

**ADOLESCENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY RESILIENCE
IN AN ABSENT FATHER FAMILY**

by

Johan Andries Louw

Submitted in partial fulfilment in accordance
with the requirements for the degree of

**MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS
(EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY)**

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at the

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Supervisor: Prof. Motlalepule Ruth Mampane

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UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

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Faculty of Education

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INVESTIGATOR	Mr J.A. Louw
DEPARTMENT	Educational Psychology
APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY	14 February 2017
DATE OF CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	18 December 2017

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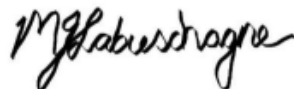
To whom it may concern

The dissertation titled, "Adolescents' perceptions of family resilience in an absent father family" has been edited and proofread as of 21 February 2018.

As a language practitioner, I have a Basic degree in Languages, an Honours degree in French and a Master's degree in Assessment and Quality Assurance. I have been translating, editing, proofreading and technically formatting documents for the past seven years. Furthermore, I am a member of the South African Translators' Institute (SATI) and the Professional Editors' Guild (PEG).

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ADOLESCENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY RESILIENCE IN AN ABSENT FATHER FAMILY

The literature reveals a vast gap in the functionality of South African families due to the absence of fathers. This study intended to identify adolescents' perception of family resilience, which may help them to overcome being part of an absent-father family.

The current study used an interpretivist paradigm and qualitative research methodology. A case study research design was adopted as it helped to explore the phenomenon of family resilience as seen from the perspective of four male adolescents living in an absent-father family. The participants were selected purposively from a partner organisation in Mamelodi East, called Stanza Bopape Community Development Centre. Data collection involved two separate visits wherein four individual interviews, visual data, and a reflective journal were used. A third visit to the site included a group session, which included member checking.

Following the thematic analysis of data, the participants revealed that they strongly relied on grandparents for financial, social, cultural, and moral support, which contributed to their perception of family resilience. This study also indicates that grandparents, more often than not, took responsibility for raising the participants. The participants also indicated the school and surrounding community as being contributors to family resilience due to positive teacher influence, friendships at school, extramural activities, and other male figures. Furthermore, some fathers also seemed to further family resilience, even though they were removed from the participants' family.

Based on the findings of the study, I can determine that family resilience in and around adolescents' family will have a positive effect on their development amidst the adversity of being in an absent-father family.

Key words:

- Absent father;
- Adolescent boys;

- Extended family;
- Fatherhood;
- Family resilience;
- Grandparent-headed household;
- Low socio-economic community;
- 'Ubuntu'.

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CHAPTER 1 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

“Families are in crisis. Schools are in crisis.
Communities are in crisis” (Theron, 2007, p. 358).

In South Africa, there is a need for families to adapt and learn to cope within the context of their unique crisis, so that resilience is developed. Research reveals a vast gap in the functionality of South African families due to the absence of fathers (Cho & Jackson, 2011; Clowes, Ratele, & Shefer 2013; Eddy, Tompson-De Boor, & Mphaka, 2013; Langa, 2014). Ratele, Shefer, and Clowes (2012) conceptualise a family consisting of the biological father, mother, and children. This is a fairly unsatisfactory explanation of family, as this seems to be a difficult concept to define in the literature. To name a few scenarios, children could also live in a single-headed family, blended family, or a step-family (Perales, Johnson, Baxter, Lawrence, & Zubrick, 2017). Absent-father families in South Africa are often headed by mothers who seek the support of extended family members in their effort to alleviate their experienced crises (Patterson, Williams, Edwards, Chamow and Grauf-Grounds, 2009). The aforementioned, as well as Perales et al.'s (2017) stance do not confirm the view of Clowes et al. (2013) regarding the definition of family. This study strives to provide information regarding absent-father families, which may point toward the regularity of single parent families being run by women or grandparents, specifically in the South African context (White Paper on Families, 2012).

Holborn and Eddy (2011, p. 4) emphasise the importance of father involvement as it contributes to “cognitive development, intellectual functioning, and school achievement” of children. Perhaps it may be the case that other role-players and extended family members within the community can fill the opening left by South African fathers. Langa (2014) finds that adolescents with absent fathers approach other role-models in their family and community that relieve a lot of the so-called risks of being raised without a father. Walsh (2012, p. 401) explains that “family resilience involves the potential for personal and relational transformation and growth that can be forged out of adversity.” This will lead any family to be viewed as strong and more resourceful in meeting the hardship that they face (Walsh, 2012). This study aimed to

identify in what way adolescents' perception of resilience were strengthened by the interaction they have with other role-players or family members within their community and how these interactions may alleviate the gap left by absent fathers. I identified participants from a township, Mamelodi East, which is characterised by many social problems, including overcrowding, informal settlements, crime, drugs, poverty, and unemployment (Blokland, 2014).

1.1.1 The perspective on the absence of fathers

The White Paper on Families (2012) explains that South African families are experiencing a predicament concerning the condition in which families operate. Ratele et al. (2012) find that families in South Africa are weak due to children living without their biological fathers. A study conducted by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA, 2010) shows that only one in every third (34%) child lives with both biological parents, a decrease from the 37.8% reported in 2002, and a quarter (25%) live with neither of their biological parents. In an analysis of the characteristics of single parents in urban areas, Holborn and Eddy (2011, p.3) noted that single parents were "overwhelmingly African, female and between the ages of 25 and 34." The unemployment rate among these urban single parents was also high (White Paper on Families, 2012). Other challenges that African families face is the higher number of deaths in men than in women, however, biological fathers who are alive frequently play a limited role in raising their children (Ratele et al., 2012). It is clear that in the research there is a gloomy outlook on families with absent fathers, but it seems that researchers fall into the rut of following a 'glass half empty' philosophy (Seligman, 2000). This philosophy is known for focusing only on the negative side or having a pessimistic view, rather than following a 'glass half full' philosophy that has a positive or optimistic outlook on life (de Lima Argimon, Esteves, Cerutti, Mosquera, & Stobäus, 2015).

Theron (2007) argues that due to the increase of father desertion, mothers are often not available as emotional caregivers due to long working hours in order to provide for the basic needs of their offspring. Other South African studies have found that when a father is not part of his child's development, it may lead to various unwanted outcomes for an adolescent, including: feelings of emptiness; a life of crime; and inadequate support concerning mental, emotional, social, and physical health (Allen & Daly, 2007; Holborn & Eddy, 2011; Ratele et al., 2012). Once again, the

aforementioned study indicates the substantial importance of the medical model, identifying the lack of, or shortage rather than including the positive attributes of absent-father families (Seligman, 2000). This study intends to provide a balanced view, indicating aspects that contribute and hinder resilience, in families with absent fathers. Walsh (2012) emphasises the importance of families being able to demonstrate resilience in the midst of adversities. Therefore, it would be wrong of me to assume that all families in an absent-father family are unable to cope with their circumstances, as civilization seems to rectify the mistakes made by individual community members in a culturally acceptable manner. As an African proverb says: “It takes a village to raise a child” (Mikucka & Rizzi, 2016, p. 944). This proverb leaves room to right the wrong of absent fathers in the South African population, as it seeks the support of the community, relatives, neighbours, and others in order to decrease the toll placed on single parents.

1.1.2 The demographics and statistics of the research site

The township of Mamelodi East was established in 1953 and is located about 20 kilometres East of the City of Tshwane, Pretoria. Mamelodi East is one of the major townships in South Africa with over million inhabitants (Spatial structure in the social science, n.d). Blokland (2014) says that there are limited resources available in Mamelodi, and residents have to travel long distances in order to gain access to metropolitan areas. Immigrants, sometimes illegal, travel to Mamelodi East in expectation of finding a job in the surrounding major cities like Pretoria and Johannesburg. This is also true for South Africans not being able to meet the expenses of other parts of the country, hoping to find greener pastures in Mamelodi. Service delivery is not necessarily something that receives urgency in townships due to other contextual challenges that continuously take preference, like managing crime rates or replacing stolen cables (Blokland, 2014). Largely, townships like Mamelodi experience the following challenges: excessive litter; burst sewers creating an unpleasant smell; and roads that are untarred or patched; bridges that are too low allowing rainy weather to overflow and flood surrounding areas (Spatial structure in the social science, n.d).

Mamelodi East is occasionally in the news due to its high crime rates, particularly relating to children. For the sake of this study, I will, however, draw attention to Mamelodi East, as the research participants dwelt in this part of Mamelodi.

Crime in Mamelodi East is fairly noticeable in the recent official South African Police Services data report (Publication of the Department of Police Services, 2016), indicating 5404 cases of crime from April 2015 to March 2016. Even though this seems reasonably high, this particular Police Station managed to reduce the amount of cases by 685 (11.2%) in one year (when compared to April 2014 to March 2015).

Sexual offences (13.3%) and common robbery (13.8%) increased in the span of one year (Publication of the Department of Police Services, 2016), which could have direct implications for vulnerable children (like orphans), who are not protected by parents or other family members. Furthermore, there has been a 27% increase in drug-related crimes, demonstrating a probable rise in the use of drugs in Mamelodi East. A further upsurge was seen in carjacking (41.8%), which could be ascribed to higher levels of environmental risk factors for adolescents in this region.

According to this report (Publication of the Department of Police Services, 2016) robbery at non-residential properties has been reduced by 16.1%, which may have a positive impact on adolescents' experience of safety at school, around their homes, or just walking about in the streets of Mamelodi East. Furthermore, burglaries at residential and non-residential properties have also dipped by more than 22.5% each. This is also supported by theft otherwise not elsewhere mentioned, having a downturn of 20.6%. Lastly, there has been a decrease of 31.3% in the amount of murders between 2015 and 2016. All of these aforementioned figures may show an improvement in the quality of life of the community members, families, and most importantly, the adolescent participants of the current study. That is not to say that the living conditions are at all favourable for the occupants of Mamelodi East, but it seems that this specific Police Station's effort to relieve crime may contribute to family wellbeing and resilience in the area.

1.2 RATIONALE

I had a particular interest in the research topic as I lived in a township, Khayelitsha (Cape Town, South Africa). Khayelitsha is also known for having severe poverty and challenging living conditions, like found in Mamelodi East. While residing there, I felt the need to help people, but I was unsure as to how. Three years later, I was involved at another township (Delft, close to Khayelitsha with similar contextual

difficulties as Mamelodi East) where I helped to support resilience in high-risk teenagers at one of the local high schools. I wrote my Honours thesis on *Adolescents' experience of absent fathers in a high-risk community*. The current study formed part of an extension of this paper to better comprehend family resilience from the perspective of the adolescence within an absent-father family. Theron (2007, p. 358) notes that there is a need to find a way to build the resilience of youth living in risky environments, but as I mentioned earlier, I will focus on what is already in place to build resilience in absent-father families. Ungar, Theron, and Didkowsky (2011) suggest that we have to provide children with opportunities that are culturally appropriate in order to generate assistance that is meaningful. Therefore, I intend to locate aspects within the family that contribute to resilience that are culturally appropriate to South African families living in low socio-economic communities.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to understand adolescents' perceptions of family resilience within an absent-father family, and to discuss the perceived role and contribution of a father in families. Furthermore, I wanted to understand how an adolescent's view of an absent father influences their understanding of family resilience, including cultural beliefs and values of the family. I also wanted to see who was otherwise responsible for contributing to these aforementioned factors, if possible, during the interviews.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

When the phenomenon of uninvolved fathers subsists, it may act as a risk factor for the family and adolescents' wellbeing and resilience. This study seeks to understand and identify possible characteristics, and a family's resilience process in an absent-father family. I wanted to determine four adolescents' perception of living in a family where the father was absent and what aspects they thought contributed to family resilience within their own family. Identifying aspects that contributed to family resilience was inspired by Walsh's (2012) family resilience framework. The perceptions of each participant's unique story of a resilient family show how each family were able to overcome adversity within their families and despite other contextual challenges.

1.5 WORKING ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

The following assumptions guided this study:

- Families consider the adolescent's views from a bio-ecological systems perspective (Rosa & Tudge, 2013), as every individual is influenced by the interactions within such complicated systems.
- The adolescents will have an undesirable perception of their father, but there will be other family and community members that will restore their view of what a father should be like (Langa, 2014).
- The adolescents would have found ways in order to cope or adapt (Walsh, 2012) to living in an absent-father family.
- In this study, adolescents may have a need for their biological fathers to be more involved in their lives and may feel empty without them (Ratele et al., 2012).
- Adolescents would experience less guidance from their fathers in terms of knowledge of their culture (Theron, Cameron, Didkowsky, Lau, Liebenberg & Ungar, 2011). However, extended family or community members may establish these cultural insights (Clowes et al., 2013).

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.6.1 Family resilience framework

This study was informed by Walsh's (2012) family resilience conceptual framework, which is grounded in the Systems Theory's orientation of multiple-layers (Walsh, 2016). The family resilience concept takes the perspective of a family that is functioning as a system by ensuring the positive adaption of family members, and by being stronger as an effect of being exposed to threatening circumstances (Walsh, 2016). The family resilience framework hopes to empower individuals, families, and communities by identifying the resources that are available to them within their environment (Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2012). Walsh (2016) says that on an individual level, a family member reaches resilience by means of positive relational networks provided by the family. Families gain durability and other assets by identifying and

using key processes to master the adversity that they face, as well as by strengthening their bonds within the family (McDonald, 2012). It is by prospering, despite the odds, that certain behaviour or characteristics become more observable within resilient families (Card & Barnett, 2015). Such behaviour or characteristics have been researched by Walsh (2012, p. 406), who categorised these as “belief systems, organisational patterns, and communication/ problem-solving processes.” Walsh (2016) reports that these key processes were the most significant contributors to resilience within families while interacting with their surrounding community.

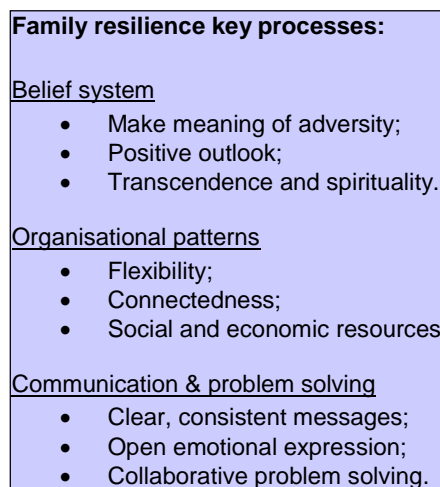


Figure 1.1: The family resilience framework as discussed by Walsh (2012)

1.6.2 The Systems Theoretical orientation

As mentioned, the family resilience framework is systemic in nature, indicating that development should be seen within a complicated system where relationships and other interactions will affect family members on various levels. This is enforced by their environment, including the school, home and neighbourhood (Berk, 2013), to name a few. Bronfenbrenner’s ecological perspective refers to contextual influences found in family, peer relationships, resources in the community, and at work and school (Tudge, Morkova, Hatfield & Karnik, 2009). These systems are embedded in the social environment and contribute to the development of resilience in individual family members. McCubbin and McCubbin (2013), and Kirmayer, Dandeneau, Marshall, Phillips and Williamson (2011) have found that spiritual and cultural resources will also reinforce resilience.

1.6.3 Intricate levels of the Systems Theory's influence

Walsh (2016) explains that the systems approach indicates that family resilience could be enhanced or hampered on the individual, family, community, and social-cultural levels. Card and Barnett (2015) state that when a resilient family is faced with risk, they will adapt positively as a result of the exchange between risk and protective factors at various levels being presented by the surrounding community. Walsh (2012) further explains that resilience and risk are seen as having a repetitive influence, having a number of elements that could complicate our understanding of the System's Theory even more. Walsh (2016) discusses one of these aspects by referring to the impact that time may have as a contextual influence may occur over a certain timespan, including: chronic multi-stress conditions, major disasters, trauma, loss, or unsettling developmental changes. This just indicates the density of considerations in and around the family that may have an effect on sustaining family resilience. Rosa and Tudge (2013) note that the systemic approach helps to unlock resilience in families, adolescents, and children and, as a consequence, helps them to make the best progress possible in their process of acquiring resilience. Even though the systems approach is a complicated part of the family resilience framework, it still seems to be able to provide the current study with meaningful contextual information that may or may not enhance adolescents' perception of family resilience.

The family resilience framework was selected for this study to help identify resiliency factors participants and their families use to overcome the challenges they face caused by absent fathers (Walsh, 2016). This is specifically true as participants of this study most probably rely on their interaction with role-players other than fathers in their surrounding community and family to fill the gap of father absenteeism. Another benefit of Walsh's (2014) framework is that it is rooted in the systems theory, which uses various contextual levels of the participants' environment to further identify factors that can help fight the risks which accompany father absence, these factors include their home, school, church, and cultural beliefs (Berk, 2013; McCubbin & McCubbin (2013); Kirmayer et al., 2011).

The asset-focused resilience was considered as a viable framework for this study and it is also grounded in positive psychology (Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2012). Asset-focused resilience focuses on finding individual and environmental resources

which will allow individuals to flourish or overcome their hardship (Ebersöhn, 2010). Other resilience theories, closely associated to the aforementioned, also seem to rely on strengths of the individual and their context in order to counter the risk of maladaptation (Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2012). I chose the family resilience framework above other resilience theories, as it considers various family members' resilience rather than just the individual within their context, which I also believe is more relevant to South Africa's cultural heritage of 'Ubuntu' (refer to Chapter 2).

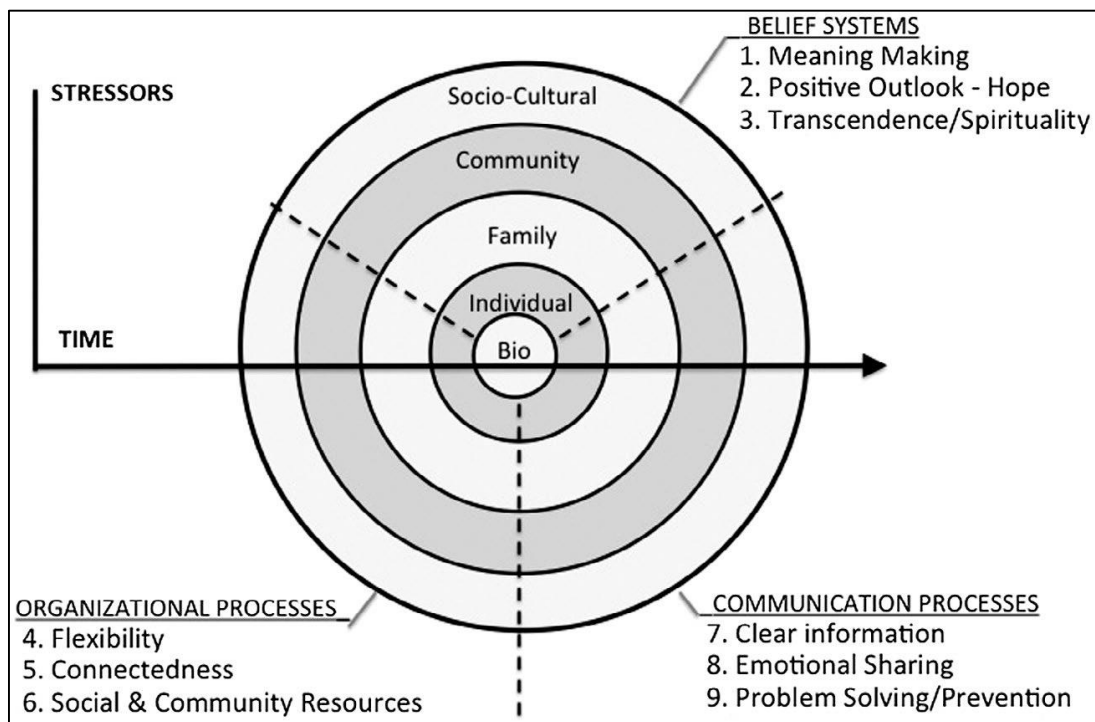


Figure 1.2: Multilevel recursive processes in family resilience as visualised by Walsh (2016, p. 10)

* The above visual representation shows the different levels of the systems orientation in combination with the family resilience framework. It also includes the consideration of stressors over time.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.7.1 Primary research question

How do adolescents from an absent-father family perceive family resilience?

1.7.2 Secondary research questions

- 1) What are these adolescents' perceptions of the role of fathers in families?
- 2) What are these adolescents' perceptions of the influence of fathers on family, resilience and culture?

1.8 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The following are the key concepts that were used in this study.

1.8.1 Absent fathers

Makofane (2015) refers to an absent father as a birth father who is either physically or emotionally uninvolved in the development of his child, normally as a result of parental relationship difficulty. Research explains why fathers are absent from their children's lives in the following manner: fathers are unemployed, fathers want to be providers but are unable, cultural factors (*ilobolo*), dysfunctional relationships between parents, and fathers adjusting to divorce or a break-up (Eddy et al., 2013), as well as diseases like HIV/AIDS (Ratele et al., 2012). For the purpose of this study, an absent father is seen as a birth father being either physically or emotionally uninvolved in his child's development (Makofane, 2015).

1.8.2 Adolescence

Carr (2015) describes adolescence as being between the ages of 12 and 18 years and, according to Erickson (cited in Snowman & McCown, 2013), adolescents face the challenge of identity versus role confusion. Louw and Louw (2014) explain adolescence as the stage between puberty and adulthood. Carr (2015) states that adolescents want to fit in somewhere or belong and this forms an important part of well-being and healthy living. Patterson et al. (2009) find that children within families who are at the stage of adolescence have an increase in boundary permeability to allow for a growing need for independence. For the purpose of this study, adolescence is defined as someone being between the age of 12 and 18 years of age (Carr, 2015).

1.8.3 Culture

Walsh (2012) defines culture as an ongoing social context wherein life emerges. Feltham and Horton (2012) clarify that culture is constantly evolving and could even vary between people of the same culture. Walsh (2012) reveals that culture involves the way in which we think, feel, and behave. Louw and Louw (2014) describe culture as being based on memories, ethnical identity, child-rearing, class, money, celebrations (example: religion), and age or gender division of roles. For the purpose of this study, culture is viewed as an ongoing social context wherein people express the way they think, feel, and behave (Walsh, 2012).

1.8.4 Family resilience

The White Paper on Families (2012, p. 3) defines family resilience as “the ability of families to withstand and rebound from disruptive life challenges.” Walsh (2012) expounds that these life challenges will lead a family that is struggling to become stronger and more resourceful in meeting the hardship that they may face. Family resilience makes the transformation of an individual possible, as well as strengthening relationships within a family, which may end in personal growth for family members (Black & Lobo, 2008). For the purpose of this study, family resilience is defined as a family’s ability to use the resources available to them to overcome adversity (The White Paper on Families, 2012; Walsh, 2012).

1.8.5 Healthy family functioning

The White Paper on Families (2012, p. 11) defines a healthy family as “a family characterised by good interpersonal relations and a good state of physical, mental, and social well-being among all members.” According to Walsh (2012), the development of family standards is unique to each family system and manifests through families advancing their own internal norms, which are expressed through clear and unvoiced rules of relationships. Becvar and Becvar (2014) say that the family can be seen as a laboratory in which children learn skills to deal with authority figures and systems outside of their own. For the purpose of this study, healthy family functioning is seen through strong interpersonal relationships between family members, as well as the wellbeing of all family members, which includes the physical, emotional, and social domains (Walsh, 2012).

1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.9.1 Metatheoretical paradigm

This study's paradigmatic focus is interpretivist in nature as it argues that the experience of people can be understood from the viewpoint of individuals (Maree, 2012). It was important for me to become involved in communication with the participants to better understand their reality through their experiences (Wahyuni, 2012), as well as observing the participants during their interactions with me in their context (Tuli, 2012). I will expand on these thoughts in Chapter 3.

1.9.2 Qualitative Methodology

I used a qualitative research method (De Vos, Delpont, Fouché & Strydom, 2011) to gain a better understanding of the adolescents' perception of family resilience within an absent-father family. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) maintain that qualitative research specifically fits into studies that want to explore and describe the unique experiences of the participants. This approach gave me an opportunity to understand how the adolescents perceived family resilience. It also helped me to identify what the phenomenon, family resilience, meant to them (Merriam, 2009). Wagner, Kawulich, and Garner (2012, p. 273) define qualitative research as "research that seeks to interpret or make sense of phenomena in terms of the meanings they have for participants." Even though I was etic to the study, the participants allowed me to step into their reality, providing me a glimpse of how they perceived factors contributing to overcoming challenges by means of using culture, family, and other role-models within their families.

I was aware that a qualitative study may be biased and subjective (Seale, 2012). However, when a study is approached in this manner, it allows the possibility of reaching the centre point of research; explaining the phenomenon being studied (Ellingson, 2009). Even though research is never free of bias, I have strived to carry it out by means of being reflective, logical, and balanced by constantly re-evaluating the data and the analysis thereof in the writing of this dissertation.

1.9.3 Research design

A case study research design was adopted in this study as it helped to explore the phenomenon of family resilience as seen from the perspective of male adolescents living in an absent-father family; therefore allocating the boundaries of the study and having specific characteristics (Maree, 2012). Yin (2014) finds that a case study is one of the most challenging methods to use in social science research, but in return, it provides an in-depth analysis of a bounded system (De Vos et al., 2011). These boundaries or characteristics included male participants who were in the adolescent development phase, having an absent father, and living in a low socio-economical community. An exploratory case study provided this research with extensive contextual data on family functioning within a natural environment (Seale, 2012; Maree, 2013). I will discuss the research design and methodology fully in Chapter 3.

1.9.4 Research sample

The sample concerned four male adolescents between the age of 12 and 14 who were selected from a partner organisation in Mamelodi East, the Stanza Bopape Community Development Centre (see Appendix H). The participants were Black South Africans residing in Mamelodi East living in an absent-father family. The reason why I choose adolescents from Mamelodi East was that they had all been exposed to the same challenging environmental conditions, therefore the factors associated with having an absent father would be more comparable. Based on these assumptions, the sample is assumed to be homogeneous. Knowing that the research participants were exposed to various stressors would then also mean that they were able to overcome these stressors by means of family resilience, but would surface differently depending on the dynamics of their family and their surrounding community resources.

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I have explored various aspects of ethics in order to demonstrate my understanding thereof and to establish that I have conducted research in a just manner (Maree, 2012). Permission was given by the University of Pretoria's Ethics Committee and by the Stanza Bopape Community Development Centre (see Appendix H), the partner organisation in Mamelodi East. This was uncomplicated because the current

study falls under a broader study already involved in Mamelodi East. Informed consent was attained from the participants' parents or legal guardians (see Appendix G) as the participants were under the age of 18. Letters of assent were also collected from the participants (Wagner et al., 2012). All of the relevant ethical issues that were maintained throughout the research process are discussed further in Chapter 3.

1.11 FORESEEN CHALLENGES

Language was sometimes an obstacle during the collection and interpretation of data, mainly due to the fact that the participants spoke multiple languages attributed to the inhabitants of Mamelodi East. My supervisor acted as my translator in understanding issues that were relevant to the language and background of the participants and this provided me with cultural appropriate interpretations and explanations of the participants' discussion. I used my supervisor, a peer, and my reflective journal (see Appendix E) in order to conduct research more impartially.

The second challenge was that of the availability of the adolescents and their arrival time at the interviews, as this could be difficult to manage. This challenge was partially overcome by my efforts to arrange the interviews in collaboration with a representative of the centre. This made it easier as the centre provided food and transport for the participants of this study. However, in the same breath, this made it more challenging because I had to plan the interviews and time spent in Mamelodi East as the students arrived from their various schools. Employees of the centre were not able to indicate the exact time the learners' arrival. Alternatively, the centre helped me to reduce the cost of my research as they daily provided food to the learners attending the centre. This also made the data collection process simple because the participants were identified by the partnering social worker beforehand.

1.12 POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS

Mamelodi East was specifically identified for this study as the township represents a diverse South African population consisting of various cultures and backgrounds. I believe that this study can contribute to a better understanding of adolescents' perceptions of family resilience in an absent-father family. This, in turn, will help to understand what the adolescents identify within their family and community

as contributors to their family resilience. This also shows us what helps them to overcome the challenges they face daily as a result of living in an absent-father family. This study hopes to use Walsh's family resilience framework as a basis to apply within the South African context, and plans to contribute to the literature on family resilience

This study also desires to encourage future studies with regard to the adolescents' ability to overcome their challenging circumstance by means of identifying and mobilising government or NGO strategies and programmes. The involvement of such institutions could inspire family resilience, especially in low socio-economic communities, as in the case of this study.

1.13 LAYOUT OF STUDY

This study can be seen in the following manner:

Chapter 1: Overview of the Study

This chapter consisted of the research background, rationale, theoretical framework, purpose of the study, the research questions, methodology, and the ethical deliberations on which the study is based.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter investigates the literature in order to provide an overview of existing research on family resilience, the role of fathers in families, adolescence as a stage of developmental, the impact of being raised in a low socio-economic community, and how culture, spirituality, and attitude contribute to resilience. It also investigates possible alternative role-models to satisfy the gap that has been left by absent fathers. Chapter 2's purpose is to set the basis for Chapter 4, expecting to communicate possible themes regarding the phenomenon of family resilience within an absent-father family, as seen throughout the literature reviewed.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

In this chapter, an explanation of the research process is given in terms of the research design that was implemented and methodology used in this study. This assisted in further discovering and expanding on the research questions. More specifically, I clarified the sample selection, data collection, documentation and

analysis by means of a qualitative approach. I also refer to the consideration of my role as the researcher and conclude the chapter with a thorough discussion of my ethical deliberations and quality criteria that I implemented.

Chapter 4: Research findings

Chapter 4 stages a discussion of the findings that were acquired in this study in a summative manner. The findings are offered in term of themes, groupings and sub-groups that were developed during the inductive thematic analysis process. The presented data will be accompanied by the literature that was reviewed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 5: Conclusion summary

In the last chapter, I will provide a summary of the research findings and conclusions with regard to the research questions and purpose of this study, as presented in Chapter 1. I also state the limitations, potential contributions, as well as suggestions for further research, training, and practise stemming from this study.

1.14 CONCLUSION

The main reason why I was interested in studying family resilience in absent-father homes was due to the lack of research found with regard to the phenomenon. There is not enough research on adolescents' point of view when it comes to family resilience in an absent-father home to show how they overcome the challenges that are thrown their way, especially when considering the low socio-economic community examined in this study. I have referred to important key concepts within this study to enable an understanding of the central constructs therein. I have also stated the methodology and ethical considerations related to the current inquiry. I hope to inspire readers to look for future research on adolescents' ability to overcome adversity and create a basis for seeing the glass as 'half full' when considering participants within the context of adversity in South Africa. Finally, I intend to learn from my own research in order to change my perspective on family resilience amidst challenging circumstances.

In Chapter 2 I will discuss the existing literature by offering a widespread review of themes that are applicable to this study. In this chapter, I will explain the

development of the selected theoretical framework, namely, the family resilience framework of Walsh (2016).

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous Chapter I illustrated the need to establish how adolescents overcome the challenge of being part of an absent father family. This study intended to identify possible family resilience characteristics of an absent-father family based on Walsh's (2012) family resilience framework. Another consideration is the gap left by absent fathers, as they are unable to fulfill their role as father and neglect to contribute to the needs of the family. There seems to be a lack of literature on family resilience, particularly in emerging countries like South Africa (Bhana & Bachoo, 2011). Therefore, this literature review intended to provide an overview of the existing literature on family resilience, the importance of fathers in families, the danger associated with absent father households, and factors contributing to family resilience (illustrated in Figure 2.1). Furthermore, special attention was given to possible alternative role-players in the lives of participants, acting as a solution to the gap left by uninvolved fathers. As a whole, this review intended to set the foundation for pinpointing the phenomenon of family resilience within an absent-father family.

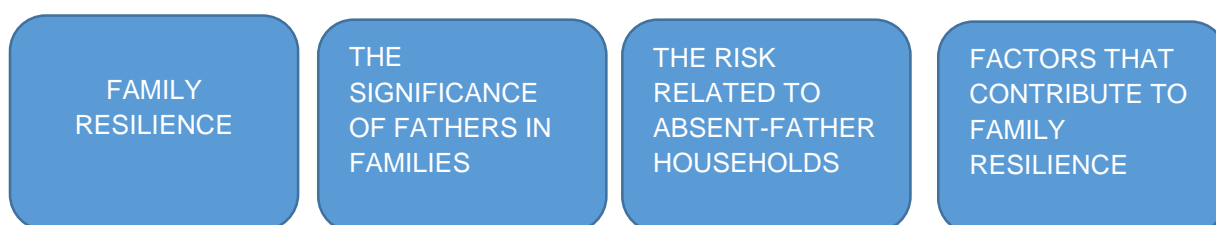


Figure 2.1 Literature review structure

2.2 FAMILY RESILIENCE

Before family resilience is explored, it is important to understand the concept of family and family resilience. After these concepts are discovered, I will review the current situation of families in South Africa.

2.2.1 Understanding family as a concept

According to the most recent South African White Paper on Families (2012), it is difficult to describe the concept of family. In an interview, Walsh stated that “diversity and complexity are the ‘new normal’ in contemporary family life” (McDonald, 2012, p. 236). Families could be explained as: children living with their biological parents or

one-parent, being blended, or having step-families (Perales et al., 2017). Amoateng and Richter (2007, p. 14) provide a generally accepted definition of families as “social groups that are related by blood (kinship), marriage, adoption, or affiliation with close emotional attachments to each other that endures over time and go beyond a particular physical residence.” The White Paper on Families’ (2012, p. 11) definition is closely aligned with that of Amoateng and Richter (2007) above; the only emphasises is on ties of marriage (instead of just marriage). This refers to two adults (tied by marriage) who could be living together as the concept of parents of children, forming a family unit. It should however be emphasised that family compositions are extremely complex and not straightforward. Blended families stress this point as these families may contain two or more children, one being biological or adopted by both parents (the ties of marriage definition is more relevant in this instance), and one who is a step-child of one of the parents (Perales et al., 2017).

McLanahan and Jencks (2015) indicate that the most essential aspect of family life is that members care for each other, have committed relationships, and use healthy family interaction as it will contribute to healthy family functioning. In other words, a healthy family will show the aforementioned characteristics. Alternatively, a less healthy family will most probably just share a physical residence like with tenants of a hostel. This definition is not far removed from the focus of this study, since adolescents living in an absent-father household remain a family based on the definition of kinship as described by the White Paper on Families (2012). Perales et al. (2017) refer to other types of family compilations, including guardians with foster or step-children. Similarly, grandparent-households fall under the definition of family. Now that I have established the concept of, I will consider the process involved in the development of family resilience.

2.2.2 Positive psychology and resilience

Positive Psychology

Health-related studies in the 1970s were known for showing individual ailment, shortage, or weakness. Seligman (2000) introduced Positive psychology, which shifted research towards a philosophy of individual strengths, resources and capacity, which advances individual hardship (Oh & Chang, 2014), specifically because psychologists became obsessed with finding fault in their clients. I understand therefore why researchers tend to want to indicate possible solutions or interventions to participants

who are etic to them as we are generally inclined to find fault as human beings, instead of identifying strengths and making them stronger (Seligman, 2000). Positive psychology is a paradigmatic underpinning of resilience in life.

Resilience

Resilience refers to a group of experiences symbolised by having a good outcome despite the occurrence of serious threats to adjustment or progress (Kirmayer et al., 2011; Liebenberg, 2015). Walsh (2012) explains that resilience involves strengths in dealing with adversity, or in other words, strengths coming to light during stressful situations. Ungar (2011) extends this idea by referring to resilience as the ability of an individual to gain access to the assets that they require to sustain well-being, and taking into consideration ways in which communities and governments can present these. Oh and Chang (2014) refer to accumulative studies on resilience in children leading to a need for being more contextually relevant, which is better known as family resilience.

It is no secret that the current participants originate from the distressing milieu of Mamelodi East. When considering the way in which the media tends to convey news about crime and violence in South Africa, including Mamelodi East, it could be said that it is a lopsided affair (especially in the absence of resilience research), as it typically emphasises the misconduct found in society. When considering the paradigm of Positive psychology, it would be wrong to only adopt the deficiencies of the participants that contribute to this study. Instead, theory on resilience will help me to identify what the participants used to sustain well-being within their current family. It will also help to identify possible ways in which adolescents could be supported to enhance their resilience and that of their families.

Family resilience

Even though some families are devastated by disaster, others appear to become stronger and more capable, able to love more fully and raise their children in a healthy manner, displaying family resilience (Walsh, 2012). Edwards (2015) explains family resilience as an active course of adaptation shown by a family wherein the family successfully overcomes the threatening situations that they face. As part of being successful when engaging with risk, a family needs to realise its qualities as a whole and as individual members of the family (Patterson et al., 2009). It could therefore be implied that the more qualities that a family has, the larger their potential would be for

recovery, repair, and growth when facing serious life challenges (Walsh, 2012). Bhana and Bachoo (2011) note that family resilience can be explained by means of a mixture of characteristics that assist members of a family, like showing optimism, to conquer hardship. Even though it is important for a family to possess these aforementioned qualities or characteristics as it may lead to more stable households, Ungar (2015) expounds that a shortage of resources within the community may have a negative impact on the resilience of families. Alternatively, having access to financial support and resources may alleviate unhealthy family functioning (Masten & Monn, 2015). According to Rutter (2013), the length of the crises experienced by a family, the family's life cycle, and the internal and external resources of the family may additionally contribute to a family's resilience. However, when participants have access to extended family members who are able to provide financial support and other resources, including the needs of adolescents to have access to fathers, then family resilience can manifest.

In this study, it is believed that the participants and their families, who were exposed to risk factors, can be resilient, especially if they are able to utilise the qualities in their family (internal) and/or resources in their environment (external). It is, however, believed that a community like Mamelodi East may have less resources available, impacting negatively on the adolescent's perception of healthy family functioning. As far as the length of the crises being experienced by the current participants, Theron (2007) confirms that most teenagers in townships undergo risk factors on a daily basis. This may mean that adolescents draw on protective factors¹ found within their family network so that they are able to overcome stressors.

Benzies and Mychasiuk (2009) claim that families who are optimistic have a communal set of outlooks, rationalisation and standards that lead to a more united viewpoint during adversity. These families view hardship as a challenge that they share, and believe that trials make their family relationships stronger (Walsh, 2012, p. 407). Masten and Monn (2015) extend the aforesaid ideas by explaining that families need to create a sense of belonging and what better way to do so by facing a challenge together. Bhana and Bachoo (2011) find that when families have to take responsibility for their circumstances, they are more likely to be resilient. Such situations attract the

¹ According to Edwards (2015), protective factors may reduce the probability of negative outcomes for a family.

possibility for the transformation of an individual, as well as relationships and may ultimately lead to the progress of the family (Walsh, 2012). My assumption was that the participants, and their family members, would take ownership of certain roles that would enhance their family's functioning and as a result, this would help the family to be able to contest the impeding environmental stressors. The term 'Ubuntu' strengthens my supposition. 'Ubuntu' is a term that is taught by teachers, parents, and elders, meaning that we should have respect for people. This term dictates a bond between all human beings (Mosoetsa, 2011). If there is a cultural perspective of respect and a mind-set to help other people in the community, how much more would the participants' family be willing to help their own family members, especially if it forms part of their cultural identity (Feltham & Horton, 2012) and the way in which they think, feel, and behave from a young age (Walsh, 2012).

Family resilience for a resilient society

The White Paper on Families (2012) indicates that resilient families are something that humanity cannot function without as it is core to a healthy economy, policies, and the education of a country. The Department of Social Development (2011) reports that steady and healthy families form the basis of a resilient society. Both the family and society should walk side by side, co-constructing the wellbeing of the family.

Parents, or guardians, have a duty to provide a sense of security for their children so that it enables them to explore their world and become citizens who are independent, responsible, and resilient (Becvar & Becvar, 2014). However, when a family lacks resources, they will find it challenging to overcome their adversity (Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2012) and this may result in a demeanour that is destructive to society (The Green Paper on Families, 2011). Several sources (The White Paper on Families, 2012; Theron, 2007; Ratele et al., 2012) indicate that South African families are continuously faced with testing environmental conditions. However, a resilient family will end in a more resilient country (Theron, 2007). In the next section I will explore the current view of families in South Africa.

2.2.3 Families in South Africa

Holborn and Eddy (2011) explain the complexity of understanding families in a South African context as there is no set criteria when it comes to families. Children often live with extended families, guardians or caregivers, mothers, and families

commonly run by a single-parent (Ratele et al., 2012). Families in South Africa seem to be exposed to some unsympathetic conditions on a daily basis (The Green Paper on Families, 2011), which may obstruct resilience. The White Paper on Families (2012) argues that aspects challenging families in South Africa are shortages of resources, absent-father homes, HIV/AIDS, violence and crime, the abuse of substances, gender-based crime, child abuse and neglect, teenage pregnancy, moral decline, and destabilised intergenerational relations.

Poverty

One factor that amplifies the risk faced by families is poverty (Ardington & Leibbrandt, 2010). According to Statistics South Africa (2017), the bulk of households in rural areas have stayed poor after apartheid (55, 2%), indicating the persistence of poverty in South Africa (Mosoetsa, 2011). Theron and Theron (2013) report that 48% of families living in poverty are mostly Black South African families who survive on less than \$60 (R800) per month. As a consequence, families tend to have material shortcomings that may even lead to socially related problems (Bottrell, 2009). Edwards (2015) includes the lack of non-material resources to steer offspring towards having insufficient schooling, skills, and knowledge. Ungar (2015) indicates that having more resources available offers higher outcomes in the psychological and social well-being of families.

Theron (2007) agrees that families who live in poverty mostly reside in informal-settlements, which may increase the risk of lower educational and emotional functioning. Theron et al. (2011) specify that poverty may also lead to insufficient admission to further education, social infrastructure, and appropriate health care. Families in poverty have a higher chance of having children who are underfed, which hinders mental progress and further impacts the child's academic success. Worsening children's inadequate nutrition are the feelings of unsafety and insecurity that are typically associated with children in absent-father families (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). This may be the result of a basic need to be raised by a father, which is not being met. Masten and Monn (2015) found a link between families in poverty and children being abused or neglected by their parents. This may be true for some adolescents in this study as well, but as I argued earlier, these risk factors do not necessarily mean that families are not resilient. Due to the cultural patterns, specifically of 'Ubuntu', families in poverty are supported by their extended families and surrounding communities (Metz, 2007).

Social problems

Furthermore, the consequence of poverty may involve the alleviated exposure of adolescents to other social problems (e.g. violence and gangsters) and family members having little personal space (Theron, 2007), as households tend to be overcrowded (The White Paper on Families, 2012). Tchombe, Shumba, Lo-Oh, Gakuba, Zinkeng and Teku (2012) indicate aspects like being subjected to other health-related diseases due to having limited access to resources. Once again, we must refrain from thinking that families are only confronted with destructive components or that they truly experience them as destructive, for that will minimise the role of resilience. Assuming that families are not able to cope with their circumstances and that exposure to risk can lead to permanently negative outcomes is wrong. This kind of thinking excludes Positive Psychology and it would be negligent to endorse this view in this study.

Surrounding community

Masten and Gewirtz (2013) say that children can only be seen as resilient when they are considered within the context of their family and surrounding community. Ungar (2015) explains that lower socio-economic status (SES) and race may be correlated with negative outcomes for families, whereas increasingly supportive homes and schools that are well-resourced may reverse the process. Other aspects like the behaviour of children and parents, or the physical circumstances of a neighbourhood, authorities' behaviour and the accessibility of resources were also found to encourage resilience (Ungar 2011). Furthermore, the research shows that it is not the quantity, but the quality of resources that helps families to overcome the adversity that they face (Saltzman et al., 2013). If the surrounding community has access to libraries, public safety (e.g. police, welfare), and affordable housing, it will contribute to a family being resilient (Masten & Monn, 2015). Freeks, Strydom and Bartlett (2015) state that families experience social support from schools, churches, and neighbours, which form a cardinal part of a family's resilience. In this study, I looked for possible resources within Mamelodi East that contributed to family resilience. This may even include activities or sport, like playing soccer, that form family support.

2.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FATHERS IN FAMILIES

Langa (2014) says that a father could play a crucial role in families and the development of adolescents as a stage of development. In the following section I will

investigate; the role of parents in families, subsequent role-models, and possible parent styles that contribute to family resilience. Subsequently, I will discuss literature on absent fathers, including the historical influence of absent fathers in South Africa.

2.3.1 Parental roles

According to Brown and Robinson (2012), roles in the family may refer to patterns that are stable in a family and visible by individual behaviour. Walsh (2012) finds that these patterns should, however, be adjustable according to the situational or developmental stage of the family. A family should be able to return to these patterns, or balanced state, after they experience a disruption (Lopez & Corona, 2012). Furthermore, parents who show a loving and child-centred approach to parenting with age-appropriate boundaries will have a more resilient child, which will be noticeable by the higher levels of independence and confidence (Carr, 2015). Additionally, the resilience of a child depends on: child-parent or child-guardian dealing with conflict and time spent together, parents' efforts to help with educational activities, and if there is healthy emotional and physical boundaries between the parents and a child (Patterson et al., 2009). This parenting approach is also known as authoritative. Louw and Louw (2014) argue that an authoritative parent allows children to solve problems effectively and collectively, and take each other's point of view into consideration, showing social competence. Authoritative parents are high on both the warmth towards and the control of their children (Edwards, 2015). Masten and Monn (2015) indicate that a parent's role is to monitor and comfort children. The above paragraph has nothing to do with a father being present in order to advance overall child development, as it could depend on extended family or alternative guardians to fulfil the role of authoritative parenting.

It should still be reflected on as to whether a more authoritarian parenting style would be more desirable for all parents, specifically those living in a township, as in this study. Masten and Monn (2015) report that parents who use higher levels of discipline normally do so in order to protect their children against the challenges they are exposed to in their environment. Bhana and Bachoo (2011) explain that parents should observe youth, provide credit for acceptable behaviour, and apply consequences for unwanted behaviour that will not only help them to develop as young adults, but will promote resilience in the community, and as a result, in families too. In their study, Clowes et al. (2013) found that the participants spoke positively about the way in which their fathers taught them to be controlled and work hard, as well as

disciplining them in an appropriate manner when they broke the rules. In another South African township study, one participant mentioned that she remembered her father instilling very firm discipline (Makofane, 2015). However, Petersen (2014) generally found a lack of discipline in absent-father families, which emphasise the role of disciplinarian a father brings to the table when being involved in family matters. The author thus recommends teachers to enforce some discipline principles in the classroom in order to ensure that youths will become quality citizens of society.

Role-model

Carr (2015) explains that parents generally play an important role in family, as they are seen as role-models by their children and in response, their children tend to imitate parental standards. According to Lopez and Corona (2012), positive role-models may contribute to the general well-being of child or adolescent development. Furthermore, a daughter having a positive relationship with her father may have a positive effect on how she views men in general (Makofane, 2015). Langa (2010) reports that adolescents with absent fathers might have an admiration and appreciation for their mothers as a positive role-model, hoping to fill the void left by absent fathers. Mampane (2014) finds that an adolescent with a role-model whose behaviour is exemplary in managing adversity tend to imitate the same positive behaviour, which enables and supports family resilience. Clowes et al. (2013) report that the positive influence of role-models may provide guidance and teach adolescents to live autonomous lives.

Parental roles

Walsh (2012) indicates that a patriarch is a force that still dominates families today, which is mainly present due to cultural and belief systems. Traditionally, in these systems, fathers are seen as strict, having the most control and power, and being the sole breadwinner (Patterson et al., 2009). Clowes et al. (2013) explain a patriarch as being independent and self-sufficient, having dominance and if this is jeopardised, it may lead to aggression and violence. However, Walsh (2012) states that there has been a shift as fathers tend to be more loving, involved, and caring than fathers of the previous, some-what traditional generation. Clowes et al. (2013) expound that the patriarch family should be opposed as it imposes a skewed view of what it means to be a man. Makofane's (2015) participants explained a father as a man that is strong, who will love, protect, and be able to provide. These aforementioned qualities are what

are habitually expected of women in a patriarch household. Choi and Jackson (2011) reveal that recent research indicates that babies form a stronger attachment to their fathers than initially thought, indicating that having the positive involvement of fathers may lead to higher levels of both emotional and social development. Traditionally, a mother's role is seen as being responsible for feeding and nurturing children, especially in a patriarchal family setting (Louw & Louw, 2014). Walsh (2012) says that mothers are seen as caregivers and keepers of the household, as it is particularly expected from spiritual and cultural values around the world.

Emotional support

Interestingly though, families suffering from financial shortage frequently show greater levels of warmth, love, and emotional support (Bhana & Bachoo, 2011). This could be due to families drawing closer in order to work together to surmount challenging encounters. For the purpose of this study, I anticipated the participants to have emotional support from their caregivers, family members, or community. Louw and Louw (2014) explicate that a father plays an indispensable role in establishing overall adjustment to life and the self-esteem of a child, but as argued, this can also be fulfilled by alternative role-models in the community. Benzies and Mychasiuk (2009) find that when a father is present, this contributes to the advancement of cognition, intellectual performance, and school success. The higher the frequency and quality of a father's involvement, the higher the levels of self-esteem experienced by a child (Carr, 2015). It was expected that all of the participants of this study had fathers who were absent in their lives, therefore I expected them to draw on other resources to develop the aforementioned characteristics that a father contributes to a child. These alternative role-models may include a mother, community member, or extended family.

Although the responsibility lies with adolescents to succeed in life, it benefits their development when they have parents or guardians who support them in their stages of development (Mampane, 2014). As part of this study, I assumed that when and if the participants had caregivers or role-models involved in their lives, they would show greater levels of overall achievement in school, including higher levels of social competence.

2.3.2 Absent fathers from a South African perspective

In this section I will explore how father absenteeism has influenced South African adolescents. Eddy et al. (2013) report that absent fathers in African families are a prevalent phenomenon in South Africa as its occurrence has increased by 7% in a period of 13 years. Madhavan, Townsend and Garey (2008, p. 647) state that “children born since 1991 are significantly less likely to receive support from their fathers than are those born before.” Single-parent households are mostly mother-headed. An estimated 3% of children live with their fathers only, while 38% live with their mothers (Statistics South Africa, 2013). With regard to this study, I assumed that the participants, coming from a single parent family, would most likely be living with their mother.

When a father is absent, as well as an alternative father-figure or role-model, it could have a long-term and, in most cases, destructive consequence for the development of a child. Even though fathers may be physically present, there has been little research with regard to whether fathers who are present actually contribute to the progression of their child (Eddy et al., 2013). Ratele et al. (2012) find that children of fathers who are physically or emotionally absent experience a great loss and feelings of emptiness. Makofane (2015) reports on some participants being hurt emotionally by their undependable fathers and as a result feeling unloved, lost, rejected, and deceived. Langa (2014) details that during interviews, his participants expressed a need for guidance and direction from their fathers. As an effect, they expected that the negative feelings they had towards their fathers might be resolved if they were present, but they also realised that these were unrealistic expectations.

Statistics South Africa (2013) indicates that when fathers are absent, the family has an increased risk of experiencing severe poverty as financial shortage seems to be higher among children with mothers only or when neither parent is contributing financially (as found in grandparent-headed households). One of the main reasons why fathers tend to be uninvolved in their family’s life is due to feeling ashamed or unworthy because they are unable to be successful breadwinners (Ratele et al., 2012). As mentioned in the previous section (2.3.1), a patriarchal household is a more common stance that families take in South Africa, as the role of a wage-earner is ascribed to the father of the house. Not being able to fulfil this role may further instigate their absenteeism.

Eddy et al. (2013) maintain that other reasons why fathers are absent may include cultural factors (like the high cost of *ilobolo*² and *damages*³ in African communities), dysfunctional relationships between parents, and challenges related to a divorce or parental break-up. Income discrimination, masculinity power and ideologies, and spouse violence further impact the quality of fatherhood in South Africa (Bhana & Nkani, 2014). HIV/AIDS is also a force that hinders fathers in South Africa in playing their role in families properly (Ratele et al., 2012).

While attempting to attain the possible alternative reasons as to why father involvement is hindered, most importantly, it was intended in this study to show how families are able to be resilient irrespective of father absenteeism. Another major facet underwriting father absence was caused by Apartheid, as men were separated from their families seeking employment in remote metropolises (Freeks et al., 2015).

2.3.3 The impact of Apartheid on absent fathers

Furthering the challenge of fathers moving far away from their families were the forced removals and refugee labour of Black families across South Africa (Ratele et al., 2012). This meant that if a father from a Black family was fortunate enough to find employment close to home, he had to work a lot harder than his White counterpart for less money (Edwards, 2015). Apartheid also contributed to the current position of families in South Africa, causing a generation of absent fathers either not fulfilling their parental role or performing it unsatisfactorily. Eddy et al. (2013) emphasise the importance of trying to break this cycle of fatherlessness by implementing proper intervention plans for these fathers. Furthermore, Edwards (2015) states that Apartheid caused restrictions to be placed on the majority of Black South African children. These restrictions were in the form of resources or possibilities that were limited for Black fathers when they were raised and as a result may have had an impact on the current study's participants' exposure to satisfactory means. In other words, today's absent

² "Ilobolo" is explained by Eddy et al. (2013) as a traditional agreement made by settlers of Natal in the nineteenth century as a payment of 11 cattle. Today, the cash equivalent for "ilobolo" is about "several thousand US dollars" and is to be paid by the groom to the bride's father.

³ Eddy et al. (2013) explain 'damages' as fines being implemented due to an offense that has been committed against the community or a family (e.g. theft, impregnating a woman out of wedlock).

fathers were constrained during the Apartheid years and this may have resulted in their children inheriting a position of scarcity.

Research shows growth in the number of absent fathers since the end of Apartheid (Eddy et al., 2013). It could be theorised that a generation of scattered fathers was the consequence of the Apartheid government, which led to many Black families being divided (Freeks et al., 2015). The adolescents in this study may face the aftermath that Apartheid had on Black manhood, which resulted in a decline of family life. According to researchers, this deterioration has had a harsh impact on: marriage, intimacy in relationships, residential outlines, job reservation, schooling, and businesses opportunities (Bhana & Nkani, 2014; Ratele et al., 2012). It would be wrong to deliberate only on the terrible side of absent fatherhood, as the majority of researchers are inclined to do. As argued earlier, these adolescents are prone to having the capacity, resources, and positive influence to overcome the challenges that Apartheid presented to their development, and to restore African manhood.

My assumptions were that role-models within an adolescent's family and their community would restore the gap that has been created by absent fathers and Apartheid. Another aspect that may have driven the more positive outcome since Apartheid is the concept of 'Ubuntu'. It was Walter Sisulu that said, "If you have two cows and the milk of the first cow is sufficient for your own consumption, 'Ubuntu' expects you to donate the milk of the second cow to your underprivileged brothers and sisters" (Metz, 2007, p. 326). In this study, it is posited that the adolescent sphere of influence will be driven by this principle, not through financial contributions, but by means of guidance, life skills, and just being there for the participants in this study. Consequently, I intended to formulate an even-handed view of absent fathers within post-Apartheid South Africa.

2.4 THE RISK RELATED TO ABSENT-FATHER HOUSEHOLDS

Being part of an absent fathers family may have some undesirable results on the members of a household. Absent fathers may lead to single-mothers having the sole responsibility of a household. This could also lead to child-headed households, having a long lasting effect on the developmental phase of adolescence. These aforementioned risks will be discussed in detail in the next section.

2.4.1 Female headed household

Mampane and Bower (2011) report that South African families living in townships are being exposed to various stressors, including single-parent families, the unemployment of the main caregiver, and the death of significant others. According to Choi and Jackson (2011), single mothers are also common in other parts of the world, for example in the US, specifically in African American families. Patterson et al. (2009) also emphasise the strain that mothers experience due to the loss or absence of a partner. The White Paper on Families in South Africa (2012, p. 17) articulates that Black families are affected the most as they have the highest proportion of single-parent households (more than 40%). Single parents generally seem to have higher levels of joblessness, and also lack resources (Allen & Daly, 2007). Living in scarcity may motivate mothers to take on additional work, contributing to exhaustion, and resulting in an inability to consider the emotional needs of their children (Theron, 2007). Patterson et al. (2009) reveal that single-mothers in the American context often feel overwhelmed due to responsibilities and roles caused by both family and work, but the picture of mothers may look different within a South African context. When considering the research carried out in this study, it was my assumption that when the participants' families were female-headed, their mother would most probably draw on alternative resources to help her carry the duties of child-rearing, as described later in this section (2.5.1.2).

As mentioned previously, Ratele et al. (2012) find that when looking at single parenthood in South Africa, it is more common for children to be raised by their mothers than their fathers. The White Paper on Families (2012) confirms that it is highly common for women to lead single parent households in South Africa, highlighting the absence of fathers in most families. Holborn and Eddy (2011) explain that these single mothers are especially prominent in the urban areas, being between the ages of 25 and 34. If this is the argument for urban mothers, the chance of statistics being elevated

in rural areas is high due to having less access to resources and having more contextual challenges. The statistics of single mothers' average age in South Africa implies that they may have raised their children when they were inexperienced, also having a long-term effect on the welfare of both parent and child. Choi and Jackson (2011) identify the enormous challenges that single mothers face as a result of fathers withdrawing from family involvement, which may be unhealthy for a child's wellbeing. Connell and UNECA (as cited by the White Paper on Families, 2012) point out that female-headed households (FHHs) are usually deprived of essential assets like property, domestic animals, financial support, and schooling.

In fact, it would be inaccurate to assume that all FHHs are less resilient than father-headed households. In a South African study, Schatz, Madhavan and Williams (2011) found single mothers to have strong signs of resilience in adversity. Some were even thriving in the context of adversity by drawing on social connections (in-laws or child support), interpersonal relationships, grants, and labour opportunities. McLanahan and Jencks (2015) indicate that some mothers are resilient because they create better systems of support than fathers, irrespective of their male counterparts' whereabouts. Accordingly, family connections and culture ('Ubuntu') should be considered as possible sources of further alleviation for families with absent fathers (Arthur, Issifu, & Marfo, 2015). The Green Paper on Families (2011) find that female-headed households are more likely to contain extended family households than households headed by males. Patterson et al. (2009) explain that the grandparents and live-in partners of these mothers tend to be part of the upbringing of these children and contribute to their social and economic resources. I have looked at single-mother households and will now consider households where both parents are absent.

2.4.2 Orphans and child-headed households

I have decided to include this section because a child that only has one parent (or no parents) may be regarded as an orphan. An orphan who is a child without a father fits the criteria of the current study and, when referring to statistics, it seems that absent fathers are more probable than absent mothers in families when considering orphans (Statistics South Africa, 2012). When doing sampling of the current study's participants, there may be strong possibility of child-headed or grandparent-headed households. Therefore, I intended to include alternative family structures that could result from the data collection process.

Violence and AIDS in South Africa has led to more frequent appearances of child-headed households (Freeks et al., 2015). Ratele et al. (2012) refer to this as a burden that has adverse impressions on families in South Africa, resulting in a significant number of children growing up without suitable guidance. In 2007, UNICEF (The United Nations Children’s Fund) revealed that it was probable that 2.5 million children in South Africa had lost one or both parents (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). Statistics South Africa (2013) has, however, found that 2.3 million orphans are paternal, 700 000 maternal, and 800 000 both-parents orphans. This means that about one in five children (20%) are orphans in South Africa (See Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Orphan status of children by sex

Orphan status	Share of child population (%)	Share of boy child population (%)	Share of girl child population (%)
Maternal orphan	3,8	4,0	3,7
Paternal orphan	12,0	11,8	12,3
Double orphan	4,2	4,3	4,2
No orphan	76,9	76,9	76,8
Status unknown	0,9	0,9	1,0
Unspecified	2,1	2,1	2,1

Statistics South Africa. (2013). Men, women: Findings of the Living Conditions Survey (2008-2009).

As mentioned earlier, Black families in South African tend to be the most affected by absent parents due to various influences of the past and present that may indicate a high percentage of orphans in this study. Statistics South Africa (2012) researched young Black African children (between 0 – 4 years of age), indicating that 45.6% of them lived with their biological mother, 21.0% of them lived with neither parent, and 2.1% with their biological father only. The aforementioned statistics may indicate a projection of the possible incline in orphaned adolescence in the future. These statistics will be used as a guiding tool when communicating the findings in Chapter 4.

Holborn and Eddy (2011) find that orphans have a higher chance of missing out on education, growing up in homes with less food security, are more likely to suffer from anxiety and depression, as well as risky exposure to HIV infection. I am not convinced that these findings are appropriate as my hypothesis that the culture of ‘Ubuntu’ and role-models will overrule the threats expressed above is possible.

Ardington and Leibbrandt (2010), for instance, have found that other members of the community may also contribute to improved educational outcome for adolescents.

Furthermore, the White Paper on Families (2012) clarifies that poverty seems to be more prevalent in all orphan categories than for a child with both parents in South Africa. Generally, orphans are exposed to higher risk factors, therefore they need to rely on quality family resilience factors in order to overcome their challenges. For the purpose of this study, I will, however, focus on orphans with absent fathers and those who have lost both parents. According to the aforementioned statistics, it was less likely that I would collect data from participants who lived with their biological fathers only (2.1%). This fits the current research topic since I intended to explore the phenomenon of absent fathers in families.

2.4.3 The Developmental phase of adolescence

Sense of belonging and identity

Young adolescents (12-18 years old) face the dilemma of group identity versus alienation (Carr, 2015). Bottrell (2009) states that central to the development of a teenager is establishing identity and adjusting to school, which may enhance protective factors in their lives. Theron and Theron (2013) describe how adolescents long to fit in somewhere or belong to a group of peers, which forms an important task for adolescents to achieve in this phase. When referring to this study, I wanted to identify if the participants had attained a sense of belonging and to what extent they had managed to belong. According to Bottrell (2009), the subjective understanding of oneself stands in relation to others that contribute to the successful or unsuccessful developmental tasks of adolescence.

Mncube and Madikizela-Madiya (2014) find that adolescents may look for this sense of belonging in the wrong places, like by joining a gang, leading them to partake in violent behaviour, drug and alcohol use. Carr (2015) elaborates that a clear sense of identity needs to be reached by the young adolescent and one can imagine that being initiated by other gang members may strengthen this sense of identity. Commonly, international and national news often report on murders that are gang-related as a result of initiation. Mncube and Madikizela-Madiya (2014) argue that rather than allowing youth, especially in township areas, to be drawn to a sense of belonging through gangs, schools should encourage their learners to purposefully contribute to

their community. Theron (2007) adds that the community should help adolescents to express their desire to develop self-awareness and an opinion, which as a result could lead to cross-generational harmony. Masten and Gewirtz (2013) believe that each teenager should get the opportunity to voice their own opinion in a community, regardless of generational variances. The opinion that children should be seen and not heard is a custom that may lead adolescents to seek less appropriate ways to express their voice, as seen with gangsters.

Preparing for adulthood

Furthermore, an adolescent's process of socialisation is based on a balance between individualisation and the formation of personal identity, on the one hand, and the integration into society on the other (Feltham & Horton, 2012). If this balance is not achieved, it may lead to "identity crisis" (Berk, 2013, p. 469). Berk (2013) credits identity crises as limiting adolescents' choices, which could result in them being shallow, directionless, and ill-equipped for the psychological challenges of adulthood. This may contribute to the argument of youths joining gangs as a result of trying to find their purpose in life. It would also be interesting to investigate the possible psychological challenges of teenagers who decide to join gangs, but there could be possible ethical challenges involved in this kind of research.

Low and Low (2014) state that adolescence involves a high level of exploration where previously unmet experiences challenge a teenager to revise and replace inappropriate or inadequate ideas with new ones. My assumption was that I would find extended family members or other role-models of the community that help with this process, specifically if the adolescents' father was uninvolved. For an adolescent, finding a place to belong could lead them to experience higher levels of stability in interpersonal relationships (Rutter, 2007), possibly leading to higher levels of resilience. Research conducted by Collishaw, Pickles, Messer, Rutter, Shearer and Maughan (2007) reveals that adults who were abused as children will normally show higher amounts of psychopathology, but almost half of their adult participants had no sign of psychopathology. Those with no signs of psychopathy tended to rely strongly on interpersonal relationships to help them overcome the childhood hardships that they had encountered. I expected that the adolescents in this study would also use close relationships to overcome the challenge of their fathers being absent, especially by means of identity formation with peers, extended family, and the school context.

Boundaries in families

Panter-Brick and Leckman (2013) find that increasing resilience in the development of children is related to higher levels of functioning in both physical and cognitive spheres later in life. Adolescents being more resilient requires families to increase their boundaries to allow the nurturing of independence and responsibility (Patterson et al., 2009). Brown and Robinson (2012) explicate that in this stage, the emotional ties of adolescents should be untied from their family for the process of establishing their own roles and identity to take place. As argued earlier, perhaps this rule of expanding boundaries may be less relevant for youth living in townships. Parents who are more rigid in terms of rules may be more prevalent in these types of conditions in order to ensure their child's physical safety.

Family life cycle and belonging

Yet another aspect that may augment resilience in teenagers is the quality of the parent-child relationship. Masten and Monn (2015) emphasise that parents may also provide a sense of belonging by means of providing emotional security. Research conducted in America reports higher levels of internal distress when adolescents do not have a strong connection with their parents (Myrick, Eric, & Crenshaw, 2014). Allowing secure attachments between parents and their child will most probably lead to feelings of "safety, security, and stability" in adolescence (Myrick et al., 2014, p. 39). Having this attachment with a parent helps an adolescent to advance in autonomous behaviour, meaning they are more likely to explore the world with confidence (Louw & Louw, 2014). However, Patterson et al. (2009) warn that the family life cycle of families with adolescents is a tricky phase for the family. In this phase, parents tend to encounter a reshaping of their own dreams, having an increased role to play in taking care of their own parents (grandparents), not to mention divorce being a high probability. This could lead to less consideration for adolescents' physical and emotional needs, leading them to search for belonging elsewhere. Panter-Brick and Leckman (2013) explain that a severe contextual threat, like divorce (Perales et al., 2017), could lead to maladjustment during a child's development depending on the quality of child-rearing, support of friends and family, and the timing of the divorce. This implies that the divorce or separation of a child's parents may or may not harm their development depending on the quality and support given by their caregivers. Another consideration is that the research done by Patterson et al. (2009) was based on an

American context, meaning that the South African adolescent may experience the family life cycle differently.

The family life cycle and possible contextual influences, like divorce or separation, were relevant and considered in this South African study. However, more emphasis was placed on the quality of the relationship between caregivers and adolescents. The extent to which the caregiver (being either mothers, grandparents, or extended families) provided safety, security, and stability to these adolescents was further considered here. Van der Kaap-Deeder, Vansteenkiste, Soenens and Mabbe (2017) report the quality of the interaction between mothers and their children contributes to the resilience of elementary schoolchildren. Furthermore, when guardians are overburdened, they give responsibility to these adolescents in order to share the duties among family members (Ungar et al., 2011). Patterson et al. (2009) add that it is common for single mothers to share home responsibilities with their children due to having to work late. Having this shared responsibility may also contribute to aspects of the child-parent relationship as they work together and have a sense of standing united in order to bounce back amidst hardships and grow in resilience.

Theron and Theron (2013) state that regardless of context, all youth have similar needs, including having access to physical resources, forming positive relationships, and being able to belong or feel accepted. Myrick et al (2014) further explain that the absenteeism of parents, especially fathers, places remarkable internal stress on adolescents' feelings of safety, security, and stability, which may or may not hinder the development of these adolescents. Consequently, an adolescent's future is not necessarily dependant on a father being present. Mother-headed or alternative households have proven able to adequately contribute to family resilience in order for the adolescent to reach the expected developmental outcomes (Keyes, 2007). These outcomes include having a sense of belonging, identity, preparing for adulthood, and independence.

2.5 FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO FAMILY RESILIENCE

2.5.1 Support

The data collected helped me to understand how adolescents perceive family resilience despite the absence of their biological fathers. Resilience for these teens can thus be seen as the manner in which they access and utilise psychosocial and structural resources in their family to sustain wellbeing (Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013). This study aimed to determine the participants' attainment of family resilience, especially with regard to family, extended family, community, and school support.

2.5.1.1 Family support

Panter-Brick and Leckman (2013) maintain that resilience-focused interventions should rather concentrate on family support and caregiver warmth than improving family structures. Tchombe et al. (2012) and Bhana and Bachoo (2011) indicate that the highest contributor to family resilience is a strong social and family support system and elevated levels of love, warmth, and emotive care shown by members of the family towards each other. Madhavan and Crowell (2014) add that mothers and other extended kin provide a basis for adolescents to experience a sense of belonging, group identity, and even encourage educational and employment goals. Single mothers also depend on extended kin when raising children, as this is a cultural expectation, which includes aunts, uncles, and grandparents (Makofane, 2015). For this reason, I expected the participants of this study to be resilient because of the love, support, warmth, and emotive care being expressed in their family, regardless of father absenteeism.

2.5.1.2 Extended family and community member support

According to Louw (2013), today's single-mothers rely on multi-caregivers such as members of the community, grandparents and other extended family members to help with child-rearing. The concept of social fathers is highlighted by Clowes et al. (2013), indicating the key role that extended family and community members play in absent-father families.

Grandparent-headed households

Research focusing on Chinese immigrants residing in America indicate the involvement of grandparents as possibly contributing to adolescents' understanding of cultural expectations, and fostering healthy psychological wellbeing (Tang, Xu, Chi &

Dong, 2016). Another study conducted on African American families in America found that grandparents may enrich grandchildren's culture, personality, self-esteem development, and interpersonal relationships (Tang, Jang & Copeland, 2015). When grandparents provide grandchildren with support, they are reported to feel satisfaction because they are able to pass their knowledge on and help balance caregiving for single-mothers who work full-time, as well as providing financial support (Tang et al., 2016).

In some cases, extended family members or grandparents are forced to take care of children with both parents being absent. Louw (2013) states that besides a child's biological parents, grandparents are seen as the second most important in line to assume responsibility for raising children in South Africa. When this happens, it may place an unnecessary burden on grandparents and lead to high levels of anxiety for them, whereas given a choice it may lead to personal feelings of satisfaction, as explained above (Masten & Monn, 2015). However, Pilkauskas and Dunifon (2016) find that being raised by grandparents has a similar outcome when compared to other urban parents. Makofane (2015) argues that grandparent-headed households help children to develop better in terms of school, health, and behaviour. Some grandparents may have more challenges with regard to physical and mental health than biological parents. However, overall, the benefit seems to outweigh the challenge as grandparents tend to be economically stronger and have less hardship when compared to biological parents (Pilkauskas & Dunifon, 2016). Makofane (2015) adds that grandparents tend to provide higher levels of love, stability, and structured environments. Further advantages of grandparent-headed households are sharing meals around the table and having higher qualifications than home-based mothers (Pilkauskas & Dunifon, 2016).

Other extended family and community support

Other extended family members may be viewed as role-models that contribute to the values of adolescents by showing the importance of collectivism⁴ (Madhavan & Crowell, 2014). In Clowes et al.'s (2013) study, one of the participants, being raised by his grandparents, indicated his uncle as his role-model because he brought money home from the mine where he worked in Gauteng. Madhavan and Crowell (2014) did

⁴ The practice or principle of giving a group priority over each individual in it. Collectivism is also a term familiar to 'Ubuntu' (Mentz, 2007).

a study on 99 Black males and female youths between the ages of 14 and 22 to identify role-models in different spheres of their life. These were the findings of their study.

Table 2.2: Role-models as perceived by adolescents from a township

Percentages who mentioned:	Total
Mothers	57%
Fathers	23%
Siblings	32%
Extended kin	64%
Village/community members	75%

* The mentioned percentages are the number of participants who identified the different groupings as being active role-models in their lives.

The above statistics indicate the high number of extended kin (64%) and village/community members (75%) actually forming part of the development of adolescents, irrespective of having an absent father in the family or not. Clowes et al. (2013) report that there are enough adult men who are available to fill the void left by absent fathers, including grandparents, neighbours, uncles, and even school principals. Madhavan and Crowell (2014) add that role-models may also be aunts and cousins that have stronger relationships with adolescents than biological parents do, and as a result, they contribute to the social and emotional development of adolescents.

2.5.1.3 School support

In the previous section, I mentioned that principals could also be considered as role models, therefore it is safe to assume that teachers could also be regarded as role-models for adolescents. Petersen (2014) researched Foundation Phase⁵ teachers' role in adolescent development and found that they may contribute to a child's understanding of culture, finance, and social issues. Another study found that teachers who offer autonomous learning experiences will lead learners to become more resilient in school (Van der Kaap-Deeder et al., 2017). Furthermore, a South African study conducted by Theron (2007) found that Life Orientation classes provided a safe space in which adolescents could voice their feelings and ask any question of

⁵ Grades R (or 0) to 3.

their teacher. Mosoetsa (2011) confirms that a teacher's role is to develop adolescents' knowledge of culture, and specifically refers to the importance of the principles of 'Ubuntu'.

Further research done by Theron (2007) found schooling as a contributing source of resilience as the participants felt that they were prepared for life after school. As mentioned previously, schools may provide teenagers with a sense of belonging and may help learners to find their purpose in their larger community. Edwards (2015) states that various positive outcomes can come from schools and parents working together in order to reduce unacceptable behaviour and conflict in families. Lopez and Corona (2012) underline that while adolescents may drop out of school for various reasons, finishing school should be encouraged as it may contribute to family resilience in the long run. Kruger and Prinsloo (2008, p. 251) did a study within a school setup, where they found that the "support of friends and family, having a sense of humour, scholastic success, sports, bonding with pets, listening to music and religion" may contribute to family resilience. Some of these aspects may be relevant to this study, even though the aforementioned study mainly focused on a higher income community. The underlining resilience factors may surface differently in this study, for instance, sport could mean cricket and netball in the aforementioned context, while it would be soccer in this study.

2.5.2 Positive outlook

"Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way" (Frankl, as cited by Pattakos & Dundon, 2017, p. 19).

Having a positive attitude in life will add to a family's ability to bounce back during a challenge. Having a confident viewpoint while facing a challenging situation is at the heart of being resilient as a family (Black & Lobo, 2008). According to Oh and Chang (2014), this way of viewing life influences judgment positively regarding the challenges experienced by a family. Rutter (2013) indicates that a positive atmosphere created by a family may contribute to the protective factors, which buffers against children being bullied at school, leading to lower signs of negative emotional and behavioural influences. A part of being mentally healthy means that the prevalence of something positive seems to be stronger than the appearance of the challenging conditions being faced by the family (Keyes, 2007).

A recent study showed that the more individual family members demonstrate a positive mindset towards life, the less chaotic family behaviour tends to be (Ungar, 2015). I used the mentioned literature in order to get an idea of what the participants' attitude was towards the challenges that they faced. As part of the interviews, I identified the participants' positive attitude towards their circumstances. The assumption here was that these participants' contributions would most probably show more indications of family resilience, advancing the topic being studied.

Furthermore, increasing resilience will depend on a family's ability to have hope for the future, as shown by 443 disadvantaged Black female adolescents, as risk-taking behaviours declined due to their hope increasing (Black & Lobo, 2008). A resilient family will therefore still identify a demanding situation as challenging, but see it as manageable whilst considering the world overall as being positive (Oh & Chang, 2014). In the middle of adversity, families will affirm assets and options, uphold bravery and hope, and stay positive (Black & Lobo, 2008). An example of a positive outlook was found in the research of Langa (2014), whose participants were more determined to be good fathers in the future, without having consistent father figures in the course of their own teenage years.

2.5.3 Making meaning

Another important consideration for family resilience is a family's ability to make meaning out of adversity. Masten and Monn (2015) state that believing that life has meaning is fundamental to the resilience of adolescents and adults. This is sustained by a study performed by Theron and Dunn (2007) on the positive viewpoint of adolescent birthmothers who gave their babies up for adoption. These mothers were not able to make meaning through the adoption process, which led to continued thoughts and feelings of emptiness, resulting in an extended grieving process. These findings on adolescents could be transferred to families, as the principle of being stuck in a mindset without making meaning may lead to a less resilient family.

Saltzman et al. (2013) encourage that a family should rather attempt to make sense of their surroundings and approach the future with sureness. This also means that they need to reconstruct their fears realistically by turning their suffering into positivity, enhancing the process of making meaning of their circumstances (Maree, 2013). As part of this study, I intended to try and identify if the participants were able to make meaning of their fathers' lack of involvement. My purpose was not to help the

participants to make sense of it all, but rather to allow them a platform to make meaning by means of asking reflective questions during the semi-structured interviews. Langa (2010) reported that the participants in their study used healthy ways of coping by focusing on future studies and careers so that they could provide for their children one day.

Moreover, it was desired through this study to contribute to the literature on where to start when considering possible interventions for adolescents with absent fathers. Maree (2015) highlights the importance of South Africans designing appropriate strategies to help people to make meaning of their challenges. As a family, however, meaning needs to be made clear so that family members can strategise together on how to address future challenges (Patterson et al., 2009). Ebersöhn (2010) used quadrant-mapping in the South African context to help people make meaning in a diverse context with a focus on career counselling. This is a technique that will particularly be useful in gathering the contextual information of families and may help families to discover aspects of resilience within their own family and context. In this study, I used the concept of quadrant-mapping after the semi-structured interview when I asked two of the participants to draw their family in terms of aspects enhancing and reducing resilience in and around their family (Ebersöhn, 2010).

2.5.4 Spirituality and culture

Bhana and Bachoo (2011) explain that belief systems refer to spirituality, which may improve family resilience. Spirituality can contribute to family resilience by providing helpful networks to members that help them to overcome their challenges, for example, being part of a church community (Walsh, 2012). It is through a church community that families partake in social activities and receive support (Masten & Monn, 2015). This support may take the form of members praying for and showing concern for each other, providing emotional care, and providing financial backing. Theron and Theron (2013) find that networks of spiritual coping forms part of culture, helps to facilitate adversity, and inspires resilience. Kirmayer et al. (2011) emphasise that no matter what an individual's spiritual orientation is, spirituality is seen as a collective internal value structure that provides a sense of belonging to a community and family. It was also found that spirituality may influence individual family members to find solace and guidance from the church community in times of adversity (Oh & Chang, 2014).

Bhana and Bachoo (2011) report that children who commonly prayed were more optimistic about the future than children who did not pray frequently. Additionally, a families' ability to place hope in a higher being and make sense of trials contributes to their protective factors (Black & Lobo, 2008). Oh and Chang (2014) state that a family's shared belief can also promote their resilience. In a South African context, spirituality is viewed as a vitally important part of everyday life, especially in my experience of Black cultures. Walsh (2012) also mentions the importance of families having rituals and routines, notably found in the Black African community, as this may also lead to more resilient families. Langa (2014) explains that participants who attend rituals at initiation school find that it contributes to their sense of identity and belonging with other male figures as role-models, which also leads to resilience. In this study, I believed that rituals and routines would mostly be present regardless of the involvement of parents in the lives of the participants due to the strong spiritual and cultural heritage that these communities generally have. This may be found through interactions with extended family members or other members of the community. It may also be frowned upon by other community members if adolescents do not partake in these traditions.

Walsh (2012) emphasises the crucial role that spirituality plays in a family as it not only contributes to maintaining hope, but members are able to tolerate the adversity by trusting and finding relief in a higher being. Masten and Monn (2015) believe that a family's faith in a higher being acts as a foundation that comforts them during severe adversity. This foundation is provided by means of reading scripture or partaking in rituals, normally within a supportive network, as mentioned earlier. Furthermore, Oh and Chang (2014) find that accepting tough circumstances was more common in families having a spiritual grounding. According to their study, acceptance of challenges may contribute to a family upholding family life and, as a result, experiencing fewer unwanted psychological reactions to adverse life events. Alternatively, Feltham and Horton (2012) have found that the denial of these life challenges may have implications for individual family members, like having a lack of drive and enthusiasm, flatness of emotions, a deficiency in pleasure, and slow dialogue and thoughts. It was therefore important to try and identify if the participants in this study had a spiritual basis at home and if so, how they used it to overcome father absenteeism.

2.5.5 Collective resilience ('Ubuntu')

Hernandez (2002) applied Walsh's family resilience framework in a Columbian context. In his article, he places emphasis on introducing the concept of collective resilience or a shared challenge by making meaning of adversity faced by families. Columbia suffered four-decades of warfare and as a result, families were run down. As mentioned, Walsh (2012) found that family resilience is a family's ability to find resources in order to adapt amidst the challenges that they encounter. Hernandez (2002) identifies the usefulness of Walsh's Family Resilience Theory as it assists, among others, in changing a family's perspective on life. Even though Hernandez's (2002) article is outdated, it shows the relevance of applying family resilience to diverse cultures and the need for more research to be done on this phenomenon. Bottrell (2009) indicates that a shift needs to take place where the focus moves from individuals in the community to the community as a whole, taking responsibility for supporting those who are disadvantaged and helping to mobilise the resources to do so. Here again, I expected 'Ubuntu' to play an important role in the lives of the participants in this study as it is seen as fundamental to African philosophy (Arthur et al., 2015). Consequently, collective resilience may also include principles of 'Ubuntu' as it infers that we can, irrespective of historical hatred, work together for the mutual good in order to uphold the wellbeing of the entire community (Mikucka & Rizzi, 2016).

A study conducted in Cameroon, based on a low socio-economic community, showed more than half of the participants indicated having family land, but did not have the resources or know-how to advance these properties (Tchombe et al., 2012). A Canadian study on community resilience suggests that most individuals thrive well when their community provides the context to flourish; which depends on the assets that the society possesses (Ungar, 2011). These findings of Ungar (2011) confirm that community resources, when used productively, can be highly beneficial to the people of that community, which could be possible through applying principles of 'Ubuntu'. When referring to the study done on Cameroon land owners – why could this community not construct a plan where they work together to ensure that they get someone to show them how to effectively work their lands? Here the principle of 'Ubuntu' is something that is acknowledged in South Africa, which could be applied to other countries around the world (Metz, 2007). Unfortunately, it seems that 'Ubuntu' is something that has been overlooked by some South African citizens, especially those interested in political gain rather than collectivistic gain.

2.6 CONCLUSION

The provided background of Mamelodi East in combination with the literature review of this chapter emphasise the unsympathetic circumstances that the adolescents in this study faced while growing up. It will, however, be wrong to assume that within these hardships there are no protective factors accessible to them. Institutions like schools, churches, NGO's, and libraries are protective factors within the community that are most possibly available to these families. These can be used to ameliorate risk and empower adolescents in Mamelodi East. Extended family members, the mothers, or even other community role-players may also be able to supply the desired resources to facilitate overcoming challenges associated with an absent father. Lastly, the philosophy of 'Ubuntu' may further promote the mitigation of risk factors for adolescents (Mikucka & Rizzi, 2016). Nevertheless, the absence of fathers in families is a worrying risk that affects teenagers on an individual, family, and community level. This demands more research in order to understand how children overcome stressors while growing up in absent-father households. This is markedly true for adolescents being raised in the South African context.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I intend to evaluate the paradigmatic approach used, as well as to refer to the selected sample, data collection, documentation and analysis, which are all established in the qualitative approach. Lastly, I will explain the rigor and ethical concerns of this study.

3.2 PARADIGMATIC APPROACH

In Chapter 1, I alluded to using an interpretivist approach as the paradigmatic focus of this study. The interpretivist approach captured the understanding and viewpoints of the participants (Maree, 2013). This allowed me to grasp the participants' perception of family resilience (Wahyuni, 2012). This made me more aware of important interactions between the participants and myself (Tuli, 2012) during the semi-structured interviews. The key features of interpretivism were investigated in terms of reality being socially constructed, eliciting the personal meaning that the participants ascribed to father absenteeism, and understanding the multiple realities embedded in culture and community contexts (Tubey, Rotchi & Bengat, 2015).

The first key assumption is identified by Wagner et al. (2012), who sees reality as socially constructed. This means that people shape their own reality and are dependent on each individual's perspective to extend their current ontology (Maree, 2007). Sefotho (2015) explains that interpretivism introduces multiple realities that can be found in society. This research tried to understand the multiple realities presented by the participants in order to formulate a better impression of family resilience. The second key assumption of interpretivism begins with the thoughts of Husserl (as cited in Maree, 2013), who believes that an experience or phenomenon and the meaning people ascribe to a particular occurrence should be explored. Tuli (2012) reports that an individual is understood by engaging with participants in a natural way, and that when both researcher and participants are in a personal partnership, it may lead to deeper insight into the studied phenomenon. It is then assumed that the better the relationship that is built between the researcher and the participant, the more significant the data will be (Feltham & Horton, 2012). This is why I first set the participants at ease by clarifying the process of data collection, asking them about their

family, and explaining to them how they would be able to help other adolescents in similar family conditions as themselves. An empathetic approach used by a researcher allows participants' subjective meaning to surface.

The third key assumption is described by Sefotho (2015) in terms of a research phenomenon being related to values, which may lead to multiple explanations depending on the time and context in which the research takes place. When thinking of the possible contextual implications, it is also worth considering the stress that unemployment, disease, and abuse may have on the embedded system; being the participants in this study (Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2012). This, in turn, may reveal aspects that are hidden within the culture and worldview that could emerge during the interviews (Roth & Mehta, as cited in Sefotho, 2015). Wagner et al. (2012) maintain that knowledge is subjective, and truth is found in personal human experience and is influenced by the culture, context and the history of an individual. This is another reason why Walsh's (2016) contextual level of influence on the family resilience framework, as explained in Chapter 1, is so important to consider as families tend to be affected over time and as part of a systemic context. When considering the aforementioned, it was important to allow the participants to elaborate on how their experiences could contribute to other adolescents in South Africa. This was specifically in relation to overcoming their challenges of father absenteeism by focusing on what worked within their family, in their specific context, over time.

Tubey et al. (2015) find that the interpretive perspective acknowledges a value-laden approach as principles of cultures may inform this paradigm. Ferreira and Ebersöhn (2012) highlight that morals are mainly established during family and cultural interaction, which leads to higher levels of self-awareness and socially appropriate behaviour. Here, my own bias was considered as I was etic to the research participants, being unfamiliar with the background and circumstances of the people of Mamelodi East (Maree, 2013). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) add that this means that personal bias or values may interfere with the research being conducted. My convictions were written down in a reflective journal in the form of personal attitudes and values (see Appendix E), for example; when I started with data collection I thought the participants would be shy to express themselves and I bore the mindset that they would show low signs of family resilience. Making notes in my reflective journal lead me to rethink ideas and inaccurate perceptions, as you will see when referring to Appendix E. The journal was intended to reduce my prejudice in order to ensure an

appropriate acknowledgment of the participants' viewpoints. Boellinghaus, Jones, and Hutton (2013) expound that journal reflections may provide a deeper level of self-awareness, possibly helping to identify bias patterns of interaction and negative attitudes towards populations. Even though this is from a psychological reflection perspective, it is a principle that is applicable to research as well. The reflective journal had a dual purpose in this research as it also contributed to the coding process of the gathered data (Silverman, 2010). In this study, the reflective journal allowed me to change my original perception from thinking that adolescents are the victims of their circumstances to seeing them as victors (Maree, 2013) who overcome their familial challenges by embracing other role-models in their family, extended family, and community.

As mentioned, I used a qualitative research method (De Vos et al., 2011) to gain a better understanding of the adolescents' perception of family resilience. I was able to discover how these adolescents made meaning out of adversity within their own environment (Tuli, 2012). The qualitative research method allowed me to investigate and describe the distinctive experiences of the participants (Wagner et al., 2012), identify what family resilience meant to them (Merriam, 2009), and this permitted me to gain data on the crux of the phenomenon being studied (Yin, 2014).

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES AND STRATEGIES

3.3.1 Research design

This study used an exploratory case study research design as it supported the exploration of the phenomenon of family resilience, which is bound by a context (Seale, 2012), and provided clear boundaries (Maree, 2013). Maree (2013, p. 75) clarifies that case study research provides a "rich description" of a particular phenomenon. When I selected the participants for this study, I chose candidates that would provide the necessary data connected to the focus of this study (Creswell, 2011). Silverman (2010) explains that a case study relies on the detail of a small amount of cases for the purpose of developing a universal understanding of an occurrence. Emmel (2013) states that the purpose of case studies is to provide descriptive data that will answer the question related to what is observed in the specific instance or context, i.e. family resilience from the perspective of adolescents. The aforementioned was a facilitated exploration of the participants' context, including: cultural, historical, physical conditions, economic, political, and the legal implications of their conditions (Emmel,

2013). Once again, this is linked to Walsh’s (2012) family resilience framework, which is rooted in the systemic orientation. Ferreira and Ebersöhn (2012) report that when contextual factors are explored, the family and neighbourhood should be considered, also emphasising the important influence that the broader system of the family may have on building the resilience of a family. Another contextual consideration is explained by Feltham and Horton (2012) as spirituality, which is specifically relevant to the South African context. Ancestors may also form part of the participants’ perception of factors contributing to family resilience (Makofane, 2015).

Flick (2009, p. 134) indicates that you can consider “people, social communities, organisations, and institutions” in a case study as it will provide comprehensive and specific data. The partner organisation in this study, Stanza Bopape Community Development Centre (as shown in Image 3.1 and 3.2) was therefore particularly valuable as it is an organisation embedded within the community of the present participants. There are often problems when trying to generalise data collected from only one participant, therefore I intended to improve this study’s validity by having four case studies where each participant represented a case (Flick, 2009). De Vos et al. (2011) state that case studies are selected in order to make comparisons between different opinions that will validate and extend the theories provided in the literature. Furthermore, due to a lack of literature found on adolescents and family resilience, specifically in the South African context, this study intended to contribute to these fields as well.

In order to provide contextual information, Image 3.1 shows the research site in relation to its ecological position, and the red dart in image 3.2 shows the location of Stanza Bopape Community Development Centre (also see Appendix H).



Image 3.1: Ecological position



Image 3.2: Aerial shot of the centre's terrain

Further contextual information is given in the following two photographs (3.1 to 3.3), showing the terrain where the participants spent most of their afternoons during the school terms.



Photograph 3.1: Entrance



Photograph 3.2: Playground



Photograph 3.3: Centre building

3.3.2 Selection of Participants

In this study, four adolescents between the ages of 12 and 14 from a partner organisation in Mamelodi East were asked to be part of the research. The participants are Black South Africans with absent fathers. Purposive sampling helped to identify specific participants who would help to execute the aims of the study (Silverman, 2010). Furthermore, purposive sampling uses systematic decision-making as a basis, and allows data to accurately shape the final findings of the phenomenon being studied (Emmel, 2013). Purposive sampling falls under the category of non-probability sampling, meaning that the data being collected does not involve random selection, which dismisses equal opportunity for all of the population when considered in this study (Guest et al., 2012). This however, gave me a set of selection criteria for the research participants (Wagner et al., 2012) and contributed to an in-depth description of the phenomenon in question (Maree, 2013). Furthermore, in this study, the participants were offered the opportunity to provide their first-hand experiences of family resilience (Emmel, 2013). I had restricted control over the participant sampling process, as the partner organisation volunteered to gather consent and assent. When referring to the table below (3.1) it would seem as though I was bias by having four male participants as part of the study. I attained consent for 14 learners (see Appendix E), which included an even spread between male and female. Unfortunately, only 2 of the participants arrived on the first day and I had to go back to the research site on the

second day with the hope of having more participants to partake in the study. Having four males will certainly contribute to one of this study's limitations.

Table 3.1: Participants' biographical information

Participant	Age	Gender	Other household members	Caregiver(s)
One (P1)	13	Male	Grandparents, older sister, sister (6), and uncle.	Grandparents
Two (P2)	12	Male	Grandmother, two uncles, and younger brother (6).	Grandmother
Three (P3)	13	Male	Grandparents, mother, mother's sister, three brothers (14, 12, and 11), and one sister (2).	Mother and grandparents
Four (P4)	14	Male	Grandparents and three uncles.	Grandparents

3.3.3 Data collection and documentation

Data assembly was done through four semi-structured interviews, various visual data sources, and a reflective journal (see Appendix E). Initially it was challenging for me to bring my research together, but because I used aforementioned sources, it helped me to look at the data from various angles in order to form a clearer picture of family resilience. The information sessions took place during the week, after school at the partner organisation (see Appendix F), Stanza Bopape Community Development Centre (see Appendix H), in Mamelodi East. The reason why I partnered with this centre was because they were already rooted within Mamelodi East, building strong relationships with the families there. The University of Pretoria also has a long relationship with the centre, as they have been conducting research since 2012 at this particular centre. The centre helped me to attain participants that were consistently available and easily accessible, which improved the validity of the data gathering process (Carlson, 2010). Parents had to give their consent and the adolescents their assent, as the participants were aged between the age of 12 and 14 (Allen, 2008). With the parents' consent (see Appendix G), I used recording devices during the individual interviews, which were later transcribed. Furthermore, I used the centre's information pamphlets (see Appendix H) and took pictures of the research site (see Appendix I), which provided me with background information on the centre and Mamelodi East.

3.3.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

I used semi-structured interviews, which is a method that provides participants with the platform to explore the phenomenon being studied in detail (Guest et al., 2012). These interviews were held with four participants over two days, interviewing two participants per day. Interview times varied between 45 minutes and 80 minutes.

Semi-structured interviews are typically broad, open-ended, and flexible and move from broad to more specific questions (Ellingson, 2009). The more structured the interviews are, the more biased it may become. For this reason, the semi-structured approach allowed me to gather focused information (see Appendix F), but also provided space for the participants to go deeper into their personal experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This meant that the discussions assisted in the discovery of unique aspects of family resilience, giving profound detail (Guest et al., 2012). All four semi-structured interviews started with the same questions (see Appendix F), but ended with additional avenues of information, which was possible due to the interview technique chosen.



Photograph 3.4: Venue used for the semi-structured interview

In order to decrease the chance of having a biased selection of participants, I consulted my supervisor, peers, and kept a reflective journal, which improved the objectivity of the researcher in carrying out this study (Maree, 2013). Kvale and Brinkman (2009) found, on the one hand, that semi-structured interviews are time consuming and costly. However, on the other hand, they are easy to administer, participants can be illiterate and still take part in the research, access non-verbal cues, and it guarantees that all questions will be answered (Maree, 2013). The semi-structured interviews helped me to determine in-depth lines of analysis (Wagner et al., 2012). However, it was important to keep the discussion relevant to the study and to not become diverted (Maree, 2013). Furthermore, I respected my role as the researcher and tried to be thoughtful with the questions that were asked in order to refrain from prompting sensitive and irrelevant information from the participants. Even though the latter was not always possible, I used the participants' own perception of family resilience to reflect on their ability to cope, irrespective of having an absent father.

3.3.3.2 Visual data

Visual data can be used to accumulate information about people, processes and culture, and offers rich and descriptive details (Wagner et al., 2012). Visual data may provide extra insight to describe cultures better within their natural setting (Tuli, 2012; Guest et al., 2012). This is, however, dangerous territory as it is easy to be culturally biased in the course of attaining visual data (Wagner et al., 2012). This is why I had consultations with my supervisor and kept a reflective journal in order to continually monitor my actions, thoughts, and feelings. This proved to be particularly relevant when one of my participants weren't able to find the English word for what he was trying to say; my supervisor jumped in and spoke in his home language. It is important to consider that visual data has an advantage as it provides a more comprehensive image of participants' understanding, actions, and opinions (Guest et al., 2012) and this in turn can provide information that is not visible to the general public (Wagner et al., 2012).

On the second day, I asked the first two participants that I interviewed on the first day to draw me a picture of their family on a page (Illustrated in Image 3.3 and 3.4) and to include features that they thought enhanced or decreased family resilience (Walsh, 2012). The reason behind only asking two participants was due to the time constraints that I had. As they drew their pictures, I continued interviewing the fourth participants. These drawings were based on Ebersöhn's (2010) study, focusing on the use of quadrant-mapping. The drawings that the participants made of the possible family resilience factors helped me to strengthen the interaction between myself and the participants, as well as assisting in capturing their non-verbal interpretation of their families (Tuli, 2012).

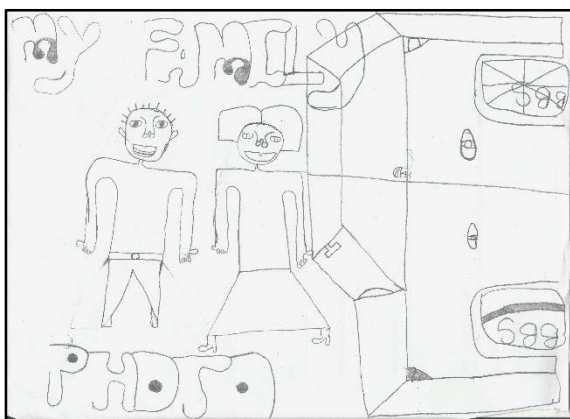


Image 3.3: Participant 1's drawing

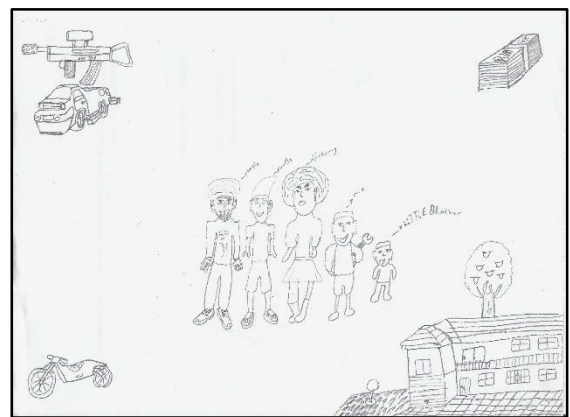


Image 3.4: Reflective journal

Thomas and Magilvy (2011) explain that a reflective journal may help a researcher in the process of developing key themes or motives identified within the research over time. While using my reflective diary to identify themes, I also used it for auditing purposes (Flick, 2009) to reflect on my bias or inaccurate assumptions by asking a peer to review it. I also used this journal to remind me to stay open to what the research produced (Boellinghaus et al., 2013).

3.3.3.3 Reflective journal

Tracy (2010) implies that a reflective journal may help the researcher in the process of developing key themes or motives identified within research over time (see Appendix E). While using my reflective notebook to identify themes, I also used it for auditing purposes (Flick, 2009) to reflect on my possible bias or inaccurate assumptions by asking a peer to review it. I also used this journal to remind me to stay open to what the research produced in order to regulate my own bias.

3.3.4 Data analysis and interpretation

I used thematic analysis in this study to make sense of the data collected during the individual interviews (see Appendix C). All audio recordings and field notes that were used to gather data were transcribed. Thematic analysis helped me to identify themes (see Appendix D) or patterns, which in return contributed to answering the research questions (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Maree (2015) clarifies that the data will allow the researcher to identify a research pattern or significance that will contribute to the original research questions. Thematic analysis helped me to understand the data that I collected and to formulate themes by condensing the information gathered from the participants (Seale, 2012).

I considered the importance of identifying differences or contradictions in the data as this helped me in the process of finding alternative explanations to adolescents' perceptions of family resilience (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). De Vos et al. (2011) maintain that alternative explanations always exist and that a researcher must be able to explain and identify these during a study. As a result, this also helped me to refrain from personal bias. Tuli (2012) states that the researcher acts as an important instrument of interpretation in this process. Researchers need to immerse themselves in the data collected and put aside their own preconceived ideas about the topic being studied (Tuli, 2012). De Vos et al. (2011) detail that as the researcher codes the data,

it is important to consider what new insight may emerge as he goes along allowing for changes in the original plan (see Appendix B). I was aware that I needed to shuffle ideas and data around in order to develop a coding scheme that provided the most insight into family resilience. In order to lower research bias, my supervisor evaluated the coding schemes, which guaranteed allocations to labels that matched the material (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

I used inductive data analysis by means of information transcribed from the audio recordings, and included data in the reflective journal and field notes to provide contextual data (Maree, 2007). Inductive reasoning allowed me to explain the phenomenon of family going from the specific to the general, involving identifying codes in the raw data (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). Maree (2015) explains that the inductive approach does not follow a current frame of coding and moves away from being manipulated by the researcher, even though this means that it will be a timeous task (Seale, 2012). To improve the process of inductive analysis, I used the steps provided by Wagner et al. (2012), namely: 1) Underline corresponding codes using assorted colours, 2) List all codes applied and define them on a separate piece of paper, and 3) Compare new data with previous findings.

3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS (SEE APPENDIX J)

First of all, I ensured that I acted in accordance with Pretoria University's ethics committee. Furthermore, the participants were informed that the data would be treated with confidentiality and only authorised people would have access to the data (Maree, 2013). The privacy and confidentiality of the participants was safeguarded at all times (Allan, 2008). The participants' privacy was protected through the use of pseudonyms, and the researcher refrained from using information that would humiliate, embarrass or harm the participants (Wagner et al., 2012).

The participants were informed that the study was voluntary, meaning that they could stop at any time if they felt violated or uncomfortable in the research process (Maree, 2013). The participants were also asked permission to record all the discussions for analytical purposes (Allan, 2008). The study used a translator, which took the form of my supervisor, therefore it is assumed that the language and cultural values of the participants were also considered at all times (Maree, 2013). The participants' cultural values and language were also considered when the data was interpreted and analysed for research purposes (Allan, 2008). At the beginning of the

research day, comprehensive information was provided on the “purpose, duration, method and potential uses of the research” (Wagner et al., 2012, p. 64).

I am aware that this research may contribute to more information about the context of the study, i.e. the Mamelodi East community, therefore I always communicated the outcome of the research findings honestly to all the involved participants (Chambliss & Schutt, 2015). I will also report research that is precise, authentic and truthful (Maree, 2013). Wagner et al.’s (2012) principle of bringing no harm (physically or emotionally or to their reputation) to participants as a result of partaking in research was also applied in this research. The participants were informed ahead of the interviews who they could contact if they had any unexpected emotional response to the issues raised in the discussions (Allan, 2008). Once the study was finalised, I provided feedback (see Appendix L) to the participants in accordance with ethical standards, as well as conducting member checking (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016).

3.5 RIGOR OF THE STUDY

According to Wagner et al. (2012), the rigor of any study needs to include five aspects that will contribute to the overall quality of the research. First of all, this study is credible as the participants of this study were considered appropriate (refer to section 1.9.4) to answer the research questions. Flick (2009) explains that credibility refers to how accurate a researcher's documentation is, how reliable the producer of the document is, and that research is free of errors. I complied with these aforementioned guidelines and establish well-defined accounts of the findings in order to further advance this study's credibility (Silverman, 2010).

The second aspect of a rigorous study is to address conformability. Conformability is reached when data is gathered from the participants rather from the subjective opinion of the researcher (Maree, 2013). This means that research should be confirmed by another researcher (De Vos et al., 2011), therefore I used external verification (audit⁶) of my findings, which contributed to the objectivity of this study (Maree, 2013). As part of the completion of my Master’s qualification, my supervisor acted as another researcher and was actively involved in the inclusion and exclusion

⁶ Flick (2009) indicates the process of auditing to include the recoding of data, short description of cases, restructuring themes, viewing researchers' field notes, reflective journal and the development of instruments.

of concepts throughout this study (see Appendix K). She also challenged my thoughts and bias throughout the research process.

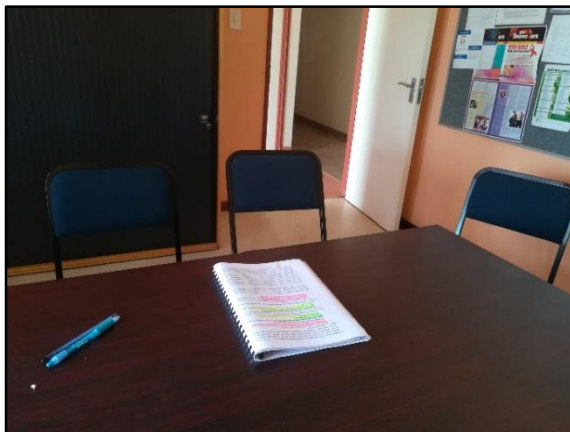
Thirdly, Wagner et al. (2012, p. 94) refer to transferability as the “extent to which one set of findings can be applied to another context”, being the third aspect to consider in the rigor of a study. Maree (2013) concludes that it is the extent to which the findings can be generalised to additional circumstances. In qualitative research, this aspect is seen as a weakness in this specific approach as findings are not as generalisable as with quantitative research (De Vos et al., 2011). One way in which I addressed this challenge was to ensure that I provided detail or thick descriptions of information. In other words, I used a comprehensive description of the research context and methods in order to enhance this research’s generalisability (Wagner et al., 2012, p. 242). The reality is that I initially planned to do a focus group with ten participants and two semi-structured interviews with two participants (see Appendix H), but even though consent and assent were attained for twelve participants (see Appendix G), only two were present on the first day. This forced me to return for a second day in the hope of having more interviews with participants that fit my criteria, and fortunately the other two arrived. These contextual factors confined the potential generalisability of this study’s research findings. However, it is not the aim of this study to generalise the findings, but rather to provide additional information on how adolescents perceive resilience in absent-father households.

Fourthly, de Vos et al. (2011) explicate that dependability is the alternative to reliability, wherein I considered the changing conditions of the phenomenon (family resilience) selected for the research. In order to improve the dependability of the research, I ensured that the standard of the recording and transcribed data, documentation, and semi-structured interviews were continuously monitored (Maree, 2013). Furthermore, I used crystallisation to contribute to the overall reliability of the study (Ellingson, 2009). Tracy (2010) explains crystallisation as a process that includes the selection of an appropriate topic, methods and conducting member checking in order to clarify the data gathered (see Appendix L). As mentioned earlier, my supervisor guided me throughout the crystallisation process, ensuring that this research was conducted in an appropriate and systematic manner. Triangulation was, however, jeopardised as de Vos et al. (2011) suggest that the concept refers to the use of multiple ways of gathering information on the phenomenon being studied. This

was my initial intention, but due to the low turnout of participants, I was unable to use multiple methods.

It is, however, important to elaborate on the member checking process (see Appendix L). Koelsch (2013) explicates that member checking is used to ensure the accuracy in representing the participants' opinions, and requires their validation of the data interpretation. Carlson (2010) explains that this process can be done on an individual basis or within a focus group set-up and consists of a conversation between the participants and the researcher. For the purpose of this research, I decided to use a focus group setting so that participants could build onto each other's arguments (Wagner et al., 2012). Birt et al. (2016) recommend that the researcher provides participants the opportunity to engage with the research by contributing more information several months after they have been interviewed. This creates data that is thick and complete as researchers tend to do member checking as quickly and superficially as possible simply to say that they have complied with the expected research regulations (Birt et al., 2016). I decided to set out an entire afternoon, ensuring that I went through all of the participants' replies with them.

In the end, all four participants attended the member checking focus group (see Appendix L). This was due to a well-organised auxiliary worker at the partnering community centre. Generally, the findings were acknowledged by the participants and some clarification were gained. This session was also audio recorded and transcribed (see Appendix L for verbatim excerpts of the transcriptions). Photograph 3.5 shows the room that I used, as well as the highlighted responses of the participants during their semi-structured interviews. I used four colours to differentiate the participants' replies.



Photograph 3.5: Venue used for member checking

Lastly, the research is “open in disclosing the methods and will be honest in presenting the findings” (Chambliss & Schutt, 2015, p. 65). Emmel (2013) states that openness is important in order to be more aware of emerging themes, which will result in having little pre-conceived ideas or perspectives. I aimed to meet the principles of authenticity by working with a classmate, participants, and my supervisor in order to ensure that the findings are presented in an honest manner (Allen, 2008).

3.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I discussed the paradigmatic presupposition forming the basis of this study. I also detailed the underpinning qualitative methodology used, including the sample selection, data collection approach, and analysis. Lastly, I have communicated the ethical considerations that I have adhered to during this study and elaborated on how I ensured the quality of this study. Now that the groundwork is laid, I can provide the findings of this study, which will be discussed next in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3, I explained how the data was collected and which documentation strategies I used, as well as the data analysis and interpretation methods. I also explained specific methodological choices, which were intended to answer the proposed research questions and purpose of the study, as described in Chapter 1. In Chapter 3, I elaborated on the ethical considerations and how I expected to ensure credibility throughout this study.

In this chapter, I will present the findings of the study, including literature control. This places this study within the broader field of research relating to the topic of family resilience within an absent-father family. The various identified themes and sub-themes, which developed during the inductive thematic analysis, will be discussed accompanied by the participants' verbatim⁷ responses (see Appendix C).

4.2 EMERGING THEMES: THEMATIC ANALYSIS

This chapter was structured in terms of the three core themes. These themes are: factors contributing to resilience in an absent-father family, risk factors to resilience in an absent-father family, and possible solutions to overcome the gap left by absent fathers. Table 4.1 outlines the themes, sub-themes and categories that emerged.

Table 4.1: Thematic analysis findings

<p style="text-align: center;">Theme 1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Factors contributing to resilience in an absent-father family</p> <p>Sub-theme 4.1.1: Social and economic resources within the family and community.</p> <p>Sub-theme 4.1.2: Male figure support in an absent-father family.</p> <p>Sub-theme 4.1.3: Positive involvement of absent fathers.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Theme 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Risk factors to resilience in an absent-father family</p> <p>Sub-theme 4.2.1: Experience of poverty.</p> <p>Sub-theme 4.2.2: Exposure to environmental stressors.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Theme 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Possible solutions to overcome the gap left by absent fathers</p> <p>Sub-theme 4.3.1: Child development and financial support for future families.</p> <p>Sub-theme 4.3.2: Interaction and connectedness.</p>

⁷ See Addendum A6 for all original verbatim responses.

4.2.1 Theme 1: Factors contributing to resilience in an absent-father family

In this theme, the participants identified aspects that enhanced their family resilience. Three sub-themes developed, involving social and economic resources within the family and community, male figure support in an absent-father family, and the positive involvement of absent fathers. The inclusion and exclusion criteria for these sub-themes are outlined in Table 4.2 (see Appendix K).

Table 4.2: Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Theme 1		
Theme	Inclusion	Exclusion
Social and economic resources within the family and community.	Data that pertains to family resilience as a result of family and community economic and social resources.	Family resilience data that exclude community and family economic and social resources.
Male figure support in an absent-father family.	Data that alludes to adult males who played a supportive role in the participants' life.	Data that does not focus on adult male figures who provide supportive role in the participants' life.
Positive involvement of absent fathers.	Data focused on absent father's positive contribution to family in terms of finances, emotions, and discipline.	Data that exclude the absent fathers' positive contribution to family regarding financial, emotional and discipline factors.

4.2.1.1 Sub-theme 1.1: Social and economic resources within the family and community

It may be true that the role of grandparents and other extended family members has been underemphasised in the literature. Grandparents play a crucial role in healthy adolescent development, especially in absent-father families (Louw, 2013; Tang et al., 2016). A further undervalued factor may be the role that they play in supporting the education of their grandchildren, including enforcing the values of 'Ubuntu' and religion. In order to explore sub-theme 1.1 in more detail, I will focus on the statements made by the participants during their interviews.

i) Economic support provided by family members

Firstly, the participants indicated that the financial support of absent father households was provided by guardians and other household members. McLanahan and Jencks (2015) explain that mothers are traditionally seen as caregivers and keepers of the household. However, single mothers often rely heavily on extended

family to help raise their children. Mothers, uncles, aunts, and grandparents seem to play various roles within the household, depending on the need presented and resources available in these households (Makofane, 2015). All four participants indicated that their grandparents, with special focus on grandmothers, contributed financially to the family income. Grandmothers were reported to earn a living as domestic workers (which is referred to as 'kitchens' by the participants) or from being on government social grants to support the household.

'My grandmother works at the kitchens' (P1, Line 29).

'My grandmother takes care of me and my siblings' (P2, Line 87). 'My grandmother provides for us, but I don't know where the money comes from' (P2, Line 110-112).

'No, my mom doesn't work and is at home all the time. My grandparents are not working and are on pension' (P3, Line 119-200).

'She [grandmother] works here at Mathimba centre' (P4, Line 315).

Other data show that extended family members (aunt and uncle) who were living with the participants acted as an additional source of income to the household, as indicated below:

'My aunt works at construction building sites'. (P3, Line 199-200).

'My other one [uncle] work in Woolworths as a supervisor ...' (P4, Line 315-318).

Another participant mentioned that even though his mother was not part of the same household, she still contributed financially in the following manner:

'...my mother is taking care of my uncle's house in Marikana' (P2, Line 88).

'My mother promised me that when I grow up she will buy me a golf [car]' (P2, Line 122).

'Sometimes she brings us new things' (P2, Line 89-90).

The above statements specify that these absent-father families managed with the limited financial resources gained from various family members who contributed financially to the family. Again, it shows that even though the fathers of the participants were absent, the mothers managed to rely on extended family members for financial support by living in extended family households.

Masten and Monn (2015) find that access to financial resources prevents a family from experiencing unhealthy behaviour, and enables them to be more resilient

as a result of having access to suitable resources. All of the participants lived with extended family members, e.g. grandparents, aunts and uncles. Ratele et al.'s (2012) study confirmed that when extended family members live together in one household, they share financial responsibilities. The extended family members share the responsibility of ensuring that the participants are raised with the best possible support that they can provide. This confirms what Patterson et al. (2009) report in terms of grandparents being important contributors of social and economic resources in female-headed households. To the contrary, the Green Paper on Families (2011) is averse to female-headed households in South Africa, which is true as fathers are expected to be present in their families and be involved in raising their children. However, it cannot be ignored that in this case, the grandmother as a family matriarch was seen by the participants as the core and constant figure, while the mothers mostly played an emotionally supportive role. Even though these female-headed households appear to have lower levels of financial resources, they demonstrated strong family relationships that are focused on achieving positive child-rearing outcomes (Schatz et al., 2011).

ii) Social support provided by grandparents

It seems that the grandparents of the participants assumed the role of parents when biological parents were uninvolved or had passed away, as seen below:

'I live with my grandmother and my mother passed away in 2015. We are three siblings living with my grandmother. My younger sibling is 6 years old' (P1, Line 6).

'My little sister, my older sister, me, and my uncle stays with my grandmother' (P1, Line 23).

Patterson et al.'s (2009) understanding of the family life cycle and the scaling down of grandparents does not match the experience of the participants in this study. These grandparents, who should be preparing for retirement and be scaling down, took on the responsibility of child-rearing in their later state of life. Patterson et al. (2009) continue by arguing that it is in adolescence that children may be neglected by their parents, resulting in them feeling unimportant. However, grandparents forming the backbone of these South African families seems to take some of the responsibility of child-rearing (Louw, 2013). The participants in this study indicated that their grandparents educated them about family, values, culture, and having a positive attitude in the following way:

'She [grandmother] told me not to marry two wives, because it will make our ancestors angry...' (P2, Line 141-142).

'She [grandmother] teaches me to take care of my family when I'm older, tell my family not to do witchcraft, and not to do crime' (P2, Line 146-147).

These grandparents taught the participants about family values and cultural beliefs. This includes lessons on respect, the importance of listening, how to live, marriage, avoidance of unlawful activities, and taking responsibility for their future families. The wisdom of grand-parenting is seen in the lessons and knowledge they impart to their grandchildren with the motivation to prepare them for their future family responsibilities. The quotes below of what the participants' grandparents said to them captures the significance of these role players in preparing the participants for responsible adulthood in the future:

'One day you [participant] will have a wife and children. You [participant] need to teach them respect and how to live' (P1, Line 66-67).

'He [grandfather] likes to tell us that we must be strong and look after our family, as well as look after his cattle and farm, when he has passed away' (P3, Line 250-253).

'...In my culture it is important to respect each other' (P2, Line 96).

'When my grandmother tells me what to do, I listen to her and respect her.' (P1, Line 7).

'I talk to my grandfather about old things. I like listening to him and ask more questions about the olden days' (P4, Line 318).

Culture is also something that grandparents pass on from one generation to another. The participants stated that they had acquired knowledge and understanding of their culture in terms of exposure to ancestors, dancing, and initiation school. They further confirmed attending initiation school, which prepared them to survive in the woods without modern day equipment, including how to cook and hunt. The data gathered on initiation schools are somewhat limited, as Louw and Louw (2014) explain that initiation school may contribute to the holistic development of adolescence. More specifically, Langa (2014) finds that initiation school may go as far as contributing to adolescents' sense of identity as related to other male figures. The participants' statements are represented in the following manner:

'My grandfather teaches me about initiation school. He [grandfather] will give me advice on how to participate at or what to expect of initiation school... they [the initiation school]

teach you how to be in the woods, how to cook without electricity using fire, and to hunt' (P3, Line 237-242).

'He [grandfather] teaches me to dance. Instruct how things work in our culture, like go to the mountains' (P4, Line 344-345).

Two participants communicated lessons that were taught them by their grandparents, which inspired a positive attitude:

'Don't stress when it doesn't matter [grandmother]' (P1, Line 14).

'...When somebody makes a joke we [family] all laugh' (P2, Line 91-92).

Another participant, who was living with his grandmother after his mother's death, seemed to express his gratitude towards his grandparents, saying:

'I feel excited about these topics [based on family resilience]. I will tell my grandmother that she is a wonderful grandmother and I'm glad that she takes care of me' (P1, Line 72-73).

The purpose was not to help the participants to make sense of their absent fathers, but to allow them to reflect through the answers to the questions I posed, and in the process, discuss their perception of how their families functioned even in the absence of their biological fathers. As a result, the aforementioned participant (P1) was able to make meaning of his absent father by realising the gift he had been given by being taken care of by his grandmother.

This research shows that it is impossible for mothers to have the single responsibility of raising their children on their own. The above statements show that grandparents largely contribute to enforcing and imparting appropriate family expectations, values, culture, and attitudes. There is definitely not a lack of love, involvement, and care shown by these grandparents, which is in agreement with the research (Walsh, 2012). Thus, based on the above, grandparent involvement minimises the distress caused by father absenteeism in families. It also seems that the support of family and having a sense of humour adds to family resilience, as supported by the literature (Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008; Walsh 2012). International research done by Tang et al. (2016) shows better living conditions for adolescents who are raised by their grandparents. This is reciprocal, as grandparents may experience feelings of satisfaction in sharing their knowledge with younger generations, as seen in the findings of this study. Other literature confirms the positive effect that grandparents

have on culture and interpersonal relationships (Tang et al., 2015). Grandparents' wisdom in terms of family, values, culture, and attitude should not be underrated, as these virtues enhance the development of mature members of society who will support their own families one day.

Another element that will ensure that the above-mentioned virtues are met is discipline. One participant elaborated on how he experienced discipline within his grandparent household, including his mother and aunt:

'They are not that strict at home and they are good parents. They don't shout or say that I should do this or that. They ask me nicely to do my chores. I would ask them to give me two minutes when I'm watching TV and then they would mostly agree. When the story is done I stand up and go do my chores. Even if I'm studying, or busy with homework, they allow me to finish first before I have to complete my chores. They give me like four hours. I feel that they are reasonable and not too strict' (P3, Line 192-197).

It seems that the participant's grandparents and mother had a loving and child-centred approach to parenting, which was notable in the participant's higher levels of confidence during the interview (Carr, 2015). This participant was self-assured throughout the interview and expressed himself in a comprehensive way. The aforementioned participant also seemed to be responsible and independent, as expected of adolescents being raised by parents with an authoritative parenting style (Patterson et al., 2009).

Lastly, the participants mentioned that their grandparents provided them support in relation to sport and schoolwork, as seen below:

'I will talk to him [grandfather] about football and about the game [that is televised]. When it comes to soccer he likes to give me advice and to coach while he is watching soccer' (P3, Line 189-192).

'My grandmother helps me with my homework' (P4, Line 315).

When considering this entire sub-theme, it is clear that grandparents offer an encouraging psychological outcome for their grandchildren in their care (Tang et al., 2016). This is due to the interaction between grandparent and grandchild which increases self-esteem and interpersonal relationships (Tang et al., 2015). Walsh (2014) indicates that, except for building self-esteem, the strong relational investment of grandparents in the lives of their grandchildren, as seen with the participants above, will contribute to higher levels of resilience. Masten et al. (2013) also find that when a

single mother is mentally ill or unable to provide the social support that is expected of her, it is helpful to have a grandparent nearby, as we see in the statements above. In terms of schooling, my study did not confirm findings by Theron (2007) whose participants were devoted to school in order to have a better quality of life than their grandparents (or parents).

iii) Social support provided by family networks and by the community

An aspect that contributes to adolescents' sense of experiencing support could be seen as the sense of belonging (Madhavan & Crowell, 2014). This is allowed when adolescents are able to express themselves emotionally and if they are able to engage in meaningful conversations with their caregivers. This is confirmed in this study below:

'My mother likes to sit with us and ensure that we are fine...' (P2, Line 89-90).

'When it comes to sport and I have a challenge, they would support me. They are also comfortable to talk about it. We would also talk about changes in my body and I can talk to my mother about anything. I can also talk to my aunt and grandmother' (P3, Line 186-189).

Theron (2007) indicate that mothers in low socio-economic communities are often not emotionally available. On the contrary, the statements above show sound levels of warmth, love, and emotional support from the mother to the child (Bhana & Bachoo, 2011). Saltzman et al. (2013) say that when there are narratives between a mother and her child, it allows the child to release everyday stressors. Theron (2007) refers to caregivers as providing emotional support to participants of her study by talking with them. This will lead to higher levels of resilience as the mother will foster trust, a sense of protection, and help the child make sense of it (Saltzman et al., 2013). Other family members were also seen as stand in parents in the form of grandparents or aunts (Theron, 2007), as confirmed in the current study. Makofane (2015) confirms that grandparents, uncles and aunts play a significant role in adolescents' upbringing. It appears that child-rearing in abovementioned cases was not necessarily harmful due to father absence, or divorce as the literature states, as the participants seemed to be resilient and thriving amidst such circumstances (Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013).

Another participant mentioned his mother's involvement in helping him and his brother with homework. This may also contribute to a feeling of support by caregivers:

'My mom helps me and one of my little brothers with my studies, simultaneously' (P3, Line 197).

Other factors that contribute to resilience are friendships at school, and adolescents' involvement in extramural activities. This interaction may also lead to higher levels of interpersonal relationship skills in adolescence (Rutter, 2007). The participants seemed optimistic about their interaction with peers at school in saying the following:

'I also like school and have a satisfactory amount of friends at school' (P1, Line 19).

'We [friends] eat together. We don't like to fight and when he [a friend] asks for money, I give him some money. More or less two rand or so. He will then go and buy some sweets for himself' (P1, Line 20).

'My friends taught me to draw at school...I like to play with my best friend and don't like to fight with him. We also take care of each other (P2, Line 100-102).

Sport seemed to play a crucial role as part of the social resources of these participants. They mentioned their involvement in soccer, swimming, volleyball, and marbles in the following way:

'I play soccer at home, at school, and at the surrounding grounds with my friends' (P1, Line 18). '...I like to play soccer...' (P2, Line 100-102).

'...I go and swim at the nearby community centre...' (P3, Line 175).

'...they (family) support me when I participate in sport and I like soccer' (P3, Line 186-187).

'Volleyball. I started only last year at the centre...' (P4, Line 307).

'I also sometimes play marbles with my friends...' (P4, Line 308-309).

'I also occasionally play soccer in the streets' (P4, Line 311).

These participants seemed to be mastering the process of finding healthy ways to build social skills as they related to peers through school and sports (Louw & Louw, 2014).

One participant in particular mentioned the importance his family and ascribed his resilience to believing in a higher power in the form of religion and attending church. Alternatively, another participant made it clear that his family did not believe in the ancestors.

'Jesus is important to me' (P2, Line 119).

'We are in separate classes. We have eleven older and ten younger classes. When we are finished with our classes we stand up and go to church to sing and pray. I pray for my mother and grandmother' (P2, Line 153-155).

'At my home we don't believe in ancestors...' (P3, Line 246).

Resilience research indicates that spirituality contributes to resilience and a person's sense of belonging within a family (Kirmayer et al., 2011). Walsh (2012) highlights that spirituality plays a critical role in family, as it provides hope in a higher power to overcome challenges. Masten and Monn (2015) explain that the church may also provide adolescents with opportunities to partake in social activities, as confirmed by this study. Tang, Jang, and Copeland (2015) particularly call on churches to sustain stability in personal resilience of families, which could speak to the statement made by this study's participant above. Madhavan and Crowell (2013) find that participants of their study believe that when church attendance is irregular, it may show signs of bad character or lead to higher levels of family conflict, which weren't confirmed in my study. Furthermore, the literature states that when people pray, it may lead to higher levels of optimism and the experience of continued support from members of the church (Oh & Chang, 2014). The current research did, however, not confirm findings by Mokafane (2015), saying that some pastors play a father role in participants' lives, contributing to their resilience by demonstrating appropriate values. Furthermore, literature also shows that some churches provide information on health insurance schemes or where they can apply for financial support that contributes to their family resilience (Tchombe et al., 2012), but this wasn't confirmed by the current study.

The current participants did not have a lot to say about their ancestors in comparison to other literature (Makofane 2015; Theron & Theron 2013; Langa, 2014). One participant in Langa's (2014) study mentioned that not acknowledging your ancestors will lead to bad luck in life, in effect obstructing family resilience. Makofane (2015) continues to say that being raised by a father may provide a resource of resilience to adolescents, as they are educated in their cultural heritage of ancestry. Theron and Theron (2013) say that ancestors may play a protective role in the lives of their participants, which weren't confirmed by participants of this study.

Another aspect in the community that may contribute to participants' perception of family resilience is the presence of a police station, as indicated below:

'Yes, if I see something I will go to the police station and feel safe.' (P2, Line 147).

Furthermore, the participants in this study showed responsibility and support for their siblings. This was the first of two occasions in this study where the participants took responsibility for their siblings. This participant liked to read and tell stories to his little sister:

'I like reading fairy tales and children's books. Books like 'Sophia the first', because I like to read fairy tales. When I come home I tell my little sister the story that I've read... Well, sometimes I read it and sometimes I tell it to her' (P3, Line 178-181).

The next participant's uncle taught him how to play marbles and he reciprocated by teaching his younger cousins to play as well:

'I also play with my smaller cousins and teach them [how to play marbles]' (P4, Line 310).

The research does not indicate evidence of adolescents taking responsibility, but the values promoted in African culture could explain the keenness to give something back to others, which in itself may contribute to resilience as the adolescent is finding a sense of belonging and role in the family or wider community (Masten & Monn, 2015). The literature indicates that the African philosophy of 'Ubuntu' teaches the value of, and respect for others, which may be another reason why the participant above wants to teach the knowledge that he was taught to his cousins, so they can possibly experience the same joy he does when playing the game (Arthur et al., 2015).

4.2.1.2 Sub-theme 1.2: Male figure support in an absent-father family.

In the previous section, grandparents, extended family members, and the community were highlighted as instrumental in forming family resilience in terms of financial and social resources and support. In this section, the participants will reveal the importance of alternative father figures in providing support for educational, emotional, and cultural or moral development. Clowes et al. (2013) also emphasises the importance of other fathers or social fathers being available to absent-father families in particular. In order to explore the concept of social fathers, I have categorised them into four areas, namely: grandfathers, uncles, teachers, and coaches.

i) Educational development

Louw and Louw (2014) explain that the development of adolescents in the school setting relies heavily on stable support from family. Furthermore, educational challenges may arise if adolescents are not held accountable for their academic output (Snowman & McCown, 2013). The following statements made by the participants indicate how the involvement of their uncles may lead to academic achievement or success in later life:

'My uncle teaches me to work on the computer' (P1, Line 9).

'I'm also good at reading and my uncle helps me to read' (P1, Line 19).

'I like the second one [uncle] more, because he helps me when I have homework.' (P2, Line 109).

'My uncle is normally at work, but sometimes he helps me with my homework when he gets home at 19:00' (P3, Line 198-199).

In contrast, some studies on adolescents living in absent-father families report poor academic performance because fathers are less involved (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). The considerable influence of male figures in the lives of the participants' is captured by the quote below:

'I go and swim at a nearby centre and we have a coach as well...I would ask him like when someone is drowning what I should do to help the person ...' (P3, Line 176-177).

'My favourite teacher doesn't punish kids and teaches us sports' (P2, 103).

Various role players seem to contribute to the educational development of participants of the current study and form a crucial part in fostering resilience. Clowes et al, (2013) found that many men within their participants' family and community take on fathering roles, including uncles, school teachers, and as the current study suggested, coaches as well. However, the role of teachers were underemphasised in the current study and differs from Mampane's (2014) view that teachers are in a position to promote resilience by accessing and utilising resources at school and in the surrounding community.

ii) Emotional development

Emotional development is an important consideration for caregivers of adolescents as it may enable them to better distinguish their emotions and use these

to direct their actions and thoughts more successfully (Louw & Louw, 2014). Adolescents with highly developed emotions will be more: productive, steady, healthy, vibrant, and show higher levels of self-confidence (Jacobs et al, 2016). Saltzman et al. (2013) find that a parent-child, or replacement parent-child attachment or bond provides emotional security, i.e. through spending time together, the adolescent can develop a sense of belonging within the family. Two participants highlighted the importance of doing activities together in the following way:

'We play on the computer at home together, including playing soccer games' (P1, Line 22).

'I also like to play marbles with my friends and sometimes with my uncles. They taught me how to play. I like it the most to play with my uncles' (P4, Line 308-310).

'Sometimes we try to play cricket. My grandmother watches how we play and my grandfather plays with me and my uncles. I like to bat' (P4, Line 319-321).

Masten and Monn (2015) argue that a sense of security, belonging, and safety (Myrick et al., 2014) should be provided by parents or caregivers. Similarly, even when fathers are absent, families should find ways to enjoy life together through leisure activities. It is during these activities that caregivers show adolescents the meaning of a loving relationship (Makofane, 2015).

iii) Cultural or moral development

Moral development refers to the emergence of morality, differentiating between right and wrong (Jacobs, Vakalisa, & Gawe, 2016). Moral development may also refer to the values of how individuals should treat each other, incorporating justice, respect, and considering the well-being of others (Snowman & McCown, 2013). Culture is closely associated with morality, as culture refers to how a group sees the world; reinforces thoughts; assesses ideas, objects, and experiences; and acts in society (Louw & Louw, 2014). In this study, male figures provided the blueprint of how to handle people with respect, to be proud of who they are, and to listen to instruction, which contributed to the moral and cultural development of the participants. This is seen below:

'He [uncle] teaches me to respect other people. He also teaches me not to swear at others, because when you swear you will not live long' (P1, Line 9).

'No, I am not scared, I am proud of myself. My uncle taught me this. I see him a lot and I will call him [on the phone] sometimes' (P1, Line 68-70).

'...and when he [uncle] tells me not to go into the street I listen to him' (P2, 110).

'He [coach] tells me that smoking is bad for you' (P3, Line 307-308).

The above accounts emphasise the strong impact male figures can have on the lives of these adolescents. This confirms Makofane's (2015) research indicating that uncles play an important role in the development of adolescent resilience, through teaching them a sense of value and pride. As mentioned earlier, grandfathers taught participants treasured morals, demonstrating what it means to be a respected member of society (Madhavan & Crowell, 2014). The aforementioned assertions display the wide variety of possible male figures that could have an influence on the development of adolescents. It seems that the combination of grandparents, uncles, teachers, and coaches sufficiently provide the guidance and support adolescents normally need from parents to help them form a perception of family resilience. Clowes et al. (2013) describe neighbours and school principals as being able to act as male figures in teenagers' lives, but this wasn't confirmed by the current study. Another component missing from the current research is the findings of Kirmayer et al. (2011), showing participants respecting the morals of their friends, not abusing drugs or alcohol, refraining from fights, and treating their girlfriends with respect. Next, I will consider contributions made by biological fathers, though it was found to be limited, when compared to the data found in the previous two sub-themes.

4.2.1.3 Sub-theme 1.3: Positive involvement of absent fathers

It would be wrong to assume that all fathers are uninvolved, as this section intends to provide data on fathers' involvement. This will specifically look at financial, emotional, and moral support. Clowes et al. (2013) indicate that fathers who are classified as being absent may still be selective in their involvement in the lives of their children in some or other way. His study points to 23% of fathers being identified as contributing to the life of the participants.

The statements below reveal that the participants' fathers would buy them food, clothes, and sometimes give them pocket money. This is shown below:

'He [father] cares about me. He [father] gives me food and clothes. He buys things for me and provides in my needs' (P1, Line 5).

'I see my father sometimes and he will buy clothes for me, other than on Christmas. He [father] sometimes gives me money for school. He promised me that he will buy me a cell phone' (P2, Line 120-121).

'He is working. He was working at the petrol station, but he has another job, but I don't know what he is doing now. Sometimes he saves money to give me pocket money for school...' (P3, Line 211-212).

Even though these fathers seem to be uninvolved, they were willing to contribute to day to day expenses. In contrast, Ratele et al. (2012) found that fathers did not want to or were unable to contribute financially to their families. Some participants in this study had some form of relationship with their fathers, who then contributed somehow to their upbringing.

The literature shows that when a father provides a quality relationship, it may lead to higher levels of self-esteem in adolescence (Carr, 2015). This could be achieved by spending time together and the way in which a father is able to control his own actions. This study shows that some fathers sometimes spend time with their family, as seen below:

'...In December when people celebrate Jesus we [father and other sibling] will go and watch a show about him [Jesus]. We will go and watch a drama. Sometimes he [father] calls my mother to take me to him and then my father takes me and my grandfather to a shop and sometimes they give me clothes for school⁸' (P2, Line 116-118).

'...and sometimes he likes to take us out with mom, but normally my little brother joins us' (P3, 213-214).

One of the participants was able to provide his perception of a father. He expressed himself in the following manner:

'The good fathers would always be on time at home. They would drink alcohol but not get too drunk, because they limit their alcohol intake. In Mamelodi, there are more good fathers...They stay with them [their family]. The good fathers normally don't abuse others or alcohol' (P3, Line 228-233).

Furthermore, the same participant suggested that having a father at home may contribute to a child having better manners:

⁸ My supervisor informed me that fathers buy new clothes with their bonuses for their children and then they would wear their new clothes on Christmas day.

'Families with fathers have manners and their children are not rude. So, there is discipline and manners in the house' (P3, Line 257-258).

Clowes et al. (2013) support these findings by indicating how fathers teach participants to be controlled, to work hard, and to be appropriately disciplined, which will lead to higher levels of family resilience. Clowes et al. (2013) found their participants as positive toward their fathers who disciplined them while growing up, as they felt it prepared them for life and pushed them to work hard at school level, confirming the current study's statement above. On the other hand, it seems as if, in some cases, fathers take the act of physical discipline too far and it turns into physical abuse of some or all family members (Collishaw et al., 2007), resulting in resilience being hindered. Theron and Theron (2013) refer to one participant claiming that he was regularly beaten by his sisters and stepfather, but no evidence of physical abuse were found in the current study. In the next section I will take a closer look at some of the risk factors faced by absent-father families.

4.2.2 Theme 2: Risk factors to resilience in an absent-father family

Theme 2 expresses adolescents' perception of factors in their family and community that obstruct resilience. Two sub-themes emerged during the data analysis phase concerning poverty being experienced within the family and other environment stressors to which the participants were exposed on a daily basis in their community. The inclusion and exclusion criteria for these sub-themes are outlined in Table 4.3 (see Appendix K).

Table 4.3: Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Theme 2		
Theme	Inclusion	Exclusion
Experience of poverty	Data focuses on participants' experience of household unemployment, scarcity, or having insufficient finances available.	Data that excludes participants' experience of household unemployment, scarcity, or having insufficient finances available.
Exposure to environmental stressors	Data alludes to other environmental stressors that negatively affect participants' lives.	Data omitting other environmental stressors that negatively affect the participants' lives.

4.2.2.1 Sub-theme 2.1: Experience of poverty

The literature points to poverty as a contributor to family adversity in South Africa (The White Paper on Families, 2012). The participants in this study, their families and the community they live in appeared to have access to some resources that are essential for their basic needs. That being said, it can also be deduced that more family members were living under the same roof due to high levels of unemployment. Here, the value of collectivism seemed to alleviate some of the pressure felt by absent-father families (Madhavan & Crowell, 2014).

Most households in the study had some family members who were employed. The participants were aware of how family members contributed financially towards the financial maintenance of the family as indicated in their discussions.

'My uncle doesn't contribute money to the household' (P1, Line 28).

'Both my uncles are living here and not working' (P2, 108-109).

'No, mom doesn't work and is at home all the time' (P3, Line 199).

'My grandfather does not work' (P4, Line 316).

'She [mother] is not working. Previously she [mother] always stayed home, but she did household chores, like washing our clothes' (P4, Line 327).

These comments indicated two of the participants' mothers as being unemployed. It did not seem as though these participants' mothers were bringing in money to provide for their children. These findings are confirmed by Snyman (2012) saying that single-mothers tend to either be doing low-paying jobs or are unemployed, but manage to contribute that what they have effectively, like with the last participant of the current study. Allen and Daly (2007) say that being unemployed may mean that a mother is more available to provide in other needs of the household or that of the adolescent.

In this study, all of the participants lived in their grandparents' houses, but these households sometimes experienced insufficient financial resources, as seen below:

'Sometimes my grandmother struggles with money' (P1, Line 28).

'Because they [grandparents] are poor and cannot take care of all of us' (P2, Line 107).

'Sometimes my mom has to give us pocket money. We struggle because we are four boys, three boys excluding myself. We eat a lot, because we are boys' (P3, Line 205-206).

The statements above seem to confirm Holborn and Eddy's (2011) view on absent father families, saying that single parent or grandparent-headed households tend to have adults who are unemployed or have resource scarcity. From an international perspective it seems as if literature indicates the contrary, showing grandparent—households to be more stable and financially secure, than absent parent households (Tang, Jang & Copeland, 2015), which may be the case in the current study as some participants live with their mothers in their grandparents' house, instead of by themselves.

The literature above seems to agree that families living in poverty are sometimes underfed and as a result, this could have a negative influence on the academic performance of children (Holborn & Eddy, 2011), but this was not the focus of this study. There are numerous NGOs and other community organisations, like churches, that provide food parcels in order to support families in need (Holborn & Eddy, 2011), however this was not confirmed by the participants in this study.

4.2.2.2 Sub-theme 2.2: Exposure to environmental stressors

Poverty in households was explored in the previous section, showing that these families were confronted with resource constraints, specifically in terms of finances. The following sub-theme moves away from the familial perspective toward participants' surrounding environment and how this may contribute to increasing their anxiety.

When considering the destruction that fathers cause when abandoning their families, the participants provide us with a glimpse of how their lives have been affected by the absence of their fathers in their upbringing. One participant mentioned that some fathers in his community were abusing alcohol and drugs. According to him, abusing these substances may be connected to sexual or physical abuse of their own families:

'Some [fathers] are bad and some do not take care of their children. Some [fathers] use alcohol and drugs, and as a result abuse their children. They are bad for the soul' (P3, Line 227-228).

'Some fathers abuse drugs and get addicted and like to abuse their children's mother, usually sexual or physically' (P3. Line 231-233).

The aforementioned references by the participants indicate that family neglect is an adversity and can lead to compounding risk factors such as emotional neglect and sexual abuse of children (Collishaw et al., 2007; Masten & Monn, 2015). Recently, there have been many media reports of women and female children being abused by men, mostly those who were family members. This may be due to the patterns seen in South African fathers using their masculine power, ideologies and violence to control the members of their family (Bhana & Nkani, 2014).

The participants indicated that absent fathers do not provide the physical presence that they deeply long for. This may lead to feelings of loss and hurt, signified by the participants in this manner:

'There are ones [fathers] who are not there [absent fathers]' (P3, Line 233).

'My father stays in Soshanguve, but I see him sometimes. His family normally comes to visit us. I miss my father' (P4, Line 327-328).

'Fathers should love their children, but my father doesn't love me. I don't think so, because he does not care about me. He is not supporting me' (P1, Line 46, 47).

Makofane (2015) emphasises that strong fathers will love, protect, and provide for their family. The complications of parents breaking up their relationship and starting new relationships may also complicate the occasions of fathers being available to spend time with their children, as indicated in the literature (Patterson et al., 2009). The participants identified one of their needs being unmet by fathers, which was to be taken care of financially, as seen below:

'He [father] doesn't support us. There is nothing that he does. I will greet him and ask him to give me some pocket money for school or I would ask him to buy me some clothes, but my father never has money. [A father] must take care of [his] children and buy children food or clothes' (P1, Line 34-40).

'My father stays in Mamelodi, but stays with another women and cares for his other child' (P2, Line 122-123).

In the following statement, the participant indicated his need to have a father who is interested in knowing how he is doing and wanted to share in special celebrations, like his birthday:

'...he doesn't take care of us, because he doesn't know how I am doing and when it is my birthday. He doesn't even bring me cake on my birthday...' (P1, line34-40).

Absent-father families have to manage their income closely, also drawing on extended support networks in order to ensure that basic physical needs are met. Furthermore, Ratele et al. (2012) and Makofane (2015) confirm that growing up in a household with an absent father may lead to feelings of loss and emptiness. Even though the literature indicates that teenagers with absent fathers long to reunite with their fathers (Langa, 2014), alternative social fathers and family members are doing a praiseworthy job of filling the void left by absent fathers.

Some mother-child relationships may be adversely affected due to mothers starting new families, or even going out to clubs at night, as seen below:

'My mother is not staying with me but she stays in Extension 4 in Mamelodi. I see her on Saturdays, but she stays with another man...' (P4, Line 325-326).

'Mothers who are not married like to go out at night, get drunk, and are naughty. They [mothers] don't care about their children. My mother doesn't go to clubs that often, but when she does, she only drinks energy drinks' (P3, Line 259-262).

'My mother passed away and sometimes I stress, because I think a lot about her' (P1, Line 8).

Mampane and Bower (2011) agree with aforementioned findings as it may be common for families to experience the loss of significant others or main caregivers, like with the first participant (P1). Ardington and Leibbrandt (2010) also indicate that the loss of a mother may have a significant impact on the scholastic achievement of a child. Furthermore, the literature indicates that Apartheid (through the migrant labour system) had an impact on father absenteeism (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). However, this would be difficult to prove in the current study as most of the participants were not sure about where their fathers were, and were born more than two decades after the annulment of Apartheid.

The participants suggested that other aspects that cause risk and adversity within their environment were crime, witchcraft practises, and kidnapping:

'Crimes. Stealing...' (P1, Line 67).

'Witchcraft scares me, because people can bewitch others by sending flies, birds, and zombies to your home. But not during day, at night' (P2, Line 147-149).

'My grandfather told me not to go out at night, because they kidnap children' (P4, Line 349-350).

4.2.3 Theme 3: Possible solutions to overcome the gap left by absent fathers

The current theme emphasises the participants' perceptions of their future families, which is contrary to their experience of their own fathers. Two sub-themes emerged referring to how the participants intended to provide for their families with finances and quality relationships. This is supported by Walsh (2012), who emphasises the importance of making sense of one's current context by reconstructing experienced sorrow into confidence, enhancing the process of making meaning of circumstances (Maree, 2013). First of all, the inclusion and exclusion criteria for these sub-themes are outlined in Table 4.4 (see Appendix K).

Table 4.4: Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Theme 3		
Theme	Inclusion	Exclusion
Child development and financial support for future families.	Data on participants' future hopes that contribute to their dreams of enhancing their children's school development and other day-to-day activities.	Data that disregards participants' future hopes to contribute to their children's school development and other day to day expenses.
Interaction and connectedness.	Data directed at how participants will ensure connectedness and interaction with their own children and spouse in the future.	Data not focused on how participants will ensure connectedness and interaction with their own children and spouse in the future.

4.2.3.1 Sub-theme 3.1: Child development and financial support for future families

The development of a child is an important consideration for the participants of this study. They emphasised, in particular, the involvement that they anticipated when it comes to the educational outcome of their future children. Other day-to-day expectations were also deliberated on by the participants in this sub-theme.

The participants mentioned that they would share advice on how to be successful in school:

'As a father I would take care of my children and teach them how to do well at school'
(P1, Line 54).

'The first thing I want is that my child finishes school and achieve their dreams' (P3, Line 217).

Another participant mentioned that he would help his future children with homework and send them to extra classes:

'Subjects and homework. Reading something that they don't understand and explaining it to them' (P2, Line 131-132).

'I would take care of my children and wife and I will help my daughters with homework...and take them to extra classes so that they can learn' (P2, Line 136-137).

The participants also seemed to be aware of their financial responsibility toward their future children. They intended to contribute to school funds, shoes, and stationary.

'I will help with school fees and buy them shoes and stationary' (P1, Line 49).

'...and pay the school payments for them' (P2, Line 137).

Lastly, the participants showed the importance of seeking education, as well as the completion of school, going up to university level:

'...and take them to school until they achieve something for themselves' (P2, Line 129).

'I would save money and when my kids are older I want to pay so that they can go to University (P4, Line 338).'

The literature agrees that poverty, as associated with the current participants, may keep learners from further educational opportunities due to a lack of resources while growing up (Theron et al., 2011). The participants had access to limited resources, which may hinder their future studies. Furthermore, the participants' statements are confirmed by Langa (2014), who states that when an individual focuses on providing a healthier future for their own children, it helps to cope with current challenging circumstances.

The participants indicated their desire to be able to provide for the physical needs of their future families. The following statements demonstrate what the participants expected from their fathers:

'They [fathers] are doing a good job because they take care of their children. And when the children wants something to eat, the father buys food for them' (P1, Line 44-45).

'Whatever I want he buys for me. They care about their sons and daughters' (P1, Line 49-50).

'Other fathers take care of their children. They buy them whatever they want...' (P2, Line 129).

'The first thing is that a father needs to support the family' (P3, Line 212).

'Give me money for school fees' (P4, Line 332).

These statements referred to the participants' clear need for a father's financial involvement which will lead to an enhanced perception of family resilience (Eddy et al., 2013). The participants continuously linked not being supported and not being cared for to feelings of not being loved by their fathers, hindering resilience (Makofane, 2015). In return, they responded by committing to be better fathers to their own children in the future. Hope is used here as a solution to correct the wrongs of their fathers that will ultimately lead to resilience, according to Walsh (2012). Focusing on their future goals of being better parents to their own children is seen as an ideal solution. This also shows that they intend to show their own future children love by supporting them and taking care of their physical needs, as seen in the statements below:

'I would surprise them with things that I bought. When my family wants something, I will give them what they want and pay for them. I will also do a job to support my family' (P1, Line 54-57).

'I would like to support my children and buy things for them, like clothes...When I find a job I would support them by taking the half of my income and save it. With the other half I will buy things for my wife and children' (P3, Line 217-220).

'I would support my children. When I'm going somewhere I will leave my money at home. I want to give my children gifts as often as possible. I will give my boy a car and I would buy my daughter clothes' (P4, Line 336-340).

4.2.3.2 Sub-theme 3.2: Interaction and connectedness.

The previous sub-theme emphasised the importance participants allotted to fathers providing scholastic development (Madhavan & Crowell, 2013); as well as financial security for their children one day (Walsh, 2016). In this section, it can be seen that they seemed to understand what benefits a quality father-child relationship may have for increasing family resilience. In order to explore the participants' future hope to interact and stay connected with their children, three areas were identified, namely: living under the same roof, spending time together, and taking responsibility for family members.

The participants seemed to want their future family to live under one roof. They may have believed that living under the same roof could improve the chances of quality family relationships, as seen in the following statements:

'He [father] is not suppose to leave the household and will stay with his wife at home' (P1, Line 33).

'I will live with the mother [of my child] at my house... and live at the same place' (P3, Line 220 & 221).

'The mother [of my child] would be with me in the same house' (P4, Line 340).

These participants, who had examples of fathers who were mainly removed from their lives, still wanted to be good fathers themselves one day, once again ascribing to the literature on turning suffering into hope (Maree, 2013). Their understanding of a good father is summarised as sharing a home with your family.

In the following statements, the participants indicate the meanings they understood of father involvement. They indicated that they wanted to love their family as fathers, and be part of everyday activities and do things together with their future family:

Fathers should love their children... (P1, Line 46).

'He would want to play and help with school' (P1, Line 48). 'I will go with them to things and take care of my family' (P1, Line 55).

'...even when I'm going to work I'll make time to spend with my children and [their] mother... (P3, Line 221).

'When we go to dinner I would not leave the child behind. We will eat together and spend time together with the child' (P3, Line 222-223).

Patterson (2009) explains that a resilient child requires a parent to: spend time with his family, help with educational activities, and have appropriate emotional and physical boundaries and input.

Finally, we see a statement made by the second participant (P2), showing that he wanted to contribute to being a responsible member of the family one day. This teenager indicated that he wanted to give back to his mother for everything that she had done for him:

'...and when I am older I will buy my mother a house and car, because she took care of us' (P2, Line 130-131).

4.3 REVISITING THE LITERATURE AND THE FAMILY RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK

I will be revisiting the literature and family resilience framework in order to establish a consistent research product. In this chapter, I discussed the topic of enquiry both in terms of the existing literature in the wider territory of research, and this study's findings. I made use of the family resilience framework (Walsh, 2012) to deliberate on the findings in a manner significant to the research questions. These participants found resources within their families and community, and as a result they were empowered to overcome their perceived challenges (Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2012). These resources included social and economic resources. The participants in this study made the most use of their strong family network resources in their effort to be resilient (Walsh, 2016). These networks included mothers, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. On the one hand, even though the participants indicated the employment of some household members as being a positive contributor to family resilience, it also seemed to barely cover their basic needs. On the other hand, grandparents play a big role in sharing wisdom, enforcing discipline, and advising in terms of schoolwork and sport, combating the undesirable effects of restricted income. Other family and extended family also seemed to supply meaningfully in terms of schoolwork, spending time together, giving life lessons, and helping the participants to express themselves emotionally.

The systemic nature of the family resilience framework revealed other systems influencing the life of the participants positively, involving the school and neighbourhood context (Berk, 2013). The participants of this study, indicate the importance of peer relationships and sport at school. Some even mentioned the encouraging involvement, even though limited, of their biological fathers. The school also played a major part in the lives of these participants as they had access to close friendships and contact with sports, like volleyball, cricket, soccer, and swimming. Another theme emphasised in this study is that of culture and spirituality, also adding to a more resilient family (McCubbin & McCubbin, 2013). The findings indicate the need of the participants to be responsible family members, most probably due to the families in the community of Mamelodi East ascribing to principles of 'Ubuntu'. These participants wanted to use their skill, talent, or future income in order to provide for others in their family. This is also seen as families being collective as they share resources and combine financial resources to sustain each other.

The findings of this study show that family members experience both risk and protective factors on a daily basis at various contextual levels within the community. It is the ability to bounce back from this hardship that allows a family to be resilient, as explained by Card and Barnett (2015). Another consideration that this study included was that of the timespan in which the participants were exposed to risk factors (Walsh, 2016), mainly including that of absent fathers and poverty. The findings, however, indicate that other role-players in the family, extended family, and community may decrease the blow of absent fathers. As a result, the participants showed high levels of optimism and hope, specifically when bearing in mind their role as fathers one day.

4.4 CONCLUSION

In Chapter 4, the findings of this study were discussed. These discussions were derived from the data analysis delivering three main themes, seven sub-themes and various categories. The findings were presented in the context of a wider field of research in terms of the phenomenon under investigation.

In the final chapter, I will answer both the primary and secondary research questions. I will also review the theoretical assumptions stated in Chapter 2 and explore probable discrepancies in the data. Lastly, I will offer an argument regarding the limitations of this study. I will then close the study by making recommendations for future studies, practice and training.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the findings were presented and related to the themes, sub-themes, categories and reviewed literature in Chapter 2. This was concluded by discussing the underpinning conceptual framework while comparing it to the general findings of this study. In this chapter, I will offer an overview of the foregoing chapters, revisit the theoretical assumptions and provide the conclusions reached. Thereafter, I will argue the possible contributions that the study has made to research, as well as the trials that I encountered. Finally, I will complete Chapter 5 with recommendations for future studies, training, and practice.

5.2 REVISITING THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

This study was approached with certain theoretical assumptions in mind, which are based on the literature focusing on adolescents, family resilience, and absent fathers (Rosa & Tudge, 2013; Langa, 2014; Walsh, 2012; Ratele et al., 2012; Theron et al., 2011; Clowes et al., 2013). These working assumptions were specified in Chapter 1 (1.5) in the following way:

5.2.1 Assumption 1

“Families consider the adolescent's views from a bio-ecological systems perspective as every individual is influenced by the interactions within complicated systems” (Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

Firstly, adolescents see their families from the bio-ecological systems perspective (Rosa & Tudge, 2013), meaning that family members are influenced by different levels within their system. Tudge et al. (2009) explain these complicated levels in terms of the micro-, meso, exo-, and macrosystem. On the microsystem level, the participants communicated that they spent most of their time (Berk, 2013) with their mothers, family members from the same household, siblings, and at school. They also emphasised the interaction that takes place between systems on the mesosystem level (Mitchell & Humphries, 2007), for instance, with their friends and school or the support given by family members to their mothers in absent-father families. Furthermore, the participants also indicated exosystemic challenges, which had an indirect impact on

the participants (Berk, 2013). This includes being faced with household financial shortages, which may restrict school fees, further educational opportunities, and other day-to-day expenses. Another strong indication given by the participants was related to the macrosystem level, as they were able to express their cultural and religious beliefs freely (Theron & Theron, 2013). This was most strongly represented by relationships on the microsystem level, which consisted of mothers, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and other male figures in the community, and resulted in building strong principles of 'Ubuntu' in these adolescents (Mikucka & Rizzi, 2016). The contribution of culture will be further investigated in the last assumption, as extended family or community members may boost cultural insights (Clowes et al., 2013).

5.2.2 Assumption 2

“The adolescents will have an undesirable perception of their father, but there will be other family and community members that will restore their view of what a father should be like” (Langa, 2014).

The second assumption was made regarding participants having an undesirable perception of their fathers, and was found to be partially true. Some participants longed to have a relationship with their fathers, which outweighed having a negative relationship with their fathers. The participants of this study showed a genuine longing to restore their relationship with their fathers. Another participant seemed to have a positive perception of his father, even though his father lived with a new family and showed limited involvement in his life. The second part of this assumption is that other family and community members will fill the void left by fathers (Langa, 2014). This part of the assumption is supported by the findings as the participants were able to state various ways in which members of their family and community constructively contributed to their development and perception of family resilience. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

5.2.3 Assumption 3

“Adolescents would have found ways in order to cope or adapt to living in an absent-father family” (Walsh, 2012).

This study revealed that adolescents are able to manage being part of an absent-father family (Walsh, 2012), as stated in the assumption above. The participants in this study seemed to show high levels of optimism about the future,

displaying a willingness to be better fathers to their own future children, and referring to multiple factors that contribute to family resilience. It, therefore, looks as if the adolescents of this study's resilience factors overshadowed their risk factors, allowing them to cope in the midst of absent fathers (Rutter, 2013).

5.2.4 Assumption 4

“In this study adolescents may have a need for their biological fathers to be more involved in their lives and may feel empty without them” (Ratele et al., 2012).

This assumption of adolescents feeling empty due to the detachment from their biological father was confirmed (Ratele et al., 2012). As mentioned earlier, this study showed the participants' yearning to have a relationship with their fathers. Some of the participants indicated that their fathers were living with new families, not taking care of their financial and basic needs, and not sharing in their celebrations, such as birthdays.

5.2.5 Assumption 5

“Adolescents would experience less guidance from their fathers regarding knowledge of their culture (Theron et al., 2011), but extended family or community members may help to establish these cultural insights” (Clowes et al., 2013).

I was not able to conclude how fathers contribute to the cultural development of participants of this study, but literature seems to argue that they can play a meaningful role in the cultural development of adolescence (Cassano, Zeman, & Sanders, 2014; Holborn & Eddy, 2011). It seems, however, that grandparents are the ones who take on the responsibility of cultural development. They appear to communicate with their grandchildren concerning ancestors, dancing, and initiation school, as shown in the results. According to Tang et al. (2015), when there is strong communication taking place between grandparents and their grandchildren, it may have a positive effective on family resilience, as seen with the participants of this study. There also appears to be a recurrent theme of participants accepting their role in the household by participating to give back to others in the family, this is probably due to the general community in Mamelodi East ascribing to the principles of 'Ubuntu'. This will also be discussed further in Chapter 5.

5.3 ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the subsequent section, I will attend to the research questions that informed the study. The secondary research question will be addressed first in an attempt to comprehend the primary research question.

5.3.1 Addressing the secondary research questions

The purpose of this study was to understand adolescents' perceptions of family resilience from an absent-father family and to discuss the perceived role and contribution of fathers in families. Chapter 1 modelled the research questions that directed this investigation. In the following section, the secondary research questions will be expanded on in order to validate the deductions that address the primary research question.

5.3.1.1 Secondary question 1

What are the adolescents' perceptions of the role of fathers in families?

As shown in this study, the participants found that fathers should provide scholastic support, financial input, spend time with their families, and promote emotional involvement (Patterson et al., 2009). In the following section, I intend to explore how these participants perceived a father's role in the family, even though their fathers were absent.

In this study, I emphasised the importance of child development, which is seen as a fundamental role of a father in families. It seems that the participants realised the important role that a father plays in order to enhance appropriate educational outcomes (Makofane, 2015). The second role of a father includes providing guidance on how to be successful in school, helping with homework and paying for extra classes, all in an attempt to improve the chance of being successful at school. The aforementioned requires a father to be actively involved in the participants' scholastic development (Louw & Louw, 2014). Another role recognised by the participants is that fathers need to be financially responsible and provide for the physical needs of their children. This may involve paying for school fees, shoes, and stationary. The participants also appeared to link an unsupportive father to feelings of not being loved, emphasising the importance of a father's role as the breadwinner of a household.

The participants wished for a father's influence in terms of a quality father-child relationship, referring to the fourth role of harvesting self-esteem (Carr, 2015). These participants believed that a father's role is to enhance the quality of a father-child relationship by living in the same household, spending time together, and being a responsible contributor to the family. Even though the participants are highlighting what their ideal father-child relationship would look like, their reality is that of uninvolved fathers. This study acknowledged another role a father should play in forming a quality parent-child relationship, which is showing love by means of doing things as a family and including children in everyday activities. Once again, these participants wish they were able to spend time with their fathers in order to experience a sense of being loved and not abandoned (refer to 5.2.3 above). A final role expected from fathers is to take care of the needs of their own parents one day. This was mentioned by a participant who seemed to take on the responsibility of ensuring that his mother's needs are met in the future.

5.3.1.2 Secondary question 2

What are the adolescents' perception of the influence of fathers on family, resilience and culture?

When considering this study's findings, the participants communicated both the challenging and promoting impact that their biological fathers had on family resilience. However, it seems that these fathers played a limited role in the lives of the participants as they showed constrained involvement. In the following paragraphs, I will expand on additional themes that contribute to, as well as hinder resilience. Lastly, I will consider the limited, if any, influence that fathers have on the development of culture in adolescence.

This study shows that the financial contribution of a father can positively alleviate the burden of everyday expenses such as food, clothes, and occasionally giving pocket money, as seen in the previous section. Other participants acknowledged having some form of relationship with their fathers, but this looked to be superficial, to say the least. Furthermore, it appears when a father is part of a family, it may lead to higher levels of discipline and order in the family (Clowes et al., 2013). As expected, the obstructing influence of the present study's fathers outweighed that of the subsidising factors, as shown above. It seems that most of the mothers of the participants in this study were unemployed, forcing them to live with extended families

or forcing mothers to request extended families to take responsibility for raising their children while they sought employment elsewhere. Again, mothers need to draw on familial networks in order to ensure that adolescents' basic physical needs are met.

The participants specified that they wanted their fathers to be more present in their lives, as this may enhance feeling more fulfilled. This included fathers being in attendance at celebrations, like birthdays, showing that they were concerned about the participants' wellbeing. The current data refers to a void left by biological fathers, however, alternative fathers or other family members may replace these fathers (Langa, 2014), as indicated by the participants throughout this study. This will be elaborated on during the primary research question discussion. Other negative characteristics fathers in Mamelodi East seem to have is the abusing of alcohol and drugs, which may possibly lead to the sexual or physical abuse of family members. Makofane (2015) confirms sexual and physical abuse as being an ever growing reality for adolescents in low socio-economic communities, like Mamelodi East. Other South African authors have also confirmed the findings regarding high levels of sexual and physical abuse in low resourced communities (Kirmayer et al., 2011; Theron & Theron, 2013; Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013). This may be due to South African fathers having trouble controlling their masculine power and ideologies, leading to violence in the family (Bhana & Nkani, 2014). Some participants also indicated how their relationship with their mothers had regressed due to mothers starting new families or going out to clubs at night.

I was unable to identify clear relations to how these fathers taught the participants about cultural practices. The main contributions came from family members living in the same household or in close proximity to the participants. In terms of culture, grandparents and uncles seem to be the main providers. In the next section, I will elaborate on how other members of the family and community contribute to family resilience, particularly in expanding the participants' perception of culture.

5.3.2 Addressing the primary research question

How do adolescents from an absent-father family perceive family resilience?

Constructed around these findings, I have derived some deductions that are confirmed by research. Alternative members of the participants' family and surrounding community played a significant role in providing family resilience. Some of these

members can even be seen as male role models for these participants. The participants' school also seemed to play a vital role in adding to their perception of family resilience as it allows them to engage with peers and participate in sport, which also provides access to other male role models.

5.3.2.1 Economic support

The mothers in this study seemed to depend on extended family members for financial support (Ratele et al., 2012). A strong contributor to family resilience is found in grandparents' financial involvement. Grandmothers seem to be major contributors to participants' household income by working as domestic workers, social workers or contributing in the form of a government grant. The mothers, uncles and aunts of the participants also appeared to add to the household's income, which may lessen the pressure of grandparent-headed households.

5.3.2.2 Social support

This study has shown that grandparents are the main suppliers of family resilience for the participants, sometimes taking the sole responsibility of child-rearing (Louw, 2013). They tend to show social support by showing love, being involved, and taking care of the participants' needs (Walsh, 2012). When adolescents are provided with the opportunity to express themselves emotionally, and if they are able to engage in meaningful conversations with their caregivers, it will provide them with a sense of belonging and enhance their perception of family resilience (Madhavan & Crowell, 2014). Furthermore, the third participant that I interviewed also demonstrated the benefit of being raised by grandparents as well as his mother, who had a loving and child-centred approach to parenting. As a result of this, the participant was self-assured, showed high levels of confidence, and was able to verbalise himself well during his semi-structured interview. This shows that adolescents are not solely dependent on fathers to have high self-esteem or develop independence, as expected from adolescents during their developmental phase (Patterson et al., 2009).

Another aspect closely associated with finding belonging is shown in the level of responsibility shown by the participants. On two occasions, the participants took responsibility by teaching or sharing something with another family member. One participant decided to teach his younger cousins how to play marbles and another read stories to his little sister. Both of these participants were taught by their uncles how to

read and play marbles respectively. Here, the value of African culture is something to emphasise as 'Ubuntu' teaches to give to others what you have been given (Arthur et al., 2015).

5.3.2.3 Wisdom and culture passed along

The participants indicated that their grandparents taught them about family, values, culture, and having a positive attitude. This included lessons and knowledge on respect, the importance of listening, how to live life to the fullest, advice on marriage, avoidance of unlawful activities, and the importance of taking responsibility for other family members. With regard to culture, these grandparents taught on ancestors, dancing, and initiation school. Initiation school seems to prepare participants for real life (Langa, 2014), for instance, to survive in the woods without modern day equipment. Furthermore, it seems that grandparents are also responsible for fostering a positive attitude when faced with challenges. Another participant unfortunately lost his mother, but expressed his thankfulness towards his grandparents for taking the responsibility of raising him, emphasising having a positive attitude amidst challenging circumstances.

5.3.2.4 Male figures

This study indicates that uncles have a positive influence on the success of adolescents within an academic setting. Furthermore, the participants discussed activities where their uncles spent time with them by playing sport and computer games together, also providing emotional stability and a sense of belongingness for the participants (Carr, 2015). It is through these leisure activities that these uncles demonstrated to the participants the importance of having a loving relationship (Makofane, 2015). Through this relationship, these uncles taught the participants to handle people with respect, to be proud of who they are, and to listen to instruction, which contributes to the moral and cultural development of the participants (Jacobs et al., 2016). Other male figures also seem to have taught the participants precious values, exhibiting what it means to be a respected member of society (Madhavan & Crowell, 2014). School teachers could also be seen as a contributor to **the** participants' resilience, as they demonstrate appropriate behaviour, teach skills, and even coach sport. Other community coaches could also be seen as male figures that further family resilience as they also seem to have taught the participants values by encouraging general healthy lifestyles, i.e. stopping smoking.

5.3.2.5 School friendships and sport

The school has been shown to promote resilience in terms of teachers, but it also appears to influence resilience positively through friendships at school and participants' involvement in extramural activities. It is through these friendships that they are able to rely on each other in tough times in order to bounce back, furthering group identity amongst friends (Edwards, 2015). This is further emphasised through sports like soccer, swimming, volleyball, and playing marbles. The participants' remarks that their grandparents offered them support when it comes to sport and schoolwork, strengthened family resilience even further. Another participant included his mother as a source of support for him and his brother as she helped with their homework, which may also enhance performance at school, and ultimately family resilience for this participant.

5.3.2.6 Other community resources

The participants identified the church as a contributor to family resilience (Kirmayer et al., 2011). One participant mentioned how the pastor's wife took responsibility for the children's spiritual development at church, being indicative that her role contributes to the community's experience of family resilience. This participant used prayer to overcome the environmental stressors in Mamelodi East. Lastly, the police station was also identified as a place where the participants could find assistance, contributing to feelings of safety and family resilience.

5.4 SILENCES IN THE DATA

Apartheid has been identified in the research as being an obstructing force in the development of adolescents due to the severe impact it has had on family life as fathers had to relocate to find employment (Ratele et al., 2012; Edwards, 2015; Eddy et al., 2013). The current study is quiet on this topic as it could be that the participants were not directly exposed to the challenges that Apartheid caused. The grandparents and parents of these participants most probably were more directly impacted by these circumstances. One participant actually referred to his grandfather who spoke about the olden days, but he was not specific about what they spoke about. Other causes that could contribute to absent parents are HIV/AIDS and violence. Both Holborn and Eddy (2011) and Ratele et al. (2012) indicate that violence and AIDS may increase the regularity of child-headed households. Even though some of the participants referred

to the occurrence of violence in Mamelodi East, there was no instance when they raised the epidemic of HIV/AIDS. This may be because they were not directly affected by the disease. One participant revealed that he recently lost his mother, but did not expand on it when prompted, however, it would be wrong to assume that it was HIV/AIDS related.

The literature also indicates that mothers who are single-parents may be overburdened because of having to work additional jobs in order to overcome having a lack of resources (Theron, 2007; Patterson, 2009). The participants, however, did not confirm this claim. Some of the participants mentioned their mothers staying at home or at another place, but no clear data emerged that indicated mothers feeling overburdened. This may be due to these mothers being able to use their family and community networks to overcome the challenges being faced, as well as being in a culture that supports the notion of 'Ubuntu'.

A final silence found in this study was that the participants did not look for their identity in inappropriate places. This may indicate that their current caregivers had provided them with the appropriate platforms to foster a sense of belonging. The literature indicates that adolescents who look for their identity in the wrong places may include joining gangs, partaking in violent behaviour, drug and alcohol abuse (Mncube & Madikizela-Madiya, 2014). Furthermore, the literature indicates Life Orientation teachers as valuable contributors to the development of adolescents' sense of belonging (Petersen, 2014; Theron, 2007). The findings of this study were mainly quiet regarding these contributing factors, as one participant mentioned that he liked one of his teachers, but no mention was made of how the subject of Life Orientation has contributed to his strengths or how the Life Orientation teacher had contributed positively to his resilience. Lastly, Clowes et al. (2013) found that mothers (57%), fathers (23%), siblings (32%), extended kin (64%), and community members (75%) are all perceived as role-models by adolescents. Even though this study's participants made remarks about their siblings, no definite statement was made that these siblings operated as a role-models or male figures in their lives.

5.5 POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

The first contribution may challenge the general literature in terms of the condition that mother-headed households are in, as seen in the most recent White Paper on South African Families (2012). These single-headed households seemed to rely strongly on support from family members, having a positive outcome on child-rearing (Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013), as explained in this study. These mothers also seemed to involve grandparents who enriched these adolescents' values, culture, and attitudes. Grandparents' role in South Africa is very important in absent-father families and contributes to the future of South African families (Louw, 2013). Another contribution to the literature is that these mothers and grandparents seemed to manage family and community resources well so that the participants could develop into members that can successfully contribute to society one day. This is contrary to what is found in the literature, indicating that absent-father families fail to function effectively because of lower outcomes (The White Paper on families, 2012; Ratele et al., 2012; Allen & Daly, 2007; Holborn & Eddy, 2011).

Secondly, the purpose of this study was not to help the participants make sense or to get meaning out of having an absent father, but simply rather to understand how such families manage to remain resilient. One participant actually showed signs of grasping how thankful he was to his grandmother for everything she had done for him. He almost showed signs of relief after the interview. This study could therefore be used as a starting point when considering future intervention strategies for the meaning-making of adolescents in an absent-father family (Pattakos & Dundon, 2017; Walsh, 2012).

The third contribution was found in male figures, who consisted of grandparents, uncles, and other members of the community. These members of the family and society may positively have contributed to the participants' social and emotional development, as a result contributing to the gap left by absent fathers in South Africa (Louw & Louw, 2014). Male figures acting as role-models were widely represented in the gathered data, which confirms Clowes et al.'s (2013) findings on adolescent role-models.

Lastly, these participants seemed to find a sense of belonging in various areas of their lives, including when interacting with their family, friends at school, and during sport activities with teammates and coaches (Carr, 2015). This shows that these

participants demonstrated limited confusion regarding their role in their family and at school (Snowman & McCown, 2013).

5.6 POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The first limitation of this study was that I used a case study design (Yin, 2014). This type of design consists of a small number of participants, which makes it difficult to generalise the findings (Flick, 2009). Furthering the challenges with generalisation of this study was the inclusion of only male participants, leading to the focus of this study being even more specific, providing an unbalanced view of absent fatherhood in adolescents. When considering qualitative research, it is more important to provide a comprehensive inquiry of the phenomenon being studied than to generalise the findings (Wagner et al., 2012). It was more important for me to reach transferability than generalisability so that the findings would consist of rich descriptions and data that support the family resilience framework (Walsh, 2012), as specified in Chapter 1. Therefore, this study may not personify adolescent perceptions of the entire population, but is restricted to the participants from four absent-father families in South Africa (Mammen & Sano, 2012).

When considering a case study, it was chosen specifically to have focused findings instead of including data that is vague and general (Tuli, 2012). In return, this may have deprived the study of the inclusion of other schools in Mamelodi East, as different areas in Gauteng and South Africa may have delivered a different result. By concentrating on the perception of adolescents in one area and at one centre, the conditions of the participants may have either been more positive or negative if this study had been broader (Tracy, 2010).

When considering my role as researcher in this study, there may be further limitations. This is specifically true because of my exposure to similar conditions of both staying and working in a township in the past. I have certain bias related to my own experience and this could have influenced the objectivity in this study (Flick, 2009). This could be particularly dangerous as I was still etic to the research participants, and thus may have made wrong assumptions and interpretations of the participants' culture and experiences (Maree, 2013). Here, I realise that the data analysis may be prejudiced by my own background, context, history, and prior experiences (Creswell, 2011). In order to stay mindful of these biases, I reflected in a study journal and discussed my thoughts, feelings and actions with both a peer and my supervisor

throughout the research process (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). It wasn't always possible to be mindful though, as when I did member-checking I got lost in Mamelodi and underestimated my fuel gage, almost leaving me stranded without fuel. This was a stressful day for me, because I don't know Mamelodi well and I wanted to be on time for the feedback session (for more info refer to Appendix E). Furthermore, language was sometimes an obstacle during the study as the participants spoke various languages as is indigenous to the inhabitants of Mamelodi East. Even though my supervisor was used as a translator (in some instances), and the participants' cultural values were considered during this study (Allan, 2008), there may have been some misunderstanding due to both the participants and researcher being English second (or third) language speakers.

Lastly, another limitation of this study was that the researcher had a group feedback session while doing member-checking. This could have led to some group members being more reserved and not fully contributing to the discussion at hand. Even though the participants' responses were verified, which increased the validity of the current study (Birt et al., 2016), the researcher would have preferred having one-on-one sessions to ensure the quality of the data analysed.

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study focused on adolescents' perception of family resilience. The following section looks at recommendations for future research, training, and practise within townships, and families in general.

5.7.1 Recommendations for future research

Based on the findings in Chapter 4, as well as other theoretical assumptions on which this study was based, I have made recommendations on possible areas of further investigation. This may result in greater understanding of the materials that have not been discovered in this study:

- Further research on how different male figures in the community act as a stand-in father for adolescents (male and female), which contributes to their development as future parents.
- The role that the church could play in contributing to the resilience of absent-father families. This may include the impact that a pastor or other clerical staff

may have on adolescent development (male and female), as well as how the church may provide helpful networks for family members (Walsh, 2012).

- Research in South Africa into the successful support of grandparent household interventions in township and rural schools, since it is these households who seems to still be strong and form the backbone of South African civilization (Louw, 2013).
- Research in South Africa into what makes grandparent households successful amidst adversity.
- International research on absent-father families, generating a sense of father involvement across different continents.

5.7.2 Recommendations for training

The findings of this study could be beneficial for future community leader training, professional qualifications for students working with people in townships or for future parents. The following is recommended for training purposes:

- Preventative training should be held in communities focusing on improving the involvement of male figures and other role-models in the community in order to raise awareness regarding absent fatherhood.
- Mothers in the community could be trained based on these findings, focusing on where they could find support to overcome the challenge of absent fatherhood by means of drawing on community and family members, fostering further family resilience.
- School principals and teachers could be trained to inspire learners from absent-father families and start initiatives to support these families.
- Teacher training could include value clarification modules to enable teachers to address personal values, beliefs, assumptions and attitudes regarding parenthood (Madhavan & Crowell, 2014).
- On a macro level (Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2012), the government could invest in training programmes to support caregivers of absent-father families, in particular grandparents, as they seem to take most of the weight of absent-father families (Louw, 2013).

5.7.3 Recommendations for practice

It seems apparent that:

- Community centres and community workers in low socio-economic areas should be organised to provide support to grandparent-headed households by engaging with policy makers at national level.
- Attention should be given to the empowerment of community members in order to enhance a culture of 'Ubuntu' in all members of the community.
- Adolescents with absent fathers should be provided support by teachers or parents of the school community in order to ensure their basic needs are being met.
- Key community stakeholders (parents, teachers, communities, churches or organisations) should be mindful of their obligation as role-models to learners in their community. This could be heightened in order to institute constructive interactions with learners from absent-father families.
- Adolescents need support and mentoring in order to enhance family resilience and knowledge related to future fatherhood.

5.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In 2009, I moved to a township in the Western Cape called Khayelitsha. I did so because I wanted to make a difference in the lives of the people living there. It was a challenging two years as I did not know where to start in order to help the community. After being involved in Delph, another township in Cape Town, I became aware that even though adolescents have uninvolved fathers, it does not mean that they are not able to overcome their challenges. These adolescents inspired me, as they showed resilience and gave me a starting point for the current study's focus.

For the purpose of this study, I investigated adolescents' perception of family resilience, expecting to overcome the challenge of father absenteeism. Three main themes were recognised in the thematic analysis (see Appendix D) of four semi-structured interviews, namely, factors contributing to resilience in an absent-father family, risk factors to resilience in an absent-father family, and possible solutions to overcome the gap left by absent fathers.

The study showed both positive and negative perceptions of fathers in Mamelodi East, but it seemed that the participants' perception of family resilience was healthy. The participants appeared resilient due to the resources and networks they were exposed to, including both family and their surrounding community. This was particularly true of grandparents and male figures providing family resilience, which also meant having a more optimistic outlook on their future (Walsh, 2016). The findings of this study may contribute to an understanding of families with absent-fathers and as a result, future interventions could be planned around supporting these families more effectively.

At the end of this study, I can appreciate the journey I have travelled in being encouraged by the perceptions of the four participants, being able to express how they were able to overcome their challenges related to absent fathers. I have been inspired by the four participants' positive attitude towards life and the honourable way in which they spoke about family and community members in their lives, especially with reference to grandparents. In working through the chapters of this study, my interests were stimulated by new knowledge and a narrowed expertise on the topic of inquiry. Moreover, I have been stretched as a scholar and researcher through my immersion in the data obtained through this research endeavour.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A
THEMATIC ANALYSIS: PHASE 1 (INITIAL SORTING PROCESS)

physical care
dad

— have dynamic
— assets
— absent fathers

stress
other father-figures

Thematic analysis

30/07/2017

Interview 1.1

What is good about your family?

care

L: They care about you. They give you food and clothes. They buy for me and provide. I live with my grandmother and my mother passed away in 2015. We are two living in the house and is 6 years old. My dad is staying in Thabonga I see him sometimes. My grandmother tells me not to do it I listen to her and I respect her. She cares about me so I listen to her. My mother passed away and sometimes a stress because I think a lot about her. My uncle teaches me to work on the computer. He teach me to respect other people. He also teaches me not to swear at others, because when you swear you will not live long.

What helps your family to be happy?

L: Don't stress when it doesn't matter.

What are you good at doing?

sport

L: Sports. Running and soccer. I play soccer at home, at home, and at a ground with my friends. I'm also good at reading. My uncle helps me to read (stays at home). I also like school and have a few friends at school. I also like mathematics. (Tell me about your best friend at school) We eat together. We don't like to fight and when he asks for money I give him some money, some ten rand. He will go and buy him some sweets. (Tell me about your uncle). We play with computer at home and we will play soccer on it together. My uncle is an Engineer and works at Dunoon. He does not live with me. My grandmother stays with us during the day as well. My little sister, my older sister, and I stay with my grandmother.

What do your family struggle with?

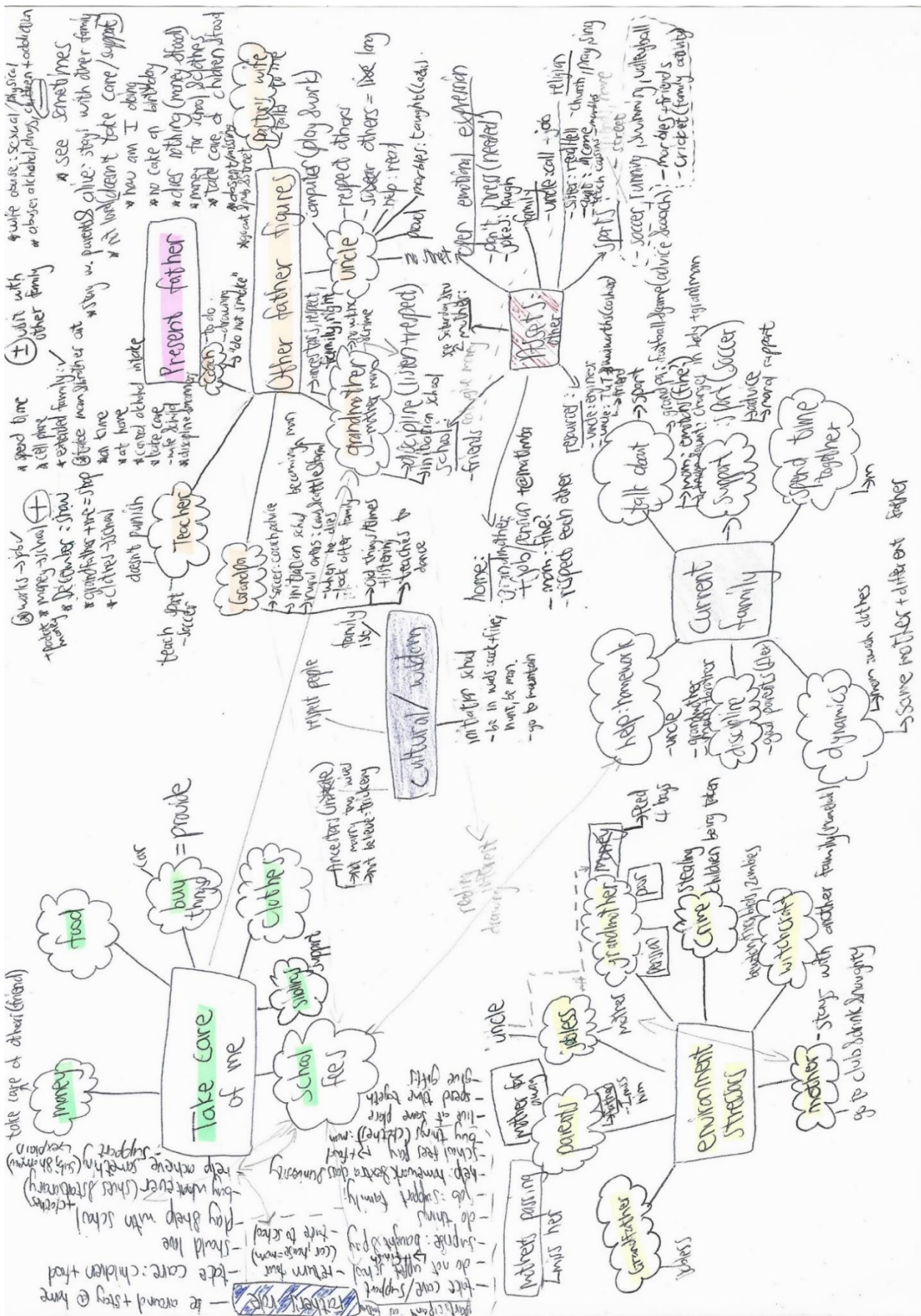
L: Sometimes my grandmother struggle with money. My uncle doesn't help with the money. My grandmother works at the kitchens. She comes home everyday.

What do you think is a fathers job (role)?

L: He is not suppose to go and will stay with his wife at home. My dad is still alive and stays with someone and his other children. They sometimes come to us unexpected. He doesn't take care of us because he doesn't know how I am doing and when it is my birthday he doesn't bring some cake. He doesn't give support for me. There is nothing that he does (no money, food, etc.). If you see him today what will you tell him? I will great him and say I want the pocket money for going to school and give me twenty rand for school. Anything else? No. (The father must support a child and take care of him). I would like him to buy me some clothes but my father never has money. What else? Must take care of children and buy children some food to eat and have some clothes for them.

APPENDIX B

THEMATIC ANALYSIS: PHASE 2 (GENERATING INITIAL CODES)



APPENDIX C

THEMATIC ANALYSIS: PHASE 3 (INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS AND THEMES)

171

Interview 2

172

173 **Fac: What are you good at doing?**

174

175 P3: Playing **soccer and swimming**. I go and swim at **a centre** and we have a **coach** as well. We talk
176 sometimes but we talk about **swimming and he shows** me what to do. I would ask him like when someone
177 is **drowning** I would ask him what to do. But there **are securities** also making sure that we are alright. I'm
178 also good at reading. I like **reading fairy tales** and children's books. Some books like Sophia the first
179 because I like to read some **fairy tale books** so when I come home I can tell my little sister the story of
180 what I read in the book. (Do you read to her?) I just tell her when she **goes to sleep** (Kato). Sometimes I
181 **read** it and sometimes I **tell** it to her. I'm good at drawing. I like it and would draw cars and people.
182 Sometimes I like to **draw** cars, people, and house, and animals. Like dogs and zebras.

183

184 **Fac: What are your family good at/strengths/that makes you happy?**

185

186 P3: I like my family at home because **they support me going to sport and I like soccer**. When it comes to
187 sport we **have challenges** and they are supporting me. They are okay to **talk about it**. We would also talk
188 about **changes in my body** and I can talk to my mother about anything. The things that is changing. I can
189 also talk to my aunt and grandmother. **Not really to my grandfather**. I will talk to him **about football and**
190 **about the game**. When it comes to soccer he likes to **give me advice** and he likes to **coach while he is**
191 **watching soccer**. Like when we are sitting with him he likes to tell us what the **soccer players are suppose**
192 **to do** like shoot the ball or pass. So he teaches me. I play middle field. They are **not strict at** home and
193 they are good parents. They don't shout and don't say do this or do this. They talk to me nicely like:
194 "Katlego the dishes are waiting for you". I would tell them that just give me two minutes I'm watching TV
195 and then they say it is fine. When the story is done I stand up and go washing the dishes until my job is
196 done. Even if I'm studying or with books they even give me more time. They give me like four hours. I
197 feel that they are fine and not to strict. My mom **helps me with my studies**, with one of my **little brothers**
198 (Tshapang). **My uncle** is normally **at work**, but sometimes he **helps me** when he gets home at 19:00 and
199 helps me to **finish the book**. **My aunt works at the contract building sites**. So she sweeps the rubbish after
200 they have built. Mom? No **mom doesn't work** and is at home all the time. Grandparents? No they are **only**
201 **on pension**.

202

203 **Fac: What do your family struggle with?**

204

205 P3: Sometimes mom have to give us pocket money. We **struggle because we are four boys**, three boys
206 without myself. Sometimes we struggle. **We eat a lot** because we are boys.

207

208 **Fac: What do you think is a fathers job (role)?**

209

210 P3: My dad he is **not living with us** but he lives in Damaskraal living with his **father and mother**. He is
211 working. He was working at the petrol station, but he has **another job** but I don't know what he is doing
212 now. The first thing is he **has to support us**. Sometimes he **saves money for pocket** money at school and
213 sometimes he likes to **take us out with mom**, but normally with my little brother, Tshapang. We are
214 brothers and the **rest have another father** (14, 11, 2). That is his job.

215 **Fac: You were father in future?**

216

217 P3: The first thing I will do I would want a child **to finish their school**. I would like to support my child and
218 **buy them things**, like **clothes**. I will **support him/her** to much because it would be like his child. I want to
219 support them. When **I find a job** I would support them buy taking my half pay and save it and with the
220 other half **give to the mother and buy things** for my child. I will **live with the mother at my house** and then
221 when I'm going to work and then **spend time with my children and mother** and **live at the same place**.
222 When we go to dinner I would **not leave the child behind**. We will eat together and spend **time together**
223 with the child.

224

225 **Fac: How do you see fathers in Mamelodi?**

226

227 P3: Some are bad and some do not take care of their children. Some of them use **alcohol and use drugs**
228 **and abusing their children**. They are **bad for their soul**. The **good fathers** would always **be on time at**
229 **home**. They would **drink alcohol** but **not to get drunk** and not drink that much. They also **spend time with**
230 **their wives** and **take care** of their **wife and children**. Supporting their children. In Mamelodi there are more
231 good fathers because they release that the future is fine. Friends fathers? They stay with them. Some
232 fathers **abuse drugs and get addicted** and like to **abuse their children's mother**, usually **sexual or**
233 **physical**...something like that. There are **one's that are not there**. The good fathers normally don't abuse.

234

235 **Fac: Who teaches you about culture? What do they teach?**

236

237 P3: My **grandpa**. **Grandma**. They **teach me about initiation schools** like they will give me **advice on how**
238 **to do this** or you will have to do this at the school. I can go when I reach **15 years** that is when I can go.
239 In two years. But usually they will **go in 4 years**. But they are back now so they will go again in 2021. The
240 one's are back from initiation schools so in for years they are open again. I'll be seventeen. Like when
241 you are in initiation school they teach you **how to be in the woods**. How to **cook without electricity** using
242 **fire, go hunt, something like that**.

243

244 **Fac: Belief systems? Ancestors?**

245

246 P3: No we don't do that. At my home we don't believe in ancestors, they are not able to be tricked.

247

248 **Fac: Who teaches you about being a strong family? What do they teach?**

249

250 P3: My **grandpa**. He likes to tell us that if you pass always like we like to **go to rural areas** and looking at
251 **cows and cattle**, or something like that. He likes to tell us that **when he passed away** we must be strong
252 and **look after our family** and look after his **cattle and farm**. He doesn't tell us that much except for that.
253 (A man with few, but powerful words).

254

255 **Fac: What is the difference with families having a father and families without fathers?**

256

257 P3: Families with a father would work to much. Like families with **fathers has manners, is not rude**. So
258 there is **discipline and manners** in the house.

APPENDIX D
THEMATIC ANALYSIS: PHASE 4 (FINAL TABLE OF THEMES)

Theme 1	
Factors contributing to resilience in an absent-father family	
Sub-theme 1.1: Social and economic resources within the family and community	
1.1.1	Economic support provided by family members
1.1.2	Social support provided by grandparents
1.1.3	Social support provided by family networks and by the community
Sub-theme 1.2: Male figure support in an absent-father family	
1.2.1	Educational development
1.2.2	Emotional development
1.2.3	Cultural or moral development
Sub-theme 1.3: Positive involvements of absent fathers	
Theme 2	
Factors obstructing resilience in an absent-father family	
Sub-theme 2.1: Experiences of poverty	
Sub-theme 2.2: Exposure to environmental stressors	
Theme 3	
Possible solutions to overcome the gap left by absent fathers	
Sub-theme 3.1: Child development and financial support	
Sub-theme 3.2: Interaction and connectedness	

APPENDIX E
REFLECTIVE JOURNAL EXTRACTS

18 July 2017: Data collection preparation

It is a week before I intend to collect data at the community centre in Mamelodi East. I have arranged to meet my supervisor, Prof Mampane, and Ms Maahlo, at the site. Ms Maahlo was very helpful in her attempt to arrange the data collection with learners. Initially she arranged consent and assent for 14 learners. I ensured that I have all the questions that I wanted to ask in both the focus groups and the semi-structured interviews. I also ensured that I take my camera with me to record any useful visual imagery that will enhance the readers' experience of the research site.

At this stage Prof Mampane already went to the research site and informed the participants and their parents about the process involved in gathering data and asked Ms Maahlo to ensure consent and assent. I also prepared all my tools needed for on the day of gathering data, including: consent & assent forms, refreshments for the participants, camera for observation, audio recorder, reflective journal, notes to help with facilitation, and articles in preparation of the data collection process. My supervisor acted as a translator on the day data were gathered.

25 July 2017: Data collection (Day 1)

Driving around in Mamelodi East reminds me of my stay in Khayelitsha. Some areas are better equipped with more space around houses, but the houses are a lot smaller and more dense than what is typically found in urban areas. The bulk of the houses that I saw were brick housing, whereas other areas were shacks or wooden housing. The streets of Mamelodi East have potholes and are surrounded by trash. On the outskirts of Mamelodi East there are beautiful natural environments with trees and plants, as well as some municipal benches and landscapes. Some areas also seem to have challenges with the drainage of water and sewerage. Being from an urban area myself I am not used to seeing this around the street where I normally drive. This was something I am not used to.

Today when I arrived at the the partner organisation I met up with Prof Mampane and Ms Maahlo. Ms Maahlo showed us the room that we could use for data collection. She is a qualified social worker, but is appointed as in an auxiliary work position at the centre. She also provided me with the consent and assent forms, as well as information on the centre. She was very friendly and helpful throughout the data collection and member-checking process. However, in the beginning I had some frustration with regards to participants not showing up, but I quickly realised that it wasn't necessarily Ms Maahlo that did not ensure that the learners are available, rather that the participants had some variables (like participants: dropping out/being expelled from school, not automatically being there on the days that I planned to be there, or participants being at extracurricular activities).

Therefore, to my surprise only three of the fourteen participants arrived on the first day of data collection. One of the participants did not qualify for the current study, as he had both of his parents living with him and his siblings under the same roof. I had to thank him for his willingness, but excused him from the data collection process. Shame, he seemed very excited to be part of the process. My supervisor quickly recommended that I do two semi-structured interviews and change the initial idea of having both a focus group and semi-structured interviews. I thoroughly enjoyed having my supervisor there to help with the translation, but the participants were actually able to express themselves quite well in English.

With regards to the semi-structured interviews, I truly enjoyed gathering information on participants who seemed to be resilient irrespective of their fathers being absent. I was inspired by the participants being positive and excited about their current and future families. After today I realised again that I have a passion to do research on participants who are able to rise above the challenges that you face daily.

26 July 2017: Data collection (Day 2)

I decided to go back to the research site today in order to see if there were more participants available that already gave consent. It was worth it as two more participants arrived, which helped me to conduct two more semi-structured interviews. I thoroughly enjoyed the positive nature of both these participants who are both living with their grandparents. One of the participants, in particular, provided significant data

in terms of fatherhood in Mamelodi East. I am so glad I decided to go back to the research site, as I had more information of four families in Mamelodi East. After the data collection I realised that I did not do enough research on grandparent-headed households. I had to find articles on grandparent-households and add it to my literature review.

Some additional observation I made over the two days:

- All four participants were positive about their grandparent involvement.
- Participants were eager to engage and share their experiences.
- The participants really enjoyed the refreshments that I gave them afterwards.

20 December 2017: Finalising my mini-dissertation

On this day I thought I would be done with my mini-dissertation, but I decided to attempt to wrap it all up in the beginning of 2018. This was after I tried numerous times to meet up with the participants at the end of this year, but the participants were either on holiday or writing summative assessments. I almost decided to leave the member-checking out, but after having a conversation with both my supervisor and wife, we thought it would be best to finish my mini-dissertation appropriately. I am glad that I have decided this as I could have a well deserved rest over the holidays and hopefully will attain a higher quality research product at the end.

18 January 2018 Preparing for member-checking

A lot of time and effort went into the thematic analysis process, but I was given excellent support by my supervisor who guided me to be culturally relevant and academically accurate. The findings also fit in well with the theoretical framework and I believe will motivate others who lives in an absent-father family in south Africa. Therefore, I was excited to share the themes and findings with the participants, as I believe they will be proud of the work that they have done.

I really struggled to get hold of Ms Maahlo as she didn't reply to my emails. I then decided that I will phone her in an attempt to do member-checking and she gave me a date and time. I told myself if there is one participants then I will be happy, while obviously hoping that all of the participants will show up. Nevertheless, I prepared

Chapter 4's member-checking session by highlighting the four participants' responses in four different colours. I wanted quality member-checking to take place, even if it meant talking a lot of time.

25 January 2018: Member-checking

On the day of member checking I got lost in parts of Mamelodi and to make matters worse, I wasn't able to fill my car up with petrol before driving to the site, as I got caught up at work. This placed a lot of unnecessary anxiety and pressure on me, however this allowed me to explore sides to Mamelodi that I haven't seen before. I also needed more photographs of Mamelodi East, therefore every now and then I stopped to gather my sense of direction and take photos of the community. Eventually I arrived at the site about 20 minutes late, but the participants were no where to be seen. I met up with Ms Maahlo who placed me in her office this time as the previous room was being renovated.

One hour went by and one of the participants arrived. Then after waiting one more hour two more participants appeared. Yes, yes, yes, I thought as 75% is not a bad turn-out. Just as we were about to start, the last participant joined us. I was so glad and thank Ms Maahlo for organising everything (in my head at this stage).

I started of by explaining my topic to them and then worked thematically I worked through Chapter 4, indicating each participants' word and clarifying aspects that were unclear to me. One of the participants weren't happy with something that I wrote and asked me to remove it, which I did. The young men were very excited about the feedback and the knowledge that they will be part of a book. I promised that I will leave them a copy of the final draft at the community centre, so that they could show it to other or just reflect on what they said. I am very surprised at how much it meant to them and will follow through on the promise I made and am excited to possibly see them again.

APPENDIX F

RESEARCH SCHEDULE



Faculty of Education

Schedule and important information: Data Collection

Research sample

The sample will consist of ten adolescents between the age of 14 and 17. The participants will be predominantly black South Africans residing in Mamelodi and will be targeted at adolescents with absent fathers.

Focus group

I will work with various adolescents simultaneously to explore (Maree, 2012) themes based on father-figures, resilience, culture, and risk. Wagner et al. (2012) describes focus group interviews as a debate wherein participants can build on others' ideas and comments to offer an in-depth view of family resilience. The focus group's duration will be about 120 minutes, with a break in the middle to keep the participants fresh. Possible focus group questions will be based on:

- What strengths/resources are there in your family? What helps your family to be healthy?
- What weaknesses/risks are there in your family?
- What do you think is a fathers' role in a family?
- How do you see fathers in Mamelodi?
- What do you think is the difference between families with a father that is present and families who don't have fathers present?
- Who teaches you about your culture?
- Who teaches you about being a strong or healthy family?

Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interviews will be conducted in order to provide personal in-depth information (Wagner et al., 2012) on family resilience. I will identify two participants to interview based on their participation during focus groups (highly informative participants). The two semi structured interviews will take between 60 and 90 minutes. These following questions will be used as basis, depending on the information obtained of the focus group discussion:

- What strengths/resources are there in your family? What helps your family to be healthy?
- What weaknesses/risks are there in your family?
- What do you think is a fathers' role in a family?
- How do you see fathers in Mamelodi?
- What do you think is the difference between families with a father that is not present or present?
- Who teaches you about your culture?
- Who teaches you about being a strong or healthy family?

APPENDIX G

EXAMPLE OF INFORMED ASSENT AND CONSENT



Pretoria 0002 Republic of South Africa
Department of Educational Psychology
25 September 2016

ASSENT LETTER

Family resilience as perceived by families from a low socio-economic environment

Dear Research participant (under the age of [redacted])

My name is Johan Louw, I am a masters student and researcher from the University of Pretoria. I am involved in an ongoing research study headed by Dr. Ruth Mampane in Mamelodi.

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into the adolescents' from an absent father family's experiences of resilience. I will also explore and describe which resilience processes are key to families of adolescents from low-socioeconomic backgrounds especially from an absent father home.

You have been selected to be part of this study as you meet the requirements of the research study. I will have the opportunity to interact with you, your siblings if possible and other children from similar home background as you (absent father homes) during group discussions. The group discussion will take a minimum of forty-five minutes to a maximum of sixty minutes to complete. There will then be individual interviews to get to know each one of you better.

The sessions will be conducted in English, however an interpreter will be present in order to explain information that you or I may not understand. The participation in the study is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time. In such case, please notify me of your intention to withdraw. You will not be penalised should you choose to withdraw.

1

You will not be exposed to any harm in the study. The discussions held will be recorded in order to assist me to compile the necessary research report. Your information will be kept confidential and no one other than the research supervisor and I will have access to the information that you contribute to. Your information will be stored in a secure place and after the study, your information will be deleted. Your identity will be kept confidential where your names will not be included in the final report. I will tell you about any changes in the study that may affect you in any way. Additionally, I cannot promise any type of reward for participating in the research study. It is completely of a voluntary nature.

The study is not of such nature that you may experience any injuries. If you feel upset from the group discussion or individual interview in any way, please inform me in order for me to arrange for you appropriate counselling at the ?

Once the study is completed, a summary of the results will be emailed to you on request.

Please feel free to ask me or my supervisor on any concerns or questions that you may have regarding the study.



Johan Louw
Researcher
johan.louw.777@gmail.com



Dr. Ruth Mampane
Supervisor
Ruth.Mampane@up.ac.za

2

Declaration and signature

Assent

[redacted] declare that I have read and understood what the study is about and hereby consent / agree to participate in the study.

[redacted]

Printed Name of Research Participant

[redacted]

Signature of Research Participant

21/06/2017 14:23

Date & Time

3



Pretoria 0002 Republic of South Africa
Department of Educational Psychology
25 September 2016

CONSENT LETTER

Family resilience as perceived by families from a low socio-economic environment

Dear Parent of child/ Guardian [redacted]

My name is Johan Louw, I am a masters student and researcher from the University of Pretoria. I am involved in an ongoing research study headed by Dr. Ruth Mampane in Mamelodi.

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into your children's experiences of an absent father family and the resilience of such a family. I will also explore and describe which resilience processes are key to your family especially when the father is not present and possible challenges of children growing up in a low-socioeconomic background.

Your child has been selected to be part of this study as he/she meet the requirements of the research study. I will have the opportunity to interact with him/her a focus group and interviews. The focus group will consist of all the children who are taking part in the study. The duration of these focus groups will take a minimum of forty-five minutes to a maximum of sixty minutes to complete. There will then be semi-structured interviews which will consist of individual interviews with a some of the participants.

The sessions will be conducted in English, however an interpreter will be present in order to explain information that you may not understand in English. The participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may withdraw from the study at any time. In such case, please notify me of

1

your intention to withdraw him/her. Your child or yourself will not be penalised should you choose to withdraw.

Your child will not be exposed to any risk or harm in the study. The discussions held will be recorded in order to assist me to compile the necessary research report. The information will be kept confidential and no one other than the research supervisor and I will have access to the raw data that you contribute to. The information will be stored in a secure place and after the study it will be deleted. The identity of your child and your family will be kept confidential and no names will not be included in the final report. Your child will not be subjected to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes. I will tell you and your child about any changes in the study that may affect you in any way. Additionally, I cannot promise any type of reward for participating in the research study. It is completely of a voluntary nature.

The study is not of such nature that your child may experience any injuries. If I experience that your child feel psychologically vulnerable from the focus group or semi-structured interview in any way, I will refer him/her to the appropriate counselling at the centre, I will ask your permission for this as well.

Once the study is completed, a summary of the results will be sent to the centre and you can see them if you want to.

Please feel free to ask me or my supervisor on any concerns or questions that you may have regarding the study.



Mr Johan Louw

Researcher

johan.louw.777@gmail.com



Dr. Ruth Mampane

Supervisor

Ruth.Mampane@up.ac.za

Declaration and signature

Consent

██████████ declare that I have read and understood what the study is about and hereby consent / agree to participate in the study.

██████████

Printed Name of Research Participant

██████████


Signature of Research Participant

21/06/2017 14:23

Date & Time


APPENDIX H

STANZA BOPAPE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CENTRE INFORMATION



STANZA BOPAPE HEALTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
 pushing back the frontiers of poverty

STANZA BOPAPE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
DROP IN-CENTRE



TEL: (012) 815 8051 or 074 4555 479 / 072 364 5762... Email: stanzabopape@gmail.com/ndokuvy@gmail.com


POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 79126
 PHYSICAL ADDRESS: 29355 Marishane Street
 EXTENSION 5
 MAMELODI EAST
 0122

PROPOSAL LETTER FOR OUR SOCIAL PROGRAM (DROP-IN-CENTRE)

YEAR: 2013/15

- VISION:**
 - To see our community develops from poor of the poorest, unskilled, and unemployed to becoming skilled, employable and self-reliant by participating in our economic and social development through various incomes generating projects.
- MISSION:**
 - To provide capacity-building programmes that will ensure the ability of lifetime sustainability and self-reliant through acquire skills and knowledge, by networking with all relevant stakeholders.
- AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:**
 - Provision of information and Referrals
 - Provision and Support Social Programmes
 - Provision and Facilitation of training and skills development.
 - Facilitation and management of business and entrepreneur programme
- SERVICES THAT ARE RENDERED IN OUR SOCIAL PROGRAM (DROP-IN-CENTRE)**
 - Orphan Care and Support Programmes
 - Psycho-Social Support
 - Support Groups
 - After School Care for the Orphans and Vulnerable Children
- ACTIVITIES TAKEN BY THE SOCIAL PROGRAM**

The program is mainly focusing on Orphans and Vulnerable children families who are affected and infected by HIV/AIDS.




BACKGROUND HISTORY

Stanza Bopape Community Development centre is a multi-purpose centre which is known for proudly serving the indigent community members through various programs and caring for orphans and vulnerable children.

The program for orphans and vulnerable children is a Drop-in-Centre the centre is initiated the orphan care and support program to offer psycho-social support, provision of food parcels and/or daily meals, assisting the children to apply for exemption of school fees through school governing bodies, providing children with items that are not provided by the school and assistance and supervision homework.

Therefore, it is our responsibility as the nonprofit organization to care for the vulnerable people and promote the spirit of belonging we run Satellites Drop-In-Centre from the two local schools which is Motheo Primary School / Pfundza ndi Tshedza based in Mamelodi East; currently our Drop-In-Centre has 187 Children.




social development
 Department
 Social Development
 REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

GAUTENG PROVINCE
 REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SERVICES RENDERED AT STANZA BOPAPE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

INFORMATION & REFERRALS ASSIST IN DRAFTING CV'S PROVISION OF INFORMATION LEARNERSHIPS AND APPLICATIONS JOB SEEKER'S CENTRE	SOCIAL PROGRAMME ORPHANS & VULNERABLE CHILD CARE DAILY MEALS FOR OVC'S FOOD PARCELS AFTER SCHOOL CARE SERVICES PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICE DRUG REHABILITATED BENEFICIARIES AFTER CARE SERVICES
ENTERPRENUERIAL PROGRAMMES SHOE MAKING BRICK MAKING WELDING, SEWING EVENTS & CATERING	SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TRAINING LIFE SKILLS / WORKSHOPS CO-OPERATE TRAINING BUSINESS SKILLS TECHNICAL SKILLS COMPUTER TRAINING PLUMBING & CAPENTRY
NUTRITION A-MEAL-A-DAY PROFILED BENEFICIARIES POVERTY ALLEVIATION	URBAN FARMING SEMI & COMMERCIAL CROP FARMING CO-OPERATIVES SUPPORT HOUSEHOLD CROP FARMING

APPENDIX I
ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF RESEARCH SITE





APPENDIX J

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET



Faculty of Education

Pretoria 0002 Republic of South Africa
Department of Educational Psychology

30 September 2016

Participation Information Sheet

Dear participant(s)

My name is Johan Louw and I am currently studying my Masters degree in Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria. As part of my requirements for the degree, I am conducting a research study on family strengths as perceived by adolescents in an absent father family.

I therefore wish to invite you to participate in my study. If you are currently undergoing psychological or psychiatric therapy you will not be allowed to participate in this study. Your participation is unpaid and if you want to stop involvement from the study it will not be held against you in any way. If you agree to take part in this study, I shall arrange focus groups and semi-structured interviews at a time that is suitable for you which will take place at the community centre in Mamelodi.

I will have the opportunity to interact with you in a focus groups consisting of ten teenagers your age. The duration of this focus groups will take about 120 minutes with a break in between. There will then be semi-structured interviews which will consist of two teenagers. You may withdraw from the study prior or during the focus group and/or semi-structured interview and you may also refuse to answer any questions that make you feel uneasy.

No one other than the research supervisor and I will have access to the information that you share. Please be sure that your name and personal details will be kept private and no identifying information will be included in the final research. All audio-recordings will be destroyed after some time. Additionally, the researcher cannot promise any type of reward for participating in the research study. It is completely unpaid.

If you feel psychologically unprotected during the interview in any way, please tell me in order to get the needed support. Once the study is finished, a summary of the results will be given to you on request. Please feel free to ask me or my supervisor on any fears or questions that you may have about the study.

Thank you for thinking about taking part in this study.

Yours sincerely

Researcher: Johan Louw

Johan.louw.777@gmail.com

083 445 1442

Supervisor: Dr Ruth Mampane

Ruth.Mampane@up.ac.za

APPENDIX K
FINAL INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Theme 1		
Theme	Inclusion	Exclusion
Social and economic resources within the family and community.	Data that pertains to family resilience as a result of family and community economic and social resources.	Family resilience data that exclude community and family economic and social resources.
Male figure support in an absent father family	Data that alludes to adult male person who plays a supportive role in the participants' life	Data that does not focuses on adult male figures who provide supportive role in the participants' life
Positive involvement of absent fathers	Data focused on absent father's positive contribution to family in terms of financial, emotional, and discipline.	Data that exclude the absent fathers positive contribution to family regarding financial, emotional and discipline.
Theme 2		
Theme	Inclusion	Exclusion
Experience of poverty	Data focuses on participants' experience of household unemployment, scarcity, or having insufficient finances available.	Data that excludes participants' experience of household unemployment, scarcity, or having insufficient finances available.
Exposure to environmental stressors	Data alludes to other environmental stressors that negatively affect participants' lives.	Data omitting other environmental stressors that negatively affect participants' lives.
Theme 3		
Theme	Inclusion	Exclusion
Child development and financial support.	Data on participants' future hopes that contribute to their dreams of enhancing their children's school development and other day to day activities.	Data that disregards participants' future hopes to contribute to their children's school development and other day to day expenses.
Interaction and connectedness.	Data directed at how participants will ensure connectedness and interaction with their own children and spouse in the future.	Data not focused on how participants will ensure connectedness and interaction with their own children and spouse in the future.

APPENDIX L
MEMBER CHECKING

MEMBER CHECKING – UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Record of the group feedback session

25/01/2018

Participants: 4 males (P1-P4)

Facilitator: Fac

I started off by briefly showing the overview of my mini-dissertation. Then I referred to Chapter 4, indicating their different responses in four main colours (orange, pink, green, and yellow). I explained to them that their identities will not be revealed to the readers, but their responses will be read by other people. I explained to them how they fit in my research title and emphasised their resilience amidst the adversity they face. I then read back their responses, using the following themes:

5.8.1 Sub-theme 1.1: Social and economic resources within the family and community.

i) Economic support provided by family members

Fac: *'My grandmother works at the kitchens' (P1, Line 29). Is she a domestic worker?*

P1: Yes.

Fac: *'The grandmother takes care of me and my siblings' (P2, Line 87). "My grandmother, but I don't know where money comes' (P2, Line 110-112). Does your grandmother get a grant from the government?*

P2: Yes.

Fac: *'...she is taking care of my uncle's house in Marikana' (P2, Line 88). 'My mother promised me that when I grow up she will buy me a golf [car]' (P2, Line 122). 'Sometimes she brings new things for us' (P2, Line 89-90). 'No, my mom doesn't work and is at home all the time. And my grandparents are only on pension' (P3, Line 119-200). 'My aunt works at the contract building sites'. (P3, Line 199-200). 'She*

[grandmother] works here at the centre at Mathimba' (P4, Line 315). 'My other one [uncle] work in Woolworths...My uncle is working the machines...'(P4, Line 315-318).

P4: *No, my uncle is a supervisor at Woolworths. He is not working on the machines.*