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THE TEENAGER'S PERCEPTION OF PARENTING

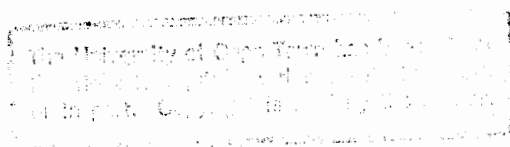
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ABSTRACT

This study is exploratory in nature. It aims to investigate the needs and experiences of teenagers, specifically in relation to their perception of their parents. In addition to the objective of exploration, the information serves as a guide to action. Therefore, the study makes recommendations for intervention as well as for future research.

The methodologies used were those of the self-administered questionnaire and the focus group. Results were subsequently analysed on both the descriptive and the interpretative levels, which facilitated the process of making recommendations.

In essence the two main things which teenagers appear to desire are:

- improved patterns of communication
- negotiation towards discipline

The findings of this study suggest the implementation of parent education workshops.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The institution of the family presents itself as a subject of intense and controversial public concern. Not only has it received heightened attention from academics and policy makers recently, but also from the popular media and the public at large. Furthermore, issues of child and family welfare which are being illuminated in the Reconstruction and Development Programme in South Africa, all emphasise the importance that society places on strong families which in turn can build stronger communities.

South Africa's policy of apartheid resulted in its children and youth finding themselves in a national crisis (Allwood, 1991). This appears to have resulted in labels such as a 'lost generation' (Bundy, 1993 in Richardson, 1994). Yet, while "large numbers of youth are 'at risk' for being, or having been, 'marginalised' from society" (Everatt & Orkin, 1993 in Richardson, 1994), being a teenager remains something natural, inevitable, and an internationally uniting experience. Of course, with being a teenager comes the perception of one's parents - an unenviable position for some!

There appears to be limited research generally, regarding children and youth in South Africa (Robertson & Berger, 1994; Wilson & Ramphela, 1989 in Richardson, 1994). Moreover, reflection on the positive aspects of the teenage years appear to be somewhat neglected.

Rather, this important developmental stage is most often referred to as a period of crisis/turbulence/turmoil. Therefore, there is a clear indication of a need to examine adolescence in South Africa, particularly from the adolescents' perspective. This would also serve to be an empowering experience for the youth.

"Many parents know little about the private world where their children form their views and develop their approach to life by experimentation and observation." (Edgar, 1989)

In J. Vedral's My parents are driving me crazy, a 15 year old says the following:

"If I could create perfect parents, they wouldn't nag so much and they would trust me and believe in me instead of always looking at the negative side. They would give me credit for things and be loving and understanding. I'd be able to tell them anything and not have to worry about the consequences." (Vedral, 1986)

The research reported in this thesis took place in a parish of youth who, like the teenager mentioned above, seemed only too eager to explore these issues, so relevant to all teenagers.

Background and motivation for this study

This study arose from the research needs that were identified by The Institute for Child and Family Development of The University of the Western Cape, in a larger "parenting skills" project. There is much written from parents' perspectives and to guide parents in their roles, but, the teenager's perspective seems to have been somewhat neglected.

Aim

This exploratory study aims to investigate the needs and experiences of teenagers, specifically in relation to their perception of their parents.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To explore the experiences of the youth sampled.
2. To highlight various problems teenagers might have with their parents in order to facilitate future research needed in this area.
3. To gather a primary data base of information on the needs of a particular group of youth, with a view to further use, exploration and intervention within the parish community.
4. To make recommendations for the implementation of possible intervention strategies.

Outline of the dissertation

Following the introduction (Chapter 1), a review of literature is presented chapter 2. The main thrust of this is to acknowledge the importance of the parents' perspective while the teenager remains just as significant, even though the literature would appear to favour the former.

The research design and methodology are then described in chapter 3, followed by a discussion of the results and an analysis of the findings in chapter 4. The final chapter (5) will summarise the research findings, provide suggestions for the implementation of these findings and conclude by making further recommendations.

CHAPTER 2: PROFILE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN FAMILY

The theoretical underpinning for this study is that of Systems Theory. Given the premises of the theory, it makes sense then that this chapter will examine the South African Family, parenthood and teenagers, all within this context. Furthermore, before any research pertaining to family life in South Africa can be conducted, it is of crucial importance to examine the nature and some of the complexities of South African society.

THE COMMUNITY

Theoretical & Historical Background

In Shaffer's (1993) developmental psychology text, 'the family' is viewed as a social system.

This is seen as a development of Bowlby's focus on the mother/child relationship.

...families are complex **social systems**, that is, networks of reciprocal relationships and alliances that are constantly evolving and are greatly affected by the larger social contexts in which they are embedded.

(Shaffer, 1993, 583)

In a more recent developmental text, Sigelman and Shaffer also refer to 'the family' as a system.

To say that it is a system means that the family, like the human body, is truly a whole consisting of interrelated parts, each of which affects and is affected by every other part, and each of which contributes to the functioning of the whole. (Sigelman & Shaffer, 1995, 390)

From the above quotations, it is evident that 'the family' is being likened to the human body. Therefore, the systems perspective which makes use of a biological model in attempting to understand situations, is a suitable model for the analysis of the family. This perspective is rooted in the theory of functionalism, which was developed by Talcott Parsons (Langan, 1985).

Traditionally in western societies, the study of the family has been influenced by functionalism, which defines a family as any social unit consisting of a husband and wife, and their dependent child/ren. With the emphasis in this tradition on marriage and biological parenthood, this type of family is popularly known as 'the nuclear family'. This typical definition of what a family is, also coincides with the traditional Catholic definition of a family. In fact, the institution of The Catholic Church views the institution of the family as "the foundation of society" (Abbott, 1966). However, according to Poster (1976), the nuclear family exists only in the middle and upper classes of bourgeois societies. Implicit in this view, is that although the working class aspires to the values and material status of the nuclear family, it never attains this due to its socio-political and economic position. It is thus the duty of social scientists to acknowledge this and make necessary provisions in the collation and analysis of data. Subsequently, this forms another section to our systemic understanding of the participants in this research, i.e. a contextual sub-system.

According to Seedat and Nell (1990), South African society has become synonymous with poverty. Since the time of colonial conquest South African families have been broken up as a result of the migrant labour system, detention, imprisonment, exile, banning and forced

removals (Chikane, 1986). Inevitably, a very different picture of the family emerges in South Africa. According to Sachs (1990) the nature of South African families has not yet been fundamentally described or explained. Instead, political organisations have looked at ways and means of repairing the nuclear family structure from the evils of Apartheid.

The concept of family in South Africa, while previously quite neglected, has seen attempts by some researchers to examine the structure and composition of households (Simkens, 1986).

The study conducted by Simkens (1986) highlighted differences in household structure in South African society. For example, the study revealed that household structure ranged from solitary families, i.e. one person households, to multiple family structures, i.e. households having at least two family nuclei, with or without extensions (Simkens, 1986).

Simkens' (1986) study also seemed to suggest that certain household structures are more prevalent within certain socio-economic classes in South Africa. For example, multiple and extended household structures seemed more prevalent among the black working class, whereas the nuclear family structures seemed more prevalent among the upper and middle classes. However, it cannot be assumed that all working class families are extended or multiple in nature. In fact, Simkens (1986) suggested that an increase in income will lead to a decrease in the proportion of complex households.

Having briefly sketched family household structure in South Africa, the issue of whether or not the concept of the nuclear family is applicable emerges. Furthermore, the implication of Sigelman and Shaffer's concept of 'interrelated parts' affecting each other and contributing to the 'functioning of the whole', is that these parts are equal and operate in harmony with each other. Thus power relations between members of 'the family' and in the larger context of the society are not acknowledged. For example, wife or child abuse could be seen as part of 'family pathology', rather than as a result of differential power relations or inequalities of power in society. Gender, 'race' and class issues are therefore rendered invisible in a systems theory perspective.

Systems theory and the similar ecological approach is adopted by preference, as it is seen to transcend the prior mother/child focus. However, this approach may be viewed as merely a sophisticated way of "reconciling individuals to an oppressive social reality" (Langan, 1985, 36).

Systems theory and the ecological approach are in reality profoundly conservative and apolitical in that no reference is made to resistance, oppression, domination or conflict. There is no acknowledgement of change and it is an ahistorical view, in which 'the family' is treated as a natural, biological and harmonious unit.

Sigelman and Shaffer's (1995) development of a "three -person system" (p. 394) might appear to be

more inclusive, especially as in 1993 Shaffer admitted that "until recently, family researchers have largely ignored extended families..." (Shaffer, 1993, 584). Whether this is an improvement on the previous state of affairs however, remains questionable. The crux of these and other experiences of researchers though, seems to be that when engaged in research pertaining to family issues, researchers need to be aware of the nuances which exist. Consequently, South African researchers ought to be fully aware of the nuances in South African "families", as opposed to "The South African Family".

Current Context

Unlike some other countries, South Africa does not have one clearly definable culture. Rather, there is a variety of many very different cultures, all of which have their own norms and values, as well as their own perceptions and expectations of family life. Therefore, this results in the formation of various beliefs and practices with regard to being a teenager, parenthood, and, more especially, parenting teenagers. The current context of this study needs to consider the specific sample being employed.

Demographic Information

The participating parish of **Our Lady Help Of Christians** is located in Lansdowne, Cape Town (a socio-economically and racially, fairly integrated and representative community). At present there are 939 families registered in the parish (this is apart from other "occasional" visitors). The total number of children (0 - 16years) is 1195.

Socio-economically, there is a spread of the working, middle and upper classes, with the majority falling into the middle class category. Therefore this may be seen as a fairly affluent parish, as well as a step up on the socio-economic ladder for most (Wrenn, 1997).

THE PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Much attention has been devoted to studying the characteristics and consequences of parenting. Although this study is intended to examine the teenager's perspective, it is important to briefly mention some of the factors contributing to why parents interact with their children in the way they do. In so doing, the author wishes to acknowledge the complexity of the issues involved in parent-child interactions.

Parenting Style

Greenberger & Goldberg suggest that there is evidence emerging which indicates that patterns of parental behaviour, rather than separate dimensions (as suggested by Belsky, 1984), may be more predictive of children's behaviour (Greenberger & Goldberg, 1989). There is evidence of research within the area of parent-child interactions, which highlights the fact that different types of parenting styles have important implications for children's development and adjustment (Cameron, 1977; 1978).

According to Greenberger and Goldberg (1989) studies on parental socialization have made researchers aware of two conceptually distinct dimensions of adult's behaviour that have important ramifications for children's socialization. These dimensions of parenting are demands for mature behaviour (Maccoby & Martin, 1983) and responsiveness (e.g. sensitivity to

children's needs, willingness to provide explanations for parental rules and expectations). The interaction between the dimensions of responsiveness and demandingness became evident in the typology of parenting styles which was developed through research conducted by Baumrind (1967; 1971).

(a) The Authoritarian Parental Style

Baumrind and Black (1967) proposed that the authoritarian style of parenting had the following characteristics:

- * Parents attempted to shape, control and evaluate the attitudes and behaviours of their children in accordance with an absolute set of standards.
- * Parents attempted to be extremely demanding where mature behaviours were concerned.
- * Parents were harsh, uncompromising and power-assertive in their exercise of authority.
- * Parents emphasized obedience, respect for authority, work, tradition and the preservation of order.
- * Verbal give and take between parent and child was discouraged.

(b) The Permissive Parental Style

This style seemed to be characterized by a lack of control and a total acceptance of the child's demands (Rutter & Hersov, 1985):

- * Parents used as little punishment as possible.
- * Parents made few demands for mature behaviour and allowed for considerable self regulation by the child.
- * Permissive parents failed to make sufficient demands for mature behaviours.
- * Parents either neglected or indulged their children's needs.

(c) The Democratic Parental Style

According to Baumrind and Black (1967), this pattern contained the following elements:

- * A clear setting of standards by parents.
- * An expectation of mature behaviour from the child.
- * Firm enforcement of rules and standards, using sanctions and commands when necessary.
- * Encouragement of the child's individuality and independence.
- * Open communication between children and parents, with encouragement of verbal give and take.
- * Recognition of the rights of both children and parents.

Having briefly outlined the definition of the major parental styles, it is important to note that the development of the teenager should not be seen in isolation from parenting behaviours. It has been found that the authoritarian style of parenting tends to produce either conformity or rebellion, with fear of punishment and anxiety often prominent components. The permissive style of parenting tends to foster insecurity due to a lack of clear boundaries and no containment of the child's impulses. The democratic style of parenting has been found to produce the more stable child (Sigelman & Shaffer, 1995).

THE SOUTH AFRICAN TEENAGER

Definitions and concepts

The concept of adolescence emerged around the 1900s as a socially constructed life stage marking the transition from childhood to adulthood. This was accompanied by a fast developing interest in child development in both Europe and America (Parry-Jones, 1994). Twentieth century childhood theories and practices have been influenced largely by the theories of Piaget (1926), Kohlberg (1964), Vygotsky (1962), Werner (1948), Erikson (1959) and the Freuds (all cited in Parry-Jones, 1994).

Psychoanalysts understand adolescence to be a crucial period in character formation in which the adolescent must individuate or disengage from parental internalizations, rework and master psychic trauma sustained during childhood, and establish a sense of ego continuity through time and a sexual identity (Blos, 1967).

In providing a context for this process, Erikson's (1963, 1968) psychosocial developmental theory links psychoanalytic and social approaches. Erikson postulates the negotiating of eight stages in the individual's life. Each stage represents a unique social problem requiring an adaptive resolution. The adolescent conflict focuses on a struggle between identity attainment and role confusion. The conflict is resolved with the formation of an identity which involves the commitment to a specific role. This implies knowing who one is and in what one believes (Germond, 1988). Experimental role playing in areas of sexuality, ideology and leadership characterise this process (Dare, 1985). Later theorists (Kroger, 1989) include age, gender,

culture and historical differences as salient identity defining issues (Germond, 1988).

Most western theorists regard adolescence as a stressful stage of life accompanied by doubts, depression, inner conflicts and fears. Consequently, the behaviour of the adolescent is often characterised by hostility, impulsiveness and maladjustment (Van Engeland, 1990). Of note is that all these views of adolescence are those of adults. There is much cultural variation in the symbols and rituals which aid the transformation from childhood to adulthood (Burman, 1988; Rodgers, 1993). It is generally accepted, however, that the adolescent requires familial and societal structures and institutions which are intact and cohesive (Kroger, 1989; Fiedman, 1989), in order to facilitate her or his passage to adulthood. The Church, and therefore, its structured catechism classes are an example of this. Hence this study is set in such an environment.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

This is an exploratory study of the experiences and perceptions of a sample of teenagers living in Lansdowne, Cape Town, with regard to parenting.

Research objectives

This study has two objectives; *exploration* and *the seeking of information as a guide to action*.

(i) *Exploration*

Since the goal of the study is to explore the experiences of the youth sampled, specifically in relation to their perception of their parents, qualitative methods of data collection were chosen. To this end, pilot interviews, questionnaires, a focus group and, subsequently an in-depth interview, proved useful. In addition to highlighting various problems teenagers might have with their parents, the study could also facilitate future research needed in this area.

(ii) *The seeking of information as a guide to action*

This research was also undertaken to gather a primary data base of information on the needs of a particular group of youth. Therefore, networking with key informants was also necessary. In reporting this information back, further use, exploration and intervention within the parish is made possible. The second objective therefore lent itself to making recommendations for the implementation of possible intervention strategies.

PRESENT RESEARCH

Study Population

The population was defined as teenagers in the parish of Our Lady Help of Christians, which is situated in Lansdowne, Cape Town.

Sampling Procedure

The teenagers were selected on account of their involvement in the life of the church. My sample may also be described as a *convenience sample*, in that they were chosen on account of my relationship with them as their catechism teacher (a voluntary religious educator at parish level). Convenience sampling was useful and desirable for two main reasons. Firstly there was a ready-made link between the respondents and myself, which facilitated their trust in me, thus increasing the reliability and validity of this study. Secondly, this sample was easily accessible.

The Sample

The sample initially (during the pilot interviews) consisted of 20 youth, between 13 and 14 years (mean age 13.4 years). At the second stage of the research, when the questionnaires were administered, only 14 participants were available. Therefore the total sample is considered to be 14.

Of the total sample, 13 participants were present for the focus group, while for the remaining young person an in-depth interview was more suitable, as well as therapeutically necessary “as a guide to action”.

Methods of Data Collection

Data were collected both formally and informally:

(a) *Pilot interviews (informal)*

In keeping with the research objective, exploration (mentioned above), I initially conducted random pilot interviews which were open-ended and unstructured. I simply asked the respondents to speak about their experiences as teenagers today. Leading on from this we began "chatting" more specifically about their experiences of their parents. I asked for detail where I felt it was appropriate. At this stage I was struck by the recurrence of issues pertaining to communication and the teenagers' perceptions thereof. I decided at this point to follow up and explore this by means of a structured questionnaire and subsequently through a focus group interview. This process encouraged the use of grounded theory data analysis (discussed later).

So the first part of my interviews were conducted without any structure in order to allow for the widest variety of answers. The respondents were merely asked to share their experiences with and perceptions of their parents. This approach supports Orford's (1992) premise that during the early stages of research the enquiry process should be as open-ended as possible in order to obtain the widest variety of answers, as well as to allow any new questions to emerge. This method is instrumental in building trust and establishing rapport, or as in this study, maintaining them.

(b) *Questionnaires (formal)*

As implied by its name, questionnaires provide a method of collecting data by asking people questions, or, asking them to agree or disagree with statements representing different points of view (Babbie, 1995). A simple form of *survey research* is a very old research technique, in fact it is as old as Moses of the Old Testament:

After the plague the Lord said to Moses and to Eleazar the son of Aaron, the priest, "Take a census of all the congregation of the people of Israel, from twenty old and upward..." (*Numbers 26: 1-2*)

(Babbie, 1995)

Today, survey research is a recognised and frequently used mode of observation in the social sciences.

Of the three different ways in which a questionnaire may be administered: self administered, face-to-face interview, or telephonically, I chose the former. The advantages of *self administered questionnaires* are economy, speed, lack of interviewer bias, and the possibility of anonymity and privacy to encourage more candid responses on sensitive issues.

At the same time, from personal experience, the construction of a questionnaire is no mean feat! Every effort has to be made to avoid lengthy items because they may confuse the respondents. Question-wording avoiding bias and double-barelled questions are both

factors which can significantly influence the quality of the data collected. The sequencing of items is also important. Finally, clear instructions are crucial for obtaining appropriate responses in a questionnaire.

A copy of the questionnaire which was administered is provided in Appendix A.

Information obtained through this method forms the central part of this research.

c) *Focus group interview (formal)*

While relatively "new" (Morgan, 1993), this formal method of data collection is useful to gain multiple perspectives on a focused topic. To some extent, it approximates a real life social situation (Binedell, 1993; Lankshear, 1993).

The selection of the focus group was in keeping with the purposive sampling. The timing of the research allowed for only one focus group interview. The group comprised 13 young people who had already answered the questionnaire.

The focus group interview took place in my flat and lasted about 1 hour. This venue allowed once again for the maintenance of trust and rapport. Furthermore, parents seemed more than willing to drop their children and fetch them from their catechist's home! The focus group interview was followed by a "party", since it coincided with the end of term, but also because it was promised as an incentive for the respondents to attend the meeting.

Having examined the raw data contained in the questionnaires, the following questions

were prepared for the focus group:

- (i) Most of you said that your family is "just like any other family...your average/normal family."

How would you describe an average/normal family?

- (ii) How do you imagine the ideal parent/s to be?
- (iii) What are parents' responsibilities?
- (iv) What do you understand by "good parenting skills"?
- (v) How does one determine appropriate discipline?

What will you do when you are a parent someday?

When you were little, what was it like? Tell some stories.....

- (vi) An average score regarding communication suggests that it is actually "good". Please describe it in more detail, for example, is "good" a talkative or quiet experience? Tell me more about these "areas that can't be discussed".

Note: This was not necessarily the order in which the questions were asked since two of the requirements in running focus groups are flexibility and adaptability.

(d) *In-depth interview (formal)*

This is an "intensive process on the part of the interviewer to explore thoroughly ... the views and dynamics of the interviewee" (Massarik, 1981 in Lazarus, 1983, 84). For practical and therapeutic reasons, as will become apparent later, it was decided to have an in-depth interview with the young person who could not attend the focus group interview. Subjects were assured at all times of complete confidentiality.

(e) *Networking with key informants (informal)*

Prior to the commencement of the study, extensive discussions were held with people in the parish about the situation of the young people, to alert me to important questions as well as to clarify the research question. As a method of data collection, it serves mostly to guide the other methods employed. Networking is an important aspect of community research where the researcher has a close, collaborative relationship with key figures in the community being researched (see Kelly, 1990 in Rappaport, 1994).

Method of analysis

Descriptive analysis:

The data is summarised or, organised according to themes taken from the raw data. In this form of analysis there is little interpretation of the data and no attempt to relate the themes to form a conceptual scheme (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS

The objectives of the study are firstly to explore the experiences of the youth sampled; secondly, to highlight various problems teenagers might have with their parents in order to facilitate future research; thirdly, to gather a primary data base of information on the needs of a particular group of youth, and to make this information accessible for further use, exploration and intervention within the parish; fourthly, to make recommendations for the implementation of possible intervention strategies.

These objectives were reached by examining the participants' responses to a questionnaire, as well as during a focus group.

The total sample of 14 comprised of 8 females and 6 males.

Question 1

Are you Female or Male?

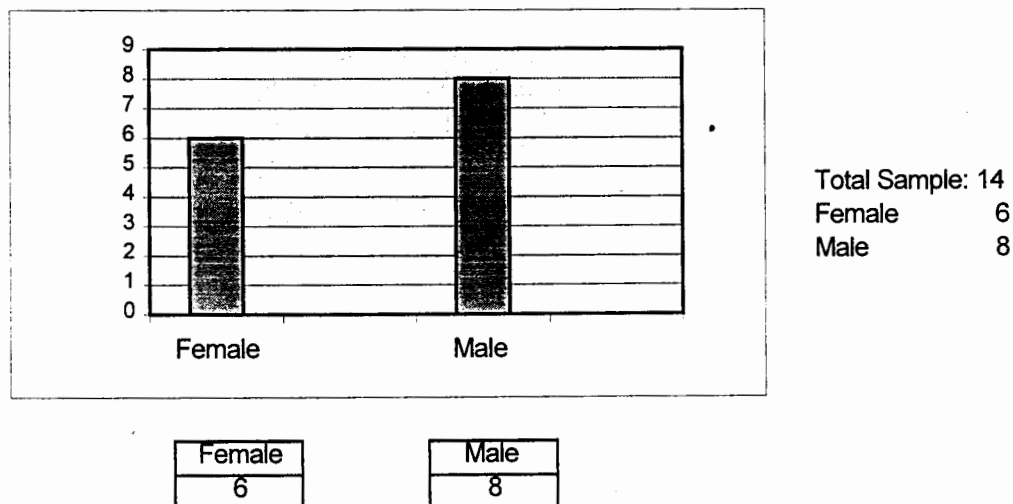
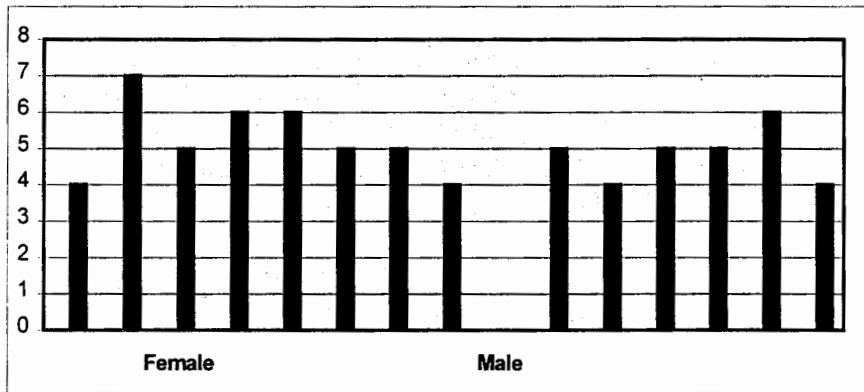


Fig. 1

The average size of household, taken of all fourteen participants is 5.

Question 2

Size of Household



Total Sample: 14
 Female 6
 Male 8

Female							
4	7	5	6	6	5	5	4

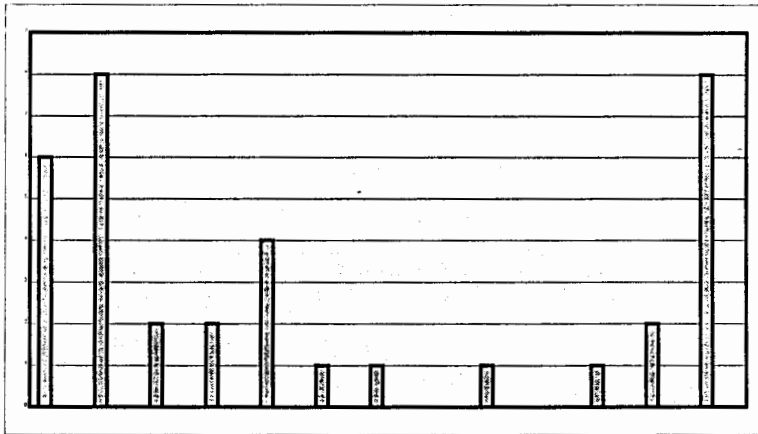
Male					
5	4	5	5	6	4

Fig. 2

This could be seen as a relatively small size of household, when considering that these are "catholic" families, some being extended families. This could reflect increased use of family planning by catholics, or it could signify the changes in family structure, that is, the shift away from the nuclear family to include for example single parent families. The follow up to this in question 2.1, which allows for a detailed account of who is living in the home with the teenager, would suggest that it could in fact be a combination of these reasons. (The key provided with the graph remains constant for the following ones). It should also be acknowledged that older siblings might have moved out of the primary home.

Question2.1

Family members living in the home with the teenager

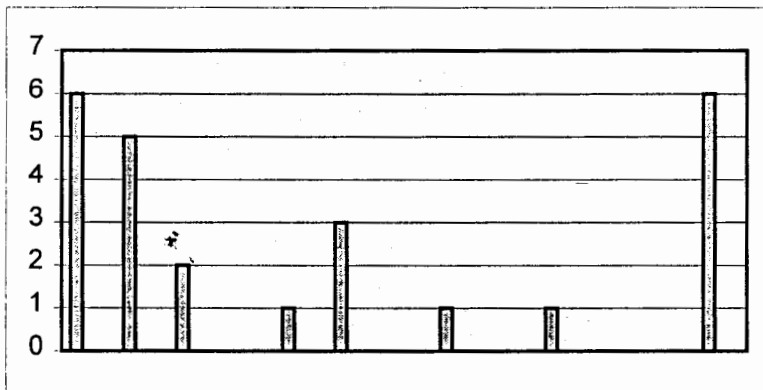


Total Sample 14
 Female 6
 Male 8

Female

M	F	Sr	Srs	Br	Brs	SM	SF	GM	U	C	N	S
6	8	2	2	4	1	1	0	1	0	1	2	8

Fig. 2.1a



M Mother
 F Father
 Sr Sister
 Srs Sisters
 Br Brother
 SM Stepmother
 SF Stepfather
 GM Grandmother
 U Uncle
 C Cousin
 N Nephew
 S Self

Male

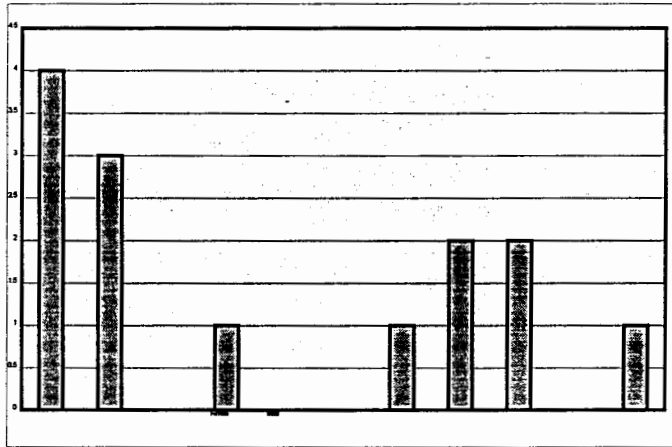
M	F	Sr	Srs	Br	Brs	SM	SF	GM	U	C	N	S
6	5	2	0	1	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	6

Fig. 2.1b

The four categories within question three's family description were obtained by content analysis of the responses.

Question 3

Family Description



Total Sample: 14
 Female 8
 Male 6

Fc Functional -Close
 F Functional
 N Neutral
 Df Dysfunctional
 NA No Answer

Female					Male				
Fc	F	N	Df	NA	Fc	F	N	Df	NA
4	3	0	1	0	1	2	2	0	1

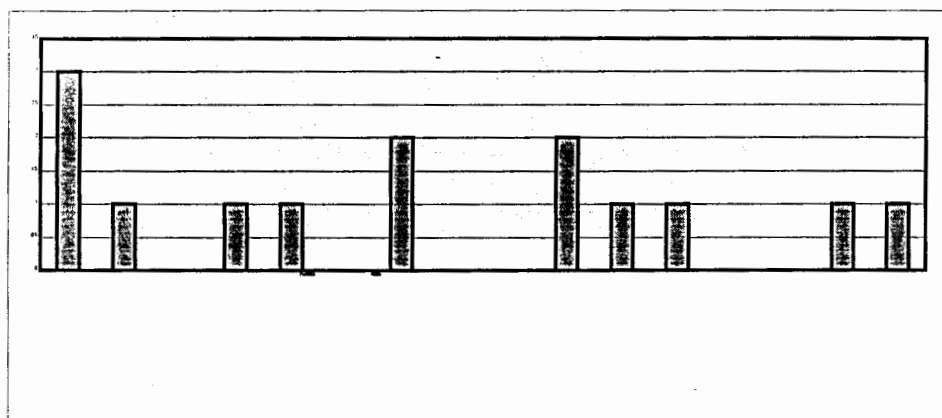
Fig 3

The category "functional (close)" is differentiated from "functional" to accommodate those cases where positive emotive language is used. A description coded within the "functional" category is one which did not suggest any extremes. Families within this category appeared to be healthy, with its realistic share of joys and sorrows. In the "neutral" category, participants appeared to provide vague responses, which would not commit them to any assessment of emotional tone. It could be seen as significant that all participants included under this category (with less verbal expression of emotional matters) were male. There may be no doubt regarding the one family in the "dysfunctional" category, not only because the participant was clear and expressive in the questionnaire, but also because this is the same participant with whom I found it necessary to have an in-depth interview for therapeutic reasons.

Question four, explores who the teenagers' most favourite adult person is.

Question 4

Most favourite adult person



Total Sample: 14
 Female 8
 Male 6

M Mother
 F Father
 Sr Sister
 Br Brother
 E-d Equally disliked
 E-l Equally liked
 NA No Answer

Female							Male						
M	F	Sr	Br	E-d	E-l	NA	M	F	Sr	Br	E-d	E-l	NA
3	1	0	1	1	0	2	2	1	1	0	0	1	1

Fig 4

This is the case for five (3 female, 2 male) out of the fourteen participants (36%). Father is the most favourite adult person for a total of two (1 male, 1 female) participants (14%), while sister and brother are both favourite adults to one participant each (7%), male and female respectively. While it may appear significant that the favourite adult person among siblings is of the opposite sex, it could also be a mere coincidence in that this is the only adult sibling. Perhaps of greater significance is that only 14% regard their adult siblings as the favourite adult in the home.

Five participants (36%) apparently have no favourite adult person in the home. One female participant (7%) claims to equally dislike them all and one male participant (7%) claims to like

them all equally. The remaining 22%, represented by 3 participants (2 female, 1 male), did not respond to the question at all. Therefore, it is likely that such a question may have made participants feel uncomfortable or almost as if they were "choosing" and so they decided not to respond at all.

The more difficult part of this question to interpret, although probably the more important, is 4.1 which explores the reasons for the choices of favourite adult persons. The reasons, tabulated in Fig. 4.1 on the next page, show fairly clearly all the positive and affirming qualities which teenagers seek in their adult members of the family. In addition, it is interesting to note how different females and males are in what they perceive as important reasons.

Question 4.1

Favourite person: Reasons why

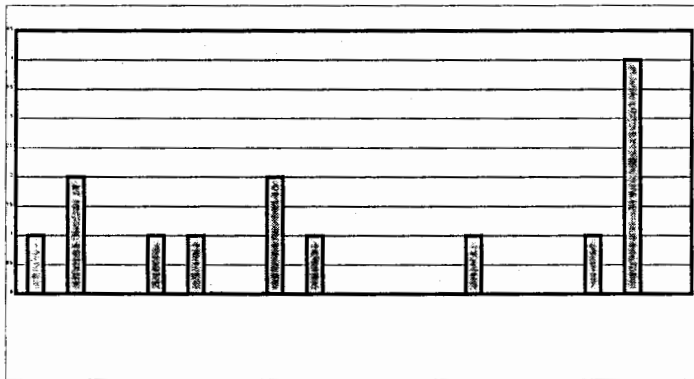
Female	Male
Mother: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loving • Understanding • Spiritual role model, • Patient, • Helpful • Favours me 	Mother: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring • Hard-working • Single parent
Father: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical resemblance • Unifying figure 	Father: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Understandable" • Understands me
Brother: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding • Has time for me • Defends me 	
	Sister: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligent • Successful • Popular

Fig 4.1

The responses to question five appear to support the findings in question four. Here father is the least favourite adult person.

Question 5

Least favourite person



Total Sample: 14
 Female 8
 Male 6

M Mother
 F Father
 Bth Both
 Gm Grandmother
 Sr Sister
 U Uncle
 N Nephew
 NA No Answer

Fig. 5

Again, the reasons, as tabulated in Fig. 5.1 are probably the more important part of this question.

Question 5.1

Least favourite person: Reasons why

Female	Male
Mother: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not listen • Moody 	
Father: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little patience • Cannot talk to him • Cannot share with him • Deserted us 	
Sister: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lazy 	
Grandmother: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritating • Disgusting 	
	Uncle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Know-all"
	Both parents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquisitive • Restrictive

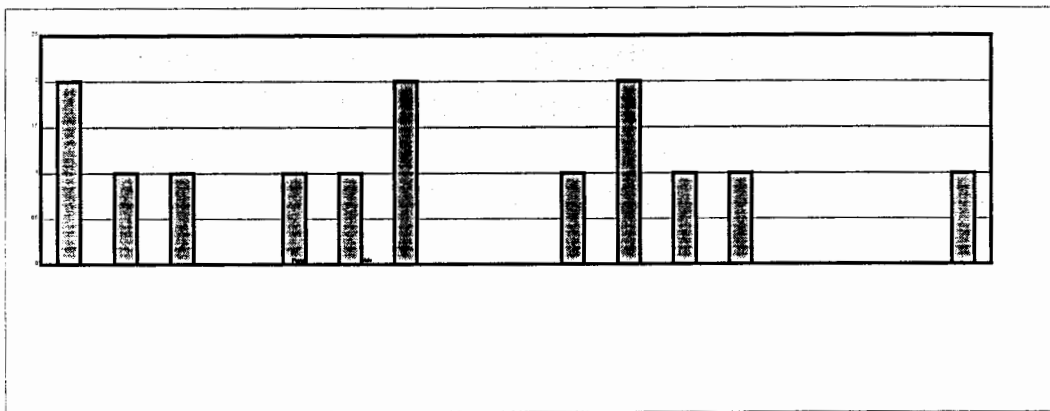
Fig 5.1

Clearly these are in contrast to the reasons for the choice of their most favourite adult person. Once again it is the voices of the female participants which are more prominent while they provide an outline of the qualities which are not favoured in the adult members of their families. The starkness of responses from the male participants could once again highlight a lesser degree of verbal expression, although 6 (4 of which are male) responses were neutral and 1 blank. So, a total of 7 participants (50%) seem less willing to answer this question. This once again suggests that a certain degree of discomfort may have been generated by this question.

Phrased differently, in terms of “role model”, as opposed to “favourite adult person”, another (and somewhat more positive) picture emerges in question six.

Question 6

Role model in the family



Total Sample: 14
 Female 8
 Male 6

M Mother
 F Father
 Bth Both
 Sr Sister
 Br Brother
 Sif Self
 N None
 Na No Answer

Female								Male							
M	F	Bth	Sr	Br	Sif	N	Na	M	F	Bth	Sr	Br	Sif	N	Na
2	1	1	0	1	1	2	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	1

Fig 6

In this question we find a greater level of response, (which may quite possibly be a reflection on the language of the questionnaire). Six participants (3 male and 3 female) each chose one of their parents as a role model, while 2 (1 male, 1 female) chose both. Therefore a total of 8 participants (57%) recognise their parents as role models. This suggests a certain satisfaction with their parents and this in turn is corroborated by the reasons given in Fig.6.1.

Question 6.1

Role Model in the family: Reasons why

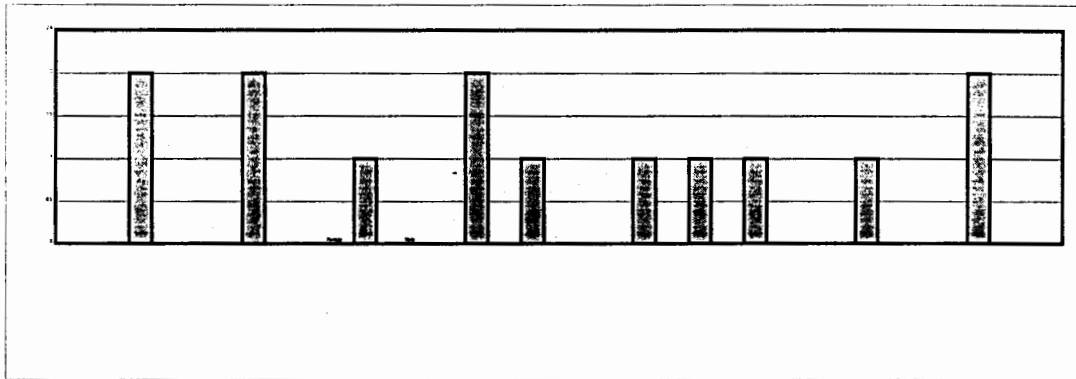
Female	Male
Mother: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Christian • Loving, Caring • Understanding, Fair • Open-minded • Frank • Has "class" 	Mother: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard worker • Enjoys life • Helpful • Caring
Father: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kind • Caring 	Father: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sportsman • Knowledgeable
Brother: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clever • Successful • Loveable • Has respect for life 	
	Sister: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful • Admired • Respected
	Both: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outgoing • Sporty

Fig 6.1

The responses to question seven, on "undesirable role models" correlate with the responses to question five ("least favourite adult"), in that father is selected by 4 participants in total.

Question 7

Undesirable family role model



Total Sample: 1
 Female 8
 Male 6

M Mother
 F Father
 Bth Both
 Sr Sister
 Br Brother
 Sif Self
 N None
 Na No Answer

Female									Male							
M	F	Bth	Sr	Br	Gm	U	N	Na	M	F	Bth	Sr	Br	Sif	N	Na
0	2	0	2	0	1	0	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	2	0

Fig 7

As seen in the table below, the reasons presented are also similar to or the same as the ones in question 5.1. This consequently suggests a reliability of responses.

Question 7.1

Undesirable Family role model: Reasons why

Female	Male
Mother: • Has "horrible" job	
Father: • Impatient, • Stubborn, • Harsh	Father: • Workaholic

Sister: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lazy, • Loud, • Rude • Has "an attitude" • Moody, • Disagreeable 	
	Brother: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perfectionist • Inconsiderate, • Abuses alcohol
Grandmother: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritating • Disgusting 	
	Uncle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcoholic

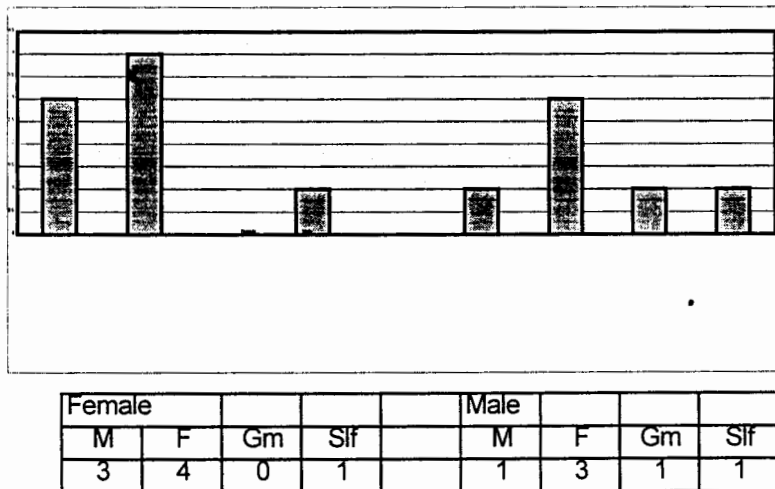
Fig 7.1

Questions eight - eleven explore the issue of discipline.

As seen in Fig. 8, father is mostly responsible for discipline at home for 7 participants(50%).

Question 8

The one mostly responsible for discipline



Total Sample: 14
 Female 8
 Male 6

M Mother
 F Father
 Gm Grandmother
 Slf Self

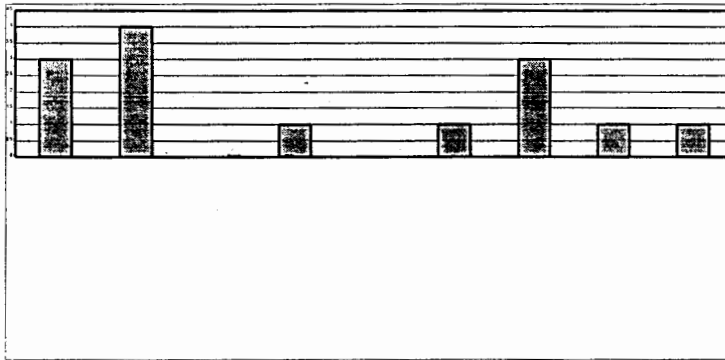
Fig. 8

Linked to this is form of discipline. Fig. 9 illustrates that verbal discipline is the most common

(current) form of discipline. Furthermore, it seems that most participants are in agreement with the present method they experience. The graph/fig.10 illustrates this quite clearly.

Question 9

Form of discipline



Total Sample: 14
 Female 8
 Male 6

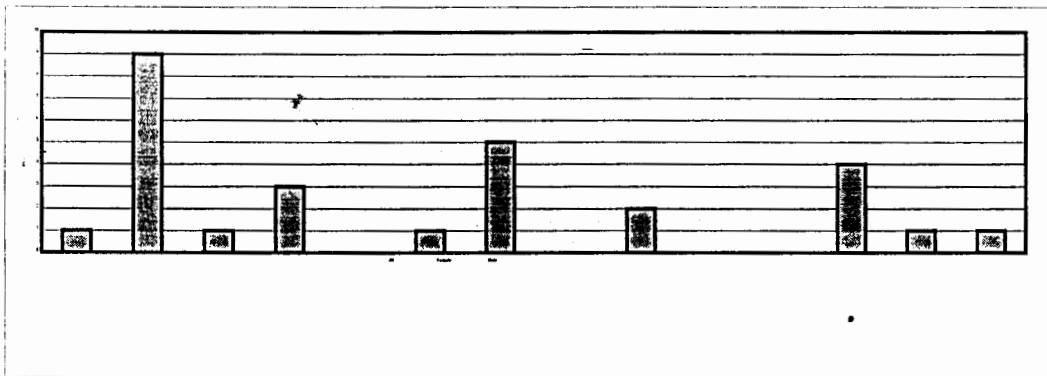
Female				Male			
V	Gr	V/Phs	O	V	Gr	V/Phs	O
3	4	0	1	1	3	1	1

V Verbal
 Gr Grounding
 V/Phs Verbal/Physical
 O Other

Fig. 9

Question 10

Feelings about current forms of discipline



Total Sample: 14
 Female 8
 Male 6

All	Female				Male						
SA	A	D	SD	SA	A	D	SD	SA	A	D	SD
1	9	1	3	1	5	0	2	0	4	1	1

SA Strongly Agree
 A Agree
 D Disagree
 SD Strongly Disagree

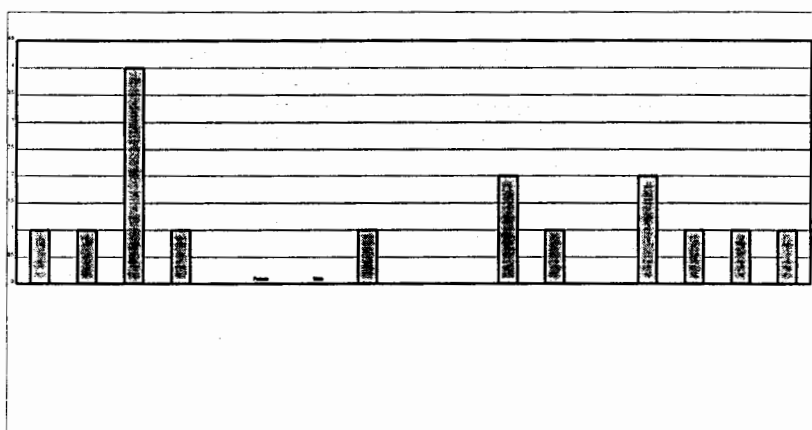
Fig 10

These responses are supported by those to question eleven, in which participants were asked

what their preferred form of discipline was. Most participants indicated preferences for verbal disciplinary measures, even though they varied in nature as reflected in Fig. 11.

Question 11

Preferred form of discipline



Total Sample: 14
 Female 8
 Male 6

V Verbal
 Gr Grounding
 Dis Discussion
 Sn Sanctions
 T Being Told
 Sym Sympathy
 U Unsure
 Na No Answer

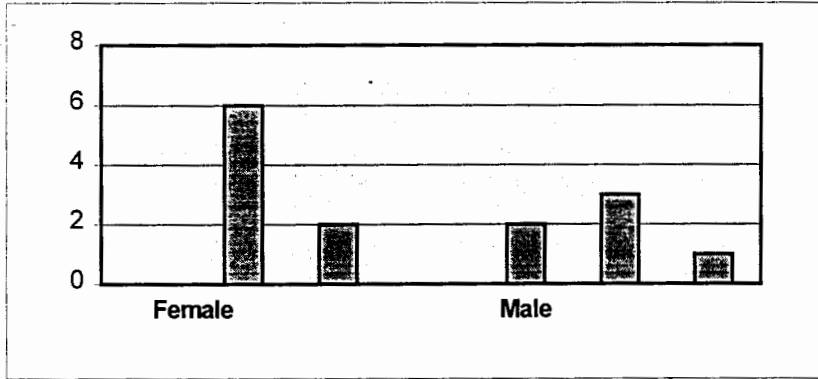
Femal								Male							
V	Gr	Dis	Sn	T	y	U	Na	V	Gr	Dis	Sn	T	y	U	Na
1	1	4	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	2	1	1	1

Fig 11

Most participants (12), that is 86%, believe they have given little or no problems to their parents. Whether or not this view would be shared by their parents is, of course, an open question! It may be significant however that the 2 teenagers who feel that they have given their parents a lot of problems are males. (One would need to study these and other recurring gender distinctions in a separate study though.)

Question 12

How many problems have you given your parents?



Total Sample: 14
 Female 8
 Male 6

Female			Male		
A	F	N	A	F	N
0	6	2	2	3	1

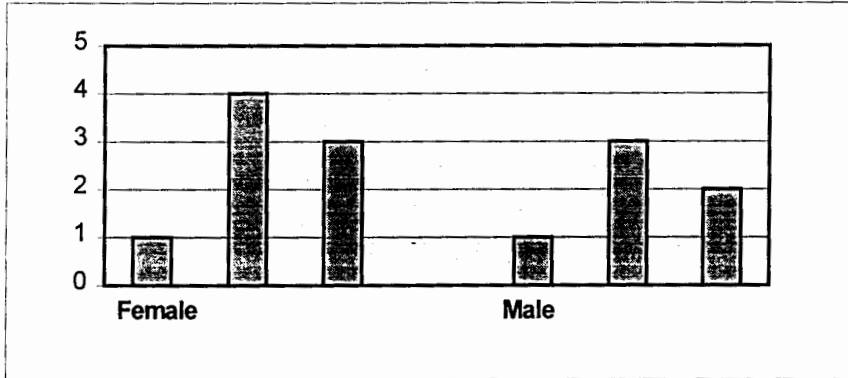
A A Lot
 F Few
 N None

Fig. 12

This rather positive picture is continued in questions thirteen and fourteen, when participants are asked how encouraged and supported they feel by their respective parents. Seven participants (50%) sometimes experience their fathers as encouraging and supportive, while another 5 (36%) participants say that they always do. Therefore a combined total of 12 participants (86%) would appear to be satisfied with the levels of encouragement and support on the part of father.

Question 13

Encouragement and support on the part of father



Total Sample: 14
 Female 8
 Male 6

Female			Male		
N	S	A	N	S	A
1	4	3	1	3	2

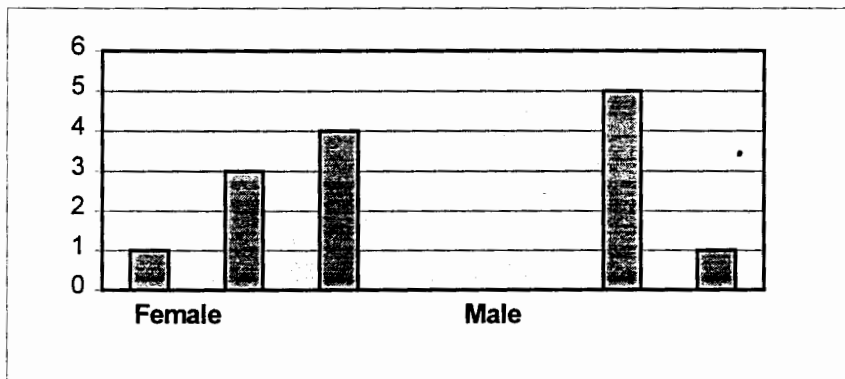
N Never
 S Sometimes
 A Always

Fig. 13

The experience of encouragement and support by mother is closely associated with responses to the preceding question on the experience of father.

Question 14

Encouragement and support on the part of mother



Total Sample: 14
 Female 8
 Male 6

Female			Male		
N	S	A	N	S	A
1	3	4	0	5	1

N Never
 S Sometimes
 A Always

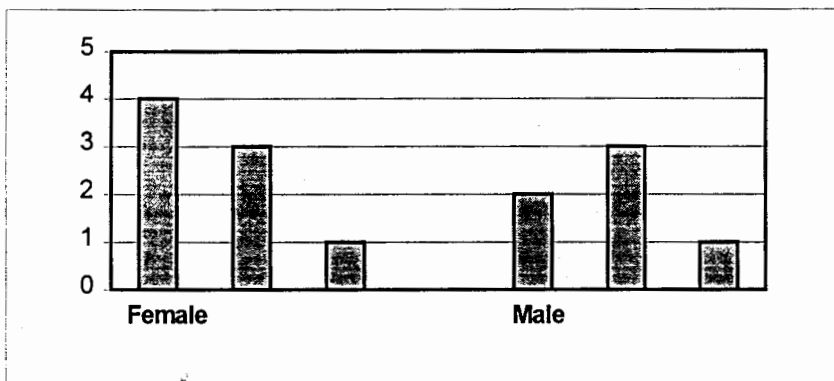
Fig. 14

The results highlight a tendency for participants to feel more encouraged and supported by opposite sex parents. While this study is not intended to examine gender issues in parenting, its existence is duly acknowledged, more especially as gender identification is part of the developmental process.

Questions fifteen and sixteen explore participants' levels of satisfaction with communication with their respective parents.

Question 15

Communication with mother



Total Sample: 14
 Female 8
 Male 6

VH Very Happy
 N Neutral
 VuH Very Unhappy

Female			Male		
VH	N	VuH	VH	N	VuH
4	3	1	2	3	1

Fig. 15

Consistent with responses to previous questions, 6 participants are very happy with their level of communication with mother while another 6 feel neutral. Only 2 participants are very unhappy.

Question 15.1

Feelings about communication with mother

Very Happy	
Female	Male
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can speak openly • Understands feelings • Enjoy each other's company • Supportive • Treated as an adult • Always there 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can speak openly
Neutral	
Female	Male
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot always have open discussions • Busy, but makes time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moodiness • Equal communication with both parents
Very Unhappy	
Female	Male
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not talk much 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age gap

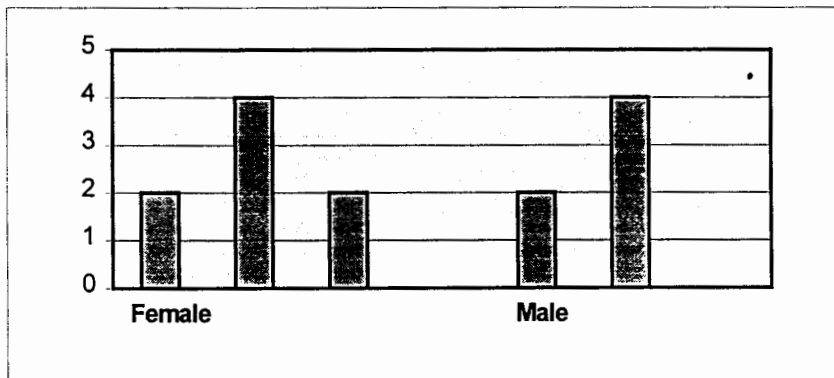
Fig 15.1

Less satisfaction with levels of communication with father, as seen below, is evident, This is also supported by responses to earlier questions.

Question 16

Communication with father

Fig. 16



Total Sample: 14
 Female 8
 Male 6

Vh Very Happy
 S Neutral
 A Very Unhappy

Female			Male		
VH	N	VuH	VH	N	VuH
2	4	2	2	4	0

On average participants appear generally satisfied with their communication with father, since 8 “neutral” responses implies 57%. While at first this may seem incongruent with participants’ earlier statements as regards father being the least favoured adult in question five, and the least desirable role model in question seven, it should be considered that perhaps they are simply more satisfied with their communication with mother!

Question 16.1

Feelings about communication with father

Very Happy	
Female	Male
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do things together • Allows freedom • Takes chances • Always there 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talks to me as an equal • Allows my own opinion
Neutral	
Female	Male
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot speak openly • Not understanding • Not open 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different tastes • Equal communication with both parents • Hardly speaks • Insufficient trust
Very Unhappy	
Female	Male
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not like him • I’m always wrong • Cannot talk 	

Fig 16.1

The overall experience of teenagers’ parents, in this study is a fairly positive one. Participants were asked in question seventeen to rate their experiences (on a scale from 1-10) and the average rating was “7”. Their reasons are tabulated in Fig.18

Rating 1			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't like either of them • Had very bad experiences with them 			

Fig. 18

Of particular significance however, is the rating at the extreme negative end, "1". This response is from the same teenager who could not attend the focus group. Subsequent personal contacts with her highlighted the necessity for an in-depth interview.

The clinical interview highlighted that the "bad experiences" which the teenager mentioned in the questionnaire, were indeed traumatic, and thus, she was referred for therapy.

Question 19

Other comments on parenting

Female	Male
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only a personal experience of being a parent can to some extent explain parenthood • Parents should allow us to learn from our own experiences • Parents should remember that they were once teenagers too • Parents should be more trusting in themselves for the upbringing of their children, as well as trusting in their children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents do not trust their children • Some parents do not give their children space • Trust and space will encourage maturity and independence • Parenting "must be a heck of a job!"

Fig.19

STRENGTHS AND PROBLEMS WITHIN THE FAMILY

The results of the focus group confirm and amplify the questionnaire results and help to clarify the parental characteristics that teenagers feel are particularly important. (See Appendix B)

Question three, which asks teenagers to “describe [their] families”, reveals that in general teenagers in this study perceive their families as “average”.

Particular strengths which were identified are the qualities of being “understanding and reliable”, as well as feeling a sense of closeness. They alternatively find secretiveness, loudness, inquisitiveness, boring family life and irritating behaviour to be problematic.

Questions 4.1 and 5.1 may be linked in this analysis as they respectively ask teenagers to provide reasons for their choice of a most/least “favourite adult person in the family”.

In describing their choice of the person whom they value most, teenagers list the following qualities: She/he

- understands me
- is understandable
- sacrificed for me
- is a role model in education and career

The qualities which they would not value are as listed:

- impatience
- not listening
- not sharing(open)
- laziness

- inquisitiveness
- knowing it all
- restrictive
- moody
- abandonment
- irritating behaviour
- disgusting behaviour

(The latter two qualities describe a participant's views regarding a grandparent.)

Questions 6.1 and 7.1, which speak of role models within the family, may also be simultaneously analysed.

In reference to the kind of person they'd like to be (6.1), teenagers list the following positive qualities:

- loving, caring & kind
- fair & just
- outgoing & sporty
- well informed
- hardworking

On the other hand, characteristics which they do not appreciate and would be certain to avoid, include the following:

- difficulties at work

- irritating behaviour
- disgusting behaviour
- loudness
- rudeness
- moodiness
- harshness
- drunkenness

Here the comment on working conditions, becomes a significant one, as it highlights the effect it is having on the teenager.

Question ten explores the teenagers' feelings regarding the manner in which they are disciplined. It is significant that 9 (64 %) are saying "it is okay". However, they are also saying that physical and social punishment are unacceptable.

This is directly related to their responses in question eleven, which asks teenagers how parents should enforce discipline. The resounding request here seems to be for negotiation and thus respect for their growing adulthood. Someone also highlights the importance of affirmation when they are compliant. As a last resort one teenager suggests "shout only if all else fails"!

Question 15.1 examines the teenagers' satisfaction with their mothers' level of communication.

In general, the teenagers in this study feel appreciated, understood and free to discuss most matters with their mothers. Another positive comment here is "we're making progress." The statement of preference for peer communication while initially appearing to be a negative statement, may also be seen as a healthy request to be treated as an adult.

Question 16.1 then explores the teenagers' feelings regarding communication with father. Here we find a strange anomaly with the earlier graph, in that the "majority" neutral response does not correlate with the strong statements suggesting a lack of communication. Such statements include a lack of shared interests, the inability to keep confidences, lack of freedom and negative criticism. The few participants who had positive feelings enjoyed doing things together and appreciated openness.

The general experience of these teenagers is positive and caring (question 18). However, the strongest complaint is perceived narrow-mindedness and unreasonable rules, which reiterates a desire for reasonable communication.

In their further comments on parenting (question 19), teenagers recognise that parents do not have an easy job. However they ask that parents be more trusting of them and remember that they were once teenagers too. (See: Appendix C).

CHAPTER 5 : CONCLUSION

Overall, it seems that teenagers in this study highly value being understood and loved, as well as being treated fairly and justly. It was also clear that communication with parents was not always what it might be. Their responses (See Appendix D), to this research project show that they enjoy being able to talk things out with freedom and an openness to their opinions.

At the same time, there are some strong desires being expressed. The desire for parents to be patient as well as the desire to be able to cope with situations of personal bad habits which are out of their control. Teenagers in this study are also clearly stating a preference for punishment which is alternative to social and physical punishment. They need a greater experience of communication and of being trusted.

In conclusion, I found that while initially nervous and uncomfortable about participating in the research, the teenagers were eventually able to say “yes it made us think... it gave us a chance to let things out... and in fact, some of them even expressed a wish for a more in-depth study into individual elements of these findings. Clearly more such opportunities to do this with their parents would strengthen their relationships with their parents.

Implementation of findings

From my own point of view, this study has confirmed that teenagers are willing to share their opinions, if asked, and when respected for these expressed opinions. Furthermore, by revealing to me what their perceptions of their parents are, these teenagers were also revealing the manner in which they would like to be treated by other adults.

Subsequently, this has contributed positively to my ongoing relationship with these young people (in fact, I even dared to take them on a train journey to Gauteng for an Easter Pilgrimage during 1998!)

Having explored the experiences of this group of teenagers, information could be shared in general terms with other catechism teachers of this particular class. The result is a group of young people who are more trusting, less “on guard” and eager to share their opinions. We have created a climate in which they can truly feel heard, or in which we as adults are permitted to enter “the private world where [they] form their views... .” (Edgar, 1989). Non-judgemental listening forms a vital component of such a climate.

Recommendations

The sample in this study has proven to be an average, rather western orientated one, for example, they speak in terms of “grounding”. Thus it has tended to focus on a relatively middle class sample. The challenge remains now to apply this study in a more working class situation.

Parent Education workshops

Furthermore, since it appears that what teenagers in this study are clearly requesting is for more 'responsiveness', and, to be able to experience a 'democratic parental style', it is recommended that attention be paid to workshops for parents in this regard.

Parent education workshops can provide vital training in areas such as communication and discipline, both of which have been expressed as main areas needing attention. Thus the request for more 'responsiveness' may be answered in this manner. A major resource in planning such workshops within communities, are place such as *The Parent Centre*, who have done much work in this field already, particularly in the more affluent areas of Cape Town.

As regards parenting style, it is significant that only the practise of a democratic style of parenting seems to enable positive character formation as well as the process of individuation so crucial in the transition from childhood to adulthood. Indeed, if we are serious about the future of our society we will recognise this as important and therefore train parents accordingly.

Finally, in conducting similar research, it could be recommended to facilitate a group with parents, partly to share the insights gained, but also to advise them on how to have a relationship with their teenagers at optimum level. (See: Appendix E).

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QUALITATIVE REPLIES TO SELECTED QUESTIONS ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE

		... is/are loving, caring & kind								
		... is/are fair & just						Good	Share the replies with our parents	
Average	Understands me	... is/are outgoing & sporty					They are close, helpful, caring, happy & concerned	Made me think about my parents & family	Share the replies with us	
Understanding	Understandable person	... is /are well informed		They should talk/reason it out together with us in calmness	There is freedom to discuss issues	He is open to my opinions	OK & positive	Comfortable	Do in-depth research into one or other aspect	
Reliable	Sacrificed self for me	... is/are hard-working		They do O K	Understands my feelings, is present & makes time for me	We do things together	They are experienced & know how to deal with adolescents	I will eventually see eye to eye with them	Happy to know that someone is trying to help	Ask more questions
Close	Role Model in education & career	I need them	OK	Appreciation if we comply	We're making progress	O K	There are some mysteries about them	They have a tough job	A chance to let things out	Good Survey!
Question 3 Describe your Family	Question 4.1 Why... is your favourite person? Question 5.1 Why... is not your favourite person	Question 6.1 Why would you like to grow up like...? Question 7.1 Why would you not like to grow up like...?	Question 10 Feelings about being disciplined in the manner indicated in Question 9	Question 11 How should parents handle difficult situations?	Question 15.1 How happy are you with the way your mother communicates with you?	Question 16.1 How happy are you with the way your father communicates with you?	Question 18 Reasons for overall ranking of parents' experience	Question 19 Comments on parenting	Question 20 How did answering this questionnaire make you feel?	Question 21 Recommendations / suggestions for future research
Too many secrets	Parental Moodiness	Drunkenness	Should not be prolonged	No emotional hurting	Prefer peer communication	Negative criticism	Narrow-minded at times	Let us experience for ourselves	Nervous	
Nosey, Irritating, loud, boring	Abandoned me/us	... is/are hard	Aversion to social punishments (grounding)	No physical hurting	Not entirely free	Can't keep confidences	Some rules are unreasonable	Parents were once teenagers!	Unsure, uncomfortable	
Messed up	Restrictive of freedom	... is/ are irritating, loud, disgusting, rude, moody	Aversion to physical punishment	Shout only if all else fails	Can't communicate	Need more freedom	Don't like either of them	Be more trusting & give more space		
	Little patience, listening, sharing, Lazy, busy-body, Irritating, disgusting, know-all	Have problems at work	Hate punishment!			No shared interests				
						I don't like him!				

CONFIDENTIAL

This questionnaire will assist in research regarding **Teenagers' Perceptions of Parenting**. Therefore there are no right or wrong answers.

Please give the immediate response that comes to mind (i.e. your "gut" feeling). If a question does not apply to you, (e.g. Nos. 13/14/15/16 because you have a single parent), please try to state the reason for leaving the question unanswered.

Your time, insight and co-operation is highly appreciated.

-
1. Are you female or male? _____
 2. How many people are in your family? _____
 - 2.1 Who are they? _____

 3. Please write 1 sentence to describe your family. _____

 4. Who is your **most** favourite adult person in the family? _____
 - 4.1 Why is this your favourite person? _____

 5. Who is your **least** favourite adult person in the family? _____
 - 5.1 Could you say why you feel this way? _____

6. Who, from your family, would you like to grow up to be like? _____

6.1 Why is this? _____

7. Who, from your family, would you not like to grow up like? _____

7.1 Why is this? _____

8. Who is mostly responsible for disciplining you at home? _____

9. What form does this discipline take? (circle what is applicable)

- 1 = Verbal punishment (shouting)
- 2 = Physical punishment (hiding)
- 3 = Grounding (please give examples)

4 = Other.... (please explain)

10. How do you feel about being disciplined in this manner? _____

11. How do you feel that parents/adults should handle situations in which disciplining should take place? _____

12. Compared to most teenagers, how many problems have you given your parents?
(circle the appropriate number)

- 1 = A lot
- 2 = Only a few
- 3 = None

13. How often do you feel encouraged and supported by your father?
(circle the appropriate number)

- 1 = Never
- 2 = Sometimes
- 3 = Always

14. How often do you feel encouraged and supported by your mother?
(circle the appropriate number)

- 1 = Never
- 2 = Sometimes
- 3 = Always

15. How happy are you with the way your mother communicates with you?
(circle the appropriate number)

- 1 = Very happy
- 2 = Neutral
- 3 = Very unhappy

15.1 Explain why you feel this way. _____

16. How happy are you with the way your father communicates with you?
(circle the appropriate number)

- 1 = Very happy
- 2 = Neutral
- 3 = Very unhappy

16.1 Explain why you feel this way. _____

17. On the scale below, where would you rank your overall experience of your parents?

(terrible) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10(wonderful)

18. Please explain your answer in No. 17. _____

19. Is there anything else regarding parenting that you wish to comment on?

20. How did answering this questionnaire make you feel?

21. Do you have any recommendations or suggestions for the next time similar research is being done?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION

Question 19

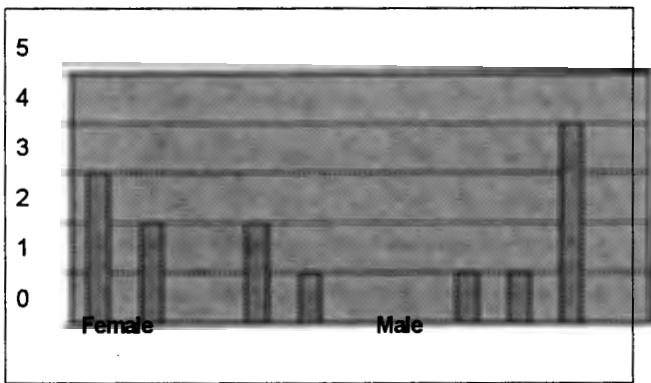
Other comments on parenting

Female
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Only a personal experience of being a parent can to some extent explain parenthood• Parents should allow us to learn from our own experiences• Parents should remember that they were once teenagers too• Parents should be more trusting in themselves for the upbringing of their children, as well as trusting in their children
Male
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some parents do not trust their children• Some parents do not give their children space• Trust and space will encourage maturity and independence• Parenting "must be a heck of a job"

Question 20

Feelings about answering the questionnaire

Fig. 20



Total Sample: 14
 Female 8
 Male 6

Female					Male				
Pos	Th	Unc	N	Na	Pos	Th	Unc	N	Na
3	2	0	2	1	0	1	1	4	0

Pos Positive
 Th Thought provoking
 Unc Uncomfortable
 N Neutral
 Na No answer given.

Question 21

Future recommendations

Female
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do something concerning one particular subject. "Parenting/ being teenagers" is a "broad spectrum"
Male
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A copy of the questionnaire should be given to parents. "See what they think."• Ask more questions• Don't phone

Appendix F

Flat 30 Rosehope
Main Road
Rosebank
7700
Tel: 689 2225 (H),
959 2617/02 (W)

2 November 1996

Dear young person

I'm sure that you're all eager to know why I've written to you. Well, quite simply I need your help and expertise in the area of being teenagers - more specifically, how you as teenagers perceive your parents. There has been so much written from the parents' perspective and as a guide for parents. Now, I feel that it is time for teenagers to speak out, in a healthy way, so that they might be taken more seriously and receive some of the guidance so necessary at this important stage of life.

The information you will provide would assist me in the completion of my thesis in psychology. Now don't worry - I'm not going to be asking you to donate brains, etc.! All I would really like is for you to answer a short questionnaire and possibly meet with me on another occasion when we could round things off and then celebrate this. (i.e. A PARTY!!)

I really must stress that all that information I receive from you will remain completely **CONFIDENTIAL**. I would like to acknowledge you as a group in my thesis, to thank you, but **NO NAMES** will be used. All things going well and God willing, this will be an invaluable experience for both you and I.

Should you have any questions to ask or ideas to share please feel free to contact me at the given telephone numbers.

Thank you so much for your patience and interest. I wish you well for the exams and when you've recovered, may you have a **Happy and Holy Christmas**. I look forward to our sharing of ideas.

God bless.

Narissa (Ms. N. Padayachy)