THE ADOLESCENT'S EXPERIENCE OF PARENTAL DISCIPLINE

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DECLARATION

I, *the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.*

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SUMMARY

Adolescents are often perceived as moody, rebellious, disinterested in school and inclined to risky behaviours such as premature sex, drug-taking and alcohol abuse.

As a result of the 'storm and stress' period that they are associated with, parents appear to lose touch with their adolescents, and fail to maintain the close bonds that they took for granted while their children were young. In attempts to control their adolescents' behaviour, parents seem to drive their teenagers further away from them.

The conclusion is reached that adolescents experience parental discipline in a way that either creates a sense of belonging to the family unit, or causes them to become distant and defiant of parental authority.

A qualitative approach is used to establish what adolescents experience as positive and what they experience as negative regarding their parents' disciplinary styles. The study is undertaken in a private school in a suburb of Cape Town.

The study revealed the following:

- A democratic parenting style creates a sense of worthiness in the adolescent. In this atmosphere adolescents feel nurtured and respected and therefore grow into well-balanced young adults.

- Parents should take note of their adolescents' emotional experiences and attune their disciplinary approach in order to obtain their children's willing co-operation to be guided towards adulthood by their parents.

- Most teenagers do appreciate and respect their parents.

OPSOMMING

Adolessente word dikwels beskou as buierig, rebels, ongeïnteresseerd in skool en geneig tot riskante gedrag soos voortydige seks, dwelmgebruik en alkoholmisbruik.

As gevolg van die 'storm-en-drang'- periode waarmee hulle geassosieer word, verloor ouers dikwels voeling met hul adolessente, en faal hulle daarin om die noue bande wat hulle as vanselfsprekend met hul jonger kinders aanvaar het, met hul tieners te behou.

Die slotsom word bereik dat adolessente ouerlike dissipline ervaar op 'n manier wat óf gehegtheid met die gesinseenheid skep, óf verwydering en opstandigheid teenoor ouerlike gesag in die hand werk.

'n Kwalitatiewe benadering is gebruik om vas te stel wat die adolessent as positief en as negatief ervaar ten opsigte van ouers se dissiplineringstyle. Die studie is in 'n privaatskool in 'n voorstad van Kaapstad onderneem.

Die studie het die volgende getoon:

- 'n Demokratiese ouerskapstyl kweek 'n gevoel van waardigheid by die adolessent. In hierdie omgewing voel die tiener geborge en gerespekteer en as gevolg daarvan ontwikkel hy tot 'n goedgebalanseerde jong volwassene.

- Ouers moet kennis neem van hul adolessente se emosionele belewenisse en hul dissiplineringstyle aanpas om hul tieners vrywilliglik tot volwassenheid te lei.

- Meeste tieners waardeer en respekteer hul ouers.

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'You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

The Archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness,

For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also the bow that is stable.' (Kahlil Gibran: The Prophet)

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Actuality

As a mother who has guided two children through adolescence, and a teacher of adolescents, the researcher has developed a passionate interest in the well-being of the members of this specific developmental stage.

As part of the researcher's daily task is to counsel the learners of the school, an acute awareness of tension between parent and adolescent has come to the fore.   Very often adolescents defy their parents' wishes and values and parents are at a loss about how to deal with their teenaged children (Steinberg, 2001: 3 - 4).   Many parents seem hesitant to take in an authoritative stance, presumably in the fear of losing favour with their children.   Adolescents frequently enjoy unchecked mobility and unlimited freedom to come and go as they please.   Adolescents frequently lose their sense of direction in life and fall prey to risky experimentation with destructive pastimes such as sex and drugs.   Often children who are attractive, popular, intelligent and financially comfortable become vulnerable to these forces.   This awareness has become the motivational force behind the exploration of this field in order to gain a more holistic understanding of how an adolescent feels when his parents discipline him.

Gibran's metaphor of the bow and arrow captures the true meaning of the aim of parenting to perfection.   The bow that launches the arrow into flight in a specific direction, depicts the parent that guides his child in a definite direction, with the confidence to release him to 'fly' on his own, like the arrow, with the security and the confidence gained from the careful guidance of his parent.

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As the developmental transition from childhood to adolescence takes place, and as adolescents are 'growing toward adulthood' (Gouws, Kruger & Burger, 2002: 2), it follows that the parents will have to guide them towards maturity. During this time relationships and boundaries will, however, have to be renegotiated with parents (Morin, Milito & Costlow, 2001: 1; Steinberg, 2001: 4), as parents face the dilemma of granting their adolescents adequate opportunity for gaining autonomy, whilst still providing structure to guide them towards mature development. Maturity implies the full development of the adolescent as a person.

The individual's emotional experience is, however, the foundation for his personal development, and it is the basis for the construction of his understanding of, and approach to, life. The role of the parent is to provide a loving and secure home for the adolescent, where he will be accepted and respected as part of the family (Stein, 2000). This nurturing implies providing in the biological, sociological, emotional and cognitive needs of the adolescent (Ferreira, 1991: 58; Stein, 2000). It is hypothesized that parental discipline directly affects children's emotional and behavioural regulation (Darling & Steinberg in Wood, McLeod, Weir & Chu, 2003: 135; O'Connor, 2002: 559). According to Gouws *et al.*, (2002: 69) a happy home is one of the greatest gifts a parent can give a child.

If the adolescent experiences his parents' nurturing (care and guidance, or discipline) as pleasant, he will seek that interaction with his parents and open himself up to their influence on his path to maturity (Steinberg, 2001: 6; Knafo & Schwarz, 2003: 595 - 597). If, however, he experiences this moulding as unpleasant, he will seek to avoid that interaction with his parents and rebel against what they want to teach him. This will hinder him in his flight to true maturity (Ferreira, 1991: 58; Stein, 2000; Gibran: 25).

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In a study with aggressive boys, Bandura & Walters (1959: 30) found that children develop antisocial behaviour when parents reject them and punish them extensively. Inconsistence in discipline also gives rise to hostility and resentment, and youths become resistant to the restrictions and responsibilities imposed upon them by their parents. Strong empirical evidence for the special role of consistent parenting on children's psychological development is found in studies of institutionalized and group-reared children. Despite adequate social and cognitive stimulation and adequate physical care, but deprived of a relationship with a specific caregiver or parent, these children distinctly present with developmental disturbances most apparent in social relationships (O'Connor, 2002: 561). It is confirmed that children of neglectful parents easily become academically disengaged, indulge in delinquent behaviours such as drug and alcohol abuse and also present with problem behaviour such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Conduct Disorder (Steinberg 1992: 76; Beymer & Hutchinson, 2002: 205).

When parents are very controlling, demanding and restrictive, negative feelings are evoked in their adolescents and they lose their motivation to attend to the teachings of their parents (Knafo *et al.*: 597). Children also lose their self-confidence and become depressed and anxious, as they experience this type of discipline as intrusive, overprotective and, at times, passive-aggressive (Steinberg, 2001: 5). This state frequently leads to rebellion and problematic behaviour.

To the other extreme is the parent who is overly indulgent. Because of the lack of demand for acceptable behaviour and clear-set boundaries, the adolescent fails to develop respect for adults, becomes disinterested in school and misconduct frequently develops (Steinberg, 2001: 5).

The adolescent has a right to develop to his full potential in order to become a competent member of society (UNICEF: The Convention on the Rights of the

Child).   The adolescent, therefore, has the right to be disciplined in a way that will allow him to develop fully.   As a long-term goal, discipline should guide children to become self-disciplined and responsible for their own behaviour (Steffens, 1995: 1). One of the main functions of discipline is to guide your child in the ways that are acceptable to society (Ferreira, 1991: 69), so that he can live a stable, happy life as an accepted, contributing member of society.

It is, therefore, the responsibility of the parent to give that clear guidance, and the nurturing surroundings, so that the adolescent can develop in this intended way. It is not just what the parent does that matters, but how he does it – the parental discipline should be moulded into an emotional context that gains the adolescent's receptiveness to his parent's teaching (Steinberg, 2001: 6).   To be able to achieve this, the parent needs to gain his child's voluntary co-operation.   The parent's understanding of how the adolescent feels when he is disciplined will enable the parent to establish a cooperative and loving relationship with his child, based upon mutual understanding and respect (Steffens, 1995:1; Knafo *et al*, 2003: 595).   In these trusting and nurturing surroundings, guidance for life can effectively be transferred.

It is the researcher's wish to gain some insight into the adolescent's own experience of this very important issue by conducting this research, as very little evidence in literature has been found on the adolescent's own experience or perspective in the area of discipline.   This frustration is echoed by Morin and her co-researchers in Morin, *et al*, 2001: 2.

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1.2   The Research

1.2.1   Research Problem

During adolescence parents often become confused about how to deal with their children.   The idealization they received from their children when they were younger, frequently turns into stressful day-to-day conflicts.   Parents are unfamiliar with the perspectives and expectations of their teenagers and, therefore, do not understand how their adolescents experience the discipline they receive.   If light is shed on the adolescents' feelings about parental discipline, parents might have a clearer idea about how to go about disciplining their teenagers whilst maintaining loving, emotionally rewarding relationships with them.

1.2.2   Research Questions

The following are the questions the researcher wishes to answer:

* What type of parental discipline is experienced as meaningful by an adolescent?
* What type of parental discipline is experienced as meaningless by an adolescent?
* What are the conditions that contribute to a positive experience of discipline in the adolescent?
* What are the conditions that contribute to a negative experience of discipline in the adolescent?

1.3   The Aims of the Research

The aim of the researcher is to examine the experience of the adolescent towards parental discipline.

This research is undertaken in an attempt to get a glimpse of the inner experiences of the adolescents who constitute the research group for this study. If some understanding of the way in which the adolescents construct meaning of their parents' attempts to discipline them towards maturity can be gained, parents might be able to adjust their approaches and perspectives. Hopefully, this could lead to well-balanced and rewarding parent-child relationships and a lessening of the 'tug-of-war' so typical of these years.

1.4   Research Method

1.4.1   Literature Study

A literature review will be done in order to focus on earlier research that has been done in areas related to the adolescent's experience of parental discipline.

As all knowledge is cumulative and every piece of research contributes to the complete body of research, all research should begin with a study of existing research (Joppe, 2001). By reviewing the literature, the researcher can place her own study within the earlier research done, whilst familiarising herself with the concepts typical to the field. In this process one carries 'on a dialogue' (Merriam, 1998) with other studies.

During this 'dialogue', the researcher can acquaint herself with the theoretical rationale of earlier researchers and this may be helpful in establishing a framework for the study at hand (University of Kansas, Department of Communication Studies).

1.4.2   Empirical Investigation

The study will be approached holistically, from an ecosystemic/constructivist paradigm. According to this paradigm, there is no definite reality waiting to be

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discovered, because each person constructs his own reality in his own context. When one investigates a social phenomenon from this theoretical perspective, one needs to get as close as possible to the participants in order to examine the phenomenon in a natural way.

For the purposes of my research I will do a qualitative study, and make use of multiple methods of data collection in as natural a way as possible. These methods will be:

* a spontaneous sketch to gain a natural description of the participants' own experience of their parents' methods of discipline and their own views about the effectiveness of these methods;

* a semi-structured questionnaire to guide the participants into the direction of the research, but leaving the questions open to allow for the participants' own perspectives;

* focus group interviews to clarify issues and to serve as member checks;

* a collage of their family situations, as a medium that the participants are more comfortable with might lead to meaningful insights;

* the title of a song as metaphor for their experience of their family situation together with the collage, as this might help to clarify or confirm my interpretation.

Triangulation, member checks and peer evaluation will be used to verify the validity and the reliability of the data.

The data will be interpreted and displayed in the form of two histograms ('disciplinary methods experienced as meaningful by adolescents' and 'disciplinary methods experienced as meaningless by adolescents') and two mind maps ('conditions contributing to a positive experience of discipline' and 'conditions contributing to a negative experience of discipline').

This display will represent the answers to the research questions posed in 1.3.2.

1.4.3   A description of concepts

1.4.3.1   Adolescence

According to the *Heinemann English Dictionary* 'adolescence' is the period between puberty, which is the period of developing sexual maturity, and adulthood.   In the *Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English* 'adolescence' is described as the period of about thirteen to sixteen years, when a boy or a girl is between being a child and being a grown person.

In Ferreira (1991: 11) the adolescent is defined as a child between eleven and nineteen years of age, who is in search of a personal identity.   He is becoming aware of differences in identity and behaviour and therefore he has to experiment with different ways in order to accept or reject them and form an ideology of his own.   Adolescence does not end before an own identity has evolved.   In essence, 'adolescence' means 'growing toward adulthood' or 'developing toward adulthood' (Gouws, *et al.*, 2002: 2).

For the purposes of this study the period between eleven and nineteen years of age will be regarded as the adolescent stage.

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1.4.3.1 Parental Discipline

As the parent gives birth to the child, the parent needs to provide in the child's needs, physically, socially, and emotionally. In these loving surroundings the child needs to be socialized according to the values of the community. This 'socializing' implies disciplining the child.

The *Oxford Dictionary of Current English* defines 'discipline' as 'control or order exercised over people or animals; a system of rules for this; training or a way of life aimed at self-control and conformity; punishment; control by training in obedience'.

Pat Steffens, Extension Family Life Specialist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (1995: 1), advocates that a parent should 'teach' or 'guide' his child when he disciplines him. As the root word of 'discipline' is 'disciple', it follows naturally that 'to discipline' should mean 'to guide or lead behaviour' and that the follower should be led willingly. The function of discipline should ultimately be the taking of responsibility for one's own actions.

Traditionally a parent thus nurtures his child physically and emotionally, and he guides his child towards the values that he holds as the basis for a mature, well-functioning life. This 'guidance' is the core of discipline.

1.4.3.2 Self-concept

Gouws *et al.* (2000: 82 - 84) defines self-concept as the answer to the question 'Who am I?' on physical, emotional, social and moral level.

Self-concept is dynamic and is, therefore, determined by a specific situation. The concept the person has of himself will influence the way he experiences a given situation, as well as his behaviour. The more important a particular

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concept is to the individual, the more impact it will have on the self-concept.

1.4.3.4   Self-esteem

In the *Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English* 'self-esteem' is defined as 'one's good or too good opinion of one's own worth'.

According to Gouws *et al.* 'self-esteem' is the answer to the question 'How do I feel about who I am?' It is the individual's appraisal of him- or herself.

1.4.3.5   Locus of Control

According to Bandura (in McClun & Merrell (1998: 381) locus of control refers to the individual's perception of own efficacy.   'Internal locus of control' designates the belief that control comes from within the person, wheras 'external locus of control' refers to the individual's belief that control over his behaviour comes from other sources and is therefore beyond his control (McClun & Merrell, 1998: 381).

1.5   Conclusion

In this chapter the motivation and the actuality of the research were addressed. The research problem and the research questions were posed and the researcher's aims for this study were discussed.   The concepts used in this study were also analysed.

1.6 Structure of the rest of the study

1.6.1 In Chapter 2 the theoretical paradigm on which the study is based, will be discussed. The chapter will also include a literature review.

1.6.2 Chapter 3 comprises the theoretical framework for the research regarding the research design, format, data collection and data analysis. The procedures for verification of validity and reliability will also be discussed.

1.6.3 Chapter 4 will entail a synopsis of the results and conclusions of this study. The implications for Education will be viewed and recommendations for possible further study will be made, whilst the shortcomings of this research will be highlighted.

Chapter 2

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises a brief discussion of the theoretical paradigm which underpins the qualitative study to follow.

An overview of literature available in the field is also included in this chapter. The researcher was frustrated by the lack of qualitative work in the field. All reports read, as well as the thesis studied, were based on quantitative research.

The focus of all reports found was also slightly off the mark for the purposes of this study. I attempted to pull a common thread through the literature reviewed to the focus of this research, however.

2.2 A Theoretical Framework: Ecosystemic / Constructivist Approach

The main purpose of the ecosystemic approach is to emphasize how individuals and groups are linked to one another in dynamic, interdependent and interactive relationships across different levels of the social context. These relationships are seen as a whole and each part is equally important to the continued existence and harmonious functioning of the whole.

When relationships and cycles within the whole are in harmony, the whole can be sustained. When, however, drastic changes within the parts cause disharmony, the

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relationships and the interdependence among the systems are disturbed to such an extent that the functioning of the whole becomes threatened. The functioning of the whole is dependent on the interaction among all its parts; what happens in one part, will influence all the others.

An action in one part is not the cause for an action in another part of the whole, but actions trigger one another in cyclical, often repetitive, patterns. These patterns are the unwritten 'rules' that sustain the system as a whole.

An example of a system is the family, constituting its various subsystems such as the children, the parents and the grandparents. The different subsystems interact with one another and the family system as a whole interacts with other systems, such as the school, the community and society at large.

* Communication patterns

* The nature and definition of roles within the system

* Boundaries between sub-systems and between the system as a whole and other systems.

All people change and develop; therefore systems do as well. These changes interact with changes in other systems (Donald *et al.*, 1999: 34 - 39). As an example, as change occurs within a family (a change in financial position, death of a family member), the interaction of the family with the school (as an example) will also change.

The ecosystemic perspective is, therefore, essential for a holistic (Tyler in Donald, 1999: 39), interactive understanding (Bronfenbrenner in Donald, 1999: 39) of child development and families, schools and peers within a specific social context (Plas & Van der Hoorn in Donald, 1999: 39). It is also necessary to understand how origins, maintenance and solutions of social problems and needs are interdependent of the wider context and the systems within it (Apter & Hobbs in Donald, 1999: 39).

The constructivist (interpretive) approach needs to be added to the above:

The basic assumption in constructivist theory is that reality is socially constructed by people who are actively involved in the process (Vygotsky in Donald, 1999: 41). People thus give meaning to their lives through their social context (Donald, 1999: 41).

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According to the constructivist paradigm, there is no objective reality that can be known. The researcher has to try to understand the multiple social constructs of meaning and reality of the participants. They (the participants) can thus aid the researcher in generating further research questions and even in structuring a possible intervention.

It is assumed that data, outcomes and research results are rooted in other people. The data can, therefore, be traced back to its source and the logic used for reaching conclusions can be described clearly.

The claims that the researcher eventually makes, can thus be verified through multiple data collection methods (Mertens, 1998: 11 - 14). Quotes, drawings, writing and other forms of data can be used for the deductions made by the researcher.

2.3   A Conceptual Analysis

2.3.1   Adolescent

As this study is about the adolescent experience of parental discipline, it is necessary to take an in-depth look at the adolescent himself in order to gain a more holistic view of the members of this age group and understand the inner workings of their psyches better.

Dacey (in Ferreira, 1991: 11) defines the adolescent as a child between 11 and 19 years of age, who is in search of personal identity. He is becoming aware of differences in identity and behaviour and therefore he has to experiment with different ways in order to accept or reject them and form an ideology of his own.

Adolescence does not end before an own identity has evolved. In essence, 'adolescence' means 'growing toward' or 'developing'.

This development brings about the typical moodiness, restlessness, self-centredness and inclination to criticize of the adolescent. These qualities all form part of the inner turmoil of the adolescent, as he is in the process of personality growth (Lingren, 1995a: 4).

One of the most significant theories regarding adolescence, is that of Erik Erikson (in Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 65 - 66).

According to Erikson, both genetic and environmental factors influence the development of the human personality. The individual has to go through eight stages, each characterised by a conflict of two opposite poles that the person has to resolve. During each phase, previous crises again have to be worked through. Synthesis is reached when the development crisis has been resolved.

Briefly, the stages are as follows:

* Phase 1: Trust versus mistrust (synthesis: *hope*) (1st year of life)

* Phase 2: Autonomy versus reticence and doubt (synthesis: *will-power*) (2nd year of life)

* Phase 3: Initiative versus guilt (synthesis: *goal-directedness*) (3rd to 6th year)

* Phase 4: Productiveness versus inferiority (synthesis: *proficiency*) (6th to 12th year)

* Phase 5: Identity versus role diffusion (synthesis: *dependability*) (12th to 18th year)

* Phase 6: Intimacy versus isolation (synthesis: *love*) (19th to 40th year)

* Phase 7: Generativity versus stagnation (synthesis: *providence*) (40th to 65th year)

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* The adolescent must adjust to the physical changes in himself and come to a new sense of his physical self.

* The adolescent develops an abstract thinking ability about his world. One of his tasks is, therefore, to adjust to these new intellectual abilities.

* In high school, more demands are made on abstract thinking and the adolescent must adjust to these increased cognitive demands.

* The adolescent must develop new verbal skills to communicate the more complex concepts and tasks that he is now capable of.

* During adolescence he becomes aware of an identity separate to that of his parents. The awareness of his uniqueness forces the adolescent to develop a personal sense of identity.

* The adolescent must determine career-orientated goals.

* After the strong dependence on parents during childhood, the adolescent needs to start developing independence and individuality.

* Peer interaction reaches a peak during adolescence, and because peer acceptance contributes to the adolescent's successful social and psychological development, the adolescent must establish stable and meaningful peer relationships.

* With the adolescent's new sense of physical and sexual maturity, he needs to incorporate a new set of attitudes and values into his personal identity. A developmental task is thus, to learn to manage his sexuality.

* After the acceptance of parents' structured set of rules during childhood, the adolescent becomes aware of other conflicting sets of values. He must restructure his earlier beliefs into a personal value system.

* In the transition to adulthood, many adolescents engage in risky behaviours. As development progresses, the adolescent must develop greater impulse control and behavioural maturity.

To these can be added that the adolescent should develop empathy towards others, as well as some degree of wisdom, integrity, reliability and compassion (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 2 - 3).

Adolescence is often divided into 3 stages:

> **Early adolescence** (13 – 14 years old), in which a confusing transition from childhood to adulthood takes place (Comstock in Marshall, 2001: 2). In this phase many physical changes occur:

> * growth takes place
> * body composition starts changing
> * both the circulatory and the respiratory systems start changing
> * the primary and secondary sex characteristics start developing (Marshall in Figgs, 2001: 2)

> **Middle adolescence** (15 – 17 years old), in which the adolescent is relatively well acquainted with new capacities to see others' points of view, but he still often resists. This happens because he realizes that a parent's opinion is not necessarily the final law.

> **Late adolescence** (18 – 21 years old). At this stage adolescents are capable of 'walking in the other person's shoes'. Late

adolescents often accept their parents' views as valid, while also maintaining their own opinions as acceptable (Comstock in Marshall, 2001: 2).

The transition from adolescence to adulthood, therefore, includes biological, social, psychological and cognitive changes (Figgs, 2001).

As a result of the central task of finding his unique identity, a distance develops between parent and adolescent. Warmth still exists between the family members, but the adolescent moves closer to his peers, who stand outside the family (Steinberg in Marshall, 2001: 4; Lingren, 1995a: 2).

During this process of gaining more control over his own life, the adolescent's parents, who have nurtured and looked after him in every way while he was younger, find this 'loosening of the ties' very difficult. The adolescent is also in conflict, because he does not wish to lose his parents' affection, despite his testing their rules and values. One of the greatest difficulties for the adolescent is, therefore, maintaining loving relationships with his parents while he is actively searching for his own autonomy (Lingren, 1995b: 1 - 2).

Despite the fact that these changes in the adolescent often lead to conflict between parent and child, most teenagers 'report admiring their parents, turning to them for advice and counsel, and feeling loved and appreciated by them' (Steinberg in Marshall, 2001: 4).

2.3.2   Parental Discipline

The parent is the source of origin for the child and, as such, he has the function of providing a home for his child, in which the child can experience safety, security, warmth and acceptance. Amid these nurturing surroundings the child is taught right and wrong.

According to Ferreira (1991: 12 - 13) a sincere, trusting relationship between family members is of the utmost importance. In the parental home, not only the basic function of physical care and protection is provided, but also the significant function of emotional and psychological nurture. This nurturance is fundamental to the development of a healthy self-concept, as the child's first perceptions of self are formed inside the family and through interaction with family members.

Self-concept and self-esteem influence the adolescent's social relationships, his emotional well-being and his achievement at school.

Not only protection and nurture form part of the parental role, but discipline and the transmission of values are also part and parcel of what the parent has to transmit to his child. Discipline implies authority and authority implies the establishing of norms, which are essential for the child to be able to fit in with society. According to Van Rensburg (in Ferreira, 1991: 15), the human being is constantly in search of authority in order to feel secure and nurtured, despite the fact that the exercise of authority so often leads to conflict between parent and adolescent.

Pat Steffens, Extension Family Life Specialist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (1995: 1), emphasises that 'discipline' means 'teaching', 'learning', 'guiding', 'leading

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behaviour'.   The short-term goal of discipline is to guide children's behaviour on a daily basis to prevent them from hurting themselves and others.   On the long term, children have to develop the ability and the skills to control their own behaviour and take responsibility for their own actions.

Steffens states that there is no magic formula for parenting, but parents can commit themselves to a positive approach to discipline, as parental discipline seems to have an influence on the social and the emotional development of the adolescent.   The way in which the child is disciplined, can either promote or hinder the development of autonomy and self-reliance and it can determine the nature and intensity of conflict between parent and child (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 71; Knafo *et al.*, 2003: 595 - 597).

McClun and Merrel (1998: 388) state that 'good parenting' should include a balance between warmth and restrictiveness; parents should support their children and be emotionally available to them, whilst also setting limits and illuminating consequences for them.   According to them, this type of parenting would lead to a positive self-concept and the adolescent would develop the belief that his own efforts make a difference.

Morrish (1998: 148 - 149) echoes the above sentiment in two of his twelve keys for discipline: 'Discipline comes best from the heart, not the hand' and 'There is no great discipline, without great commitment'.

Steffens (1995: 1) advocates respect, clearly defined expectations, clearly set limits and reasonable consequences as characteristics of 'positive parenting'.   The dignity and the self-esteem of the child will stay intact, while he is guided to develop his own

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'inner guidance mechanism' to function responsibly on his own. Gouws *et al.* (2000: 85) adds that a close relationship with a parent that the adolescent can identify with, enhances the development of confident, self-controlled, well-adapted adolescents. Parents are extremely important role models, as attitudes, manners and values are mainly imitated (Steffens, 1995: 5). An optimal way of reinforcing positive discipline is, therefore, to serve as a role model of appropriate behaviour.

In the study of McClun and Merrel (1998: 381), locus of control orientation and self-concept in adolescents were studied in relationship with adolescents' perceptions of parental discipline, especially regarding the areas of demandingness and responsiveness.

Baumrind (in McClun & Merrel, 1998: 383) proposes that 'demandingness' is '... the claims parents make on children to become integrated into the family whole, by their maturity demands, supervision, disciplinary efforts and willingness to confront the child who disobeys'. 'Responsiveness' is '... the extent to which parents foster individuality, self-regulation, and self-assertion by being attuned, supportive and acquiescent to children's special needs'.

An internal locus of control is associated with academic achievement, emotional well-being and lower incidence of delinquency (McClun & Merrel, 1998: 382).

Parenting behaviours that are linked to internal locus of control have been found to be: consistency in discipline, balanced autonomy and reinforcement of positive behaviours (Dew & Huebner in McClun & Merrel: 1989: 382).

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In research done by Sohlberg, 1989 and Van-Boxtel and Monks, 1992 (in McClun & Merrel, 1998: 382), an external locus of control was found to be related to low achievement, depression and delinquency in adolescents.

Parenting behaviours associated with external locus of control orientation have been identified as: indulgence and over-protectiveness, as well as rejection and neglect.

It should thus be the aim of parenting to implement disciplinary styles that would foster the development of an internal locus of control in their child.

Diana Baumrind originally identified three parenting styles, which are described in the following way by Katherine Grobma (2001: 2):

* Permissive / Indulgent

- accepts and affirms child's needs and desires

- consults with child about policies

- explains rules to child

- makes few demands for domestic responsibilities

- makes few demands for obedient behaviour

- acts as resource for child to use according to his wishes, not as an active agent to help him shape his behaviour

- allows child to regulate own activities as often as possible

- avoids exercising control

- does not encourage child to meet externally set standards

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° uses reason rather than overt power to accomplish own ends

* **Authoritarian/Autocratic**

° shapes, controls, evaluates behaviour of child according to set of absolute standards

° regards obedience as a virtue

° prefers punitive measures to curb child's self-will

° believes implicitly in respect for authority, work, order, structure

° does not believe in discussion; child should accept parent's view

* **Authoritative/Democratic**

° directs child's behaviour rationally

° addresses issues as necessary

° encourages discussion and shares reasoning behind rules with child

° values autonomy and disciplined conformity

° exerts firm control, without hemming child in

° values own needs as adult, but also child's individual interests

° affirms child's present qualities, whilst setting standards for future behaviour

° uses reasoning and power to achieve objects

° does not base decisions on child's will or consensus of group

° parent flexible enough not to see self as infallible

* **Neglectful/Indifferent** has been added to her original three styles (Maccoby and Martin in Aunola, Stattin & Nurmi, 2000: 207; Baumrind in Aunola *et al.*, 2000: 207).

  ° neither responsive, nor demanding

  ° does not support or encourage child's self-regulation

  ° often fails to supervise and monitor child's behaviour

  ° an overall uninvolvement

The four parenting styles have been shown to influence children differently (Misseldine in Stein, 2000: 206 - 219; Aunola *et al.*, 2000: 206 - 219; Baumrind in Grobma, 2001: 3; Larzelere, 1998: 12 - 13; Steinberg, 1989: 1424; 1992: 1266 - 1279; 1994: 754 - 765; Juang and Silbereisen, 1999; The Prevention and Children Committee of the National Crime Prevention Council in Canada, 1995: 6; Knafo *et al.*, 2003: 597 - 598):

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2.3.3   The Adolescent's Experience of Parental Discipline

The human being is an emotional being. What one observes, addresses one's emotions. If a situation is experienced as pleasant, a person would be eager to be part of the situation; if a situation is experienced as unpleasant, the person would try to avoid the situation (Ferreira, 1991: 16).

Emotion accompanies all behaviour (Vrey in Ferreira, 1991: 16). Thus, everything that the human being experiences, is perceived emotionally. An experience is either pleasant or unpleasant. The quality of a relationship, also between adolescent and parent, will, therefore, be influenced by the subjective experience of it being a pleasant or an unpleasant relationship. The adolescent's reaction to his parent's teachings will be coloured by how the parent's disciplinary style makes him feel. This, in turn, will influence the readiness with which he will internalize what he is taught by his parent.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines emotion as 'any agitation or disturbance of mind, feeling, passion; any vehement or excited mental state.'

According to Cole and Hall (in Ferreira, 1991: 46) emotion is: 'the reaction that accompanies either the satisfaction or the frustration of a basic need'.

Poplin (1988: 409) refers to emotion as a 'passion', which has a forceful impact on what is learned. The positive or negative quality of the emotion, therefore, directly influences the way the adolescent reacts to what is taught.

Daniel Goleman (1995: 289) sees emotion as '...a feeling and its distinctive thoughts, psychological and biological states, and range of propensities to act' and Rice (in

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Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 96) postulates that 'emotion is a state of consciousness, or a feeling, felt as an integrated reaction, of the total organism, accompanied by physiological arousal, and resulting in behavioural responses.'

Goleman (1995: 289 - 295) believes that there are main 'families' of emotions, each with its many nuances. These nuances consist of ripples, from moods, which are the most subdued and longest-lasting, to temperament, which is an indication of a tendency towards a certain emotional state, to emotional disorders, such as anxiety or depression.

The main categories of emotion are:

* anger

* sadness

* fear

* enjoyment

* love

* surprise

* disgust

* shame

Each emotion has its typical biological reaction, as each emotion prepares the body for a different response.

- **Behaviour**

  The adolescent wants to make his own decisions regarding his behaviour and actions.

- **Emotions**

  The adolescent wants to be emotionally self-reliant and capable of accepting his own responsibilities.

- **Values**

  The adolescent wants to determine his own value system, independent of the values he has been taught by his parents (Newman & Newman & Thom in Gouws *et al.*, 2001: 72).

During adolescence, a substantial amount of emotional growth thus has to take place in order to enable the adolescent to become a well-functioning adult.

Emotional growth comprises development in various domains, such as attachment, trust, security, affection, as well as diverse other emotions, temperament and concepts of self and autonomy.

Emotions have a marked influence on:

* physical well-being and health

* behaviour in relationship with others

* experience of pleasure, enjoyment, satisfaction, and the warmth of love or affection, given or received.

Numerous physical, cognitive, moral and other factors contribute to the adolescent's heightened emotionality. Parents or teachers may hold unrealistic expectations of the adolescent, which may make him feel inadequate. Anxiety may be caused through pressure from the peer group, or his relationships with members of the opposite sex. Educational or religious standards may be stress-inducing to the adolescent. The adolescent has great effort to adjust to body changes, which lead to emotional disorientation, maladjustment and instability (G. Stanley Hall in Gouws *et al.,* 2000: 65). The most common cause for teenage emotionality is, however, his interaction with and adjustment to his environment. His quest for independence and the resultant conflict with his parents often cause passionate, sometimes uncontrolled, reactions (Gouws *et al.,* 2000: 96).

According to Stanley Coopersmith in Brendtro *et al.* (1992: 45), four components of self-esteem need to be nurtured in adolescents in order for them to develop to emotional maturity:

*   **significance**, which is nurtured through acceptance, attention and affection of others

*   **competence**, which is developed as his environment is mastered and in turn leads to innate satisfaction and a sense of efficacy

*   **power**, which is revealed in his ability to control his behaviour and gain respect from others

*   **virtue**, which is a worthiness evaluated according to the values of his own culture and significant others.

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Native-American education regards the nurturing of the above components as the birthright of all children. The fulfillment of these central values leads to the following feelings:

* **belonging,** which is fostered when the child or adolescent experiences significance because of acceptance, attention and love from his family members

* **mastery**, referred to as 'competence motivation' by Robert White (Brendtro *et al.*, 1992: 49), which should be developed on cognitive, physical, social and spiritual level by learning self-control and self-restraint through the observation of elders

* **independence**, which is fostered firstly by being allowed to be dependent as a child, to learn to respect elders and finally by being taught the desired behaviour through reasoning or explanation

* **generosity**, which is encouraged by being taught unselfishness and caring for the community.

Brendtro *et al.* (1992: 60 - 65) observe that lack of these skills leads to discouragement in children, as their lives are without harmony.

When adolescents are discouraged because of a deficiency in one of the above-mentioned skills, they disguise their real feelings behind a mask of pseudo-courage, or show their conflict and despair in obvious ways.

If a child's need for belonging has been fulfilled, he will be intimately attached to his family members in a friendly, trusting and loving way, and he will be cooperative to their guidance attempts.

Should his sense of belonging become distorted, he will crave acceptance and affection. In his search for belonging, he might become promiscuous or clingy in his relationships with others. He might also become vulnerable to gang and cult membership.

The adolescent will feel lonely and isolated and become guarded, distrustful and unattached if his need for belonging is not met at all.

If a child has mastered his environment, he will experience a sense of achievement and satisfaction. These emotions will drive him to become a competent and creative problem-solver, who will persistently strive for success.

In the case of a deficient sense of mastery, he will show this lack by putting on an arrogant air, or he will become an overachiever or a workaholic. He might even cheat to fake mastery, or he might become a risk-seeker or an expert at some or other delinquent skill.

If the adolescent has experienced no sense of mastery, he will feel inadequate and become a failure-oriented nonachiever, who fears challenges and avoids risks.

A good sense of independence will manifest in autonomous, confident, assertive behaviour. These are signs of leadership, which are based on strong inner controls and self-discipline.

Reckless, macho behaviour, such as bullying, manipulation, rebelliousness, defiance of authority and displays of sexual prowess are often signs of under-developed independence.

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A total lack of independence will reveal itself in a passive, inferior adolescent, who is easily led by others. His lack of confidence may also present itself in submissive behaviour and a belief that he has no control over his environment.

The mastered skill of generosity manifests in supportive, empathic, pro-social behaviour of caring for and sharing with the members of the community.

A distorted sense of generosity will be accompanied by feelings of servitude and bondage. The adolescent will easily become over-involved, or co-dependent in difficult situations. He will also be prone to playing the martyr.

Lack of generosity will reveal itself in a hardened, antisocial approach to life. Narcissistic, affectionless, exploitive behaviour will be par for the course. The labels 'affectionless' or 'narcissistic' are often attached to these adolescents.

To enable the full development of each of these essential components, it is clear that certain social skills have to be learnt, or certain emotional conditions need to prevail. These skills and conditions are directly linked to the input of the parent – it therefore follows that the adolescent's experience of parental discipline is either positive or negative and these experiences give rise to certain outcomes in the development of the adolescent on his way to adulthood.

The family is the intimate hearth where emotional learning first takes place. By experiencing their parents' reactions towards them, children develop their first feelings about self. By comparing these feelings to their parents' reactions, they learn to think about their own feelings and behaviour and start realizing they have control over their own emotions and behaviour by exerting choices. They learn how to express their hopes and fears. This guiding takes place not only through what the

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parents say and do, but also through the models they offer to their children for handling their feelings. Whether parents treat their children with coldness and harsh punishment, or with empathy and warmth, the way they treat them will have a deep and lasting effect on the child's emotional life (Goleman in Debaryshe and Fryxell, 1998: 205).

To understand how the adolescent experiences parental discipline, it is essential to look at the different parental disciplining styles and study the research results of adolescent emotional and social outcomes.

Permissive/Indulgent Parenting

Permissive parents befriend their children and have a very empathizing style towards them. Little is asked of them and few things are denied them. Impulsiveness and poor emotion regulation develop as a result of this slackness in authority. Because they take everything for granted, they develop very little responsibility and no caring for others around them. No clear boundaries are set and children feel uncertain about what behaviour is valued, with resultant anxiety and frustration. Adolescents lose respect for their parents and easily defy them with aggressive and delinquent behaviour (Bandura *et al.*, 1959: 255; Brendtro *et al.*, 1992: 22).

Brendtro *et al.* (1992: 25 - 29) refer to this mode of parenting as the 'tyranny of indulgence' and 'narcissism of the affluent generation', as self-centeredness and lack of caring are the fruits of this parenting style.

Authoritarian/Autocratic Parenting

Brendtro *et al.* (1992: 30 - 32) call this parenting style that is based on obedience and punishment as 'the tyranny of obedience'. The inclination in this style is to compel

the youth to obedient behaviour by controlling all deviations by punishment or excluding those who violate the rules.

Adolescents who are coerced to obey often experience feelings of frustration and discontent, which lead to indifference and disrespect towards their parents.

Authoritative/Democratic Parenting Style

In the authoritative mode of parenting the parent assumes authority whilst affectionately nurturing the child into adulthood. The child is emotionally securely attached, and therefore he becomes more curious, self-directed and empathic. The outcome of this style of parenting is, therefore, achievement, autonomy and altruism. Because the child imitates the behaviour of the parents, he easily reproduces the affectionate behaviour of his parents. The mutual respect that is evoked naturally in this type of relationship fosters high self-esteem in the child, because he feels worthy, competent and strong (Bandura *et al.*, 1959: 252 - 253; Brendtro *et al.*, 1992: 22; 75).

Neglectful/Indifferent Parenting Style

Some parents are indifferent, uninvolved and 'care-less'. Children from these families struggle to regulate themselves, as parents have little concern for monitoring the behaviour of their children. Adolescents become deficient in conscience development and seem to have no concern for others. For them the emotional bonds that make us human, are severed (Brendtro *et al.*, 1992: 29 - 30).

As a result of the lack of identification or bonding with the parent, they lack security in their emotional relationship with their parent and fear is mostly the emotion that controls their behaviour.

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In adolescence, resistance to the parent's demands is mostly the result (Bandura *et al.*, 1959: 255 - 256; 308).

The child's response to the different modes of parenting is tabled below (Henry T. Stein, 2000):

Parental Disciplinary Style	Child's Response
Permissive/ Indulgent	Bored and indifferent. Without initiative and spontaneity. Takes everything for granted. Adults are seen as givers of pleasure and comfort.
Authoritarian/ Autocratic	Submissive – docilely obedient. Actively rebellious – overtly defiant. Passively resistant – covertly defiant.
Authoritative/ Democratic	Secure, being loved and accepted. Strong, can overcome difficulties. Satisfied, because of achievement and contribution. Not afraid of failure. World seems safe and friendly.
Neglectful/ Indifferent	Cannot form close relationships. Feels worthless – nobody cares. Absent parent may be idealized.

For this study to be meaningful, it is certainly necessary to look at what research has found to be the most meaningful circumstances for a child to be raised in in order to become a mature, well-functioning adult, that can make a positive contribution to society.

Supportive to Fromm's view, Brendtro *et al.* (1992: 74 - 75) believe that the most potent behavioural influence an adult (parent) can have on a youth is when an attachment, a loving bond, has been formed. When there is a loving attachment, the youth will willingly become a 'disciple' by modelling his parent's behaviour and adopting his values. This 'discipleship' is what effective parental discipline should be about.

Children who are securely attached, become more self-directed, autonomous and empathic – the qualities of mature youth on their way to adulthood.

Whiting in Bandura *et al.* (1959: 191 - 192) talks of love-orientated versus non-love-orientated techniques of parenting. In love-orientated measures the parent rewards his child with love and punishes his child by withholding love. Whiting proposes that love-orientated measures are better in developing the conscience and the inner control of the child, thus leading him to maturity. Love from the parent will elicit the desire to do as the parent wishes.

Positive expectations, kind lecturing and blending autonomy with belonging to the family unit help to generate a sense of value. This sense of value can, however, not be fully realized without an opportunity to be of value to others (Brendtro *et al.*, 1992: 54 - 56).

William Shakespeare observed that 'it is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no man can sincerely help another without helping himself' (Brendtro *et al.*, 1992: 34).

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As the aim of discipline is to nurture a well-balanced individual to maturity, the parent will have to look past the fault to find the 'germ of virtue' (Goethe, German poet and philosopher) and harness the adolescent's emotions in a loving way for this essential growth to take place.

These are the experiences the researcher is hoping to confirm in the adolescents of this study group.

2.4 Conclusion

Adolescence is a stage marked by adaptation to many changes. As the aolescent is in the process of defining his own identity apart from that of his parents', he has to adapt to many physical changes in himself and he also has to adapt to a new way of interacting with his parents and his environment.

These adaptations often lead to strain in the relationship between parent and adolescent. If the parent wishes to exercise discipline effectively, with a positive experience thereof on the part of the adolescent, the parent will need a thorough understanding of the way that his child experiences the disciplinary style that he wishes to pursue. Positive emotions on the part of the adolescent will follow a positive experience of the parenting behaviour.

The different parenting styles lead to different experiences in the adolescent. An authoritative/democratic parenting style, where the parent responds to the adolescent warmly, whilst also demanding that rules be adhered to, has been shown to lead to the greatest feelings of acceptance, satisfaction, belonging and stability in adolescents.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

The chapter comprises the theoretical framework for the research regarding the research design, format, data collection and data analysis. The procedures for verification of validity and reliability are also discussed.

3.2   The Research Process

The research process followed the framework outlined in figure 3.1. The framework was conceptualised to suit the purposes of the specific study, a qualitative study, to probe the subjective experience adolescents have of parental discipline.

3.3   The Research Design

The research design is a qualitative one, as interpretive research is based upon the constructivist paradigm, which implies that people active in the research process socially construct knowledge.   Knowledge is not discovered or invented, but constructed in social context and the researcher is interested in understanding the meaning of this knowledge from the insider's perspective (Merriam, 1998: 4 - 6).

The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, and according to Patton (in Deacon, 2000: 2), we as researchers also have the responsibility of reporting our own experiences and perceptions in the data analyses.

Goetz and Le Compte (in Merriam, 1998: 8) state that qualitative research is typically analysed in the form of themes, categories, concepts or hypothetical theories that are reached inductively via the data.

The product of qualitative study is 'richly descriptive' – words and images portray the meaning of the data.   The context, the participants and the actions are richly described and data, in the participants' own words and writing, is included (Merriam, 1998: 8).

According to Deacon (2000: 1 - 2) researchers need to find methods that can 'en-capsulate the multi-dimensionality of the human experience' and 'more active methods of data collection may be a better fit for those studying dynamic, living systems, such as families… '.

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The research design was emergent and flexible, as '… constructivists are unwilling to assume that they know enough about the time/context frame *a priori* to know what questions to ask. That is, it is not possible to pursue someone else's emic construction with a set of predetermined questions based solely on the enquirer's etic construction… constructivists typically face the prospect of not knowing what it is they don't know… But as the design proceeds, the constructivist seeks continually to refine and extend the design – to help it unfold' (Lincoln & Guba in Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 275).

It was the aim of the researcher to describe the phenomena in detail (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 275) in order to record the feelings and experiences that emerged during the study.

Interpretations had to be made as a framework for these descriptions (Merriam, 1998: 235) in order to give meaning to the processes so that they could be understood from the participants' point of view.

The study was also explorative, as it specifically sought to explore the subjective experience of the participants, so that these phenomena could be described and interpreted.

3.4   Format

A basic or generic format was chosen, as the study had as its aim the understanding, the description and the interpretation of the phenomenon, from which recurrent patterns could be identified in the form of themes or categories.

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Certain elements of a case study are also present in this research, as it comprises a thorough, holistic description of a single grounded unit, in this case learners from a specific school (Merriam, 1998: 12).

3.5   Sampling

The sampling is an example of purposeful sampling, as the researcher made use of one of her Grade 9 classes that she sees for both English and Career Counselling.

The research group was an Afrikaans-speaking Grade 9 class, consisting of 20 learners: 11 boys and 9 girls. The mean age of this group was 14,8 years. Two girls did not participate in the study, which brought the actual number of participants down to 18.

With the exception of one boy of colour, all the learners were members of the white community. This boy also left the study midway during the research (before the creative collection of data took place), but his responses in the initial three instruments are included in the data.

All these learners attend a private school and are of middle to high socio-economic status.

3.6   Study Implementation

A letter in which permission for the participation of their children was requested, was sent to the parents via the children. A reply-slip was attached to the letter for replies from the parents. All the parents granted their permission and the slips were returned. A copy of the letter is included with the study (Appendix A).

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All data collection was done in this class, in the researcher's presence, during school hours. The researcher could tell them exactly what was required of them, and clarify any uncertainties. The total data collection process took three school periods of 50 minutes each.

3.7 Methods of Data Collection

Triangulation was built into the data collection process by using multiple methods for gathering data (Merriam, 1998: 204). Five different methods were used in this study. Triangulation is seen as the best method to promote validity and reliability in qualitative research (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 275).

3.7.1 Spontaneous Sketch

This was the first data collection method. A spontaneous sketch is an authentic reviewing document, in which the participant gives his own interpretation of the phenomenon researched. A subjective interpretation is the essence of a spontaneous sketch and because it provides links between subjective and objective data, it complements an objectivist account of social life. It therefore serves the purpose of a 'touchstone' by which theories of propositions may be tested (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 300 - 303).

The learners completed their sketches in the Career Counselling class, while I was present and attended to their queries.

A copy of the instrument is included (Appendix B).

3.7.2   Questionnaire

Directly after the completion of the spontaneous sketch, a short questionnaire, in which five questions had to be answered, was handed out to the participants.

The questionnaire was semi-structured in order to provide focus to the research. In order to be true to the essence of qualitative research, which is understanding the phenomenon from 'the *emic*, or insider's perspective' (Merriam, 1998: 6), the questions remained open-ended.

A copy of this instrument is also included (Appendix C).

The spontaneous sketch and the questionnaire were both completed in one period of 50 minutes.

3.7.3   Focus group interviews

The focus group interviews were decided upon to serve a dual purpose: to clarify unresolved issues and to serve as a member check. In a focus group interview 'people can create meaning among themselves' as ideas are 'shaped and reshaped' (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 292). It also points out similarities and differences in participants' experiences straight away (Morgan in Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 292). It has the added advantage that the data derived from the first two methods can be taken back to the participants for confirmation (Merriam, 1998: 204).

The types of questions asked during the interview were:

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'Tell me again which type of punishment you like the least.'

'How does it make you feel when they punish you like that?'

'What is the exact emotion that you experience when…?'

'Do I understand you correctly if I say …?'

The participants were interviewed in three groups of six and the researcher attempted not to include 'best friends' in the same group (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 292). In this way I tried to keep the group dynamics uncomplicated and the input from the pupils as sincere as possible.

3.7.4   Collages

After the first three methods had been applied, I felt a need to include something that would interest them more and be closer to their preferred mode of expression. Deacon (2001: 4) notes 'sometimes a picture can be worth a thousand words' and it can often 'provide quality information in a fun and creative manner'.

For the above-mentioned reasons, and because qualitative research is 'flexible and emergent' (Merriam, 1998: 5), it was decided to include the making of a collage, which would depict their family situations in terms of their perception of punishment and the general atmosphere in the home.

They used magazines in the class to cut out and paste and this assignment was completed within a period of 50 minutes.

3.7.5   A song title as metaphor

On the collage they were requested to write down the title of a song which they associated with their own family situation, as they had depicted in the collage.

'Language develops different meanings as words become more vivid and we capture moods and interpretations in metaphors' (Deacon, 2000: 5).

3.8   Data analysis

The researcher and a respected colleague, also a member of the Didactic Support Team of the school, first examined data from the first two sources, namely the spontaneous sketch and the questionnaire, and placed the responses in five broad categories coded as: 'meaningful punishment', 'subjective experience thereof', 'meaningless punishment', 'subjective experience thereof' and 'the things they would like to change'.

Studying these findings carefully, the responses were grouped into 'Satisfied with Punishment', 'Reason', 'Dissatisfied with Punishment' and 'Reason'. The reason for doing so was to gain a broader picture, a more general idea of their subjective experience of discipline. This initial coding is not displayed, as it was a broad process and difficult to present in condensed form.   It is, however, described under 'Data Interpretation'.

During the focus interviews, the researcher recorded responses and afterwards the researcher and her colleague compared this data with the responses already

categorized. The interviews mainly confirmed the previous categories of findings and these findings were only indicated as confirmatory.

After gaining understanding of the above data, and establishing patterns and themes, the collages of each of the participants were studied to determine whether there was any confirmatory data, or whether any new light was shed by the visual, creative approach. This was interpreted and integrated with the existing data by the researcher and her colleague, without adding other categories.

The song title as metaphor was treated in the same way as described for the collages above.

3.9   Data Consolidation

Once the initial coding was done, the themes that emerged through the data in answer to the research questions, were grouped together according to four separate categories. These four categories represent the answers to the initial research questions.

Each of these categories is made up of homogenous items, although the data was collected from heterogeneous sources.

These four categories are discussed and displayed in the form of histograms and mind maps. They form the basis of the interpretation in section 3.10.

3.10   Data Interpretation

What emerged from the data, was that 'open, loving communication' was viewed as the most meaningful method of discipline, as 14 out of 18 participants (77,8%) stated that from their own perspective.

Responses of adolescents such as: 'hulle praat liefdevol' ('they talk lovingly'); 'hulle kommunikeer kalm/rustig' ('they communicate calmly'); 'hulle dink voor hulle praat' ('they think before they say something'); 'hulle wys vir my die gevare uit' ('they point out the dangers to me'); 'hulle leer my wat ek verkeerd gedoen het' ('they teach me what I did wrong'); 'sê wat ek verkeerd gedoen het' ('tell me what I did wrong'); 'dat hulle my net wil leer' ('that they simply want to teach me'), were interpreted as 'meaningful communication' and included in that category.

Two out of the 18 participants (11.1%) regarded it as meaningful if their parents disciplined them by curbing their time for socializing.

The participants expressed the above as follows: 'hulle plaas perke op besoeke na en van vriende in die week of tydens toetse en eksamens' ('they limit visits to and from friends during the week or during test and exam times'); 'hulle laat nie toe dat vriende oorslaap nie' ('they do not allow friends to sleep over').

The particular information gained led to the generalization that certain types of discipline, accompanied by certain conditions or characteristics, give rise to the subjective experiences of happiness or unhappiness.

The feelings expressly mentioned by the participants when they were disciplined in a way that they regarded as meaningful, were:

* 'kalm, omdat hulle verstaan' ('calm, because they understand')

* 'jammer, omdat hulle verstaan' ('sorry, because they understand') '

* 'sal probeer om dit nie weer te doen nie' ('will try not to do it again')

* 'gelukkig, omdat hulle omgee' ('happy, because they care')

* 'ek voel sleg, maar ek leer deur my foute' ('I feel bad, but I learn through my mistakes')

* 'ek voel goed, omdat ek my foute erken' ('I feel good, because I admit my mistakes')

* 'ek weet hulle dissiplineer my om my te beskerm' ('I know they discipline me to protect me')

* 'ek voel die dissipline was regverdig' ('I feel the discipline was just')

The feelings associated with meaningless experiences of discipline were:

* 'woedend' ('enraged')

* 'ek haat hulle' ('I hate them')

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*'irritasie' ('irritation')

*'wil weghardloop' ('want to run away')

*'wil selfmoord pleeg' ('want to commit suicide')

*'voel dom en kinderagtig' ('feel stupid and childish')

*'aggressief' ('aggressive')

*'ongeduldig' ('impatient')

*'verneder' ('humiliated')

*'ek het geen gevoel nie' ('I feel numb')

The collages of the participants who mainly experienced their parents' discipline as meaningful, depicted scenes such as happy families, having fun, praying together, the father or the mother with a smile on the face, but a strict finger pointing at the child, the child being lovingly embraced by a parent or an angel guarding over the child.

The above-mentioned collages carried song titles as metaphors such as: 'Happy Phantom', 'It Feels Like Home To Me', 'Heart of Gold', 'Private Peacekeepers', 'Don't Worry, Be Happy'.

The participants who mainly experienced their parents' discipline as meaningless, portrayed expressions of hopelessness and anger in the faces of the members of the family. The child's posture depicts despair and the parent is often portrayed with an angry face in an aggressive posture. In one instance a child is chased out of the house. Money and objects are displayed, but no human figures.

The song titles that accompanied these collages, included titles such as: 'Think Twice', 'Dope Show', 'I'm nothing but a Freak on a Leash, having no release...', 'Disposable Teens'.

In a study done by Morin *et al.*, 2002: 2 - 3, adolescent participants were asked to identify what they regarded as the most severe punishment they had ever received. They indicated grounding (being restricted from leaving home for a period of time), loss of privileges (not being able to use the phone, the car or the internet) and physical punishment as the most severe.

In the same study the adolescents identified excessive physical punishment, excessive verbal punishment (lecturing, nagging) and no discipline as the worst way to discipline an adolescent.

It is interesting to note that when the above-mentioned adolescents were asked how they would discipline adolescents, they cited loss of privileges, grounding and lecturing as the methods they would use.

The research by Morin *et al.*, 2002: 2 - 6 confirmed the researcher's findings to a great extent.

Ferreira (1991: 12) stresses the importance of a sincere, trusting relationship for the adolescent to feel secure and loved. McClun and Merrel (1998: 388) state that 'good parenting' should include both warmth and the willingness to demand that certain principles are adhered to. This will lead to a positive self-concept and the belief that he can make a difference (symbolised by the researcher as 'happiness'). Parental behaviours linked to the belief in his own value (McClunn and Merrel (1998: 382)

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'Unhappiness', according to the research, is accompanied by a lack of trust, inconsistency in discipline, the taking away of privileges and the use of physical, verbal or emotional aggression in 'disciplining' the adolescent.

This is confirmed by Aunola *et al.* (2000: 20). According to them, adolescents experience passivity, a lack of autonomy, a feeling of being controlled and not valued (symbolised by 'unhappiness' by the researcher) if their parents are 'authoritarian' (autocratic). According to the same authors, this style implies a lack of trust, a lack of open communication, harsh discipline and often a lack of warmth. 'Consistence' is stated as important for feelings of security by Juang and Silbereisen (1999) and Dew and Huebner (in McClun and Merrel, 1998: 382). The lack of consistency inevitably implies the possibility of a lack of security. (See Figure 3.5)

Literature, therefore, confirms the researcher's evolved theory that adolescents experience parental discipline favourably if they know that they are loved and if they experience that loving concern in the way that their parents discipline them.

An open communication system, in which feelings can be expressed sincerely, leads to a relationship of trust, where adolescents know that certain boundaries are set for their own good.

3.11   Data Verification

To enhance the validity and the reliability of the findings, triangulation was employed by using various methods of data collection. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 275) triangulation is viewed as one of the best methods to ensure validity and reliability in qualitative research.

The researcher also attempted to view the process holistically in order to arrive at acceptable explanations for phenomena. Member checks were done by checking the interpretation of data with the participants during the focus group interviews. Peer evaluation of the findings was also done by a knowledgeable colleague of the researcher (Mathison in Merriam 1998: 204).

From a constructivist paradigm there is no reality to be discovered or known, as each person actively constructs his own meaning. For that reason the reflection of perception should be of more value than the discovery of reality in qualitative research.

Bednarz in Merriam (1998: 205) states very aptly: 'If the researcher's self is the prime instrument of inquiry, and the self-in-the-world is the best source of knowledge

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about the social world, and social reality is held to be an emergent property of interacting selves, and the meanings people live by are malleable as a basic feature of social life, then concern over reliability.... is fanciful.'

3.12   Conclusion

In this chapter the theoretical framework for the research was formulated. Adolescents' subjective experience of parental discipline called for a qualitative design with a holistic, naturalistic methodology. The sampling, data collection methods, data analysis and interpretation for this method were discussed. The verification of the results was also examined.

Chapter 4

THE CONCLUSION

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter there is a brief synopsis of the results and conclusions of this study, while the possible implications and recommendations for parents, as well as education, are evaluated. The shortcomings of the research are highlighted and recommendations for possible further research are made.

4.2 Results and Conclusions

From the data collected during this research process, it is possible to state that the research group regarded the following methods of parental discipline as **meaningful**:

* warm, open communication (77,8%)

* control over socialization/limiting the frequency of being with friends (11,1%)

The remaining 11,1% could not name any method of discipline as meaningful.

The following methods seem to be regarded as **meaningless**:

* physical, verbal and emotional aggression (33.3%)

* grounding (16.7%)

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* the taking away of privileges (16.7%)

* curfew control/control over time children need to be back home (11.1%)

* 'preaching' (5,6%)

* the setting of unattainable expectations (5,6%)

* inconsistency in discipline (5,6%)

The conditions found to contribute towards a happy subjective experience of their parents' discipline, were:

* open, loving communication

* an awareness of their parents' love and care

* an understanding of the sense of the discipline

* an awareness that their parents have their best interests at heart

The conditions that seemed to contribute towards unhappy subjective experience of their parents' discipline:

* a lack of trust from the parents

* parents' lack of 'practising what they are preaching' (inconsistency)

* a taking away of privileges

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* aggressive treatment by parents

    - physically
    - verbally
    - emotionally

These findings show that adolescents seem to have a positive subjective experience of parental discipline if they are sure of their parents' love and this love is demonstrated in their parents' way of handling them. This implies that adolescents experience their parents' discipline positively if there is a relationship of open communication between the parent and the adolescent, and that emotions can be discussed freely. This type of parent-adolescent interaction enhances understanding and knowledge of one another, and therefore makes it easier for the adolescent to come to terms with the boundaries set by the parents.

4.3   Implications and Recommendations for Parents and Teachers

The findings of this research may be important to both parents and teachers.

Adolescence is often viewed as a problematic stage, as adolescents are often experienced as moody, irritable, argumentative and manipulative. They often seem to lack respect for authority and they frequently try to test boundaries.

The behaviour described above causes parents to feel uncertain about what adolescents really need from them and how they should discipline their adolescents without alienating them. Teachers are also often at a loss about how to deal with the adolescents in their care in the most effective way.

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The perceptions exposed by this research can comfort parents in the knowledge that adolescents need their parents and their parents' discipline, if certain conditions are met. These conditions can clarify uncertainties for parents and help them to align their disciplinary methods to maximise the trust and cooperation of their adolescents.

These perceptions might also be valuable to teachers, who are in an authoritative position towards adolescents as part of their daily lives by aiding them in their understanding of the pupils they teach.

These perceptions may also equip teachers and parents to support each other in a more 'down to earth way' by remembering to focus on the adolescent's own experience. These insights might be useful for teachers and parents in their daily approach to the adolescents in their care.

I, as the researcher, am especially interested in healthy relationships between parent and adolescent and feel that an emphasis on the adolescent's own feelings and perceptions is extremely important. By examining these perceptions one can more effectively advise parents how to deal with their adolescents.

I would be very interested in developing a parenting workshop around these issues of adolescent subjective experience of parental discipline. These same principles could easily be incorporated into an educational setting as well.

4.4   Shortcomings in the research

The study was undertaken on a small group of learners, as the researcher teaches at the specific school and has this particular class for more than one subject. These learners also all belong to the same culture group and all come from the middle or

higher socio-economic group. The group consisted of a greater percentage of boys (61.1%) than girls (38.9%).

The spontaneous sketches suffered in some cases from an inability to pinpoint certain emotional responses - mainly as a result of lack of emotional intelligence. The other methods used by the researcher, however, focused on the relevant issues being researched and clarified uncertainties.

All of these factors may detract from the generalizability of the findings.

4.5   Recommendations for further research

The researcher feels quite strongly that research in the whole area of adolescents' subjective evaluation or experience or perception of discipline is sadly lacking. Relevant literature was very difficult to find.

The incorporation of these insights into a parenting program is also an area that warrants further research.

4.6   Conclusion

From the results of this study it is clear that adolescents have different emotional experiences of their parents' different disciplinary attempts. The more positive the experience of their parents' discipline, the more willingness on the part of the adolescents to conform to their parents' wishes. The parental disciplinary style that evokes most positive reaction from the adolescents in this study group is the style that assures the adolescents of their parents' care and willingness to take in an authoritative stance to guide their offspring in the right direction. This open and

loving style of discipline corresponds with the authoritative and positive approach referred to in the literature studied.

At the end of this study I feel positive about the fact that most of the respondents indicated a feeling of satisfaction with the way that their parents deal with them. With a little bit of effort to seek for the inner beings of their children, most parents will be able to be 'the bows' intended to be bent by 'the Archer... that His arrows may go swift and far'.

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18 April 2001

Dear Mr and Mrs ………………………………....

This letter is a friendly request for permission for your child, ……………………….…………., to be part of a study project.

I am currently an English teacher and the Career Counsellor at Curro Private School. At the same time I am also enrolled for a Master's Degree in Educational Psychology at the University of Stellenbosch.

As part of my research project adolescents' perceptions of parental discipline / authority need to be established. It will be necessary for the learner to write a short sketch, as well as complete a short questionnaire. Uncertainties will be clarified afterwards by means of group interviews.

All information will be treated confidentially. Learners need only indicate their age, grade and gender.

Thank you very much for your kind co-operation.

Yours faithfully,

J. Visser
TEACHER

E. Ungerer
PRINCIPAL

……………………✂……………………………………………………………………………..

Mr & Mrs …………………………….. give our permission: YES / NO

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NAVORSINGSPROJEK DISSIPLINE

SIEN ASB. ALBEI KANTE/PLEASE SEE BOTH SIDES

Voltooi asb. die volgende/Please complete the following:

Graad/Grade :_____
Ouderdom/Age:_____
Gender/Geslag :_____

SPONTANE SKETS/SPONTANEOUS SKETCH

Skryf asb. hoe jy jou ouers se dissipline ervaar/Please express in writing how you experience your parents' discipline.

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VRAELYS/QUESTIONNAIRE

Vul asb. die volgende vrae so sorgvuldig as moontlik in/Please complete the following questions as carefully as possible:

1. Wat omtrent jou ouers se dissipline maak vir jou sin(verstaan jy en dink jy dit beteken vir jou iets)?/What about your parents' discipline do you find meaningful(it makes sense and you accept it)?

2. Hoe laat dit jou voel as jou ouers jou dissiplineer soos jy in no. 1 beskryf het?/How does it make you feel when your parents discipline you in the way described in nr 1?

3. Wat omtrent jou ouers se dissipline maak vir jou glad nie sin nie(verstaan en aanvaar jy glad nie)?/What about your parents' discipline do you find meaningless(it makes no sense and you don't accept it at all)?

4. Hoe laat dit jou voel as jou ouers jou dissiplineer soos jy in no. 3 beskryf het?/How does it make you feel when your parents discipline you in the way described in nr 3?

5. Wat sou jy graag omtrent jou ouers se dissipline wou verander?/What would you like to change regarding your parents' discipline?

Dankie!/Thank you!