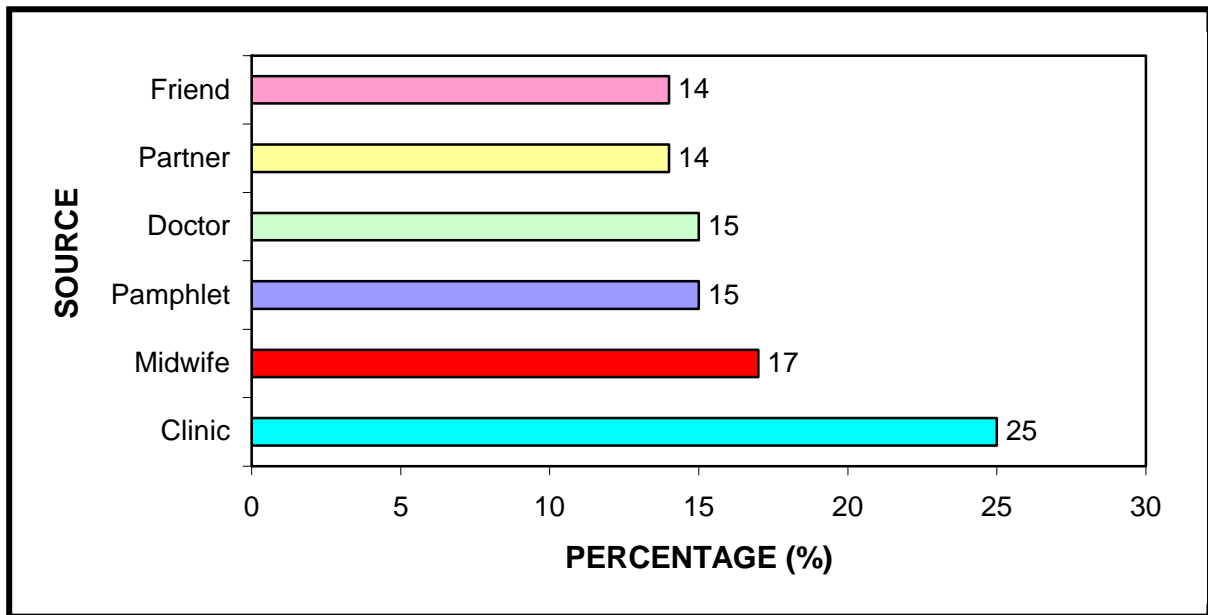
The frequencies illustrated in figure 4.4 represent the participants' partners' phases of pregnancy.



**FIGURE 4.4: PARTICIPANTS' PARTNERS' PHASES OF PREGNANCY**

Figure 4.4 reveals that the largest percentage of expectant fathers' partners were in the third trimester of their pregnancy (71%) at the time of the study. Twenty-three percent were in the second trimester and only 6% in the first trimester.

Participants involved in the study obtained information about the study from various sources. These percentages are represented below in figure 4.5.



**FIGURE 4.5: SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDY**

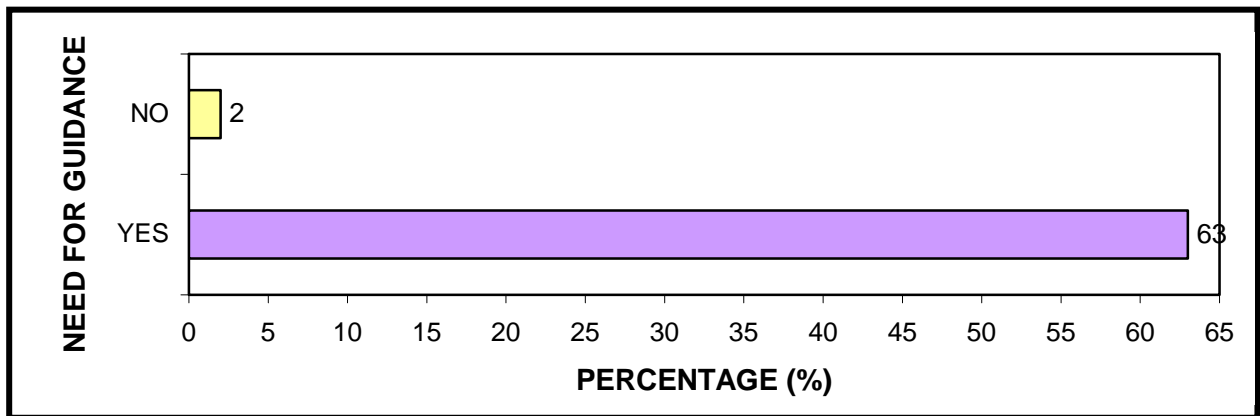
The information presented in figure 4.5 indicates that 25% of the expectant fathers received information about the study via clinics, 17% received the information from midwives whilst the rest of the group were informed by means of pamphlets (15%), doctors (15%), partners (14%) and friends (14%).

#### **4.2.1.2 Expectant fathers' views on their need for guidance**

During the telephone questionnaire the participants shared their views on the need for guidance to expectant fathers and provided insight into the type of information they require. In addition, they offered a variety of views on skills they would like to attain, as well as their greatest needs as expectant fathers. These results are presented below.

**i. Need for guidance for expectant fathers**

Figure 4.6 represents expectant fathers' opinions on whether or not they experience a need for parent guidance.



**FIGURE 4.6: EXPECTANT FATHERS' VIEWS ON THE NEED FOR GUIDANCE**

The results indicate that the majority of expectant fathers experience a need for parent guidance (97%), whilst only three percent stated that there is no need for guidance.

**ii. General information required by expectant fathers**

Table 4.1 provides a summary of the themes that were identified in relation to the type of information desired by expectant fathers.

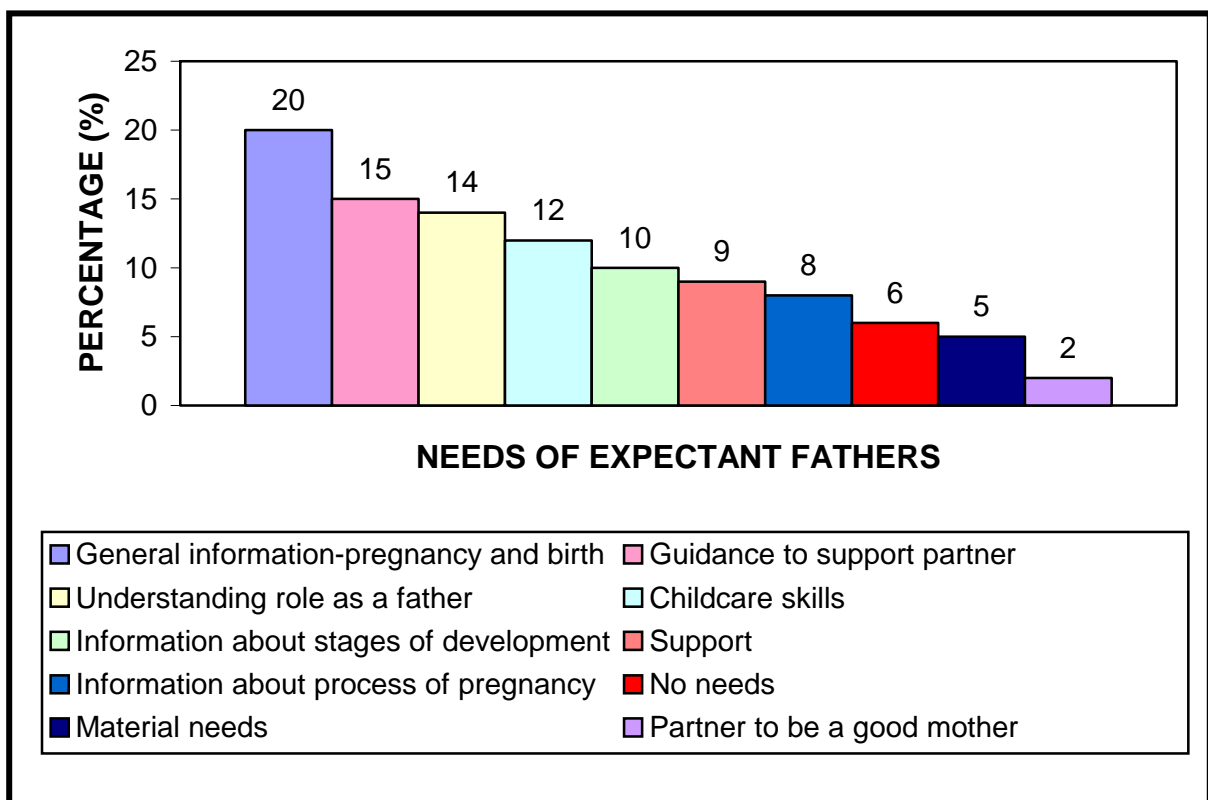
**TABLE 4.1: THEMES IDENTIFIED WITH REGARD TO THE TYPE OF INFORMATION EXPECTANT FATHERS REQUIRE**

MAIN CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES	PERCENTAGES OF SUB-CATEGORIES	PERCENTAGES OF MAIN CATEGORIES
FATHERHOOD	The roles of a father	13%	39%
	Father's expectations	7%	
	Providing support to your partner during pregnancy, birth and childcare	18%	
	Places to go for help/information	1%	
PREGNANCY	The process of pregnancy and related changes	14%	22%
	Stages of development of a baby	2%	
	Basic care during pregnancy	6%	
GENERAL INFORMATION	General information regarding pregnancy, birth and childcare	18%	18%
CHILDCARE	Basic childcare skills	12%	14%
	Childhood illness, complications and common problems	2%	
LABOUR AND BIRTH	Medical procedures and processes	2%	8%
	Guidelines regarding labour and the birth process	5%	
	Premature birth or emergencies related to labour	1%	

Table 4.1 reveals that the majority (39%) of expectant fathers require information relating to the topic of fatherhood, which includes how to go about supporting one’s partner and fulfilling the role as a father. Twenty-two percent of expectant fathers would like more information regarding pregnancy, especially the process and changes that occur during pregnancy, whilst 18% of expectant fathers indicated a need for more general information regarding pregnancy, childbirth and childcare. Other areas of interest include learning more about childcare (14% of the participants), and the labour and birth processes (8%).

**iii. Greatest needs of expectant fathers**

Figure 4.7 represents the current needs of expectant fathers, as indicated by participants in the study.



**FIGURE 4.7: GREATEST NEEDS OF EXPECTANT FATHERS**

As indicated in figure 4.7, 20% of expectant fathers experience a need for general information relating to pregnancy and the birth process, 15% experience a need for guidance in order to support their partners and 14% indicated the need to

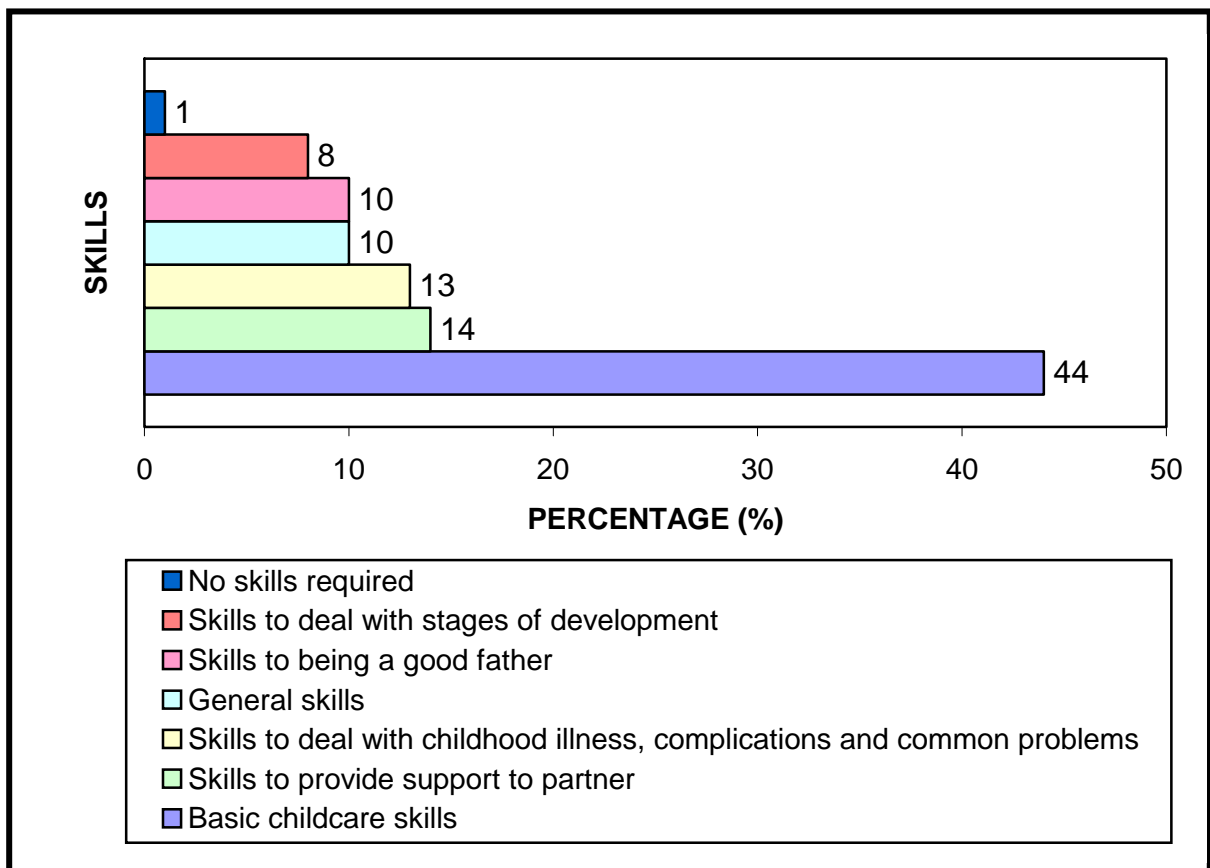
understand their role as a father. Only 6% of the participants indicated that they have no needs at present.

**iv. Greatest needs of expectant mothers**

Based on the statements provided by expectant fathers regarding the greatest needs of expectant mothers, 65% of the participants believed that an expectant mother’s greatest need is the need for support, including emotional, moral and physical support. The second greatest need (19% of participants) was identified as the need for basic care for a healthy lifestyle during pregnancy. This includes, for example, rest and relaxation, massaging and good nutrition.

**v. Skills required by expectant fathers**

Figure 4.8 represents the different skills that expectant fathers would like to acquire in terms of pregnancy and childrearing.



**FIGURE 4.8: SKILLS REQUIRED BY EXPECTANT FATHERS**

From the information presented in figure 4.8 it is apparent that a large percentage (44%) of expectant fathers would like to attain childcare skills that focus on, for example, handling an infant, changing nappies, feeding and bathing. It is significant that only 1% of expectant fathers stated that they do not require any skills at present.

#### 4.2.1.3 Appropriate forms of media for guidance to expectant fathers

The information relating to the forms of media that are regarded as the most suitable for providing expectant fathers with the guidance they require will now be discussed.

##### i. Most suitable form of media for providing guidance to expectant fathers

In the telephone survey expectant fathers were asked to state the form of media they regard as the most suitable for providing guidance to expectant fathers. The results are presented in figure 4.9.

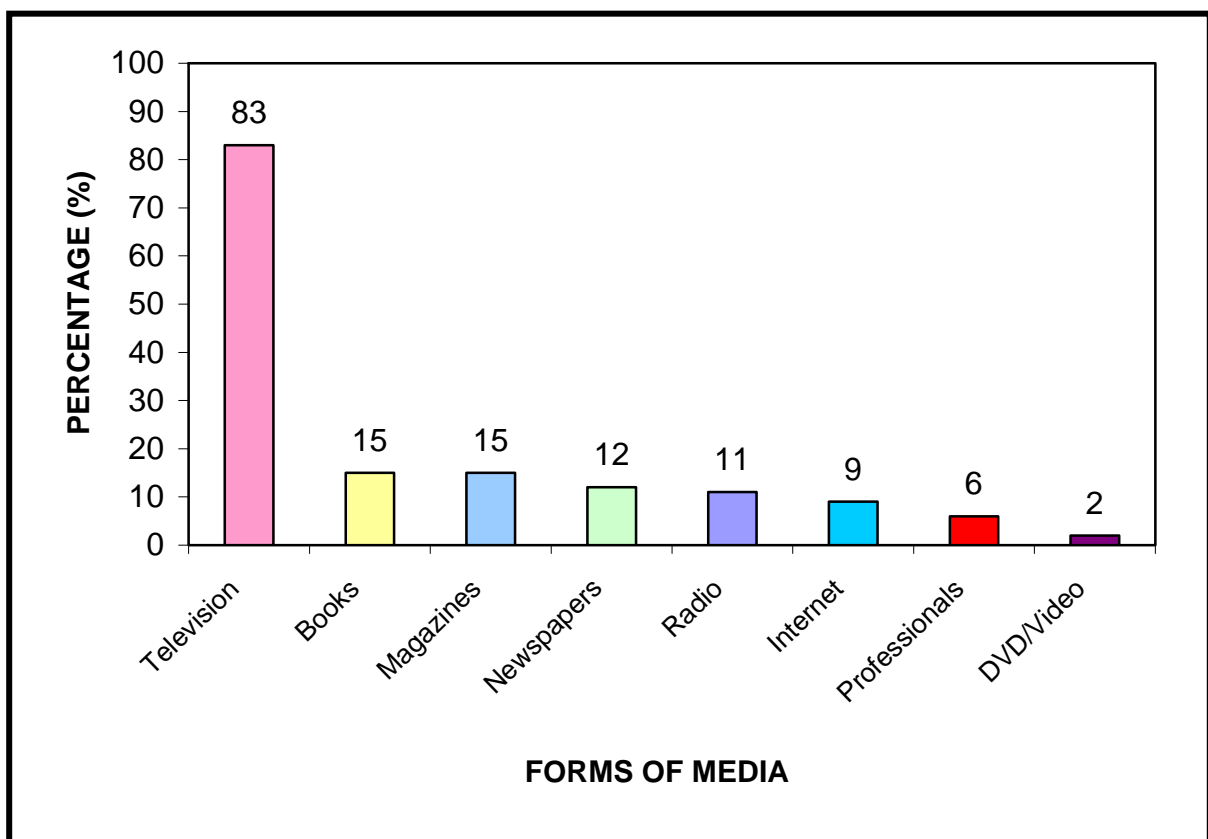
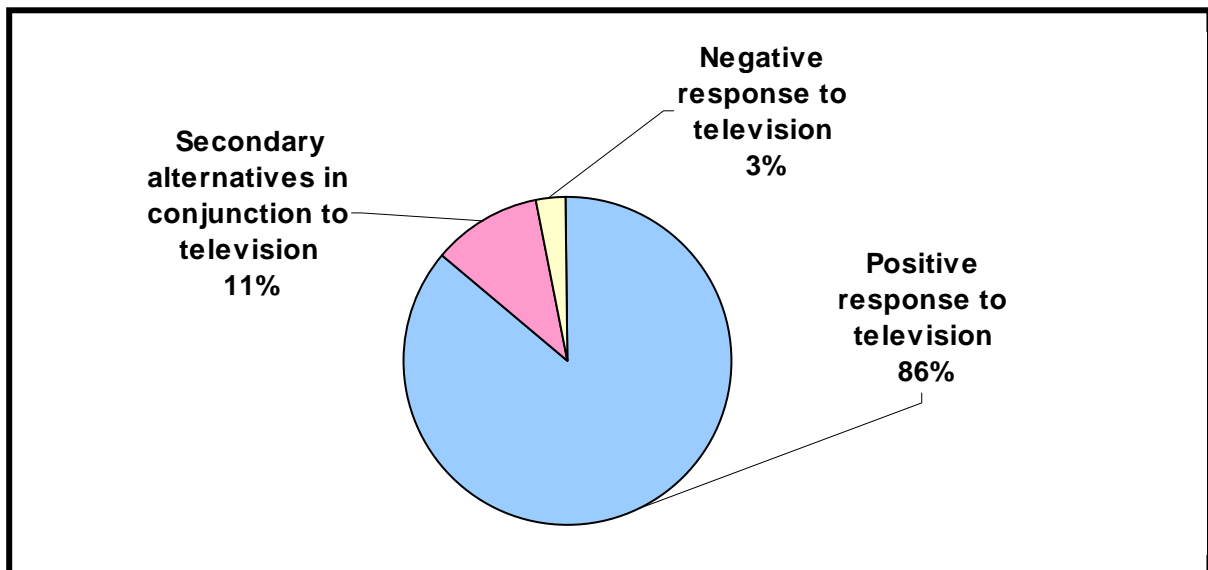


FIGURE 4.9: MOST SUITABLE FORMS OF MEDIA FOR PROVIDING GUIDANCE TO EXPECTANT FATHERS

ii. **Views regarding television as a way of providing guidance to expectant fathers**

Once participants had indicated their choice of the most suitable form of media for providing guidance to expectant fathers, they were asked to provide their views on using television as a means to guide expectant fathers. The results are presented in figure 4.10.



**FIGURE 4.10: PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS ON TELEVISION AS A MEANS TO GUIDE EXPECTANT FATHERS**

Eighty-six percent of the participants responded positively to the application of television as a means to provide guidance to expectant fathers. In addition, 11% of the participants stated that they would prefer television in conjunction with an alternative means, for example a digital versatile disk (DVD), video, magazine, Internet site or a talk by a professional, whilst only 3% did not regard television as the most appropriate way of informing expectant fathers.

Participants identified certain conditions necessary for the effective use of television as a guidance tool. For example, they stated that a programme for expectant fathers should be appealing, practical and presented at a convenient time. Participants further indicated that applying television as a means to guide expectant fathers would be helpful and beneficial to all expectant fathers. With regard to the most suitable mode of presentation for providing the information required via



television, the highest percentage of participants (43%) selected an interactive talk show as being the most applicable, followed by 18% of expectant fathers who chose a documentary. Twelve percent stated a preference for a programme that combined an interactive talk show and a documentary in order for them to benefit from both modes of presentation.

### **iii. Hours that expectant fathers spend watching television**

The responses provided by the participants during the telephone survey indicate that 31% of expectant fathers spend an average of three hours per day watching television, 23% watch television for an average of two hours per day, 17% for one hour daily and 16% for four hours per day.

Section 4.2.1 presented the primary and secondary biographical data. The inferential statistics are discussed in the section that follows.

## **4.2.2 Inferential statistics**

Inferential statistics allow researchers to use the information acquired from samples to draw conclusions about populations. Inferential statistics are used for two main reasons: firstly, to estimate population parameters and secondly, to test hypotheses (Durrheim, 2002b). The statistical procedures applied to the data will now be discussed.

### **4.2.2.1 Statistical procedures applied to the data**

For the purpose of this study two procedures were applied to draw inferential statistics from the data gathered. Firstly the *Chi-squared test for independence* was employed to test for the association between two nominal (categorical) variables, with the Chi-squared statistic ( $\chi^2$ ) representing the relationship between two nominal (categorical) variables (Durrheim, 2002b; Maree, 2003). Secondly, the *Fisher's exact test* was used due to its suitability for cases where  $n$  is small or where the expected frequency under  $H_0$  is not at least 5 (Steyn, Smit & Strasheim, 2003).

#### 4.2.2.2 Hypotheses

Hypotheses are well-read deductions or expectations of differences in relationships among variables or groups in the population (Durrheim, 2002b). Before hypotheses can be accepted as valid it is necessary to test the relationships against reality, in order to determine whether or not they prove to be true (De Vos & Schulze, 2002). The results obtained from the hypothesis testing are presented below.

##### i. Hypothesis testing<sup>1</sup>

Four hypotheses were tested. Each hypothesis is followed by a contingency table and relevant conclusions.

##### First hypothesis:

- **H<sub>01</sub>**: There is no association between the parental status of expectant fathers (whether or not they have children) and the population group (Asian, Black, Coloured and White ethnic groups).
- **H<sub>a1</sub>**: There is an association between the parental status of expectant fathers (whether or not they have children) and the population group (Asian, Black, Coloured and White ethnic groups).

**TABLE 4.2: CONTINGENCY TABLE REPRESENTING PARENTAL STATUS OF EXPECTANT FATHERS AND THE POPULATION GROUP (P-VALUES FOR  $\chi^2$ )**

Parental status	Population group			p < effect size (w) for significant value is presented between brackets	
	Rest <sup>2</sup>	Black	Total		
				Statistic	(one-sided)
Yes (children)	7	22	29		
No (no children)	18	18	36	Chi <sup>2</sup> (2)=4.54	0.03* (w = 0.26)
Total	25	40	65		

<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this dissertation the 5% level of significance will be accepted. In the case of effect sizes, the following guidelines will apply: (a)  $w = 0.1$  - small effect (b)  $w = 0.3$  - medium effect (c)  $w = 0.5$  - large effect

<sup>2</sup> Rest = Asian, Coloured and White.

From table 4.2 it is clear that a statistically significant association exists between the parental status of expectant fathers (whether or not they have children) and the population group (Asian, Black, Coloured and White ethnic groups). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected at the 5% level of significance. We may therefore conclude that a statistically significant association exists between the parental status of expectant fathers (whether or not they have children) and the population group (Asian, Black, Coloured and White ethnic groups). However, the effect size is rather small, therefore the result is not deemed practically significant (Ellis & Steyn, 2003).

**Second hypothesis:**

- **H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no association between the parental status of expectant fathers (whether or not they have children) and the marital status of expectant fathers.
- **H<sub>a2</sub>:** There is an association between the parental status of expectant fathers (whether or not they have children) and the marital status of expectant fathers.

**TABLE 4.3: CONTINGENCY TABLE REPRESENTING THE PARENTAL STATUS OF EXPECTANT FATHERS AND THE MARITAL STATUS OF EXPECTANT FATHERS (P-VALUES FOR  $\chi^2$ )**

Parental status	Marital status			p <	
	Rest <sup>3</sup>	Black	Total	effect size (w) for significant value is presented between brackets	
				Statistic	(one-sided)
Yes (children)	21	8	29		
No (no children)	22	14	36	Chi <sup>2</sup> (2)=0.916	0.338*
Total	43	22	65		

According to the results represented in table 4.3, a statistically significant association does not exist between the parental status of expectant fathers (whether or not they have children) and the marital status of expectant fathers. The null hypothesis is therefore not rejected at the 5% level of significance. We may

<sup>3</sup> Rest = Asian, Coloured and White.

therefore conclude that a statistically significant association does not exist between the parental and marital status of expectant fathers.

### Third hypothesis:

- **H<sub>03</sub>**: There is no association between the population group (Asian, Black, Coloured and White ethnic groups) and the marital status of expectant fathers.
- **H<sub>a3</sub>**: There is an association between the population group (Asian, Black, Coloured and White ethnic groups) and the marital status of expectant fathers.

**TABLE 4.4: CONTINGENCY TABLE REPRESENTING THE POPULATION GROUP AND THE MARITAL STATUS OF EXPECTANT FATHERS (P-VALUES FOR  $\chi^2$ )**

Population group	Marital status			p <	
	Married	Other <sup>4</sup>	Total	effect size (w) for significant value is presented between brackets	
				Statistic	(one-sided)
Rest <sup>5</sup>	23	2	25		
Black	20	20	40	Chi <sup>2</sup> (2)=12.12	0.0005* (w = 0.396)
Total	43	22	62		

From the results presented in table 4.4, it is clear that a statistically significant association exists between the marital status of expectant fathers and the population group (Asian, Black, Coloured and White ethnic groups). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected at the 5% level of significance. We may therefore conclude that there is a statistically significant association between the marital status of expectant fathers and the population group (Asian, Black, Coloured and White ethnic groups). In addition, the effect size is medium, which means that in practice a larger proportion of Black expectant fathers are unmarried compared to the other population groups. These results are discussed as they could play an important role with regard to the role of the father in the family. When I enquired

<sup>4</sup> Other = separated, divorced, living together and never been married.

<sup>5</sup> Rest = Asian, Coloured and White.

about participants' marital status, many of the Black expectant fathers responded that although they were not married and did not live with their partner they still intended to be involved in the pregnancy, birth and childrearing tasks in order to fulfil their role as a father. The participants also commented that they were planning to marry after the baby was born.

**Fourth hypothesis:**

- **H<sub>o4</sub>:** There is no association between the parental status of expectant fathers and the work status of expectant fathers.
- **H<sub>a4</sub>:** There is an association between the parental status of expectant fathers and the work status of expectant fathers.

**TABLE 4.5: CONTINGENCY TABLE REPRESENTING THE PARENTAL STATUS OF EXPECTANT FATHERS AND THE WORK STATUS OF EXPECTANT FATHERS (P-VALUES FOR  $\chi^2$ )**

Parental status	Work status			p <	
	Employed	Unemployed	Total	effect size (w) for significant value is presented between brackets	
				Statistic	(one-sided)
Yes (children)	29	0	29		
No (no children)	31	5	36		0.037* (w = 0.26)
Total	60	5	65		

Table 4.5 shows that a statistically significant association exists between the parental status of expectant fathers and the work status of expectant fathers. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected at the 5% level of significance. However, 50% of the cells had expected counts less than 5, therefore the *Chi-Square* may not be a valid test. Since this is the case, the results of the *Fishers exact test* were reviewed, and these results show a statistical significant association between the parental status of expectant fathers and the work status of expectant fathers (p= 0,0456).

#### 4.3 RESULTS OF THE QUALITATIVE COMPONENT OF THE STUDY

For the second phase of the study, participants were identified using purposeful sampling, according to a set of criteria (discussed in chapter three). Four of the 65 participants were selected for individual (face-to-face) interviews. The ages of the four expectant fathers ranged from 24 to 33 years of age. Two of the participants' partners were in the third trimester of pregnancy and each had two children at the time of the study. The third participant's partner was in the second trimester and had one child, while the final participant's partner was in the first trimester and did not have any children.

The main aim of conducting the individual interviews was to generate 'thick data' and gain additional information on the use of television for providing guidance to expectant fathers. This data promoted an understanding of the quantitative data gathered from the telephone questionnaires, so that the findings of both components of the study could be explained in an integrated manner. The individual interviews focused on the reason expectant fathers selected television as the most suitable form of media for providing guidance to expectant fathers, as well as on how television might be implemented for this purpose.

Interviews were conducted according to an interview schedule (**APPENDIX E**), audio-taped and transcribed *verbatim*. The information obtained from the interviews was analysed qualitatively. The categories and themes that emerged are presented in table 4.6, and include selected *verbatim* responses to elucidate the results. Refer to **APPENDIX H** for the content analysis and thematic coding of the transcribed individual interviews.

**TABLE 4.6: THEMES AND CATEGORIES IDENTIFIED FROM THE INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS**

Emerging themes	Sub- themes	Illustrating responses
<b>THE NEED FOR GUIDANCE</b>	Young parents are not always well informed about raising children. Children taking care of younger siblings are also in need of guidance.	<i>Young women fall pregnant at a very young age and obviously the partner in that case is also young. ... Unfortunately today we've got a lot of children who are looking after families without parents to learn from.</i>
	Fathers experience difficulty forming relationships with their children when they do not have a clear understanding of their role as a father.	<i>I didn't have a clue, even up to today we're struggling. There's not really a good relationship between the two of us because I was never there as a father figure ... it was difficult because I didn't have a clue what to do.</i>
	In many communities father figures within the family are missing, leading to uncertainty regarding the role of the father within the family. No role models exist to guide men as to how they should fulfil their role as fathers.	<i>One of the other things that also creates a problem for this area in our community is the fact that if you look at most of us – most families – if you look at them, they grow up and there's no father because for some reason the father left....he didn't have the skills, so that was never imparted to me. These are attributes that somebody needs to impart, a father needs to be around you and live in the house to teach you but if he's not there how are you going to learn it?</i>
	Fathers rely on the advice and guidance of friends and family members with regard to how they should fulfil their role as fathers.	<i>My wife on that side helped me a lot. And also a friend of mine said to me, take your child every night when you get home, play with the child five minutes only, permit yourself to do that for one week, do that and it helps.</i>
	Many fathers in society require information regarding their role as a father within the family.	<i>I think that is the real problem that I have experienced and I believe that whatever I go through, somebody else is also going through at the same time, and there's somebody else that's gonna come and still have to go through it. And if you look at our society, it's definitely happening.</i>
	A lack of understanding and a need for information regarding the basic skills of being a father and parenting children.	<i>If you sit down and talk to a guy like he will tell you, I've got serious problems, I don't know how to manage my house, I don't always have the skills; and also Identifying the role of the father/mothers and looking at the issues that a working dad are dealing with in terms of parenting, the struggles in terms of time plus work, how to balance your time – looking at not only the problems that a father would face but also looking at ways that a father can enhance his time with his children.</i>
	A lack of knowledge by a father might turn into violence and abuse. Guiding expectant fathers should help to alleviate and prevent abuse by men within families.	<i>I didn't know what to do as a father and the bad thing about men is when we don't know what to do, we do the one thing that would be best, that is to become aggravated, to become ignorant and to use violence.</i>

	<p>A need to identify and address cultural issues regarding the role of the father within families, in order to provide clarity for fathers.</p>	<p><i>You need to understand where we come from as well. What happened, if you understand history, is that our forefathers left our grandmothers and our ancestors as well.</i></p>
	<p>Much negativity about men in the media but limited information with regard to providing guidance to fathers.</p>	<p><i>We are tired of programmes that are publicly showing the bad and the negative about men, there's nothing positive, there's nothing to say, listen here guys, you can make it.</i></p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>TELEVISION AS A MEANS TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE</b></p>	<p>Television is able to address many people and can reach the wider population in South Africa.</p>	<p><i>Probably the easiest way to reach the people I guess is through something like television, I think television each and every family has one so I believe they watch television... I've got sisters who can't speak English so if there's a certain group they can easily reach all these people even through the television.</i></p>
	<p>Television is a medium for learning and informing people.</p>	<p><i>It's a medium of learning a lot of things.... it's gonna reach a lot of people.</i></p>
	<p>An interactive programme should provide expectant fathers with the opportunity to ask questions, learn from others' experiences (fathers, professionals) and discuss challenging topics.</p>	<p><i>When you phone in, you tell them your problem and find out how they can help you, they explain and discuss this. I think either a talk show where you can interact with the people, have live discussions, get professional trained people to assist you in answering those questions because I think a lot of the time the people on the show will be able to ask questions that most of the people are afraid to ask or may not want to ask.</i></p>
	<p>Television can be regarded as suitable to provide in-depth information just by watching it, as it makes understanding possible by seeing a visual representation and an explanation.</p>	<p><i>I watched those men preach from America, and I watched it on TV and that's how I learned, so if I could learn through the television....about most of these issues then it can help. I think in that way we will be able to dig more deeper because people talk on TV, they talk even better than I'm talking now, it's amazing what you will hear....</i></p>
	<p>Despite other sources of information being available to expectant fathers, they do not always have access to them. In addition, such sources do not always address expectant fathers' needs and questions.</p>	<p><i>It reaches all the people, people ... some are lazy to read, they would rather watch. I think for information as well, television will be the best. If you look at males and females especially, males tend to be more pictures, they want to see things rather than having to explain, and what better way to do it than television.</i></p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>ADVANTAGES OF A TELEVISION PROGRAMME FOR PROVIDING GUIDANCE</b></p>	<p>Providing guidance to expectant fathers should benefit all members of society and assist future generations to come.</p>	<p><i>If we reach one person, it is one for now but if you change my life, you are automatically changing the generations to come. ... We are actually helping with abuse and we are helping with rape and we are helping with victimising and all those things ... I think it will bless a lot of women out there as well. ...It will kind of bond us together because she understands it better...</i></p>
	<p>In addition to a television programme for expectant fathers, developers of programmes might consider creating other institutions that could provide more intensive guidance for fathers and families.</p>	<p><i>There should be people that can assist them and support them, to go there and teach them, social workers, and places like clinics, hospitals, places like that where they can go and for this thing to be more effective, the generations that are growing up behind us have to learn about it.</i></p>



	Television should be able to meet the needs of expectant fathers by determining the kind of information they require.	<i>Trust me when I say this that this research, this will be one of the tools that is going to help someone like me and all the others that are out there.</i>
	Secondary forms of media could be developed to assist expectant fathers.	<i>So basically I think that in the process you can also create some discs, I think people can go and buy and watch, I think that part, if those discs can be accessible, I think they will make a big difference, you do your programmes and sell them and other tapes must be created specifically for expectant fathers.</i>

In summary, three main themes emerged from the qualitative data. These include reasons for the need for guidance for expectant fathers, the use of television in providing guidance, and the advantages of such a television programme for expectant fathers. Results of the integration of the quantitative and qualitative raw data are now provided, in order to explain the identified themes. In addition, the findings are related to existing literature.

#### **4.4 INTERPRETATION AND SYNTHESIS OF THE QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA**

In the following sections, the findings are triangulated by integrating the quantitative and qualitative results and comparing them with relevant literature. The result of this process is a synthesis of the findings, which supplies answers to the research questions posed in this study.

##### **4.4.1 Triangulation of the data and literature control**

In order to observe the data from different angles and to gain further insights into the findings, the data collected during the two different phases were triangulated by combining quantitative and qualitative results, and comparing them to existing literature. All findings are interpreted in light of these comparisons, adding rigour to the study. One of the advantages of applying triangulation to the mixed method approach is that the results can be accepted with greater confidence. In addition, mixing qualitative and quantitative methods leads to a fuller and more comprehensive study (De Vos, 2002a).

The quantitative and qualitative results will now be integrated, interpreted and compared with relevant literature, in order to triangulate the findings. By addressing the secondary research questions (presented as themes), the primary research question should be answered.

#### **4.4.1.1 Expectant fathers' views on their need for guidance**

Figure 4.6 indicates that 63 of the 65 expectant fathers (97%) revealed a need for parent guidance. These results can be explained in terms of the findings provided in table 4.6, which contribute to a clear understanding of expectant fathers' need for guidance.

The participants provided numerous motives for why they need guidance. Firstly, it seems evident that many men in society do not have father figures available to guide them on how they should fulfil their roles as fathers, making it difficult for new fathers to acquire the necessary skills to care for an infant. Men learn how to be fathers from role models, and when such figures are absent, expectant fathers find it difficult to acquire the expertise necessary for involved fatherhood. For example, the following response was provided by one of the participants when asked to comment on the type of information that should be provided to expectant fathers: *Basically everything, just to be able to care and understand pregnancy and the childbirth. I come from a family where my father ran out so I want to be different and close with my child.*

These findings correlate with the findings of a study conducted with new fathers by Barclay and Lupton (1999), in which men emphasised the fact that there are no guidelines to assist first-time fathers and that only a few men have role models to learn from. Brott and Ash (1995) support this finding by stating that few fathers have role models whom they can learn from in modern times, nor do they have anyone to teach them childcare skills in preparation for fatherhood. It seems clear that many men lack role models or father figures to lead them, leaving them in need of alternate forms of guidance in order to gain an understanding of their role as a father.

The results presented in table 4.1 show that 39% of expectant fathers require information related to the topic of fatherhood, including topics such as the role of the father, fathers' expectations, how to provide support to a partner with regard to pregnancy, birth and childcare, and information about places that offer further guidance to expectant fathers. Furthermore, 22% of the participants would like to obtain more information on the topic of pregnancy, including the process of pregnancy, the stages of the baby's development and basic care during pregnancy. These findings can be understood in light of men's reported lack of father figures and sufficient role models to provide guidance on this topic.

Table 4.6 indicates that expectant fathers rely on their partners and friends for guidance on their role as a father. Singh and Newburn (cited in Cohen, 2001) report on a survey that revealed that men tend to acquire most of the information they have on pregnancy, birth and postnatal issues from women. Women are therefore known as men's key resource with regard to such aspects. Although this might be of benefit to many men, not all fathers have a partner or a woman on whom they can depend for guidance, resulting in men experiencing the need for alternate forms of guidance to inform them.

Another reason for the need for guidance, outlined by expectant fathers in table 4.6, relates to the part that culture plays with regard to the role of the father within the family. Mkize (2004) emphasises this finding by stating that a large majority of men are taught how to fulfil their roles regarding position and power according to the cultural prescriptions of manhood, which in some traditions does not expect the father to be actively involved with childcare and often views this as the primary task of the mother. However, modern fathers seem keen to be involved in childrearing and need guidelines to prepare them for this task. It is important to keep in mind that the actual roles that fathers perform differ according to time and culture, and also vary from society to society (Lamb, 1997; Popenoe, 1996). In the South African context, this should be kept in mind when focusing on providing guidance to expectant fathers, as each culture views the role of the father within the family differently. Eggebeen and Knoester (2001:384) emphasise the importance of considering context when planning for guidance:

*Today it is commonplace for fatherhood to be practiced across households and bloodlines. It is critical, therefore, to distinguish fathers in a variety of contexts beyond the traditional biological father living with his own children.*

One of the main themes identified during the individual interviews as a reason for the need for guidance is the opinion of expectant fathers that a great deal of negativity exists concerning men in the media, in conjunction with a lack of adequate information available to guide them. This finding relates to Lloyd's (cited in Moss, 1995) view of the media as a powerful and significant source of insight into current ideas about fathers and fatherhood. The participants' experience that the media portrays men negatively is soundly confirmed by Lloyd (cited in Moss, 1995), who, in a review of 280 newspaper articles on fathers and fatherhood, found that the majority of items had the theme of *fathers as monsters*. Most of these stories focused on fathers that had killed, abused or bullied those closest to them. Content of this nature does not provide a positive image of fathers or offer any type of guidance for fathers, once again stressing the importance of appropriate and informative guidance for expectant fathers.

#### **4.4.1.2 Nature of information required by expectant fathers**

During the telephone survey I determined areas of concern experienced by expectant fathers with regard to the knowledge and the type of information they require. Three questions were posed in order to determine specific details regarding the various types of information required by expectant fathers. These questions focused on determining the type of information required (table 4.1), expectant fathers' greatest needs (figure 4.7) and the skills expectant fathers would like to acquire (figure 4.8).

Table 4.1 shows that most expectant fathers would like more knowledge pertaining to fatherhood and pregnancy. The following statement was provided by one of the expectant fathers in this regard: *There is a need for more information on how we should assist our wives emotionally, in terms of mood swings and how to handle it.* The findings of a National Childbirth Trust study corroborates this view with their finding that *more than two-fifths of men* want more information relating to the topics

of mood swings, how to cope with a crying baby and having sexual intercourse after the birth of a child (Singh & Newburn cited in Cohen, 2001).

An additional 44% of the expectant fathers in my study revealed that they would like to learn certain basic childcare skills (figure 4.8), including handling and holding the infant, changing nappies, feeding and bathing, what to do when the baby cries and how to prepare the baby's food. This correlates with Hosking's (2004) finding that new fathers would like to learn the fundamentals of how to hold and dress a baby that feels like a living doll. Men who are motivated to assist with their children often complain that a lack of skills (exemplified by a lack of knowledge or clumsiness) often prevents increased involvement on their part. Fathers want to know how to read their children's signals, what their children want, how to react appropriately and which expectations can be regarded as realistic (Lamb & Opperheim, 1989). Providing guidance to expectant fathers in order for them to acquire such specific skills might help to promote the development of self-confidence and sensitivity with regard to basic childrearing skills.

In order for such information to be provided to expectant fathers, a suitable medium needs to be selected to convey appropriate content. The telephone survey identified television as the most suitable form of media for providing guidance to expectant fathers. This finding will now be discussed in more detail.

#### **4.4.1.3 Television as a suitable medium for providing guidance to expectant fathers**

The telephone survey indicated that expectant fathers regard television as the most suitable form of media for providing guidance to them. Table 4.6 shows that, although fathers have access to other sources of information, such sources are not always regarded as applicable to them and do not always address their needs. The following response by one of the expectant fathers during an individual interview confirms this: *I was on the Internet during the week searching for a site for prospective dads and I found just one site. It was quite amazing because every site is childbirth, but there isn't one for the dads, there should be more information for the dads, dads like to be involved.*

In support of this finding, a survey conducted by the National Childbirth Trust revealed large discrepancies between the information men require on pregnancy, birth and a new baby, and the information actually available to them (Singh & Newburn cited in Cohen, 2001). Figure 4.9 reveals that 83% of the participants rated television as the most suitable form of media to provide guidance to expectant fathers. Furthermore, 86% of the participants responded positively to the use of television as a means to provide guidance to expectant fathers (refer to figure 4.10).

One of the main themes that emerged in the individual interviews supporting participants' choice of television as a preferred medium is that television has the potential to address many people simultaneously. In addition, it informs people and can be regarded as a medium for learning. One participant explained: *Most men have access to television, it is a good way of informing people and most men enjoy watching television. I think it is a great idea, not everyone has access to books or Internet but more people will have access and will get hooked.* De Beer (1998) validates this by stating that television has been acknowledged as one of the best mediums of non-formal teaching, and in the process, has an all-encompassing effect on society.

During the individual interviews, expectant fathers provided reasons as to why they chose television as the most suitable medium for providing guidance to expectant fathers. A main theme highlighted throughout the interviews is that television implies the possibility of broadcasting an interactive programme, which might provide expectant fathers with the opportunity to ask questions and thereby immediately address their needs (table 4.6). These findings compare favourably with the results obtained during the telephone questionnaire in which the majority (43%) of the participants identified an interactive talk show as the most suitable mode of presentation for providing guidance to expectant fathers via television. Frank (cited in Simpson, 1997) reports on a study by Stanford University, which revealed that about half of the television talk shows presented on childrearing issues contain a considerably higher percentage of information of practical use for parents than other sources of information, for example the Internet. This supports the rationale for implementing television as a potentially effective means of conveying the required information to expectant fathers.

#### 4.4.1.4 Possible impact of providing guidance to expectant fathers

Based on the results of my study, it seems apparent that expectant fathers are in need of guidance and that television is the most suitable form of media for this purpose. According to the themes emerging from the findings, there are benefits to providing guidance through the use of television. For example, the need for guidance seems to also apply to children who are caring for their younger siblings and in lack of role models to learn from. By providing information to expectant fathers via television, others' need for information could therefore be met at the same time.

Most of the expectant fathers who were interviewed during the survey (39%) require information on the topic of fatherhood. Within this topic, the majority of expectant fathers (18%) require more information on the way in which they can provide support to their partners during pregnancy, birth and childcare. According to Belsky and Kelly (1994), today's mothers do not only need helpers but rather seek partners who will relieve their exhaustion by taking on an active role with regard to tasks in the home, as well as care of a baby. Mothers need partners who are able to appreciate the intense connection that they have with their babies and who can understand why they might neglect them (the partners) emotionally and physically to be with their babies. During the transition to parenthood, it is important for a mother to feel that her partner is emotionally involved in the new transition (Belsky & Kelly, 1994). The results of my study further show that 65% of expectant fathers experience the greatest need of an expectant mother to be the need for support. Therefore, by providing guidance to expectant fathers, expectant mothers' needs may also be addressed.

During the face-to-face interviews, two of the expectant fathers highlighted the theme of abuse and violence by fathers within families. The following statement was provided by one of the participants concerning the importance of providing guidance to fathers in this regard: *Groundwork is the learning that must be done to teach us men, because we discuss the issue of the abuse, fathers abusing children and stuff like that, but it's due to a lack of understanding, lack of being informed that is causing all those things.*

The Fatherhood Project (2004), which focuses on promoting men's care and the protection of children, states that although South Africa has very high levels of child abuse, most of which is committed by men, relatively few programmes exist which include men in order to protect children and build family and community life. Cohen (2001) also mentions that some acts of violence against children are not cold, hard acts of hatred, but can rather be ascribed to the fact that men are becoming more involved with their children but do not always have the appropriate emotional skills to deal with certain crises when they arise. As a result, they relieve their distress through abuse. When fathers are unsure of their role as a father or partner in a family, they become frustrated. This might lead to violence. Providing guidance to expectant fathers might help to alleviate such frustration and could further assist fathers by offering coping skills to deal with the many tasks of being a father. As such, the focus should rather be on providing fathers with ways in which to cope and defuse their anger by managing their feelings. This could have a possible impact on society, encouraging a more positive image of fathers in South Africa.

According to the Fatherhood Project (2004), a vast majority of evidence seems to exist regarding the important role that men, especially fathers, play in promoting children's progress and adjustment in life. Deluccie (1999) mentions that over the last few years, many research projects have documented the finding that fathers have an effect on their children's sex-role identification, cognition and moral development, social ability and psychological adjustment. Fathers are regarded as a vital component of their children's lives. For them to be more involved in their children's lives, they need to acquire the skills to successfully fulfil such a role, according to social and cultural standards. Burgess (1997) is of the opinion that involved fathers have a positive impact on babies and that fathers who are prepared for parenthood manage to give babies a head start as they can stimulate their babies, in turn helping to enhance early competence. Findings of a German study reveal that babies whose fathers were prepared for their new role as a father were happier and more receptive than infants whose fathers were unprepared for their role (Burgess, 1997).

It seems clear that any television intervention that provides parent guidance should assist fathers in obtaining the skills necessary to fulfil their role as a father. In light



of the limited information available in South Africa for expectant fathers, society should perhaps be more appreciative towards those men who are trying to make a difference as a father. Cohen (2001:11) summarises the so-called *good enough* father: *he is not perfect but he tries, he is there and he does not commit terrible sins – being abusive to children, denying emotional warmth, being indifferent.*

#### **4.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided an overview of the results and findings of the empirical study. The quantitative and qualitative data were analysed and interpreted in order to explore whether or not there is indeed a need for parent guidance for expectant fathers via television. The results of the study were triangulated and discussed, relating them to relevant literature. In the discussion of the research results, the secondary research questions were used to guide a synthesis of the findings. The findings suggest that expectant fathers are indeed in need of parent guidance and that they do regard television as the most suitable means of providing such information.

Chapter five offers a final outline and summary of the study. In addition, possible contributions and challenges of the study are discussed and recommendations regarding further research, training and practice are formulated.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter four the results of the study were presented according to the following secondary research questions, as formulated in chapter one:

- What are expectant fathers' views on the need for guidance?
- What information on pregnancy and early childrearing do expectant fathers require?
- To what extent is television regarded as a suitable medium to provide parent guidance to expectant fathers?
- What is the possible impact of providing guidance to expectant fathers on the wellbeing of the child and family?

Answering these questions indirectly addressed the following primary research question: ***How can the medium of television be used to provide parent guidance on pregnancy and childrearing to expectant fathers?***

This chapter offers a final synopsis to the study by providing a summary of the findings and conclusions. The recommendations drawn from the research are also presented, in conjunction with the challenges and possible contributions of the study.

#### 5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

An outline and summary of each of the chapters is provided below.

### **5.2.1 Chapter one**

In chapter one an overall view of the study was provided. The chapter offered an introduction to the study, the rationale as well as the motivation for the research, which focused on determining whether or not expectant fathers experience a need for guidance and how the use of television might be implemented to provide such guidance. Key concepts were defined and explained in order to provide clarity regarding the terms “expectant father”, “television as a medium” and “parent guidance”. The research problem was described in terms of the primary research question, which focuses on television as a possible medium to provide guidance to expectant fathers. The chapter further explained the purpose of the study, which was to explore the use of television to provide guidance to expectant fathers. A brief orientation and discussion on the empirical component of the study was provided in the form of an outline of the research process.

### **5.2.2 Chapter two**

In chapter two a theoretical framework was presented as a platform for the study. Literature relevant to the research problem was offered to provide clarity and understanding on the topic under investigation. The chapter focused on information related to parenting, expectant fathers, parent guidance and the use of television as a communication medium.

### **5.2.3 Chapter three**

Chapter three offered an in-depth discussion and explanation of the research process. The empirical component of the study was described in terms of the research design, methodology, data collection techniques, data analysis and interpretation methods. My motivation for choosing these methods and strategies was also provided.

The study was undertaken from two different paradigms, namely interpretivism and positivism. The research followed a mixed methods approach (QUALITATIVE-quantitative), incorporating both a case study and survey design. Data collection

techniques included a telephone questionnaire (quantitative component), as well as individual interviews, observations, field notes and a reflective journal (qualitative component). Finally, my role as the researcher, the criteria applied for quality assurance and ethical considerations were discussed.

#### **5.2.4 Chapter four**

In chapter four the results obtained from the two phases of the study were presented. Focus was placed on comparing and integrating the results of the study with information obtained during the literature review. The findings obtained were triangulated in order to synthesise the findings, draw conclusions and present them.

#### **5.2.5 Chapter five**

Chapter five presents a final overview of the study with reference to the entire research process and the results obtained. This chapter focuses on the conclusions drawn from the study, as well as recommendations for practice, training and further research. The challenges and possible contributions of the study are also discussed.

### **5.3 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

The purpose of this study was to *explore and describe the use of television for providing guidance to expectant fathers*. One of the main objectives was to determine whether or not expectant fathers in South Africa require guidance relating to the topic of fatherhood and if so, what kind of knowledge they require. Focus was therefore placed on gaining an understanding of the specific type of information required by expectant fathers, in conjunction with their perceptions of the most suitable form of media to provide such guidance. The study aimed to establish whether or not television could possibly be implemented as a means of providing guidance to expectant fathers. In addition, I aimed to ascertain what expectant fathers' views are regarding the use of television for guidance, in order to determine how television might be implemented for this purpose.

The primary research question for this study was formulated as follows: ***How can the medium of television be used to provide parent guidance on pregnancy and childrearing to expectant fathers?*** Based on the findings discussed in the study, it is concluded that a definite need for parent guidance for expectant fathers exists. This need seems to have arisen due to a number of factors that influence and affect South African society on a daily basis. Secondly, expectant fathers view television as the most suitable medium to provide them with the information they require.

One of the reasons that expectant fathers require parent guidance relates to the fact that many men in South Africa lack father figures or do not have role models to guide them on their path to fatherhood. A second factor relates to the part that culture and society plays in defining the role of the father. In South Africa, the various cultures have different views of the role of a father in a family. It is therefore difficult to draw up just one set of guidelines for South African fathers. By utilising the information expectant fathers have requested and then providing this guidance through television, a variety of content may be offered, therefore meeting the diverse needs of fathers despite their different cultural backgrounds and expectations.

Although fathers have been involved in the entire process of parenthood for many years, the tendency for expectant fathers to show an interest and be involved as parents right from the beginning of pregnancy is increasing. However, due to the constantly changing roles of fatherhood and the lack of guidance offered to expectant fathers to assist them in clarifying their roles, expectant fathers are unsure of how they should go about fulfilling these expectations. A third reason for expectant fathers viewing the need for guidance as important relates to the fact that fathers are often portrayed negatively in the media. Offering guidance to expectant fathers through television might help to alleviate this unjust perception of fathers in the media. In addition, it might assist in preventing abuse perpetrated by men, especially fathers, and therefore further increase the possibility of fathers being represented more appropriately in the media.

In addition to the aforementioned, the findings indicate that expectant fathers require more knowledge regarding the topic of fatherhood and pregnancy. It was also found that expectant fathers wish to receive guidance in order for them to develop certain basic childcare skills needed to fulfil their role as father. Television is regarded as the most suitable form of media for providing guidance to expectant fathers. Fathers feel that television may assist them by providing the information and knowledge they require, thereby directly addressing their needs. The participants perceived television as a potentially effective tool for this purpose, as it can reach many people simultaneously and can be interactive, thereby providing the viewers with the opportunity to participate in the discussion.

#### **5.4 CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that expectant fathers have a clear need for more information to help prepare them for fatherhood. They believe that television is the most popular form of medium to convey such information. One reason for this preference is that by utilising television, information can be conveyed in the form of practical demonstrations. Furthermore, programmes can be interactive, thereby inviting viewers to participate and ask questions on certain topics that are not often discussed or about which little is known.

Many factors negatively influence the involvement of fathers with their children. For example, many men do not have role models or father figures to guide them, leaving them unsure of their role as a father. These feelings of uncertainty and insecurity may cause them to withdraw, which in turn might have a negative impact on the role fathers play in society. Providing guidance could build their confidence and help expectant fathers to develop needed skills so that they may be more involved in fulfilling their parenting tasks. Besides expectant fathers requiring extensive information on fatherhood and pregnancy, they also want to acquire practical childcare skills.

Expectant fathers regard television as the most appropriate medium for presenting such content, as it has the potential to address many people at the same time. Everything that is seen can also be heard when watching television, thereby making

the demonstration of practical examples possible. Offering guidance to expectant fathers could create a more positive image of the father within the family and also demonstrate the importance of the father's role.

In addition, providing guidance to expectant fathers via television may indirectly benefit other members of the population. For example, older children caring for younger siblings will be able to access the information broadcast and apply it to their family. Furthermore, a television programme for expectant fathers might also be of assistance to expectant mothers, who themselves need guidance.

## **5.5 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

During the course of the study I faced a number of challenges, some of which had to be accommodated by seeking alternative solutions. The challenges experienced during the study are discussed in this section, followed by a discussion of the potential limitations of the study.

### **5.5.1 Challenges of the study**

The first challenge that I faced was the limited amount of scientific literature available on the topic of expectant fathers and parent guidance to expectant fathers. As a result, alternate sources of information (for example, non-scientific literature, Internet sources and conversations with experts in the field) had to be consulted and applied.

Secondly, I faced many challenges in my attempt to introduce the study to the South African population for sampling purposes. I initially planned to introduce the study to expectant fathers and request their participation by broadcasting a short snippet about the study on television. Although I was in constant contact with various representatives from broadcasting companies, certain factors led to the snippet only being broadcast once, on a Saturday morning. As a result, only a few potential participants responded. I had to decide on another method to relay this information and managed to overcome this challenge by designing pamphlets and distributing them via clinics, doctors and midwives.

### **5.5.2 Limitations of the study**

The findings of the study might be limited by the fact that the participants involved only represent those members of the total South African population who have access to television. As such, research results cannot necessarily be applied to the wider community. Due to the fact that individual interviews only involved four of the participants, the potential limitation of a lack of generalisability to all participants needs to be mentioned.

Different data collection instruments and different research paradigms could be used to investigate this topic. In addition, different researchers may or may not arrive at different findings through a re-analysis of the current data.

### **5.6 POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY**

As little research has been conducted with expectant fathers, and due to the limited literature available on this topic, the results of this study should add to the scientific body of research in this area. This study should make a positive contribution to understanding the needs of expectant fathers in more depth, as well as identifying the guidance and knowledge they require. My research has established the need for guidance by expectant fathers and determined the specific types of information they require, as well as the most suitable medium to provide such guidance.

The findings of the study may lead to the design and production of parent guidance television programmes for expectant fathers and parents in general. During the study, I was in contact with programme developers from different Broadcasting Production Companies. Conversations with these individuals indicate an interest in developing a television programme for expectant fathers based on my findings. With the lack of sufficient sources of information available, this study might further help to explore and generate new ways of informing expectant fathers about the role of parenting, on a wider level. For example, primary health professionals and clinics might consider implementing more appropriate strategies for including expectant fathers in their expectant parent programmes.



Furthermore, the study might enhance a more positive image of fathers in South Africa and may lead to fathers being recognised as competent caregivers. The research suggests that society needs to become more informed about and aware of the importance of fathers in children's lives. The results of this study might help in creating such an awareness, as the results demonstrate expectant fathers' willingness to contribute actively to the wellbeing of their offspring. As Richter (in Cohen, 2001:33) states:

*The words a father speaks to his children in the privacy of their home are not overheard at the time but, as in a whispering gallery, they will be clearly heard at the end and by posterity.*

## **5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations with regard to practice, training and further research are presented in this section.

### **5.7.1 Recommendations for practice**

The findings obtained from the study may be used as a basis for helping to prepare and guide expectant fathers. The information required by expectant fathers might be compiled into suitable content and then presented either through literature, radio or television.

### **5.7.2 Recommendations for training**

Besides relying on television, which is regarded as the most suitable medium for providing guidance to expectant fathers, assistance to fathers may be provided through developing programmes to train health workers within communities, or creating a centre where expectant fathers could go for information or advice. Trained health workers might be utilised to teach expectant fathers the practical skills they require and to provide them with the support they need.

Since there are children in South Africa caring for younger siblings, it might be valuable to explore the development of a curriculum that could be applied in schools to offer these children the opportunity to learn how to fulfil certain roles within the

family. Such a programme might also be implemented to assist learners who are already parents themselves, especially young boys who might not have sufficient role models to guide them with regard to fatherhood. Teaching young boys about fatherhood could indirectly be of benefit to society at large, as understanding the roles of fatherhood may both encourage fathers to become more involved in their children's lives and foster a more positive image of fathers.

### **5.7.3 Recommendations for further research**

The findings of this study indicate a need for parent guidance for expectant fathers, and emphasise that television may be the most appropriate medium for this. However, no programmes presently exist, which contain content suitable to provide such guidance. Therefore, a complete television programme for expectant fathers needs to be designed and developed. The programme could use the information obtained in this study to address the needs of expectant fathers, although additional related studies might also need to be consulted.

Another area that requires further exploration is the role of antenatal preparation in preparing men for fatherhood. There is a need to investigate the current levels of support available for expectant fathers at clinics and in antenatal preparation groups. Further research could be conducted to determine whether or not there is a need to develop specific centres or institutions where men can go to receive guidance or counselling relating to parenthood. Although expectant fathers revealed that they would like more information as well as practical skills to assist them in supporting and caring for their offspring, the possibility of providing such information during antenatal preparation groups has not been explored extensively. Bradley *et al.* (2004:47) confirms this by observing that *the role of the antenatal period in preparing fathers for fatherhood and improving support provision would be a particular area for future investigation.*

## **5.8 CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

Fathers are important members of our community and play a crucial role in the lives of their children. However, fathers are not always given the credit they deserve as

parents and are often not recognised by society, as illustrated when comparing the literature available for expectant fathers to that for expectant mothers. Not only should opportunities to prepare mothers for motherhood be provided, but such opportunities should also exist for fathers. This study revealed that expectant fathers are indeed interested in being involved in their children's lives and want more knowledge to equip them sufficiently as parents. Expectant fathers have a desire for more guidance to help prepare them for fatherhood.

In summary, expectant fathers require the support and guidance of society to fulfil their roles adequately, and need to be recognised as positive contributors in the lives of their children. Implementing television as a means to guide expectant fathers should help in addressing this need for information. Such an initiative should not only benefit fathers in South Africa, but society as a whole. De Beer (1998:233) substantiates this in the following concluding statement:

*The vision of a new, non-racial South Africa as a land of equal opportunities and equal facilitation rests upon a shared, negotiated future, and the identification of existing and potential commonalities in terms of South African values and needs. Mass communication, particularly television, will no doubt play a key role in this process of negotiation, education and development.*

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