EXPERIENCES OF ADOLESCENT BOYS WITH ABSENT FATHERS IN SINGLE-MOTHER FAMILIES IN BAKENBERG VILLAGE, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

By

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DECLARATION

I, Phasha Kgethego Terrance, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own academic work and that all sources used in compiling this document have been properly acknowledged using complete references.

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Phasha Kgethego Terrance   Date

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family for always being there for me throughout my studies. They were my beacon of strength and made me to push myself to never give up. Their support is much appreciated and I am grateful for my family.

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of absent fathers continues to be one of the major social problems which affect families globally. This study has examined the experiences of adolescent boys who grow up without fathers in single-mother families in Bakenberg village in Limpopo Province. The objectives of this study were to establish the experiences of adolescent boys with absent fathers, to describe the challenges faced by adolescent boys in growing up without a father and to determine their understanding of the role and value of having a father. A qualitative approach was used for this study. This approach was complemented by the use of a descriptive phenomenological research design for its focus on lived human experiences and the meanings participants assigned to those experiences. A purposive sampling technique was used to collect data from 18 adolescent boys through face-to-face interviews and as well as focus group discussions. The data collected was analysed using the thematic analysis method.

The findings of this study showed that participants regarded fathers as an important figure in their lives and their families and his absence brought about financial challenges, poor academic progress, indulgence in alcohol and smoking brought about by negative outside influences as well as lack of immediate gender role model. The study also revealed that in the absence of fathers, these boys end up being compelled to play the role of the man in their families. For the participants in this study, other male figures such as uncles and grandfathers played a vital role in as far as gender specific roles and identity development is concerned. The study encourages more research into issues that impact negatively the children in one-parent families. The study also draws attention to the necessity to discover the reasons for the disintegration of the family structure, thereby highlighting a serious national and global problem which needs to be addressed for the health and well-being of our people because families form the foundation of a country's citizenry.

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The composition of families across the globe has changed and single-parent, child-headed and female-headed families, amongst others, have emerged. The phenomenon of absent fathers as well has captured the attention of researchers. According to Cartwright and Henriksen Jr. (2012:29); Mather (2010:1) and Rabe (2018:13), there is an increase in the number of children growing up without fathers. Fathers have always been regarded as heads of families in society. Even though the physical availability of a father in a child's life does not automatically translate into positive outputs, the absence of a father in the family is understood to have negative consequences for children and women (Eddy, Thomson-de Boor & Mphaka, 2013:11; Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018:30). The absence of a father has in fact been noted as the root of many social problems and contributing to a variety of issues like crime, delinquency, premature sexuality, poor educational achievement and poverty (Cartwright & Henriksen Jr, 2012:29). Studies in Central America and the United States of America revealed that the absence of a father results in poor educational performance, school dropouts, teenage pregnancies, drugs and alcohol abuse amongst boys (Eddy *et al.*, 2013:11; Gray & Anderson, 2015:3; McLanahan, Tach & Schneider, 2013:422). To that end, such findings are also observable among adolescent boys in developing countries like South Africa.

The information presented above highlights significant social, psychological and emotional issues concerning the absence of a father in the family, especially for adolescent boys. However, these studies did not explore the subjective accounts of boys' experiences of growing up without a father in the context of rural villages. The researcher contends that although there is research on the experiences of

fatherhood and father absence in South Africa; they are based in the context of urban and township environments and these experiences differed with those of adolescent boys in rural communities. The current study aimed to add to the understanding of the experiences of adolescent boys who are growing up without fathers in the rural area of Bakenberg, thereby filling a gap in the existing literature.

1.2 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.2.1 Absent father

According to Eddy *et al.* (2013:7), absent fathers are defined as fathers that do not live with their children, do not maintain contact and are not paying any maintenance. For the purposes of this study, an absent father denotes a father who does not live with his child, has no communication with the child and does not contribute to the upbringing of the child.

1.2.2 Adolescent

Gouws (2015:1) defined an adolescent as a person in a transitory period involving biological, cognitive and social-emotional changes where he or she is seen neither as a child nor an adult. For the purposes of this study, an adolescent implies a boy between the ages of 14 and 18.

1.2.3 Single-mother family

A single-mother family is defined as a family where the mother lives with no spouse or partner and performs all the day to day responsibilities of raising children alone (Stephen & Udisi, 2016:1). In the context of this study, a single-mother family implies a family where the mother is the sole parent and there is no father or adult male figure.

1.3 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

The rationale for this study stemmed from the observable increase of challenges faced by adolescent boys with absent fathers in rural areas. There have been a

growing number of households with absent fathers worldwide specifically in Black communities (Cartwright & Henriksen Jr., 2012:29; Wilson, 2014:90). According to Holborn and Eddy (2011:4) and Van den Berg and Makusha (2018:30), boys who grow up in absent father households are likely to display hyper-masculine behaviours including aggression. Similarly, greater concern has been expressed over an increasing number of boys who grow up without fathers and the negative effects it has on boys (Bojuwoye & Sylvester, 2014:2017; Wilson, Henriksen Jr., Bustamante & Irby, 2016:189). These findings indicate that the phenomenon of absent fathers is a cause for concern which needs to be addressed in order to better understand its effect on adolescent boys' experiences and social functioning.

The study by Bojuwoye and Sylvester (2014:2017) explains that children growing up in single-mother families are disadvantaged by not having a live-in gender role model and financial security which is generally provided by the father as the head of the family. Some of the findings from studies on the phenomenon pointed to both an academic and an emotional disadvantage (Franklin, Makiwane & Makusha, 2014:48; Khewu & Adu, 2015:3; Wilson et al., 2016:190). Given these findings and the fact that single-mother families are on the rise worldwide (Stephen & Udisi, 2016:1); and that boys need their fathers (Department of Social Development, 2012:24; Williams, Hewison, Wildman & Roskell, 2013:92), the matter is important for consideration.

Adolescent boys who grow up in families where there is no father are considered to be at risk. Studies have found that there are negative effects of father absence on virtually every aspect of children's lives (Bojuwoye & Sylvester, 2014:2017; Khewu & Adu, 2015:3; McLanahan et al., 2013:422). Although research on absent fathers has been done in South Africa, only a few have been found in Limpopo Province in particular (Mabusela, 2014; Sekgale, 2017; Spjeldnaes, Moland, Harris & Sam, 2011; Spjeldnaes et al., 2014). Furthermore, these researchers focused on the experiences of single-mothers in relation to absent fathers. The current study intended to describe the experiences of adolescent boys who grow up in single-mother families where the father is not part of the family system from a rural point of view.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

With the advent of industrialisation, globalisation and socio-economic changes in the society, the structure of the family has shifted from the traditional nuclear family towards single-mother families. According to Pitsoane and Gasa (2018:10748), South Africa has many single-mother households owing to an increase in the number and proportion of absent but living fathers. The study by Eddy *et al.* (2013:7) found that the phenomenon of absent fathers is more prevalent in rural areas than in urban areas with 55% of African rural children under the age of 15 having absent living fathers compared to 43% of African children in urban areas. According to Van den Berg and Makusha (2018:34) in 2016, Limpopo Province was mentioned as one of the provinces where children were least likely to live with their fathers. In the Mogalakwena Local Municipality, Waterberg District in Limpopo Province, the overall statistics on single-mother families stands at 52,3% (Mogalakwena Municipality IDP 2018/19:34); whilst the total statistics on mother-only households in South Africa for black Africans was 39, 4% and 41,9% in 2010 and 2015 respectively (Statistics SA, 2015:11). Furthermore, it is estimated that 40% of the 18 million South African children are raised by single-mothers (Bojuwoye & Sylvester, 2014:2017; Franklin *et al.*, 2014:48; Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018:32). Eddy *et al.* (2013:7) mention that one father out of two is absent from his child's life. A worrying trend with the absence of a father is the behavioural problems which result in boys experiencing difficulties to adjust socially and it also exacerbates detrimental behavioural and emotional effects (Pitsoane & Gasa, 2018:10748).

Adolescent boys who grow up in single-mother families tend to experience less commitment to schooling and often display behaviour which becomes difficult for their mothers to control and apply disciplinary parental guidance. Research has shown that boys from homes where the father is absent display an inability to delay gratification, interpersonal problems, poorer psychological adjustment, depression and anxiety compared to boys from intact families (East *et al.*, 2017:38; Hill *et al.*, 2016:436; Pitsoane & Gasa, 2018:10748). According to Pitsoane and Gasa (2018:10750), these problems are linked to the lack of a positive father-son relationship, supervision, insecure attachment and inadequate involvement by the father. They further mention that the involvement of a father in his son's life plays a

major role in his emotional functioning. For boys, the availability of a father in the household has been linked to high levels of self-confidence, less fear of failure and increased self-esteem (Hill, Proffitt-Leyva & DelPriore, 2016:436); unlike those who grow up without their biological father (East, Hutchinson, Power & Jackson, 2017:38). Fathers are acknowledged to be a significant influence on the boy child and the quality of contact and the father-son relationship impact positively on the child's social, psychological, emotional and behavioural development (Gray & Anderson, 2015:1; Hill *et al*., 2016:436; Londt *et al*., 2017:146; Pitsoane & Gasa, 2018:10750).

The prevalence of psychological, social, academic and behavioural difficulties faced by adolescent boys in rural communities with regard to issues of behaviour, attitudes and overall social conduct is the key consideration in addressing this phenomenon. Most adolescent boys in Bakenberg village come from families where there are no fathers or male figures, and such family settings pose challenges which impact negatively on adolescent boys' well-being and upbringing. Studies have found that the absence of a father, neglect or abandonment can result in boys experiencing poor educational performance, school drop-out, teen pregnancy, and drug and alcohol abuse (Eddy *et. al*., 2013:11; Bojuwoye & Sylvester, 2014:2017; Ratele, Shefer & Clowes, 2012:553).   Recent studies have been documented on the understanding and explanation of fatherhood and the absent father phenomenon mainly focusing on adult men and women, young girls and men's experiences of fatherless homes (Eddy *et. al*. 2013:12; Freeks 2017a:94; Makofane 2015:5; Williams, Hewison, Wildman & Roskell 2013:93; Swartz, Bhana, Richter & Versfeld 2013:1). There is limited literature on the experiences and challenges faced by adolescent boys who grow up without fathers, living in rural villages especially in Limpopo Province. This observation informed the need for this study in order to shed some light on the experiences of and the implications of these experiences on adolescent boys from families where fathers are absent and mothers are the sole providers in households in Bakenberg village, Limpopo Province.

1.5 ROLE OF THEORY IN THE STUDY

1.5.1 Structural functional theory

The phenomenon under study focused on the experiences of adolescent boys who grew up without fathers present in the family in Bakenberg village, Limpopo Province. Families have been regarded as the primary structural units and agents of socialisation in any society. The theoretical framework which underpinned this study is the structural functionalism theory by Emile Durkheim. This theory advances the argument that a system consists of various parts or subsystems which must function together for the overall system to work (Archibong & Antia, 2014:350; Kimani & Kombo, 2010:15; Laluddin, 2016:10). The issue of absent fathers depicts a structure within a family which contributes to the disintegration of the functioning of a family system.

The failure of fathers to perform and fulfill the role of fatherhood in their families contribute to the disintegration and disfunction of the entire family system (Archibong & Antia, 2014:350; Kimani & Kombo, 2010:15). Accordingly, a family is likened to an organism consisting of individual members who are expected to perform a role in order to sustain the entire family unit (Kimani & Kombo, 2010:15). This study described the experiences of boys who grew up without fathers and the critical role of the father in the family as well as the effects of his absence on the adolescent boys and the family. The findings of this study affirmed the essential role that fathers play in the family especially on the socialisation of boys. This concurred with the tenet upon which the focus of structural functional perspective lies, in that fathers have an important role to play in the family in order to enhance the overall functioning of the family system.

1.6 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1.6.1 Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to describe the experiences of adolescent boys who grow up without fathers in single-mother families in Bakenberg village, Limpopo Province.

1.6.2 Objectives of the study

The following objectives were formulated for the study:

➢ To establish the experiences of adolescent boys with absent fathers in single-mother families in Bakenberg village.

➢ To describe the challenges faced by adolescent boys in growing up without a father in Bakenberg village.

➢ To determine the adolescent boys' understanding of the role and value of having a father in the family.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this section, I demonstrated how the study was done by unpacking my research approach, design, population, sampling, data collection and analysis methods as well as the trustworthiness of the findings

1.7.1 Research approach

This study employed a qualitative research approach in order to achieve the envisaged aim and objectives. The researcher used a qualitative approach based on its advantages. This approach was earmarked for this study due to the fact that it focuses on linguistics (words) rather than numerical data (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:53). The use of a qualitative approach stemmed from the nature of the study which sought to describe human experiences. The researcher opted for this approach for the purpose of describing the experiences of adolescent boys in growing up without a father figure. The use of the qualitative approach allowed the researcher to have direct contact with the participants as well as the phenomenon under investigation. In corroboration, other authors point out that researchers study things in their natural settings in order to make sense of them and also interpret the meanings people assign to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Nieuwenhuis & Brit, 2012:126). In this regard, the researcher collected data from adolescent boys who live in absent father households in order to get firsthand experiences on growing up without a father figure from people who are directly affected by such a phenomenon.

1.7.2   Research design

According to De Vos *et al.* (2011), research design refers to those decisions taken by the researcher when planning the study.   Moreover, Maree (2016:72) views a research design as a plan that moves from an assumption to a specific selection of participants, the methods of collecting data and the analysis of the data collected. In this section, the researcher shows who, what, where and how the study was conducted to arrive at the point of achieving the aim and objectives of the study.

1.7.2.1   Descriptive Phenomenology research design

This study aimed to provide a description of the experiences of adolescent boys who grow up without fathers in Bakenberg village.   To achieve this aim, a descriptive phenomenology research design was chosen for its point of departure which focuses on a concrete description of experienced events from the perspective of everyday life by participants (Qutoshi, 2018:217).   According to Groenewald (2004:44), the operative word when it comes to phenomenological research is to describe. The researcher incorporated a descriptive phenomenological research design wherein the lived experiences of adolescent boys with absent fathers were described and understood through the meanings they ascribed to the phenomenon (Bradshaw, Atkinson & Doody, 2017:2; Lambert & Lambert, 2012:255; Wagner, Kawulich & Gardner, 2012:132).   The use of a descriptive phenomenology design further allowed the researcher to give an in-depth descriptive account of adolescent boys' experiences of growing up without a father and how it affected them.

A descriptive phenomenology research design enabled the researcher to understand the life experiences of adolescent boys growing up without a father figure in the context of single-mother families in Bakenberg village, in particular.   The study provided an opportunity to gain knowledge on adolescent boys' experiences of growing without a father as it occurs from their point of views (Bradshaw *et al.*, 2017: 3; Nieuwenhuis, 2016:55). Furthermore, this research design also shed light on how the phenomenon of absent fathers affected the adolescent boys' upbringing and behavioural conduct.   This study, therefore, offered an authentic account of what

participants experience and how they experienced the phenomenon under study (Maree, 2016:78). The use of the phenomenology design also enabled the researcher to place the phenomenon of absent fathers in context, as experienced by adolescent boys in a rural setting of Bakenberg village.

1.7.2..2   Population

According to De Vos *et al.* (2011), population differs with universe in that it entails specific characteristics of individuals in whom the researcher is interested. In other words, it sets boundaries on the study units. The researcher in this study was interested in studying the experiences of adolescent boys who have absent fathers from Bakenberg village. In that regard not all adolescent boys from Bakenberg were included in this study; only those who grew up without the presence of a father. These adolescents live in single-mother families where the father is not part of the family setup or unit.

1.7.2.3   Sampling

For the purpose of this study the researcher opted for a non-probability sampling. This sampling method was selected because the population size was not known by the researcher (De Vos et al, 2011). The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was selected because it provided the richest data possible from people who possessed the requisite knowledge and experiences of the phenomenon being investigated (Bradshaw *et al.*, 2017:3; Creswell, 2012:205). According to the nature of qualitative research and the purpose of the study, the sample for the study consisted of 18 adolescent boys from population group who possessed the specified characteristics required. The researcher purposefully selected participants who met the inclusion criteria and who would provide valuable information on the study phenomenon.

According to Bradshaw *et al.*(2017:3) and Wagner *et al.*(2012:89), the researcher purposefully selected participants who could best help him to understand the phenomenon being studied and this is critical for in-depth qualitative-descriptive research. Therefore, the sample of this study included the following criteria:

✓ Adolescent boys between the ages of 14 and 18.

✓ Adolescent boys who grew up without fathers and receiving no contribution from their fathers.

✓ Attending secondary school within Bakenberg village.

✓ Living in Bakenberg village.

The study did not include adolescent boys who are living in households where there is a male figure who plays a fatherly role, for the reason that the researcher aimed to describe the experiences of adolescent boys who grow up without fathers. The researcher targeted the participants who fit the given inclusion criteria and they were recruited from their respective secondary schools. The schools principals assisted the researcher to identify participants who met the criteria and the researcher presented the intended study to the sampled participants who showed an interest to take part in the study.

1.7.3 Data collection methods

According de Vos *et al.* (2011:341), the purpose of the research guides the researcher in choosing the most appropriate and effective methods for collection of data. The researcher used two methods for data collection, namely semi-structured open-ended interviews and focus group discussions. These methods of data collection were understood to be advantageous in establishing rapport with participants and also enabled the researcher to obtain rich descriptive data and to view the world through the eyes of the participants (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:93; Wagner *et al.*, 2012:132). The researcher conducted 8 interviews face-to-face and a focus group discussions with 10 adolescent boys. The participants who formed part of the focus group discussions were not the same participants who were interviewed face-to-face.

Prior to the process of collecting data, the researcher met with the participants in order to brief them on the purpose of the study and also establish rapport. Although the researcher briefed the participants about the study, its purpose, aim and

objectives; this process however does not constitute a pilot study exercise as the tool for collecting data was designed in a manner which was comfortable for the participants to understand in their own language. According to Wagner *et al.* (2012:133), the development of rapport and winning the trust of the interviewees ensures that they give the researcher information that would not be obtained in any other way. During this process of collecting data, the researcher notified all the participants that they were allowed to ask questions for clarity, to express their thoughts and feelings freely and that they also had the right to withdraw from participating in the study anytime they so wished. For this study, the researcher used dual methods for collecting data, namely semi-structured one-to-one interviews and focus group discussions. The main aim for applying two methods was to enable the researcher to triangulate the data, that is, use a number of strategies to ensure that the research findings presented are credible and authentic (Wagner *et al.*, 2012:138).

Interviews were used as a primary data gathering method to collect information from individuals about their lived experiences; whilst focus group discussion was used as a secondary method to capture the essence of the participants' experiences within a collective setting. The use of focus group discussion ensured that valuable information which may not have been revealed in face to face interviews was likely to emerge in a group setting (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:341). The researcher used semi-structured open ended strategy to collect data. The use of an interview guide was necessary as it provided the researcher with a set of predetermined questions that were used as an appropriate instrument to engage the participants (De Vos *et al.*, 2011; Wagner *et al* 2012; Nieuwenhuis, 2016). These authors state that the use of an interview guide in open-ended semi-structured interview enable the researcher to probe, explore deeper and also not get side-tracked by other aspects that are not related to the study.

The interview schedule (**Appendix C**) was firstly evaluated by the Supervisor and then translated into the Sepedi language. The researcher allowed the participants to go through the questions in the interview schedule for familiarisation. It is recommended that the researcher should familiarise the participants with the content of the interview schedule prior to the interviews (De Vos *et al.*, 2011; Skobi, 2016). In

the first part of the interview schedule, the researcher asked the participants for biographical information and after that, open-ended questions about their experiences of having absent fathers. Both interviews and focus group discussions with the participants were recorded with their consent and all audio recordings were done in Sepedi. The use of recordings allowed the researcher to regularly return to and analyse the data from their primary source. This is seen as the most important part of the interview process. In this study, the participants were contacted in their natural setting as both the interviews and the focus group discussions took place at the schools after school hours to minimise disturbances. The researcher was guided by the interview schedule and collected data until saturation point, that is, a point at which no new information is forthcoming (De Vos et al., 2011; Wagner *et al.*, 2012:88). Initially, the researcher proposed to have 10 face to face interviews; however, the saturation point was reached with the eighth participant.

1.7.4 Data analysis

According to De Vos *et al.* (2011), analysing data is an attempt to bring order, structure and meaning to the information collected from participants. For the purposes of this study, the researcher opted for a thematic analysis as an appropriate method of analysis. The analysis of data in terms of the thematic method enabled the researcher to familiarise, organise, code and identify themes emerging from the data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017:3352; Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013:400). The researcher followed the steps outlined by Clarke and Braun (2013) when analysing data using the thematic method, namely, familiarisation, organisation, coding, and identification of themes.

All of the data collected from the interviews and the focus group discussions were transcribed into meaningful texts. This allowed the researcher to familiarise himself with the data as he listened to the audio recordings repeatedly and read through the manuscripts. Through reading the transcriptions and listening to the recordings, the researcher was able to identify emerging patterns in the data that were then able to be organised together. In order to accurately categorise and interpret the data, the researcher used coding to identify emerging patterns or themes within the data. Maguire and Delahunt (2017:3355) explain that data coding enabled the researcher

to reduce data into small chunks of meaning and labelling it to form descriptions and broader themes in the data. In this regard, the researcher studied each sentence line by line to arrive at the most appropriate meaning of the data. Different codes were then categorised together to formulate broader themes and sub-themes. The identified and generated themes and sub-themes were reviewed to ascertain that they made sense and related to the study aim and objectives.

1.8   TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

1.8.1   Credibility

Credibility, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited in Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams & Blackman, 2016:17) represents the actual meaning assigned by the participants or the "truth value". It signifies the truthfulness, authenticity and genuineness of the research findings. To ensure credibility, the researcher provided a clear description of the methods of data collection and analysis in order to deduce the accuracy of the data and also make sense of the data (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:121). Furthermore, different methods of data collection were used, namely individual interviews and focus group discussions to arrive at an in-depth understanding of the participants' experience and also allow for triangulation of the data (Maree, 2016:123). Member checks were also used to re-check with participants after interviews to determine whether the findings reflected their true meanings and experiences (De Vos *et al.* 2011:420).

1.8.2   Dependability

The dependability of the findings relates to the reliability of the findings. A study is dependable when its findings and research procedures are well documented, allowing for someone outside of the study to follow, audit, and critique the research process (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:420; Moon *et al.* 2016:18; Nieuwenhuis, 2016:124). The researcher used over-lapping methods of data collection to ensure dependability.   An in-depth description of the research design and its implementation, that is, how the data was gathered and analysed contributed to the study's dependability. This should enable future research on the topic to follow and replicate the process.

1.8.3 Transferability

Several researchers and authors state that qualitative research studies are not typically generalisable due to its nature of relativity to a small number of environments or individuals (De Vos *et al.* 2011:420; Moon *et al.* 2016:19; Nieuwenhuis, 2016:124). The researcher provided a description of the phenomenon being studied to allow for comparison to other environments and individuals within similar contexts, namely, in rural villages. The provision of an accurate description of the methods used, the research design, participants' actual experiences and also the context within which the study was conducted would enable readers to make connections with their current experiences, settings or environment (Moon *et al.* 2016:19; Nieuwenhuis, 2016:124).   The study focused on adolescent boys with absent fathers in single-mother families and the use of in-depth interviews and focus group discussion allowed for a deeper understanding of the experiences and perceptions of the phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:124).   By so doing, comparisons of the findings of this study could be made by individuals who share similar characteristics and environment.

1.8.4 Confirmability

Confirmability attempts to show that findings, and the interpretation of those findings, do not derive from the imagination of the researcher but are clearly linked to the data. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited in Liamputtong, 2013:23), confirmability is seen as the degree to which findings of the study emanate from the participants and not from the biases, motivation, interest or perspectives of the researcher. The findings of this study were those described, discussed and narrated by the participants. This was especially important as the aim of the study was to describe the experiences of the participants growing up without fathers. To further ensure the confirmability of the study, member checking took place where the researcher checked with the participants whether what they have shared was still consistent and unchanged.   The researcher also cautioned against biasness by applying the notion of bracketing, where his preconceptions were put aside and he focused mainly on the participants' frame of reference on the phenomenon under study (De Vos *et al.* 2011:317).

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study sought to describe the experiences of having an absent father from adolescent boys in Bakenberg village. In the literature, the information that was provided on this phenomenon of absent fathers mostly was about urban and township settings as well as about individuals within those environments. This study focused solely on adolescent boys' experiences of the phenomenon in terms of their psychological, educational, socio-economic, behavioural and overall functioning from a rural point of view. The study was able to shed light on the experiences of the adolescent boys' upbringing and the major difficulties they faced in growing up without a father figure. The findings also pointed out salient issues regarding the absence of a father on adolescent boys' social functioning such as gender role modelling, becoming a man. The study informed social workers and other social service professionals to appropriately understand the underlying challenges and circumstances when rendering services to adolescent boys within the context of single-mother families.

The understanding of the experiences and challenges these boys encountered growing up without a father's presence provided a basis for the researcher to understand the domestic background which influences these boys' behaviour, attitudes and interpersonal relationships throughout their life span. This would be significant in laying a foundation for further studies to strengthen efforts to assist the functioning of family functioning and also initiate programmes that would mitigate for father involvement in caring for the family and the boy child in particular.

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical conduct in social research is an imperative aspect of the process of research since human beings are mostly used as participants. According to Wagner *et al.* (2012:62), every research study, design and implementation is guided by ethical rules. In the following discussions, the researcher outlined the manner in which the ethical requirements of the study were met, namely, seeking permission, avoiding harm, informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality as well as voluntary participation.

1.10.1 Ethical Clearance

Before engaging and making contact with potential participants in research, the researcher needs to obtain permission from gatekeepers. According to Wagner *et al* (2012:64), researchers need to gain access or entry into an organisation or community to conduct research. In this study, the researcher submitted a research proposal to the Turfloop Research and Ethics Committee an ethical clearance certificate (**Appendix D**) which cleared him ethically to conduct the research. The clearance certificate further granted the researcher permission to continue with data collection and recruitment of potential participants.

1.10.2 Seeking Permission

The acquisition of the ethical clearance certificate allowed the researcher to proceed with approaching the Head of Department of Education in Limpopo Province to gain entry into the targeted Schools. Upon receiving a permission letter from the HoD, the researcher met with the school principals who were briefed about the purpose of the study and the request to recruit learners who met the inclusion criteria for the study. The researcher was granted written permission by principals from both schools to continue working with the learners. All the required permissions were granted before the commencement of approaching, recruiting and collecting data from the participants.

1.10.3 Avoidance of harm

Due to the potential of this study to evoke unintended emotions from the participants, the researcher informed the participants about the potential impact and benefit of participating in the study. Caution was exercised in the engagements between the researcher and the participants in order to safeguard the probability of subjecting participants to prolonged emotional discomfort during the study. None of the participants showed an emotional breakdown, but in the event that participants had adverse reactions as a result of participating in the study, the researcher had made arrangements for consultations with local social workers to render counselling and support services to the participants. Participants were also informed of their individual freedom to withdraw from the study at any time and stage (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:115).

1.10.4 Informed consent

In any research event where human beings are involved as participants, it is important to acquire their consent for participation. In order to ensure that learners were not coerced into participating in the study, the researcher drafted an assent and consent form (**refer to Appendices A and B**) which fully informed the participants about the purpose of the study and the benefits of participating in the research. According to De Vos *et al* (2011:117) and Wagner *et al.* (2012:68), consent involves much more than just the signature on a form; it is an individual's personal choice to agree or disagree to participate in a research study. Some of the participants were below 18 years and they were given consent forms to be signed by their parents. The participants were also informed about the use of the audio recorder and the right to withdraw at any time of the study. The researcher also informed them that access to the recordings would only be for the researcher and the supervisor.   All participants were requested to sign the forms and this indicated that they understood the content of the informed consent form. The information of the participants was kept confidential. The contact numbers of the researcher were included so that the participants or their parents could contact him when they needed clarifications. The issuing of these forms enabled the researcher to acquire the required permission and proof of willingness from people who are key to the research study, namely the adolescent boys.

1.10.5 Anonymity and confidentiality

Throughout the research, the researcher ensured that the participants' identities were kept confidential. The principle of anonymity and confidentiality dictates that the identity of participants in a research project should be safeguarded (Wagner *et al.*, 2012:70). In order to ensure that the identities of the participants were not revealed during the study, the researcher did not use the participants' real names in the research. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym or number in order to protect their identity. This was communicated to the participants during recruitment and they were assured that under no circumstances their real names would be used during the research process and also during the interviews.   Furthermore, all transcripts and records were kept in a safe place within the researcher's proximity and under no circumstances were they accessed by other people who did not form part of the study and without the participants' consent.

1.10.6 Voluntary participation

A person's willingness to participate in a research project is entirely of his or her own choice rather than mandated. Under no circumstances shall participants be coerced or feel compelled to take part in the study (De Vos *et al*., 2011:116). In this study, the participants were informed in detail about the purpose and significance of the study and also that their participation in this research process was entirely of their own free will. The researcher was cautious of the notion of power relations over the participants by informing participants about their right to withdraw. Participants were able to express their views and feelings freely in relation to the phenomenon under study. This meant that participants were voluntarily engaging in the study without any pressure from the researcher or other participants in the case of focus group discussion. In this study, only the participants who were sampled and fit the criteria formed part of the process and their willingness to participate voluntarily was the key factor. The participants understood their right to participate and withdraw from the study willingly.

1.11   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher acknowledges the following limitations of the study:

➢ The study focused on the experiences of adolescent boys in the rural area of Bakenberg in Limpopo Province. Similar research on this topic in a different geographic location might come to different findings.

➢ The study did not include the single-mothers in an attempt to ascertain the reasons for the absence of the fathers and their perceptions in raising an adolescent boy without the father. The reason for not including them is because the researcher focused on adolescents' experiences in growing up without a father rather than the reasons for their absence.

1.12 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation consists of four chapters which are as follows:

CHAPTER 1

The first chapter offers a general orientation to the study. This entails the introduction to the study, the background and motivation to conduct this study. The chapter also presents the problem statement as well as the aim and objectives of the study. The research methodology is also addressed in this chapter as a blueprint for conducting this study.

CHAPTER 2

In chapter 2, the researcher reviews the literature related to the phenomenon of absent fathers. Chapter 2 highlights the extent and prevalence of absent fathers internationally, nationally and within the local sphere. It also provides input about the role and value of a father as well as the effects the phenomenon of absent fathers has on the family, and adolescent boys in particular.

CHAPTER 3

In Chapter 3, data presentation, analysis and interpretation is explained and it highlights the interpretation of the research findings. This chapter provides in-depth analysis and interpretation of themes and sub-themes which emerged from the collected data on the phenomenon of absent fathers.

CHAPTER 4

The last section, that is Chapter 4, draws conclusions from the findings and summarises the major points in the findings. This is followed by highlighting the recommendations on future areas of research in as far as the absent fathers phenomenon is concerned.

CHAPTER 2

EXPOSITION OF EXPERIENCES OF ADOLESCENT BOYS WITH ABSENT FATHERS

2.1   INTRODUCTION

According to the White Paper on Families in South Africa (2012:11), a family is viewed as a societal unit that is related by blood or kinship, adoption, foster care or the ties of marriage, civil union or cohabitation, and go beyond a particular physical residence.   International studies and some studies in South Africa reveal that families are not functioning to their optimum capacity due to the absence of fathers and this creates a vast disadvantage for family well-being (Choi & Jackson, 2011; Clowes, Ratele, & Shefer 2013; Eddy *et al.,* 2013; Langa, 2014).   The White Paper on Families (2012:16) also states that families in South Africa are in a predicament over the manner and conditions under which they operate.   Ratele *et al.* (2012) found that the absence of biological fathers and prominent male figures in families renders South African families dysfunctional.

Fathers are seen as pivotal for socialisation and the development of independence and maturity in boys (Nilsen & Sagatun, 2015), and it is widely acknowledged that it impacts more unfavourably for boys than girls in households where the father is absent (East *et al.*, 2017:38; McLanahan *et al.*, 2013).   According to East *et al.* (2017:38), boys may also be more sensitive than girls to family instability.   The impact of family instability on boys may explain the increasing gender disparity in school performance (Nilsen & Sagatun, 2015).   Father absence has also been noted to have an effect not only for boys but also on family economics and resources, thereby decreasing their life opportunities and wellbeing of the family (East *et al.*, 2017:38).

Other studies in South Africa found that the absence of a father in his child's development, leads to a variety of negative outcomes for adolescents ranging from

social, emotional, and psychological to behavioural problems (Hadfield, Amos, Ungar, Gosselin & Ganong, 2018:87; Holborn & Eddy, 2011; Mackay, 2005:112; Ratele *et al.*, 2012). According to Carlson and Corcoran (2001:780), parents' influence on their children can be multifaceted; hence the mechanisms that explains the effects of family structure on child outcomes are numerous. This chapter presents a review of literature which scrutinises pertinent issues experienced by adolescent boys as a result of growing up without fathers in their lives. The phenomenon of absent fathers is a worldwide problem which cuts across every race, colour or creed (Bartlett, 2013:1; Cartwright & Henriksen Jr., 2012:29; Freeks, 2017a:91; Salami & Okeke, 2018:1; Wilson, 2014:90). Many researchers point out the impact father absence has on the family unit and on adolescent boys in particular (Khewu & Adu, 2015:6; Manyatse & Nduna, 2014:68; Salami & Okeke, 2018:2; Wilson *et al.*, 2016:190). This chapter provides a global picture of the extent and prevalence of absent fathers, the role and value of fathers in households and the effects of growing up without a father for adolescent boys, including social-emotional developmental issues, behavioural effects and effects on gender identity and academic performance. Furthermore, the chapter will also indicate the influences of father absence on the socio-economic status of the family as well as the psychological effects of on single-mothers in relation to adolescent boys.

2.2   THE EXTENT AND PREVALENCE OF ABSENT FATHERS GLOBALLY

Worldwide, the status of the family is shifting from the traditional nuclear family to single-parent family (Bojuwoye & Sylvester, 2014:2017; Freeks, 2017a:90; Holborn & Eddy, 2011:6; Stephen & Udisi, 2016:2). According to Mather (2010:1), single-mother families are on the rise worldwide. In the United States, 24% of 75 million children below 18 years grow up in families where the father is absent and 18.1% of these children are below the age of nine (Mather, 2010:1). Meyer (2018:2), indicates that a study conducted in 2004 in the United States, reveals that 26% of children who are 11 years old seldom made contact with their biological fathers. These statistics indicate an increase in the number of children who grow up without fathers in the USA.

While Wilson writes about the United States of America (USA) the same applies in South Africa and other countries in the world as will be demonstrated later in the

section. In the USA, approximately 25% of children grow up in homes headed by mothers or grandmothers (Londt, Kock & John-Langba, 2017:146; Wilson *et al.*, 2016:189). Single parenthood has become an accepted prevalence in the USA and has also become a worldwide trend (Bujowoye & Sylvester, 2014:2017; Holborn & Eddy, 2011:6; Stephen & Udisi, 2016:2). A study in the United Kingdom also reveals that 22% of children are raised in families where fathers are not present, whereas, 46% of Black children in Canada live with only one parent, mostly the mother (Lawson, 2012:806). Another research study in Canada found that approximately 35% of families had a biological father who did not stay with his children (Pougnet, Serbin, Stack & Schwartzman, 2011:173). Furthermore, studies in Australia, Great Britain and the United States found that over 40% of children and families in each of these countries were headed by single-parents, especially mothers (Bojuwoye and Sylvester, 2014:2017; Londt *et al.*, 2017:146; Pougnet *et al.*, 2011:173; Wilson *et al.*, 2016:189).

Regarding the prevalence of absent fathers in Africa, Khewu and Adu (2015:2), state that nearly a third of households where fathers are absent is largely prevalent in African countries such as Namibia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Kenya and South Africa. It is therefore acknowledged that this issue is not peculiar to South Africa as it is experienced in other countries as well. According to Holborn and Eddy (2011:1), the status of the family institution is perceived to be in a state of crisis and under pressure. A study in South Africa indicates that men are the highest section of the population that is absent from their families in sub-Saharan Africa; and children from this region mostly have absent fathers (Spjeldnaes *et al.*, 2014:58). Further studies in South Africa state that Black fathers are more likely to be absent in the lives of their children compared to other racial groups (Mncanca, Okeke & Fletcher, 2016:203; Richter *et al.* 2010; Richter *et al.* 2012). This literature provides a picture which indicates that Black children in South Africa and other parts of Africa increasingly grow up in single-mother families.

The absence of fathers and their lack of involvement in their children's lives constitute a societal problem in South Africa (Makusha & Richter 2015; Mncanca & Okeke 2016; Richter *et al.* 2010; Salami & Okeke, 2018:2). According to Freeks (2017a:91) and Richter *et al.* (2010), within the African continent South Africa is

regarded as having the second highest rate of absent fathers, low rates of maintenance payment by fathers, and an increase in men abusing and neglecting their children. In comparison on a global scale, South Africa was rated in 2012 as one of the countries with the highest figure of fathers who are absent from their homes (Freeks, 2017b:1). Gould and Ward (2015:1), also state that about 50% of children in South African grow up in families where fathers are absent. Studies also report that only a small portion of pre-school children stay in with their fathers in South Africa (Makusha & Richter 2015; Pitsoane & Gasa, 2018:10748; Salami & Okeke, 2018:2).

The phenomenon of absent fathers impacts negatively on adolescent boys in rural communities such as the researcher's area of operation in Bakenberg village, Limpopo Province. Eddy *et al.* (2013:7) found that the phenomenon of absent fathers is more in rural communities compared to urban areas. They state that 55% of children in rural areas who are aged below 15 years have absent but living fathers compared 43% of those in urban areas. Furthermore, Makiwane, Nduna and Khalema (2016:4) also state that children in rural areas are mostly affected as a large number grow up in single-parent and absent-father families. These researchers highlight that growing up in an absent father family impact negatively on children's feelings of security and safety. These researchers' findings are in line with those of the South African Institute of Race Relations who state that 44% of all Black female parents in urban areas were single-parents, the majority of them aged 24 and 34 years (Meyer, 2018:2). Furthermore, Statistics South Africa (Stats SA, 2012) report that only 33% of all Black children reside with both their mother and father.

In 2016, Limpopo Province was mentioned as one of the provinces where children are unlikely to live with their fathers as more than 50% of children are born out of wedlock and grow up in single-parent families mostly headed by women (Mlotshwa, Manderson & Merten, 2017:1; Van den Berg and Makusha, 2018:34). Spjeldnaes, Moland, Harris and Sam (2014:58) further state that an estimated 60% of men in Limpopo are absent from their homes and do not co-reside with their families for more than 6% of the year. In Mogalakwena Local Municipality, Waterberg District in Limpopo Province, the overall statistics on female-headed households stands at 52,3% (Mogalakwena Municipality IDP 2018/19:34); whilst the total statistics on

mother-only households in South Africa for black Africans was 39, 4% and 41,9% in 2010 and 2015 respectively (Statistics SA, 2015:11).

2.3   THE ROLE AND VALUE OF FATHERS IN HOUSEHOLDS

Traditionally, fathers have been regarded as heads of families who bear the responsibility of providing, protecting and safe-guarding the needs of the family (Marissa & Ishaaq, 2012:1370; Mncanca *et al.*, 2016:203). According to Chideya and Williams (2013:209) and Richter, Desmond, Hosegood, Madhavan, Makiwane, Makusha, Morrell and Swartz (2012:5) and Shefer, Stevens and Clowes (2010:4), the traditional role of a father involved being a provider and breadwinner and also shouldering the responsibility for moral oversight over children as well as gender role modelling for boys. This supports the notion of traditional gender roles which regard mothers as caring and nurturing children and fathers as providing financial support and administering discipline (Opondo, Redshaw, Savage-McGlynn & Quigley, 2016:1; Smith, Khonou & Nathan-Taulela, 2014:433; Swartz, Bhana, Richter & Versfeld, 2013:3).

According to Eddy *et al.* (2013:13) and Makusha and Richter (2014:982), as a result of the influences of modernisation, industrialisation, labour market change, socio-economic pressuresa and demands for gender equity in the 21st century, a new fatherhood model emerged with emphasis on the need for fathers to be involved in every aspect of parenting including care-giving activities. The study by Ward, Makusha and Bray (2015:69) states that the involvement of a father results in independent and positive outcomes on children's behaviour, especially boys. The support fathers provide contribute to the well-being and happiness of the family and the protection they provide against child abuse and neglect by mothers who might otherwise feel demoralised and overburdened (Makusha & Richter, 2014:986). Freeks (2017b:1) states that involved fathering is essential and plays a prominent role in the development of children and in regulating their behaviour, relationships, life decisions and self-esteem.

Historically, fathers were viewed as having a minor influence on children's development; that is, they were regarded to be material providers and offering little in respect of children's socio-emotional and psychological development (Macbeth,

Kaczmarek & Sibbel, 2012:99). According to MacBeth *et al.* (2012:99) and Meyer (2018:2) and Pitsoane and Gasa, (2018:10748), positive relationships between fathers and children contribute to better school outcomes and better social competence for adolescents and potentially reduce the likelihood of anti-social behaviour. MacBeth *et al.* (2012:99) also states that as father involvement plays an essential role in protecting against psychological maladjustment in adolescent boys and girls, this effect proves to be greater for boys than girls.

Meyer (2018:4) conducted a study which reveals that boys specifically require a male role model, especially their fathers, to model good manlike behaviour by being involved emotionally, physically and psychologically in their lives. However, the physically present father does not readily guarantee the well-being of the family as he can be just as detrimental to the family as is the case with an absent father. Therefore, the physical presence of the father is not the initial determinant of family welfare, but rather his emotional contact and involvement in the children's lives is key (Holborn & Eddy 2011:4; Meyer, 2018:2). According to Holborn and Eddy (2011:4), the father's presence can directly, and indirectly, influence the well-being of the family. They state that a present father plays a direct role in the emotional support and discipline of the children which enhances their self-esteem and confidence, as well as added motivation to perform better in school. More indirectly the presence of a father in the family provides the mother with parental support and a substitute in playing the role of parenting (Holborn & Eddy, 2011:4; Meyer, 2018:2).

 The father-child relationship has a potential to positively impact on different aspects of the child's development including physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural adjustment (Chauke & Khunou, 2014; Holborn & Eddy, 2011; Meyer, 2018:2; Mufutau & Okeke, 2016:19). Therefore, it should be noted that the establishment of a positive relationship between boys and their fathers has the potential to influence their behavioural and emotional adjustment positively (Kruk, 2012:10; Pitsoane & Gasa, 2018:10748). Society perceives fathers as primary agents of teaching basic societal rules to their sons, hence the tendency for boys to emotionally and socially identify with fathers as role models (Pitsoane & Gasa, 2018:10749). This implies that boys often emulate their fathers with regard to proper social conduct and behavioural regulation as men. According to Mufutau and Okeke (2016:19), the

degree of father-son contact determines the amount of their bond and relationship. Boys need a sense of identity modelled by fathers, without which they may lose a sense of belonging and become isolated (Pitsoane & Gasa, 2018:10749).

According to Cobb-Clarke and Tekin (2011:6), fathers who are involved and make efforts to raise their children perpetuate a likelihood of long-term consequences for children's intellectual and developmental well-being. In that regard, the involvement of both parents is essential to the positive outcomes of children's later life (Schneider, 2017:81). Mufutau and Okeke (2016:20), further state that children greatly benefit from their father's involvement and participation at home and the support he provides for the mother. According to Meyer (2018:2), the presence of a father often means emotional supports for the mother and collaborative decision making regarding the educational, health and social well-being of the children. This indicates an added benefit to children who grow up in the presence of a father and mother in a stable functional family structure.

Wilson *et al.* (2016:191) and Williams *et al.* (2013:92), state that children living in homes where the father is absent, lack the exposure to behaviours modelled by fathers, including gender role development and discipline. Notwithstanding the resilience and role played by mothers in the lives of adolescent boys (Freeks, 2017a:91; Langa, 2017:63), the involvement and presence of a father in the household, especially in the lives of the children, has been largely associated with positive outcomes. This includes lower psychological distress, reduction of risky tendencies during adolescence, better adjustment psychologically and better school performance, less antisocial behaviour and more successful intimate relationships (Cobb-Clark & Tekin, 2011:2; Ratele *et al.*, 2012:554; Williams *et al.*, 2013:92; Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018:29).

According to Stephen and Udisi (2016:7), family structure plays a significant role in facilitating ways by which parents are able to exert positive influences on educational outcomes and psycho-social well-being of their children. According to these authors, the complementary roles played by the father enable a proper process of socialisation in the upbringing of children. Freeks (2017b:1) states that boys need their fathers to mentor and model appropriate gender identity development and good

values. Hence they seek their fathers' attachment, presence and lifestyle of modelling good values (Freeks, 2017b:3; Falana, Bada & Ayodele, 2012:160; Pitsoane & Gasa, 2018:10750). Although fathers are still viewed mostly to be playing the role of providers, protectors and disciplinarians in contemporary society, they are presently engaging in new responsibilities within the family which include care-giving and providing emotional support to children, offering guidance and participating in a variety of household activities (United Nations, 2011:1).

The study by Bojuwoye and Sylvester (2014:2021) found that boys felt dissatisfaction with their living circumstance in single-mother households as they felt deprived of same-sex role modelling resulting from the absence of the father. They added that these circumstances affected their participants' subjective well-being, including emotional integrity and self-worth (Bojuwoye & Sylvester, 2014:2023). Researchers who conducted studies on the phenomenon of absent fathers found that the absence of a father affects the socio-emotional well-being of the boy child (Holborn & Eddy, 2011:4; Meyer, 2018:4; Mufutau & Okeke, 2016:19; MacBeth *et al.*, 2012:99), affirming the significance of an involved, present and active fathers in the lives of adolescent boys.

2.4   EFFECTS OF ABSENT FATHERS ON ADOLESCENT BOYS

Father absence is a social phenomenon which has severe negative effects on the boy child. The prevalence of absent fathers across all communities implies that this social problem afflicts many families with profound consequences on socio-emotional, educational, cognitive and gender role disparities for the adolescent boys. This section highlights prominent psychological, behavioural, and educational effects of growing up without fathers as well as its influence on gender identity for boys.

2.4.1   Psycho-social effects of absent fathers on adolescent boys

Studies indicate that father's affection and presence is essential for a boy child (Cobb-Clark & Tekin, 2011:2; Ratele *et al.*, 2012:554; Stephen & Udisi, 2016:2; Williams *et al.*, 2013:92; Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018:29). These studies indicate that when the father is present in the family, children's emotional well-being is enhanced, as opposed to emotional disturbances, aggression and violent behaviours

as well as poor social competence noted in boys growing up without fathers. Langa (2014:56) states that boys who grow up without fathers are prone to experience emotional and behavioural problems leading into adulthood. Furthermore, it is stated that boys who grow up with absent fathers display an inability to delay gratification, interpersonal problems, poorer psychological adjustment, depression and anxiety as compared to boys where both parents are present (East *et al.*, 2017:38; Hill *et al.*, 2016:436; Pitsoane & Gasa, 2018:10748). According to Pitsoane and Gasa (2018:10750), these problems are linked to the lack of a positive father-son relationship, supervision, insecure attachment and inadequate involvement by the father. These authors also mention that the involvement of fathers in their sons' lives plays a major role in their emotional functioning.

It is mentioned that boys from single-mother families are usually deprived of certain privileges and opportunities which often impact negatively on their psycho-social well-being later in life (Azuka-Obieke, 2013; Stephen & Udisi, 2016:3). This indicates that the impact may not always be visible in the short term but often be displayed during adulthood. According to Falana, Bada and Ayodele, (2012:160), the cognitive development and social stimulation for children in absent father families is lower compared to those in which both parents are present. A study in the USA by McLanahan, Tach and Schneider (2013:422) found that when the father is absent from the family, children's socio-emotional development is severely affected. They further state that the negative effects on children's socio-emotional development increases adolescents' engagement in risky behaviours like smoking and early child-bearing.

The presence of a father is associated with positive influences on children's developmental outcomes, in contrast to father absence which is associated with a variety of psychological dispositions and negative social outcomes (Hill, Profitt-Leyva & Delpriore, 2016:436). For instance, the inability to delay satisfaction is often displayed by children from absent father families, more so than by children where both parents are present at homes. The children with absent fathers also demonstrate interpersonal problems, an inability to adjust psychologically, and often experience depression and anxiety when compared to boys and girls from families with both parents (Richter & Lemola, 2017:2). These children tend to consume

alcohol, demonstrate hostile behaviours and get arrested, unlike those growing up in the presence of the father. Many of these risks appear to be heightened for adolescent boys due to the lack of a positive relationship with their fathers (Hill *et al.*, 2016:436).

According to Louw (2018:28), the absence of a biological father and an alternative male figure within the family has the potential to produce long-term destructive consequences in most aspects of the child's development. Ratele *et al.* (2012) state that children with fathers who are physically and emotionally absent tend to experience feelings of loss and emptiness. Some research further found that most children express emotional pain and feelings of rejection as a result of the father being absent from home. A study by Qureshi and Ahmad (2014:4) found that a positive correlation exists between the presence and involvement of a father and the subjective well-being of the boy child and it has been noted to result in decreased levels of psychological distress and depression for both the children and their mothers.

 A study by Mabuza *et al.* (2014:2256) found that adolescent boys experience immense challenges and stresses in single-mother families as some expressed frustration and stigmatisation in some instances. The lack of parental support and emotional stress by the single-mother were mentioned as some of the challenges as mothers often project the frustrations on the children. However, these researchers also found that some children expressed resilience and get motivated by their family circumstance of growing up without a father. These findings support and affirm the research by Langa (2014) and Louw (2018) of adolescent children growing up in absent-father families showing positive coping mechanisms and also being resilient to the negative outcomes associated with growing up without a father. Mooney, Oliver and Smith (2009:9) also support this view, but add that children also differ in respect of resilience and coping with stressful adversities within absent-father families.

2.4.2 Effects of absent fathers on educational attainment

Primarily, the responsibility for the educational and career development of children lies with their parents (Abankwa, 2013:21; Stephen & Udisi, 2016:4). Boys who experience father-to-child relationships that are positive and meaningful often progress well in school (Change, 2015; Chauke & Khunou, 2014). In addition, the academic success of children is enhanced by the father's participation and involvement (Mncanca *et al*, 2016:202; Mufutau & Okeke, 2016:19). The negative result of absent fathers is also highlighted by Stephen and Udisi (2016:4), who state that children tend to perform poorly academically when the father is absent in the family. Similarly, Franklin, Makiwane and Makusha (2014:48), note that absent father families are associated with poor school performance and educational progress for children and youth.

A study by Steffan (2012:3) in rural Bangladesh found that the absence and non-investment of fathers in their children's education has resulted in children's low levels of educational achievement and performance. Furthermore, a study in the USA by McLanahan *et al*. (2013) also found that the absence of a father in a child's life has been associated with poor and negative academic outcomes. These studies also found that in comparison to children living with their fathers, children from absent father households have shown to be less interested in schooling, perform poorly at school, and experience an increased rate of dropping out of school. According to Whitney, Prewett, Wang and Chen (2017:105), a relationship exists between the academic progress and achievement of adolescent boys and the presence and involvement of fathers. These authors further state that children who are without fathers not only exhibit poor academic outcomes but also fare poorly emotionally. Hence father absence is regarded as one of the factors affecting holistic aspects of children's development, that is, social, emotional, behavioural, cognitive, and educational development.

According to Osmond (2010:23), adolescent boys growing up in families where there is only a single-mother are at multiple risks of leaving school early. In comparison to other groups, Osmond (2010:24) found that African American boys who are from single-mother households are susceptible to repeating a class, achieving poor results in school and also being suspended from school. Furthermore, Abankwa

(2013:21) concurs that boys from single-mother families are likely to have low education goals and rarely complete their schooling years and this indicates high probabilities of school drop out for adolescent boys from single-mother families.

Studies conducted in various countries in Africa also reflect a similar impact on boys. For instance, Stephen and Udisi (2016:3) state that adolescent boys in single-mother families in Nigeria show poor school performance and often do not meet their academic expectations. According to Falana *et al.* (2012:160), neither boys nor girls in single-mother households perform well at school. These authors, however, state that the intellectual development and academic performance of boys is more affected than girls in single-mother families and this is attributed to the absence of a male figure. Studies in South Africa reveal that absent fathers and the rise of single-mother families have been associated with poor academic performance and lower educational achievement for adolescent boys and youth (Franklin *et al.*, 2014:48; Holborn & Eddy, 2011:7). Furthermore, Holborn and Eddy (2011:7), point out that secondary school pupils who do not live with their fathers often have lower scores on scholastic achievement tests in all subjects as compared to those living with their fathers. These studies affirm the association between poor educational outcomes for boys growing up in absent-father families with only the mother as a single-parent.

Parental involvement in children's education has been associated with positive school outcomes for the children, whereas those growing up in single-22parent families are said to be receiving limited academic attention and supervision required due to the single-parent overburdened with responsibilities. According to Abankwa (2013:23) and Gray and Anderson (2015:3), dropping out of school is relatively more likely for children growing up in single-mother families than families with both parents. It is further stated that the involvement of a father influences children's tendencies to continue schooling and perform better than those whose fathers are not involved (Meyer, 2018:2; Richter *et al.,* 2011:59).

2.4.3 Behavioural effects of absent fathers on adolescent boys

Research shows that boys who grow up in families where the father is absent often display more poor behavioural outcomes than those with both parents (Gray & Anderson, 2015:3). Wilson *et al.* (2016:190) state that the absence of a father

creates a crisis which impacts negatively on the moral development of the boy child and often perpetuates crime and delinquency. In addition, these authors assert that children growing up without fathers show increased tendencies of violence, abuse of substances and truancy. According to Nieuwenhuis and Maldonado (2018:6) and Pougnet *et al.* (2011:174), adolescent boys who experience the absence of a father at some point in their lives, are likely to internalise and display problems like sadness, anxiety, and social withdrawal, and they are also prone to externalise aggression, act impulsively and display hyperactive episodes. These studies found that boys from absent-father families in the United States displayed elevated anti-social behaviour when compared to those whose fathers were present in the homes.

According to Sikweyiya, Nduna, Khuzwayo, Mthombeni and Mashamba-Thompson (2016:2), children who grow up without biological fathers display behavioural problems and often experience life trauma and distress in comparison to those living with both parents. These authors also state that in South Africa, growing up in absent father home is a risk factor for gender-based violence with boys and men becoming perpetrators. They further mention that the prevalence of violence against women is perpetrated by men who did not live with their fathers, and had poor father-son relations. Schmuck (2013:117) states that due to single-mothers having high levels of stress and administering harsher methods of discipline when interacting with the boy child, this may lead to development of aggressive tendencies and misconduct.

The development of behavioural problems due to absent fathers result in boys experiencing challenges to adjust socially, and have problems with friendships, and often develop a troublesome persona to disguise fears, resentments, anxieties and unhappiness (Kruk, 2012, Pitsoane & Gasa, 2018:10748). Furthermore, Falana *et al.* (2012:160) also state boys who grow up without fathers experience problems with developing self-control. They display a tendency of aggressiveness and are at risk of becoming delinquents (Ogwo, 2017:239). Hill *et al.* (2016:436) also note that boys from absent father homes demonstrate interpersonal problems and hostile behaviour including indulgence in alcohol as young adults, often leading to incarceration. The level of aggressiveness displayed by boys is noted to be the result of a distorted

family structure and the kind of supervision they receive, and these are significant factors in the development of delinquency (Falana *et al.*, 2012:160).

Absent fathers tend to be unavailable to support the adolescent boys in times of need. This lack of support, according to Pitsoane and Gasa (2018:10750), may push the adolescent boys to the ambits of misbehaviour and heavily rely on outside forces other than family members. Adolescent boys from families where relationships are cold and unsupportive are more vulnerable to emotional and physical health problems, including substance abuse and emotional problems. According to Bojuwoye and Sylvester (2012:214) and Pitsoane and Gasa (2018:10748), adolescent boys growing up in absent-father families often learn negative behavioural traits from their peers in an attempt to compensate for the lack of paternal attachment and involvement within their families. This lack of love and attachment directly contribute to adolescents finding solace in drugs (Hill *et al.*, 2016:438; Pitsoane & Gasa, 2018:10752-3). A television programme called "it takes a village" aired on Sabc 1 on 11 September 2019 and one of the guests, Israel Matseke-Zulu stated that boys are mostly under pressure in society especially when they have no father figure or male role model and they end up associating with gangsters and nuisance groups to belong to and for guidance.

According to Pougnet *et al.* (2011:173), the socio-economic status is particularly low in single-mother families and this factor is attributed to the absence of one parent from the family, namely the father. Ryan, Claessens and Markowitz (2014:11) also state that children from families of low socio-economic status resulting from the absence of a father display graver behavioural problems than those who come from high socio-economic statuses. This state of family instability due to unfavourable family economics, have adverse effects on the well-being of the children in the family as it increases their risk of behavioural problems such as promiscuity, the use of substances as well as involvement in criminal activities (Qureshi & Ahmad, 2014:4).

Studies conducted by East *et al.* (2017) and Langa (2014) point out the effects of absent fathers on adolescent boys. According to Langa (2014:56), the absence of a father is associated with emotional disturbances including aggression and violent behaviour for boys. It is further stated that boys who grow up without their father

often experience emotional and behavioural challenges transitioning into adulthood (East *et al.*, 2017:58; Langa, 2014:56). Although these challenges in boys who grow up without fathers are pointed out, Langa (2014:57) argues that this cannot be assumed that all boys with absent fathers will experience maladjustments in their lives. Findings from his study of adolescent with absent father figures reveal that some boys are able to construct positive male identities and lead positive lives despite the lack of father figures in their lives. East *et al.* (2017:41) also found that despite fathers being absent from home, adolescent males mentioned the efforts made by their single-mothers as pivotal in shaping their character and self-concept. These findings challenge the notion that boys who grow up in absent father homes, display maladjustment in emotions and behaviour. This is supported by Langa (2017:63) in his findings that young men attributed their responsible character and positive identities to the role their mothers played in shaping it.

2.4.4 Effects of gender identity on adolescent boys

The presence of a father in the family ensures that the boy child will be exposed to and taught values and roles that signify masculinity. Meyer (2018:5) states that fathers are perceived as role models who provide adolescent boys with behavioural and cultural values and rules. They are also expected to educate boys about the roles and identity of manhood. Identity formation is a time of tension for adolescents and can lead to confusion about their personality. For instance, the absence of the father is often associated with the lack of masculine influence in the family (O'Dywer, 2017:6); whereas the availability and engagement of a father provides a model for appropriate male behaviour for adolescent boys (Richter *et al.*, 2011:59). A study by Bojuwoye and Sylvester (2012:209), found that boys in single-mother families experience a lack of exposure to, support and an opportunity to learn specific gender roles from their fathers. They further state that boys whose fathers are absent suffer the lack of father figure or same sex role model. The influence of fathers on gender identity forecasts development in boys than in girls because they serve as male role models for their sons (Pougnet *et al.*, 2011:175).

For boys, fathers play an essential role in socialising and influencing the development of independence and maturity in boys (Nilsen & Sagatun, 2015:11), and it is widely acknowledged the absence of a father impacts more negatively on

boys than girls (McLanahan *et al.*, 2013:424). This factor may explain the increasing gender disparity in school performance where boys achieve poor school results as compared to girls in absent-father families. According to Figueiredo and Dias (2012:705), the breakdown in family relationships which result from father absence produces a gap in male role modelling for gender identification in boys. However, a study by Langa (2014:57) contrarily reveals that some boys in absent-father families developed positive male identities despite the lack of father figure in their lives. These findings challenge the notion that the absence of a father necessarily result in maladjustment in gender identity for boys.

According to O'Dywer (2017:6), adolescent boys growing up without a father often formulate their own identity and tend to do so with no positive male influence. This identity formulation differs with that of boys where fathers are present in the family as they seldom become particularly susceptible to peer influence. This implies that boys tend to resort to external influences from peers and other forces in relation to formulating their individual identity and gender role in a situation where the father is not present at home. A study conducted by Meyer (2018:4) found that masculinity and fatherhood are interlinked social constructs as fathers model the behaviours, values and conduct of hegemonic masculinity to young boys who emulate and learn how to behave. However, Meyer (2018:4) indicates that in the absence of a father or healthy male role model, boys often get confused and frustrated as they are left to their own assumptions with regard to the type of behaviour required to obtain manhood. In the absence of a father or male role model in the family, boys are often led to learn from peers and others join gangs to obtain a sense of belonging as well as manhood (Eddy *et al.*, 2013:14; Mahati *et al.*, 2016:18; Meyer, 2018:5).

Furthermore, Val Melis (2013:4) states that it is critical for adolescent boys to grow into adulthood with a sense of belonging. According to Bray and Dawes (2016:28), the absence of a father or a male figure in the family puts adolescent boys at risk as they lack the nurturing and recognition in modelling initiation through rites of passage provided by fathers. These authors found that some adolescent boys attributed their unruliness and ill-disciplined behaviours on their invisibility to paternal ancestors as a result of fathers being absent in their lives. Given the moral role played by the father

in the family, his absence has the potential to compromise the children's moral development (Mahati, Moore & Seekings, 2016:16).

Furthermore, in a study of cultural relativity to the absence of a father and adolescent development of identity, Nduna (2014:31) states that boys who grow up without their fathers lack cultural personal identity which creates a perpetual sense of dissatisfaction and feelings of disenfranchisement. Eddy *et al.* (2013:20) and Nduna (2014:31) and Smith, Khunou and Nathane-Taulela (2014:433) state that in South Africa just like in other African countries, the presence and acknowledgement of a child by the biological father foster a sense of legitimate identity that gives the child access to the paternal ancestry and family lineage. Findings from these studies conclude that the discovery and connection of children to paternal identities enhances self-knowledge and provide children with deep psychological and spiritual clarity. Eddy *et al.* (2013:33) further state that some boys experience misfortunes due to certain rituals not observed by the absent father.

2.4.5 Effects of absent fathers on the socio-economic status of the families

Economic status is an important mediator of the effect of family structure and the outcomes of children within the family (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001:780). The role of the father as a provider in the family diminishes due to his absence, thereby leading to negative consequences for the children and the low income status of the family. Carlson and Corcoran (2001:780), state that almost two-thirds of single-mothers in the world receive no financial support from the children's fathers. The absence of a father places single-mother families in an ongoing situation of economic disparity and disadvantage (East *et al.*, 2017:45). According to Louw (2018:31), single-mother families are more than 5 times as likely to be poor as compared to married couple families with the former at about 44.8% compared with 8.7%, and their average family income is about one third that of their married couple counterparts.

Langton and Berger (2011:4) state that families where both parents are present, particularly married couples, often have greater access to economic resources than single-mother families. In addition to economics, these families also have access to proper health care and they are able to meet children's health-related needs (Langton & Berger, 2011:4). These researchers state that economic resources are

associated not only with parents' ability to afford goods and services for their children but also enhances parents' psychological well-being and provision of quality parenting.

According to Carlson and Corcoran (2001:780), persistent poverty has the potential to produce developmental deficits for children in single-mother families. One reason cited is that most single-mother families are not able to afford adequate basic needs, and other material goods that foster healthy cognitive and social development of children (Mackay, 2005:118). Family income also affects the type of neighbourhood in which families live, as children in higher income families are more likely to receive positive peer influences that encourage achievement and pro-social behaviour, unlike those in low income setting (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001:780). In addition to poverty, economic stress also exacerbate the effectiveness of parenting which, in turn, has adverse consequences for children's development and adjustment (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001:780; Mackay, 2005:118). Nieuwenhuis and Maldonado (2018:34) make mention that single-mothers and their children often experience high levels of poverty which can lead to low educational achievement and poor psychological well-being in adulthood. According to Hadfield *et al.*(2018:88), family instability elevates stress and increases the negative effects on children's mental and physical well-being. This predicament, according to these authors, brings about major challenges as it affects low income single-mother families who already face significant disadvantages from social and economic marginalisation.

According to Mampane and Bouwer (2011), many single-mother families in South Africa, especially those living in townships are being exposed to various economic stressors, including the unemployment of the main caregiver and the death of significant others. Choi and Jackson (2011) also state that single-mother families are also a common occurrence in the USA, specifically in African American families. The White Paper on Families in South Africa (2012:17) states that Black families are mostly affected as they have the highest proportion with over 40% of single-parent households.

According to Louw (2018:31), single-mother families are generally plagued by high levels of unemployment, and lack of resources. Louw (2018:28) states that in the

American context, single-mothers often felt overwhelmed by the dual responsibilities and roles related to both family and work. A study conducted by East *et al.* (2017:40) found that when a father is absent from the family home, the responsibility for the provision of financial support and care is left entirely on the shoulders of the single-mother. Ratele *et al.* (2012) also reveals that a greater number of children in South Africa are raised by their mothers than by their fathers. The White Paper on Families (2012:17) states that it is highly common for mothers to lead single-parent families in South Africa, highlighting the scourge of the absence of fathers in most families.

2.4.6 Effects of absent fathers on single-mothers' socialisation of adolescent boys

The quality and characteristics of the home environment are important for children's outcomes as it provides the context within which learning and socialisation occur (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001:780; Stephen & Udisi, 2016:1). According to these authors, the home environment stimulates the opportunities for learning and exploration which provides warmth and emotional support that foster healthy growth and development of children. Stephen and Udisi (2016:1) state that rapid social changes have brought changes in the African system of raising children and the structure of the family has transformed to mostly single-parent families. In families where both parents are present, the responsibility of monitoring the children's activities and providing the necessary encouragement is shared, as is the discipline of boys, unlike in single-mother families which lack the shared parenting duty (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001:780).

Notably, in the case of single-mother families, the mother assumes the dual roles of being the primary or sole provider of both financial and parental resources. This reduces the time required for monitoring and socialising children, especially boys (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001:780, Mackay, 2005:119). Therefore, this implies that the non-residential parent, in this case the absent father, is less proximate to the activities of the family and therefore has less regular interaction and involvement in day-to-day activities. According to Holborn and Eddy (2011:4), the presence of a

father at home indirectly creates a supportive environment for the mother emotionally and through collaborated decision making on matters concerning family education, health and social well-being.

According to Langton and Berger (2011:3), in comparison to boys growing up in families with both parents, boys in single-mother families do not benefit from greater economic resources and high quality parenting of the two-parent family. These authors mention that family structure has a direct and indirect influence on the quality of parenting and the home environment within which children grow up. For instance, the amount of effort and time single-mothers can devote to parenting is often limited and stressful as compared to those faced by families with both parents (Mackay, 2005:120). Langton and Berger (2011:4) further maintain that the levels and quality of parenting provided to children in single-mother families may be less than for those who have both parents present. This suggests that boys who grow up in single-mother families often receive low quality parenting and less parental investment due to the absence of the father.

Families are charged with the responsibility of training and passing on norms and values of the society (Mabuza, Thwala & Okeke, 2014:2252). However, when the family structure breaks down, the single-parent, usually the mother, is left with having to take over the parental duty of socialising both the boy and girl children on issues of moral conduct and development. According to Mabuza *et al.* (2014:2252), the break down in families adversely affects the development of children. Kitheka (2016:13) states that parents are responsible for navigating children into developing a clear sense of right and wrong. This according to Kitheka, takes place when the available parent, mostly the mother, develops a quality mother-child relationship measured by high levels of involvement, supervision, controlled discipline and spending time with their children. Mabuza *et al.* (2014:2257) further state that when this does not occur within the immediate family, children, mostly boys, may be influenced by and learn moral conduct from external sources such as peers and the media. Stephen and Udisi (2016:3) support this view when they state that less quality parenting, discipline and guidance result in boys being socialised by external influences rather than by their immediate family.

According to Ward *et al.* (2015:69), many families in South Africa, especially single-mother families encounter considerable barriers in their efforts to fulfil the tasks of parenting. It is stated that single-mothers may experience increases in stress as a result of poverty which affects their abilities to protect and provide for their children and often breeding emotionally absent, harsh and inconsistent parenting (Ward *et al.,* 2015:69). This indicates that poverty as an economic reality in most single-parent families significantly undermines the efforts and ability of single-mothers in parenting.

2.4.7 Effects of absent fathers on maternal psychological well-being

According to Carlson and Corcoran (2001:781), the psychological functioning and well-being of single-mothers is yet another aspect accounting for children's behaviour and cognitive functioning. These authors also state that single-mothers have shown higher levels of depression and reduced levels of psychological functioning than their counterparts. The stress related to marital disruption and the daily strain of coping with family problems with limited financial and social resources contributes to single-mothers' psychological disparities (Falana, Bada & Ayodele, 2012:159). Mothers' poor psychological health adversely affects children's behaviour (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001:781; Langton & Berger, 2011:4). This not only affects children's development in the short-term, but also as Mackay (2005:113) indicates, boys in single-mother families are further affected in early adulthood with feelings of mistrust of others, unhappiness, poor quality relationships with others and general discontentment with life.

Langton and Berger (2011:3) state that children and mothers in the single-mother families encounter elevated stress levels and parental conflict as well as reduced levels of psychological well-being than families where both parents are present. Furthermore, these low levels of a single-mother's psychological well-being results in mothers rendering inadequate parental support to children, less engagement, warmth as well as less parental attention to children's health and emotional needs (East *et al.*, 2017:43; Langton & Berger, 2011:3). According to Mackay (2005:121), not only that the absence of a partner results in feelings of anxiety, depression, anger and self-doubt in the mother, but also affects their parenting with less

affectionate and more inconsistent disciplinary interactions with their children, especially boys.

According to Gould and Ward (2015:2), parenting within the South African context does not occur in a vacuum as most parents are confronted with many challenges which are then especially exacerbated in single-mother families. Poverty appears to be a common denominator in single-parent families creating a myriad of problems for parenting (Dickerson, 2014:40). Gould and Ward (2015:2), also state that mothers who struggle with poverty are likely to suffer from depression and may use harsh punishment as discipline and are inconsistent in responding to the behaviour displayed by the boy child. According to these authors, the application of inconsistent parenting and harsh punitive measures potentially increases the likelihood of boys indulging in drugs and alcohol, engaging in risky sexual behaviour and involvement in crime.

A study conducted by Sekgale (2017:52) in Mphanama village, in Limpopo, reveals that single-mothers declare that raising children alone without their fathers is strenuous and it affects their psychological, emotional, social and physical well-being. These challenges were also noted by Hadfield *et al* (2018:89) and Langton and Berger (2011:3), namely, that single-mothers tend to experience heightened amounts of stress and lower levels of psychological and emotional well-being due to the hefty responsibilities of being the sole provider in the family. This supports the argument on the significance of the presence of the father in the family in providing parental support to the mother and ensuring that all aspects of children's development are catered for comprehensively. Findings in a study by Sekgale (2017:53), concurred with the societal notion that fathers are viewed as providers who ensure that their families are taken care of financially. The findings in this research emphasise the significance of the presence, participation and involvement of the biological father or any male role model in the development of adolescent boys.

2.5 CONCLUSION

The family is an important institution which fosters comprehensive development of children. However, when the structure and functioning of the family are altered or

disrupted, the crisis within families will persist and leave mostly, single-mothers and children destitute and living in dire poverty. Absent fathers perpetuate a fundamental crisis which breeds an unhealthy nation plagued with relative poverty, inequalities and inadequate parenting in families. The absence of a father in the family is a significant risk factor which affects other members of the family, especially boys, at an individual, family and community level. This phenomenon constitutes one of the most social concerns in the modern era. Boys need both parents, especially the father, to flourish and fully enhance their social, emotional, psychological and educational development. However, due to most families being headed by single-mothers it makes it difficult to meet the needs of the family as low socio-economic factors, poverty, the impact of HIV/AIDS, and lack of paternal support influences the ability of mothers to comprehensively care, provide and protect the family. The need to address the effects of absent fathers on families, especially on the boy child is imperative to understand and interpret the phenomenon from the perspectives and experiences of boys who grow up without fathers in single-mother families.

CHAPTER 3

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

3.1   INTRODUCTION

The data presented was collected from 18 adolescent boys residing at Bakenberg village who are growing up without fathers. The researcher conducted a focus group discussion with 10 adolescent boys and 8 in-depth face-to-face interviews to collect data.   These methods allowed the researcher to get in-depth data from the participants regarding their experiences on the phenomenon of the absent father; their experiences of growing up without fathers and how it affected their lives. The participants' ages ranged from 14 to 18 years in order to get insights from adolescent boys of different age groups on the phenomenon of growing up without a father.

The data was analysed using thematic analysis. Data was analysed using the thematic method necessitates the researcher to familiarise, immerse, organise and code the data collected to identify emerging themes (Clarke & Braun, 2013:120; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017:3352; Vaismoradi *et al.*, 2013:400). The researcher followed the steps noted in Clarke and Braun (2013) to code the data and categorised it into emerging themes and sub-themes that are presented in detail in this section. This chapter presents an analysis of empirical findings from the data collected on adolescent boys' experiences, of growing up without a father. The analysis starts with a presentation of the demographic characteristics of the participants in order to present a profile of the participants. This is followed by the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data, namely, the participants' experiences of growing up without a father, their understanding of the role of a father, the effects of growing up without a father, their perceptions regarding boys who are raised by their father as well as the significance of having a father and its effect on boys and girls and the role of social support structures on boys with absent fathers.

3.2   Demographic characteristics of participants

Table 1: Demographic information of the respondents from the focus group

Participants	Age	Grade	Lives with:
P1	17	10	M, GM, S (2 sisters)
P2	18	10	M, B (1 brother), S (1 sister)
P3	17	9	M, GM, B (1 brother)
P4	15	8	M, B (2 brothers)
P5	15	8	M
P6	16	9	M, GM, GF
P7	17	9	M, S (2 sisters)
P8	18	9	M, GM, B (1 brother)
P9	15	8	M, GM, S (3 sisters)
P10	16	9	M, S (2 sisters)

P=participant; M=mother; GM=grandmother; GF=grandfather; B=brother; S=sister(s)

Table 2: Demographic information of the respondents from face-to-face interviews

Participants	Age	Grade	Lives with:
R1	14	8	M, GM, S (1 sister)
R2	14	8	M, GM, S (1 sister)
R3	18	8	M, GM, S (3 sisters)
R4	14	8	M, GM, B (1brother)
R5	17	10	M,GM,B (1brother)
R6	15	9	M
R7	17	9	M, GM, B (1brother)
R8	17	10	M, GM, S(2 sisters)

M=mother; GM=grandmother; B=brother; S=sister(s)

The tables represent the demographic information about the participants. The participants' ages in both the focus group and face-to-face interviews ranged from 14 to 18 years which is a spread over the adolescent stage. They were in grades 8, 9 and 10, respectively, at the time of data collection. According to their age distribution, it appears that most of them may have experienced challenges with academic progress when correlating their ages with the grades they are in. The initial age of starting school is mostly between 6 and 7 years old; when calculating the ages at which most participants in both tables were, most of them should have been in grades 11 and 12 respectively. These inconsistencies suggest that most of the participants may have failed or repeated grades at some point in their schooling. Although the sample is not representative, the data resonates with some of the findings from various studies which found that there is a link between the absence of a father and academic progress (Franklin *et al.*, 2014; Steffan, 2012; Stephen & Udisi, 2016).

3.3   PRESENTATION OF THE THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

The following themes and sub-themes emerged in the study:

Table 3: Summary of development of themes and sub-themes

Emerged Themes	Coded sub-themes
Participants' experiences regarding the absent father	Compelled to adopt the role of a man Being rejected by the absent father
Participants' understanding of the role and value of a father in the family	Father as head of the family Father as provider of family's basic needs Gender role modelling and guidance for boys
Effects of having an absent father in the household	Inadequate finances in the family Negative peer influence on participants' behaviour Poor academic performance and continued disinterest in schooling
Participants' perceptions regarding boys with present fathers	
The significance of a father on boys compared to girls	
Role of other men on boys with absent fathers	

3.3.1 PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCES REGARDING THE ABSENT FATHER

This section about the participants' experiences of having an absent father serves to describe instances with which these boys are confronted and also how the absence of a father affects their lives. These experiences include participants being

compelled to adopt the roles of a man because the father figure is absent from the household as well as experiencing rejection from their absent fathers upon making contact.

3.3.1.1   Compelled to adopt the role of a man

The primary roles of a father are generally regarded as caring, protecting and providing for the family in conjunction with mothers. His absence implies that these roles shift to other members of the family and generally to male figures in the family. According to Eddy *et al.* (2013:12), when the father is absent, boys are pressured to act as adult males in the household. This study found that the majority of the participants were often forced or felt compelled to perform adult roles. For these boys, the absence of a male figure deprived them of the opportunity to be children as they grow up either being expected to or thinking they should play adult male roles. The majority of the participants in this study are confronted with the responsibility to play adult roles especially those that would have been executed by their fathers in the family. The researcher contends that traditional gender roles and expectations also play a major role in exacerbating the situation that most boys find themselves in as they are expected to assume tasks that are generally performed by adult men within the family. These findings tally with the viewpoint of the theory on structural functionalism in that the absence of a father initially creates a functional void within the family hence these adolescent boys seem to think that they are expected to or compelled into filling that functional gap as a result of absent fathers. To corroborate this viewpoint, a participant expressed the following:

> *"As a boy child at home, it is often required of me to play the role of protecting the family as we live in a place where there is too much crime and I also perform tasks which women in the family cannot perform".*

In corroboration of the same sentiments, another participant echoed that:

> *"I often look after the cattle at home and fix the yard fence as a boy child because there is no one except me who can do that job at home"*

The participants in this study grew up in homes where fathers are absent and they find themselves performing roles that were generally meant for adult men. These findings indicate that the assumption of adult roles deprived these adolescents the opportunity to enjoy being boys. These findings resonate with the studies by Khewu and Adu (2015:6) and Wilson *et al.* (2016:190) who point to a link between the absence of a father and boys' increased pressure to play adult male roles. This current study also revealed that some of these boys end up seeking temporary jobs in order to assist their mothers to provide food for the family. The results of this study indicate that when the father is absent in the family, there is a gap in the family system and its functioning which is one of the tenets of the structural functionalist perspective. These findings support the findings of previous researchers such as Archibong and Antia (2014:350), Kimani and Kombo (2010:15) and Laluddin (2016:10) whose research is mentioned in Chapter 1, section 1.5.1.

3.3.1.2 Being rejected by the absent father

The findings of this study revealed that some of the participants experienced rejection from their absent fathers. The participants mentioned that they were rejected when they made contact with their fathers. Some of the participants explained that they made efforts to meet their fathers; however, their fathers told them that they did not know them. This experience made the participants feel rejected and unwanted by their fathers. The researcher observed that some of the participants were showing sad emotions when they talked about how their fathers' rejection made them feel. This is supported by the study of Rohner (2016:10), who found that the experience of rejection by the father affected the boys' emotional well-being. Nilsen and Sagatun (2015:123) concur with this when they mention that a father's rejection also influences the formation of identity and construction of self for boys.

When sharing their experiences, some of the participants mentioned that:

"It is painful and sad when you reach out to your father and be denied and rejected by the man whom you thought to be your father".

"I made an attempt to locate my father and when I met with him, he told me that he does not know me, I felt rejected and disappointed."

The findings from this study indicate that some of the boys experienced rejection when they attempted to make contact with their fathers. Some of the participants indicated that the experience of rejection discouraged them to make further contact with their absent fathers. This experience of rejection according to the participants also made them wonder whether their fathers ever cared about them in the first place and also whether they were actually their fathers.

3.3.2 PARTICIPANTS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE ROLE AND VALUE OF A FATHER IN THE FAMILY

The researcher wanted to ascertain the participants' understanding of the roles that fathers play in the family. The researcher also wanted to find out from the participants the value of having a father present in the family, especially for adolescent boys. The majority of the participants understood the roles played by a father to be that of heading the family, providing for the needs of the family as well as gender role modelling. These identified roles will be discussed below.

3.3.2.1 Father as head of the family

The participants revealed that although they grew up without fathers present, they share a traditional view of the role of a father in the household. The participants commonly understand the role of a father as the head of the household. They regarded fathers as heads of their households who bear the roles of providing and protecting the family. Furthermore, the participants understood fathers to be the authority figure who makes decisions as the head of the family. These findings are in line with the studies of Freeks (2017a:92) and Londt *et al.* (2017:146), who posit

that fathers are regarded as the authority figure for their families. This is also corroborated by the study of Selebano and Khunou (2014:24), which viewed fathers as heads of families who exercised authority over children in the family. A father's presence carries with it the dignity of the family; as asserted by some of the participants that a household where a father is present is dignified and respected. In this study, participants mentioned that as head of the family, a father is expected to provide, protect and also make decisions which direct the affairs of the family.

In response to the question of their understanding of the role of a father, one participant indicated the following:

"A father is the head of the family who takes decisions and make rules."

Another participant echoed that:

"Fathers as heads of the household should maintain order and set rules for the children to follow as a way of instilling discipline."

These findings reveal that the participants understand the role of a father as the head of the family. This understanding indicates that fathers as heads of families are entrusted with the role of navigating the affairs of the family. In a study on perceptions about the absent father phenomenon, Sekgale (2017:58) found that as head of the family, a father's role is to make decisions and direct how the family should run. When the father is absent his role as head of the family system diminishes, hence single-mothers often assume the role and responsibility of taking care of the family. This current study reveals that fathers are depicted as executing a vital function within the family system and their absence often hinders the functioning of the family unit as single-mothers have to carry out these functions in solitude. These findings too coincide with the Structural Functional theory as the

absence of a father in the family diminishes his role and function, thereby affecting the overall functioning of the entire family system.

3.3.2.2   Father as a provider of family's basic needs

Although single-mothers often play the role of providing for their families, traditionally fathers were bestowed with the role to provide for the needs of the family. Fathers have been known to be providers and breadwinners, providing financial support for their families (Chideya & Williams, 2013:209; Richter *et al.*, 2012:5; Shefer, Stevens & Clowes, 2010:4). Furthermore, studies by Chideya and Williams (2013:209), Richter *et al.* (2012:5) and Shefer *et al.* (2010:4) also found that the traditional role of a father involved being a provider and a breadwinner. However, it is imperative to mention that the traditional role of a father being a breadwinner or provider has transformed. This view is supported by Nielsen and Sagatun (2015:114), who posit that the traditional image of a father being a breadwinner is being replaced by an image of a caring father. Similarly, the study on constructions of fatherhood by men with absent fathers by East, Hutchinson, Power and Jackson (2020:477) indicated that the expectations of men as parents have changed in recent times, from a more traditional notion of being a breadwinner and a disciplinarian to constructions of fathers as caring, sensitive and engaged. The findings in this current study, however, has revealed that participants still hold this traditional view about the role of a father as being there to ensure that the family is taken care of in terms of food, shelter, education and clothing.

 To support these findings, some of the participants mentioned that:

"A father needs to maintain and provide for the needs of the family and also care for their children.

The findings from various studies mentioned financial provision as an important role played by fathers (Chili & Maharaj, 2015; Franklin *et al.*, 2014; Lesch & Ismail, 2014; Selebano & Khunou, 2014). Furthermore, studies conducted about young fathers'

experiences with fatherhood found that young men deemed the provision of basic needs such as food and clothing to be the most important role of being a father (Chili & Maharaj, 2015:36; Selebano & Khunou, 2014:29). The findings of these studies corroborate the results of this study as it revealed that the role of a father is to maintain his family by providing food, clothing and shelter for his children.

3.3.2.3   Gender role modelling and guidance for boys

It is generally understood that when boys reach teenage years, the presence and guidance of a father is needed. A study conducted in Zimbabwe by Nyanjaya and Masango (2012:4), found that the role of a father is to guide his sons, that is, to mould the boy child into a man. This is so because fathers are regarded as the appropriate gender to model acceptable male conduct and teach boys what it means to become a man. In a study conducted by Meyer (2018:4), it was revealed that boys specifically require the involvement of a male role model in order to model good manlike behaviour. This could be a father, brother, uncle, teacher, neighbour to mention but a few. These studies are in line with the findings of this study as participants indicated that the presence of a father is important for guiding them into responsible young men. Another study by Pitsoane and Gasa, (2018:10749) found that boys need a sense of identity modelled by fathers, without which they may lose a sense of belonging. The findings of this study recognise fatherhood as an important function in the family in order to socialise adolescent boys into manhood. To corroborate this viewpoint one participant indicated that:

"When a father is present, it is important for us as boys because he can guide and teach us how to behave as men."

The findings from this study indicate that the presence and involvement of fathers is important for the development of gender identity and discipline for boys. These adolescents expressed a desire to have their fathers present so as to gain knowledge of becoming responsible young men. However, when the father is absent, they are reliant on other male figures for guidance on issues relating to

manhood. These findings confirm the general notion of fathers as primary agents of teaching basic societal rules to their sons (Pitsoane & Gasa, 2018:10749); hence these boys tend to emotionally and socially identify with fathers, brothers and uncles as role models. This is also corroborated by the study of Meyer (2018:5), who stated that fathers are perceived as role models who provide adolescent boys with behavioural and cultural values and rules.

3.3.3 EFFECTS OF HAVING AN ABSENT FATHER IN THE HOUSEHOLD

This section highlights the ways in which these boys are affected as a result of absent fathers in the household. The researcher wanted to find out how growing up without a father affects the participants' lives. Generally, the absence of a father in the life of a boy child has been associated with negative outcomes (Clowes *et al.*, 2013:1; Franklin *et al.*, 2014:48; Freeks, 2017a:92; Makusha & Richter, 2014:988). This study found that boys from absent-father families are confronted with various effects ranging from inadequate finances in the family, negative influences on their behaviour stemming from peers as well as poor academic performance and continued disinterest in schooling. A discussion of these effects is outlined below:

3.3.3.1   Inadequate finances in the family

Notwithstanding the role single-mothers play in their families, the absence of a father to provide for the family exacerbates the hardship felt in the family. This is in line with a study by Nieuwenhuis and Maldonado (2018:34), who found that single-mothers and their children experience high levels of poverty which is worsened by the absence of a father. Another study conducted by East *et al.* (2017:40) also found that when a father is absent at home, the responsibility for provision of financial support and care is left entirely on the shoulders of the mother. These studies concur with the findings of this current study that most of these boys are unable to comprehensively meet their needs and this is attributed to their fathers' absence to provide for them. Generally, for most adolescents, physical appearance is very important which could lead to the demand for certain types of clothing such as expensive brands. In most instances their mothers are unable to provide and

meet their demands for the desired expensive clothes and accessories. The majority of participants attributed their dissatisfaction with the kind of clothing they wear and other things they are unable to have to inadequate family finances as the result of the fathers' absence.

To corroborate this viewpoint, one participant expressed that:

"When the father is absent at home, as a boy child, I cannot get certain types of clothes like expensive labels as my mother struggle to meet all our needs alone."

In support of the above sentiment, another participant mentioned that:

"As a boy, I wish my father were present at home to assist my mother in looking after us financially because with the little money she get, she provide us with food and I do not get some of the things I desire."

The study by Chili and Maharaj (2015:30) found that children from households where the father is absent face higher levels of poverty than other households. Several participants perceived their family situation as having a negative effect on their confidence and self-esteem. They mentioned that they repeat the same clothes more often and this makes them appear uncool in front of their friends. They regarded the absence of their fathers as an aggravating factor for not having all the things they wanted as they can only rely on their mothers. This finding supports the notion that having a father present lessens the hardship of poverty. This viewpoint is supported by a study conducted by Sekgale (2017:53), in the rural area of Mphanama, where it was mentioned that the fathers' presence ensures that the family is taken care of financially.

3.3.3.2   Negative peer influence on participants' behaviour

One of the roles of being a father is to guide and model the conduct of the boys in the family. The absence of a father could make these adolescents prone to

developing unacceptable ways of behaving, mostly influenced by people outside the household. According to Pitsoane and Gasa (2018:10753), when the father is absent from a home, adolescent boys rely on forces outside the family for guidance. These authors state that reliance on outsiders may push adolescents into the realms of misbehaviour and indulgence in drugs. The study by Bojuwoye and Sylvester (2012:214) similarly found that boys who grow up in absent-father families often learn negative behavioural traits from their peers in an attempt to compensate for the lack of paternal attachment and involvement within their families. The participants in this study had no male figure in their immediate family setup to model acceptable male behaviour and thus looked to people outside the family for guidance. They mentioned that in some of their association with other boys who are mostly of the same age or older, they learned to smoke and drink alcohol. To emphasise this viewpoint, some of the participants mentioned that:

"Some of the older boys I hang out with teach me to smoke, go to taverns at night and drink alcohol, and when I get home my mother cannot say anything to me".

In corroboration with the above view, another participant stated that:

"We often associate with friends who teach us to drink and smoke and this gets worse when there is no father to discipline us at home."

In a study about narratives of young adolescent boys who grew up without fathers, Langa (2014:57) found that some of the boys attributed their problems of drinking, smoking and poor academic performance to peer influence and a lack of connection with their fathers. These findings correlate with that of Bojuwoye and Sylvester (2012:216) and Pitsoane and Gasa (2018:10750), who also found that boys who grow up in absent-father families, become more vulnerable to problems such as substance abuse and negative peer pressure. The findings of this study indicate that these boys are susceptible to outside influences most of which are misguided,

leading them to anti-social conduct. They also revealed that they often smoke, drink and disrespect their mothers as a result of the negative influence from peers and the lack of paternal punishment.

3.3.3.3 Poor academic performance and continued disinterest in schooling

Most of the adolescents in the study are seemingly progressing poorly at school. Studies on the phenomenon of absent fathers have found that there is a relationship between the absence of a father and poor school performance in children (Abankwa, 2013:23; Franklin *et al.*, 2014:48; Gray & Anderson, 2015:3; McLanahan *et al.*, 2013; Steffan, 2012:03; Whitney *et al*, 2017:105). These studies are further supported by the findings of Mncanca *et al.* (2016:202), Mufutau and Okeke (2016:19), who reveal that when a father is actively involved in his children's education, their academic performance is enhanced. Due to the absence of fathers in the family and poor academic progress, the participants mentioned that they get demotivated from pursuing their education. Most of them do not do well in school hence they are still repeating grades. This lack of progress in school has translated into being uncertain about their future prospects in as far as schooling is concerned. To emphasise this point, some of the participants mentioned that:

"I repeated a Grade twice at school due to the lack of paternal support and having no father figure bothered me to a point where it affected me at school."

In corroboration to the sentiments above, another participant expressed that:

"I often feel discouraged to continue with schooling because I do not perform well, so I end up hopeless over my future."

In accordance with the findings by Franklin *et al.* (2014:48) and McLanahan *et al.*, (2013), children from absent father households show less interest in schooling, perform poorly at school and tend to drop out of school. This goes to show that there is a link between the academic progress of children in the family and the involvement of their fathers. Some of the boys in this study mentioned that they often think of leaving school because they fail repeatedly, therefore they preferred to go for schools where they can learn skills to use their hands.

3.3.4 PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING BOYS WITH PRESENT FATHERS

Boys in this study expressed being envious of how their peers relate with their fathers and also the benefits they receive from having fathers present in their lives. The presence of a father is associated with positive outcomes for boys when compared to those who have absent fathers (East *et al.*, 2017:38; Hill *et al.*, 2016:436; Pitsoane & Gasa, 2018:10748). These boys envy the father-son relationship which is something they are not able to experience due to their fathers being absent. Most of the participants indicated how different their lives would have been if their fathers were present. For instance, they mentioned that their fathers would have been able to buy them the expensive clothes they wanted and also guide them as boys about becoming men. Almost all the participants pointed out differences between themselves and other boys who have fathers present.   In responding to this question, one of the participants mentioned that:

"Most of the boys who have fathers do not have to struggle for anything because they receive everything they desire, unlike us who barely get of the things we need."

In corroboration to the above viewpoint, another participant expressed that:

"I see a big difference between me and boys who have fathers because they wear nice expensive clothes and also tend to brag about visiting places like Mall of the North in Polokwane where I am not able go willingly".

According to Langton and Berger (2011:4), boys who have fathers present have greater access to economic resources as compared to boys from single-mother homes. This study revealed that boys who grow up having fathers present at home benefit more from their fathers' presence in terms of access to money and paternal guidance which are readily available. However, these boys also mentioned that some of the boys who have fathers present are often spoiled and show disrespect at school, wandering about at night, smoke and drink alcohol more than boys from absent father families. These differences indicate that not all boys from families where fathers are present behave well and subsequently not all boys from absent-father families display anti-social behaviour. These findings corroborate the study conducted by Langa (2014:56), who found that not all boys who grow up without fathers necessarily engage in risky anti-social behaviours.

3.3.5 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A FATHER ON BOYS COMPARED TO GIRLS

In comparison to girls, boys are considered to be the ones feeling the brunt of having an absent father at home. This is due to traditional expectations in gender role modelling where boys learn from their fathers and girls learn from their mothers. According to Pitsoane and Gasa (2018:10749) and Kruk (2012), boys unlike girls, need a sense of identity modelled by their fathers. This is not to downplay the role fathers play on the development of girls in the family; however, it implies that boys usually identify with their fathers more than girls do. In the same vein, East *et al.*, (2017:38) and Nielsen and Sagatun (2015:114) and McLanahan *et al.*, (2013), concur that fathers are seen to be pivotal for the socialisation and development of maturity in boys and their absence unfavourably has a greater impact on boys than girls in the household. These studies are in line with the findings of this study in that almost all the participants mentioned that girls are not as much affected by the absence of a father because the mother is present to guide them on issues relevant to womanhood. In corroborating these viewpoints, the participants mentioned that:

"Girls do not need fathers to that extent because they have the mother present who is of similar gender and can guide the girls on proper female roles and behaviour, unlike us who needs a father for guidance."

"My father can guide me better than my mother because he has past the stage of being an adolescent boy"

These findings place more emphasis on the importance of the presence of a father and his influence on boys than girls in the family. The participants indicated that it would be much comfortable for them to discuss issues concerning manhood with their fathers than mothers. In particular, they referred to issues of changes taking place in their bodies and this builds on the father-son relationship. It was also noted that girls usually rely on their mother for learning specific feminine role issues and as such fathers would not be as significant in that regard for them, unlike boys. These findings correlate with a study by Lesch and Ismail (2014:40), who found that fathers are less able to relate to their daughter's experiences and development issues in the same way their mothers would be able to.

3.3.6 ROLE OF OTHER MEN ON BOYS WITH ABSENT FATHERS

An African proverb indicates that it takes a village to raise a child and this is no exception to boys who grow up without fathers. The social fabric which builds communities and ties families together comes into play when the need for other male role models arises to bridge the gap of absent fathers to navigate adolescent boys to some degree of acceptable ways of life. In their study on constructions of fatherhood by men with absent fathers, East *et al*. (2020:483) found that men who grew up with absent fathers drew examples of fatherhood from male relatives such as grandfathers and uncles as well as from observing their friends interacting with their fathers. The role played by uncles, older men, male pastors and brothers within the immediate environment where these boys live is key in ensuring that boys learn acceptable male roles and are able to satisfy the need to belong. As pointed out by Langa (2014:56), individuals such as uncles, brothers, grandfathers and male teachers play a significant role as father figures to boys who grow up without biological fathers.

In corroborating these views, the participants mentioned that:

"To some extent uncles and elderly men from the community play the fatherly role and provide guidance and support which help us to feel like we belonging."

In support of the above sentiments, another participant expressed that:

"I often learn from the guidance provided by fathers of my friends because I mostly spend time with them and get to observe and learn important lessons that they teach their sons."

The role played by uncles, older men, brother and pastors as role models is significant in modelling the behaviour of these adolescent boys. This study found that these support systems bridge the void left by the absence of a father in the lives of adolescent boys. These structures also instil important social values that guide these boys into taking responsibility for the choices and decisions they make into adulthood. Such supportive systems supplement the parental role provided by single-mothers to comprehensively meet the social and emotional needs of the adolescent boys in the family.

3.3.7 CONCLUSION

The scourge of absent fathers continues to prevail and cripples families in South Africa. In some instances, single-mothers are confronted with multiple challenges of trying to raise children on their own, and added to which is the more challenging one of raising a boy child. This phenomenon compromises the upbringing of adolescent boys who need the presence of a father to instil cultural values and gender specific duties. Notwithstanding the significant role played by other male role models, the biological fathers need to be involved and be at the forefront of championing the socialisation of their sons to instil values that talk to responsible manhood and citizenry. This also requires the intervention of the government and social network societies to encourage men and mostly fathers to take responsibility and be active citizens in the lives of their sons.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, a presentation and discussion of the major findings from the study on the experiences of adolescent boys with absent fathers in single-mother families in Bakenberg village will be highlighted.   Conclusions will be drawn and recommendations made based on the findings presented.   This discussion of the findings was guided by the themes and sub-themes that emerged during the analysis and interpretation of data from the previous chapter drawn from the semi-structured interviews and the focus group discussion.   Furthermore, the problem statement and the aim, as well as the objectives of the study shall be restated in this chapter.

4.2   RE-STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

The advent of industrialisation, globalisation and socio-economic changes in the society has brought about changes in the structure of the family.   The traditional nuclear family setup has now shifted towards single-parent families, most of which are single-mother families.   One of the reasons or factors cited for this shift in the family structure is the prevalence of absent fathers in the households.   In South Africa, single-mother households are prevalent as a result of the increase in the number and proportion of absent but living fathers (Pitsoane & Gasa, 2018:10748).   It is estimated that over 40% of the 18 million children in South Africa are raised by single-mothers (Bojuwoye & Sylvester, 2014:2017; Franklin *et al*, 2014:48; Van der Berg & Makusha, 2018:32).   Furthermore, according to Statistics South Africa (Stats SA, 2015:11) the total statistics on mother-only households in South Africa stood at 39,4% and 41,9% in 2010 and 2015 respectively.   In Mogalakwena Local

Municipality, in the Waterberg District, Limpopo Province, the overall statistics on single-mother households stood at 52,3% according to the Municipality's Integrated Development Plan for 2018/2019. In 2016, Limpopo Province was named as one of the Provinces in South Africa where children are less likely to live with their fathers, especially black Africans (Van der Berg & Makusha, 2018:34). According to the findings of the study by Eddy et al (2013:7), the phenomenon of absent fathers is more prevalent in rural areas than urban areas with over 50% of black rural children under 15 years having absent fathers compared to 43% of black children in urban areas.

Adolescent boys who grow up in single-mother families tend to experience less commitment to schooling and often display behaviour which becomes difficult for their mothers to control and apply disciplinary parental guidance. Research has shown that boys from homes where the father is absent display an inability to delay gratification, exhibit interpersonal problems, poorer psychological adjustment, depression and anxiety as compared to boys from intact families (East *et al.*, 2017:38; Hill *et al.*, 2016:436; Pitsoane & Gasa, 2018:10748). According to Pitsoane and Gasa (2018:10750), these problems are linked to the lack of a positive father-son relationship, supervision, insecure attachment and inadequate involvement by the father.

The prevalence of psychological, social, academic and behavioural difficulties faced by adolescent boys in rural communities with regard to issues of behaviour, attitudes and overall social conduct is the key consideration in addressing this phenomenon. Most adolescent boys in Bakenberg village come from families where there are no fathers or male figures, and such family settings pose challenges which impact negatively on adolescent boys' well-being and upbringing. Studies have found that the absence of a father, neglect or abandonment can result in boys experiencing poor educational performance, school drop-out, teen pregnancy, and drug and alcohol abuse (Eddy *et. al.*, 2013:11; Bojuwoye & Sylvester, 2014:2017; Ratele, Shefer & Clowes, 2012:553). There is limited literature on the experiences and challenges faced by adolescent boys who grow up without fathers, living in rural villages, especially in Limpopo Province. This observation informed the need for this study to shed some light on the experiences of adolescent boys from families where

fathers are absent and mothers are the sole providers in households in Bakenberg village, Limpopo Province and the implications of this on these adolescent boys.

4.3   AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY IN RELATION TO THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The researcher managed to achieve the following aim and objectives of the study:

4.3.1   Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to describe the experiences of adolescent boys who grow up without fathers in single-mother families in Bakenberg village, Limpopo Province. The researcher was able to achieve this aim by describing the adolescent boys' experiences of having an absent father.

4.3.2   Objectives of the study

To ascertain the attainment of the aim of the study, the following objectives were pursued and met:

OBJECTIVE 1: To establish the experiences of adolescent boys with absent fathers in single-mother families in Bakenberg village

This objective was achieved as the researcher managed to describe the participants' experiences of having an absent father. The participants in this study come from families where the father is absent and this has been known to cause unfavourable outcomes for the family at large and for these boys as well (Khewu & Adu, 2015:6; Manyatse & Nduna, 2014:68). During the collection of data, the majority of the participants expressed their experiences and their emotions on growing up without fathers present. It was observed that the words and expressions used were mostly similar for all participants when reflecting on their experiences and emotions about their absent fathers. Anger, sadness, and feelings of rejection were the major emotional reflections which surfaced, giving an indication of how growing up without a father emotionally affected these boys' lives. The participants expressed their

sadness over the absence of a father who is regarded as the role model to learn from and their envy of the observed interactive relationship between their friends and their fathers.

Moreover, the feeling of rejection also emerged as a consequence of attempts by boys to contact and locate their biological fathers. These attempts, as mentioned by the participants were met with denial and rejection from the people they believed to be their fathers. This prompted the researcher to the realisation that boys often get curious about the identity and knowledge about their fathers, especially when they come of age during adolescence.

In the absence of a father and male partner, the mother is mostly the sole provider who shoulders the responsibility for the family's well-being. As a consequence, most of the boys from this study said that they often look for piece jobs to help their mothers in supplementing the family income and bring relief from the financial burden of the family. The study also found that boys in absent father households, often feel the need to execute manly tasks within the family such as mentioned by some participants, namely, herding cattle, fixing and erecting the yard fence as some of the duties they perform. These tasks were regarded as those associated with being a man as women are not suitable to perform them; hence they felt it was their responsibility. These findings prompted the researcher to conclude that some boys with absent fathers often feel compelled to perform the tasks that would otherwise be the responsibility of their father had he been present in the family.

OBJECTIVE 2: To describe the effects faced by adolescent boys in growing up without a father in Bakenberg village

The researcher achieved this objective because participants were able to express how having an absent father in the family affected their lives. The study revealed that adolescent boys from absent-father families experience hardship in as far as

financial support is concerned. Generally, the absence of a father in the life of a boy child has been associated with negative outcomes (Clowes *et al.*, 2013:1; Franklin *et al.*, 2014:48; Freeks, 2017a:92; Makusha & Richter, 2014:988). This is in line with a study by Nieuwenhuis and Maldonado (2018:34), who found that single-mothers and their children experience high levels of poverty which is worsened by the absence of a father. In absent-father families, the single-mothers bear the sole responsibility of financially providing for the family and this is often overwhelming as there is no father to supplement the family finances. According to the participants in this study, the absence of a father to support their single-mothers financially has placed them in a position of hardship and poverty. It was found that these boys attribute their lack of having the desired expensive clothing brands to the absence of a father to provide them with finances to afford such clothes, as their single-mothers alone are unable to. The dissatisfaction with their family financial situation has been labelled as one of the factors that negatively affect their confidence and self-esteem, especially when they appear to be uncool in front of their peers.

Due to the absence of a father, boys in this study did not have a male figure within their immediate family setup. This situation suggests that these boys had to look elsewhere for guidance in as far as gender role modelling is concerned. The findings from this study indicate that some of the boys tend to associate with older boys and peers with whom they learned to engage in smoking and drinking alcohol. This indulgence in smoking and alcohol often led them to show dissent and disrespect to their single-mothers as there is no paternal punishment or discipline to be administered. The study by Bojuwoye and Sylvester (2012:214), revealed that boys who grow up in absent-father families often learn negative behavioural traits from their peers in an attempt to compensate for the lack of paternal attachment and involvement within their families. Similarly, in a study about narratives of young adolescent boys who grew up without fathers, Langa (2014:57) found that some of the boys attributed their problems with drinking, smoking and poor academic performance to peer influence and a lack of connection with their fathers. The findings in this study have revealed that these boys often find themselves within the ambit of negative influences of people outside their families owing to the lack of a father or male influence in their immediate family environment.

OBJECTIVE 3: To determine adolescent boys' understanding of the role and value of having a father in the family

This objective was also met as the participants shared their understanding of the role of a father in the family and especially what it means to the boy child for whom it is said to be unique. Sylvester (2010:84) supports this view that fathers are pivotal as they bring a range of unique qualities to the role of parenting such as protecting, disciplining and role modelling particularly for the boy child. Freeks (2017a:93; 2017b:1) adds that the value of a father is crucial in terms of the love and attention he gives to his family and how he leads by example when it comes to values. This is especially significant for adolescent boys as they will be able to successfully emulate such values when they mature into fatherhood roles themselves. During the interviews, participants expressed the view of being unable to disclose male issues to their mother and this seems to suggest that boys need a father or male figure in the family to communicate with on such issues. In that regard, the researcher has come to the realisation that boys need the guidance and a myriad valuable knowledge and education on male specific roles that can only be rendered by the father or prominent male figures in order to develop a positive personal identity on the way to adulthood.

Historically, fathers defined their manhood in terms of the various roles they fulfilled for their families and for society (Freeks, 2017a:83). This traditional mandate emanated from the notion of viewing fathers as providers and it placed them in a superior position in families. This position can also be attributed to issues of patriarchy and culture where men are regarded as heads of families. A strong sentiment across the majority of the participants viewed fathers as the head of families who make rules and take decisions on the affairs of the family. These sentiments view fathers as leaders in families whose command and rule need to be observed. Some participants regarded families without a father figure lacking in dignity and not commanding respect. The role of fathers being breadwinners who provide financial support to the family still persist as participants expressed the financial void left in their families due to the absent fathers leaving them and their

single-mother struggling for survival. This was realised by the researcher from the responses of the participants that they are unable to comprehensively achieve or obtain the things they desire and by observing the hardship suffered by their mothers in the absence of a father in the family. This objective was achieved as the researcher managed to describe the understanding of the role played by the father in the family from the participants' viewpoints.

4.4   A SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS

The following are the major findings of this study:

➤ Fathers play a major role in the lives of boys in the family and their absence brings a myriad challenges to all aspects of the development of boys. In their absence, boys lack a prominent male figure to guide them on gender roles and the development of personal identity.

➤ The boys emphasised the importance of having their fathers present because having an absent father means they lack a person of similar gender to communicate certain developments taking place in their lives. Added to this, the boys have experienced rejection from their absent fathers when attempting to connect with them and it affected their emotional well-being due to the envy of other boys who enjoy a relationship with their fathers.

➤ Economic disparity is also found to be common in absent-father families and single-mothers are overwhelmed with having to provide for the family alone; hence it has been found that some boys feel compelled to do piece jobs to help their mothers.

➤ Fathers have been found to be essential for the upbringing and development of boys, more so for than for girls in terms of gender role guidance and development of male identity. Girls lean towards their mothers for learning gender specific roles, unlike boys who need a father to be guided in that regard.

➢ The study did, however, also find that participants perceived boys with fathers present exhibiting more behavioural problems such as drinking alcohol, smoking, being truant and disrespectful even in the presence of a father; unlike boys who have absent fathers. This debunks the notion that boys from absent-father families in all cases have more challenges with behaviour, emotional adjustment and proper conduct.

4.5   CONCLUSIONS

The researcher concludes based on the findings that:

➢ The role and value of a father in the family has a positive impact on the complete functioning of the entire unit, hence the absence of a father is associated with negative outcomes affecting the family, especially boys.

➢ Boys need their father to model gender specific roles and give guidance on taking responsibility as a man.

➢ Boys with absent fathers envy the relationship of other boys with present fathers.

➢ The notion that negative behavioural problems associated with boys from absent father household cannot be entirely concluded as some boys from families where fathers are present also display such behaviours.

4.6   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the findings, the researcher recommends that:

➢ The sample population for the study was delimited to adolescent boys from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, in order to obtain a broader perspective on the phenomenon of absent fathers, a similar study needs to be done with boys from different backgrounds like middle-class and rich families.

➢ Since only the experiences of adolescent boys was the focus of the study, a much deeper research is needed on single-mother families to determine the

reasons for the fathers' absence and ways in which mothers cope with raising male children.

➢ Further research needs to be undertaken to ascertain how single-mothers deal with issues of discipline between boys and girls in the household.

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APPENDIX A

ASSENT FORM

Statement concerning participation in the Research Project

Title: The experiences of adolescent boys with absent fathers in single-mother families in Bakenberg village, Limpopo Province

Information box:
Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. I am a researcher from the University of Limpopo. The aim of this study is to describe the experiences and challenges of adolescent boys in growing up without a father at home. The study is non-invasive. A voice recorder and interviews will be used to collect data.
Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from it at any time without supplying reasons.
Should you have any queries, kindly contact:
Mr KT Phasha   Cell No: 079 246 9696

I……………………………………. have heard the aim and objectives of the proposed study and was provided the opportunity to ask questions and given adequate time to rethink the issue. The aim and objectives of the study are sufficiently clear to me. I understand that i will not be pressurized to participate in any way.

I understand that participation in this study is completely voluntary and that i can withdraw from it at any time and without supplying reasons.

I know that this study has been approved by the Turfloop Research and Ethics (TREC), University of Limpopo. I am fully aware that the results of this study will be used for scientific purposes and may be published. I agree to this, provided my privacy is guaranteed.

I hereby give consent to participate in this study.

....		....

Name of participant				Signature of participant

....		....

Place				Date

APPENDIX B

<div align="center">

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

CONSENT FORM

</div>

Statement concerning participation in the Research Project

Title: The experiences of adolescent boys with absent fathers in single-mother families in Bakenberg village, Limpopo Province

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Information box:

Thank you for agreeing to have your child participate in this study. I am a researcher from the University of Limpopo. The aim of this study is to describe the experiences and challenges of adolescent boys in growing up without a father at home. The study is non-invasive. A voice recorder and interviews will be used to collect data.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and your child may withdraw from it at any time without supplying reasons.

Should you have any queries, kindly contact:

Mr KT Phasha   Cell No: 079 246 9696

I…………………………………. have heard the aim and objectives of the proposed study and was provided the opportunity to ask questions on behalf of my child and given adequate time to rethink the issue. The aim and objectives of the study are sufficiently clear to me. I understand that my child will not be pressurized to participate in any way.

I understand that participation in this study is completely voluntary and that my child can withdraw from it at any time and without supplying reasons.

I know that this study has been approved by the Turfloop Research and Ethics (TREC), University of Limpopo. I am fully aware that the results of this study will be used for scientific purposes and may be published. I agree to this, provided my child's privacy is guaranteed.

I hereby give consent that my child can participate in this study.

....

Name of parent/guardian   Signature of parent/guardian

....

Place   Date

KGOMAGANTšHO A

FOROMO YA TUMELELO

Setatamente sa tšeo-karolo go protjeke ya nyakišišo

Hlogo: Maitemogelo a bašemane ba tšweleng-mahlalagading bao basenago Bopapa maphelong a bona ka gare ga malapa ao a hlokometsego ke Bomme motsaneng wa Bakenberg, Limpopo Province

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Lepokisi la tshedimošo:

Re leboga tumelelo ya gago go tšeyeng karolo mo nyakišišong ye. Nna ke modira-dinyakišišo go tšwa Unibesithi ya Limpopo. Maikemišetšo a nyakišišo ye ke go hlaloša maitemogelo le ditlhotlo tša bana ba bašemane ge ba gola ba sena bopapa ka gae. Nyakišišo ye ga se ya go bololla goba go kodutla. Segatiša mantšu le poledišano di tla šomišwa go kgoboketša tshedimošo.

Go tšea karolo mo nyakišišong ye ke ka boithaopo ebile o nale tumelelo ya go tlogela go tšea karolo nako enngwe le enngwe ntle le go fa mabaka.

Ge o nale dipotšišo, ka kgopelo o ka leletša:

Mr KT Phasha   Cell No: 079 246 9696

Nna……………………………………. Ke kwele maikemišetšo le kgwekgwe ya nyakišišo ye go bolelwago ka yona ebile ke filwe monyetla le nako ya go botšiša dipotšišo. Ke filwe le sebaka seo se lekanego go ikgopodišiša ka taba ye le sephetho sa ka.

Kea kwešiša gore go tšea karolo mo nyakišišong ye ke ka go ithaopa le gore nka ikgogela morago nako efe go ba efe ntle le go fa mabaka.

Kea tseba gore nyakišišo ye e dumeletšwe ke komiti ya dinyakišišo le maitshwaro ya Turfloop, Unibesithing ya Limpopo (TREC). Ke kwešiša go tlala seatla gore dipoelo tša nyakišišo ye ditla šomišwa go tša mahlale a tsebo ebile di ka gatišwa le go phatlalatšwa. Ka fao ke dulelelana le tse ka moka gee le gore maina a ka a kase bolollwe le go tšweletšwa mo nyakišišong ye.

....

Leina la motšea-karolo   Mosaeno

....

Lefelo   Letšatši-kgwedi

KGOMAGANTšHO B

<p align="center">UNIBESITHI YA LIMPOPO</p>

<p align="center">FOROMO YA TUMELELO</p>

Setatamente sa tšeo-karolo go protjeke ya nyakišišo

Hlogo: Maitemogelo a bašemane ba tšweleng-mahlalagading bao basenago Bopapa maphelong a bona ka gare ga malapa ao a hlokometsego ke Bomme motsaneng wa Bakenberg, Limpopo Province

---

Lepokisi la tshedimošo:

Re leboga tumelelo ya gago gore ngwana wag ago a tšee karolo mo nyakišišong ye. Nna ke modira-dinyakišišo go tšwa Unibesithi ya Limpopo. Maikemišetšo a nyakišišo ye ke go hlaloša maitemogelo le ditlhotlo tša bana ba bašemane ge ba gola ba sena bopapa ka gae. Nyakišišo ye ga se ya go bololla goba go kodutla. Segatiša mantšu le poledišano di tla šomišwa go kgoboketša tshedimošo.

Go tšea karolo mo nyakišišong ye ke ka boithaopo ebile ngwana wa gago o nale tumelelo ya go tlogela go tšea karolo nako enngwe le enngwe ntle le go fa mabaka.

Ge o nale dipotšišo, ka kgopelo o ka leletša:

Mr KT Phasha   Cell No: 079 246 9696

Nna……………………………………. ke kwele maikemišetšo le kgwekgwe ya nyakišišo ye go bolelwago ka yona ebile ke filwe monyetla le nako ya go botšiša dipotšišo legatong la ngwanake. Ke filwe le sebaka seo se lekanego go ikgopodišiša ka taba ye le sephetho sa ka.

Kea kwešiša gore go tšea karolo ga ngwanake mo nyakišišong ye ke ka go ithaopa le gore a ka ikgogela morago nako efe go ba efe ntle le go fa mabaka.

Kea tseba gore nyakišišo ye e dumeletšwe ke komiti ya dinyakišišo le maitshwaro ya Turfloop, Unibesithing ya Limpopo (TREC). Ke kwešiša go tlala seatla gore dipoelo tša nyakišišo ye ditla šomišwa go tša mahlale a tsebo ebile di ka gatišwa le go phatlalatšwa. Ka fao ke dulelelana le tse ka moka ge e le gore maina a ngwanake a kase bolollwe le go tšweletšwa mo nyakišišong ye.

....

Leina la motswadi   Mosaeno

....

Lefelo   Letšatši-kgwedi

APPENDIX C

Interview guide

Topic: The experiences of adolescent boys with absent fathers in single-mother families in Bakenberg village, Limpopo Province

1. **Demographic information**
❖ What is your age?
❖ What grade are you in?
❖ Who do you stay with at home?
❖ How many siblings do you have?

2. **Questions about the role of a father**
❖ What is the role of a father in a home? (*what is he supposed to do and be like*)
❖ Since you do not live with your father, who plays these roles in your family?

3. **Questions concerning the absent father**
❖ How would you describe your experiences of growing up without a father?
❖ How do you feel about growing up without a father?
❖ Has growing up without a father affected you? (Whatever your answer, *can you elaborate more*)
❖ Do you feel different from boys who grew up with their father present?(how different, please explain)
❖ Would you say that growing up without a father affect boys and girls the same way? Whatever your answer, please explain.
❖ Is there any other important information you wish to share on the matter?

Translation of interview guide to Sepedi language

1. **Tshedimošo ya dipalopalo**
   ❖ O na le mengwaga e mekae?
   ❖ O tsena mphato wa bokae wa dithuto?
   ❖ O dula le mang ka gae?
   ❖ O na le bana beno ba bakae?

2. **Dipotšišo ka karolo ya Papa**
   ❖ Naa karolo goba mohola wa tate ke eng ka gae? (O swanetše go dira eng)
   ❖ Bjale ka ge o sa dule le tate ka gae, ke mang a ralokang karolo tše ka mo gae?

3. **Dipotšišo tša kamano le tlhokego ya tate**

❖ O ka hlaloša bjang maitemogelo a go gola ntle le tate ka gae?

❖ Ke maikutlo afe ao o bago le ona mabapi le go gola ntle le tate?

❖ Naa e kaba go gola ntle le tate go go kgwathile? Hlaloša karabo ya gago.

❖ Naa o bona gona le phapano magareng ga gago le bašemane bao ba dulago le Botata bona? (hlaloša)

❖ Goya ka wena, o ka re go gola ntle le tate go swara bašemane le basetsana ka tsela ye tshwanang?

❖ E ka be gona le tshedimošo yenngwe o ka e tšweletšago go tlaleletša poledišano ya rena?

Appendix D: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

University of Limpopo
Department of Research Administration and Development
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 3935, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email: anastasia.ngobe@ul.ac.za

TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: 6 August 2019

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/203/2019: PG

PROJECT:

Title: The Experiences of Adolescent Boys with Absent Fathers in Single-Mother Families in Bakenberg Village, Limpopo Province.
Researcher: KT Phasha
Supervisor: Mrs JM Mokone
Co-Supervisor/s: N/A
School: Social Science
Degree: Master of Social Work

PROF P MASOKO
CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: **REC-0310111-031**

Note:
i) This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.
ii) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.
iii) PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

Finding solutions for Africa

Appendix E: PERMISSION LETTER FROM DEPT OF EDUCATION

LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Ref: 2/2/2   Enq: Mabogo MG   Tel No: 015 290 7600   E-mail:MabogoMG@edu.limpopo.gov.za

Phasha KT
P O Box 03
Mahwereng
0626

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

1. The above bears reference.

2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct research has been approved. Topic of the research proposal: **"THE EXPERIENCES OF ADOLESCENT BOYS WITH ABSENT FATHERS IN SINGLE-MOTHER FAMILIES IN BAKENBERG VILLAGE, LIMPOPO PROVINCE ."**

3. The following conditions should be considered:

3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.

3.2 Arrangements should be made with the Circuit Office and the schools concerned.

3.3 The conduct of research should not in anyhow disrupt the academic programs at the schools.

3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations especially the fourth term.

3.5 During the study, applicable research ethics should be adhered to; in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).

3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: PHASHA KT

CONFIDENTIAL

Cnr. 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X9489, POLOKWANE, 0700
Tel: 015 290 7600, Fax: 015 297 6920/4220/4494

The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!

4   Furthermore, you are expected to produce this letter at Schools/ Offices where you intend conducting your research as an evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.

5   The department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your investigation.

Best wishes.

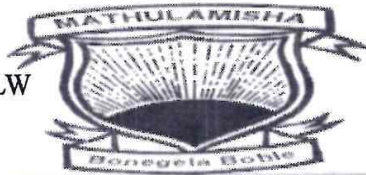**Ms NB Mutheiwana**
Head of Department

2/9/19

Date

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: PHASHA KT

CONFIDENTIAL

Appendix F: PERMISSION LETTER FROM MATHULAMISHA HIGH SCHOOL

LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
MOGALAKWENA DISTRICT
BAKENBERG SOUTH CIRCUIT

HIGH SCHOOL
ENQ: MAKHAFOLA LW
CELL: 060 615 2832
Email: makhafola.lw@outlook.com
SUSWE 0612

HOËR SKOOL
EMIS : 92114 2416
Est: 1988
10002 MABULADIHLARE VILLAGE

PHASHA KT

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

1. The above matter bears reference .
2. Our school would like to inform you that your request to conduct research has been approved. The topic of proposal is :"**EXPERIENCES OF BOYS 15 – 18 YEARS WITH ABSENT FATHERS IN SINGLE – MOTHER FAMILIES IN MABULADIHLARE AND NEIGHBOURING VILLAGES IN BAKENBERG .**"

3. The following conditions are applicable :

   3.1   The research should be done as per parents consent.
   3.2   Research should not violate learners rights to learn.
   3.3   Research should not disrupt any school activity for the day, except for sports period.

4. Our school wishes you all the best in your research and hopes that you will be at liberty to share your experience as this will be integrated with Life Orientation as one of our compulsory subjects .

Good Luck !!!

_____   10/10/2019
Matli J M   Date
School Management
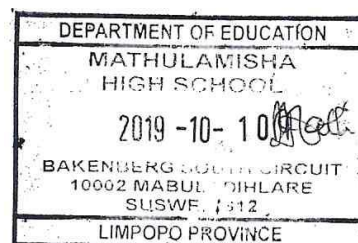
Appendix G: PERMISSION LETTER FROM BAKENBERG HIGH SCHOOL

BAKENBERG HIGHSCHOOL

PRIVATE BAG X2303 BAKENBERG 0611
Fax 086 660 7933 CELL: 0723103853
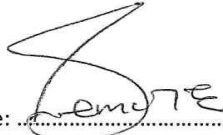*E-mail: bakenberghigh@gmail.com*

OPPORTUNITY COMES BUT ONCE

Enq: Semono T.E

Cell: 072 310 3853

To whom it may concern.

The above-mentioned school, has approved Mr Phasha KT to conduct the research/study with our learners.

Principal: Semono T.E   Signature: ....   Date: 15.10.2019 .

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BAKENBERG HIGH SCHOOL
PRINCIPAL
15 -10- 2019
P.O. BOX 05, BAKENBERG. 0611
MOTTO "Opportunity comes but once"
LIMPOPO PROVINCE