‘Parenting Styles, Abilities & Perceptions: The Impact of Parental Gender’

xxxxx

Bsc Health and Social Care

School of Health Sciences

Cardiff Metropolitan
Abstract

This research study investigates the impact of parental gender on parenting styles, abilities and perceptions, and aims to discover whether the link between them exists. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using a convenience sample of three heterosexual parent couples and two homosexual parent couples of children under ten. Participants were questioned on their parenting views, and how they would respond to particular given scenarios. The responses from both genders were compared to deduce an answer to the research question. The findings showed inconclusive results; a mixture of similar and differing styles and opinions in relation to parental gender were revealed. The results highlighted the existence of some traditional and stereotypical gender roles and views. However, it also showed that roles have swapped in some cases, and there are views, styles and behaviours from Mothers and Fathers that are contingent. Furthermore, the findings of this demonstrate that it is not parental gender alone that influences these, but that it goes along with other contributing factors.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary of Key Terms</td>
<td>2-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 1: Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Overview</td>
<td>6-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Rationale</td>
<td>7-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Hypothesis</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 2: Literature Review</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Introduction</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 General Relevant Literature</td>
<td>10-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Family Structure</td>
<td>16-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Employment &amp; Income</td>
<td>18-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Changing Roles</td>
<td>21-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 Culture</td>
<td>22-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 Conclusion</td>
<td>25-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 3: Design &amp; Methodology</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Introduction</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Sampling</td>
<td>27-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Data Collection Method</td>
<td>28-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Planning Data Collection</td>
<td>29-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Process of Data Collection</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Data Analysis</td>
<td>32-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 Validity &amp; Reliability</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 4: Ethics</strong></td>
<td>34-36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 5: Results</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Introduction</td>
<td>37-38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Quantitative Results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1 Participant Details</td>
<td>38-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2 Gender</td>
<td>39-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3 Age</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.4 Ethnicity</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.5 Level of Education</td>
<td>41-42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.6 Employment Status</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.7 Partner’s Parenting Styles &amp; Views</td>
<td>42-43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.8 Does Men and Women’s Parenting Differ?</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3 Themes from Qualitative Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.3.1</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>44</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.3.2</td>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>44-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.3</td>
<td>Basic need and wellbeing</td>
<td>45-46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.4</td>
<td>Boundaries</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.5</td>
<td>Child’s Gender</td>
<td>46-47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.6</td>
<td>Differing parental style and views</td>
<td>47-48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.7</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.8</td>
<td>Failure</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.9</td>
<td>Fun/Play</td>
<td>49-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.10</td>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.11</td>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>50-51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.12</td>
<td>Love</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.13</td>
<td>Negative Religious Views</td>
<td>51-52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.14</td>
<td>Non-biological children</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.15</td>
<td>Prioritising child care</td>
<td>52-53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.16</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.17</td>
<td>Similar parenting styles and views</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.18</td>
<td>Socialising</td>
<td>54-55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.19</td>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.20</td>
<td>Strictness</td>
<td>55-56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.21</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>56-57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.22</td>
<td>Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.23</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.24</td>
<td>Treatment of others</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 6: Discussion of Results | 59-65 |

Chapter 7: Conclusions | 66-67 |

Chapter 8: Recommendations | 68-69 |

Bibliography | 70-75 |

Appendices
- Appendix A – Ethics approval letter | 76-77 |
- Appendix B – Participant advertisement poster | 78 |
- Appendix C – Interview guide questions | 79-80 |
- Appendix D – Participant consent form | 81 |
- Appendix E – Participant information sheet | 82-83 |
- Appendix F – Ethical principles table | 84 |
- Appendix G – Critical appraisal framework | 85-86 |
- Appendix H – Stages of thematic analysis | 87 |
- Appendix I – Gender brief charts | 88 |
## List of Tables & Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table/Figure</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 1:</strong></td>
<td>Participant Details</td>
<td>p. 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Figure 1:</strong></td>
<td>The Gender of Participants</td>
<td>p. 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Figure 2:</strong></td>
<td>The Age of Participants</td>
<td>p. 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Figure 3:</strong></td>
<td>The Ethnicity of Participants</td>
<td>p. 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Figure 4:</strong></td>
<td>Participant’s Highest Level of Education</td>
<td>p. 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Figure 5:</strong></td>
<td>Participant’s Employment Status</td>
<td>p. 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Figure 6:</strong></td>
<td>Whether Participant’s Believed their Partner’s Views Differ from their Own</td>
<td>p. 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Figure 7:</strong></td>
<td>Whether Participant’s Believed Men &amp; Women have Different Parenting Styles, Views and Behaviours</td>
<td>p. 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Glossary</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anonymity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ensuring non-identification of research subjects or organisations, so that they cannot be linked with the data being collected.  
(Moule & Hek, 2011, p.166) |
| **Bias** |
An unintentional influence or effect which may occur at any stage of the research process and which distorts the findings, e.g. sample bias, interview bias.  
(Moule & Hek, 2011, p.166) |
| **Confidentiality** |
The processing, summarising and interpretation of raw data into meaningful information.  
(Moule & Hek, 2011, p.167) |
| **Data** |
Data is composed of the raw unprocessed details and facts pertaining to the issue or problem being explored.  
(Crowther & Lancaster, 2008, p. 87) |
| **Data Analysis** |
The processing, summarising and interpretation of raw data into meaningful information.  
(Moule & Hek, 2011, p.167) |
| **Data Collection** |
A systematic process of gathering information to be studied. This process should be checkable and verifiable.  
(Holosko & Thyer, 2011, p. 28) |
| **Deception** |
The act of convincing another to believe information that is not true, or not the whole truth.  
(Holosko & Thyer, 2011, p. 29) |
| **Ethics** |
The branch of philosophy which addresses questions about morality.  
(Wiles, 2013, p. 4) |
| **Gender** |
This is often thought of as a synonym for ‘sex’, referring simply to a division of people into two biological categories based on their apparent reproductive organs.  
(Bolich, 2007, p. 8) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Generalisability</strong></th>
<th>This extent to which the patterns and results observed in a research project can be applied to other situations outside of the specific research study.</th>
<th>(Crowther &amp; Lancaster, 2008, p. 87)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heterosexual</strong></td>
<td>A person who is sexually attracted to people of the opposite.</td>
<td>(Cambridge University Press, 2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Homosexual</strong></td>
<td>A person who is sexually attracted to people of the same sex and not people of the opposite sex.</td>
<td>(Cambridge University Press, 2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis</strong></td>
<td>A measurable statement which sets out the expected relationship between two or more variables.</td>
<td>(Moule &amp; Hek, 2011, p. 168)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Informed Consent</strong></td>
<td>Providing participants with clear information about what participating in a research project will involve and giving them the opportunity to decide whether or not they want to participate.</td>
<td>(Wiles, 2013, p. 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literature Review</strong></td>
<td>A section of report, or a whole report where previous research or literature on a specific subject has been evaluated or appraised.</td>
<td>(Moule &amp; Hek, 2011, p. 168)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literature Search</strong></td>
<td>A process by which a person looks for literature on a specific subject or topic.</td>
<td>(Moule &amp; Hek, 2011, p. 47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mental Capacity</strong></td>
<td>The ability to make a decision.</td>
<td>(Brindle et al., 2013, p. 25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent</strong></td>
<td>A mother or father of a person.</td>
<td>(Cambridge University Press, 2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pilot Study</strong></td>
<td>A small preliminary study that allows the research to test the research methodology, e.g. data collection techniques.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Research</td>
<td>Data that is collected for the first time for the purpose of a particular study at hand.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudonym</td>
<td>A name someone uses instead of their real name.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Data</td>
<td>Non-numberical data, such as words or text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Data</td>
<td>Numerical data.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Quality of measurement that suggests that the same data would have been collected each time in repeated observations of the same phenomenon.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to Withdraw</td>
<td>The right of participants to refuse to enter a study has been fully discussed. The right to withdraw consent after having entered is of equal importance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>The possibility of something bad happening.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>A portion or part of a population, from which data can be collected.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampling</td>
<td>The techniques used to select a portion or part of a population.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary Research</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies conducted using information that was initially collected and possibly processed by people other than the researcher conducting the study.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Crowther &amp; Lancaster, 2008, p. 112)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Target Population</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The entire membership of the group in which the researcher is interested and from which data can be collected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Moule &amp; Hek, 2011, p. 172)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Validity</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The extent to which a data collection or measurement technique measure what is supposed to measure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Crowther &amp; Lancaster, 2008, p. 87)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

This dissertation is being completed in order to obtain a Bachelor of Science (Honours) degree in Health and Social Care.

The main aim of this dissertation is to investigate whether or not the gender of a parent can impact their parenting views, styles and abilities. Comparing the responses by several couples should aid in this investigation, by determining whether they agree or disagree on how particular situations involving their children should be dealt with, as well as their opinions on which parenting styles are most effective or appropriate.

This project will begin with a literature review, which is secondary research of previous literature on the topic and other relevant contributing areas. The sources for this review will be research and journal articles. By examining this information from research findings pre-existing to this dissertation, it is possible to establish what is already known of the subject, and what the results from previous research show. From this, gaps in research can be identified, justifications for the need of new primary research can be drawn out, and any adaptations can be made to the plan of the current study, if felt necessary. The information collected from this literature search will be organised and presented using common themes.

The dissertation will delve into the design and methodology of the proposed primary research. This involves defining the chosen methods for sampling, data collection and data analysis, as well as exploring strengths and limitations of these. The primary research for this dissertation intends to investigate the parenting views, styles and abilities of couples that have children aged ten or under. The responses of Mums and Dads will be compared in order to determine whether men and women generally differ in
their parenting views, styles and abilities, and therefore whether gender has an influence on these aspects.

The ethics of the research will then be discussed, including the process of ethical approval application, and preventative measures that will be put in place to reduce the risk of ethical issues developing. Following this will be the exploration of the findings from the primary research. This will entail presenting the results, accompanied by an explanation of what these findings show and may suggest, in addition to what that might mean for the research question.

Afterwards will be a final conclusion of the dissertation, which will deduce the main findings, and draw everything together in an attempt to answer the research question.

To bring the assignment to a close, a recommendation section will be written to propose future research, and any other actions that may be suggested as a consequence of the study.

1.2 Rationale

Children, being vulnerable members of society who require a guardian to provide them with care and support, are an important part of Health and Social Care. There were a predicted estimate of 360,000 children aged 0-10 in Wales in 2015, which is expected to have risen since, and continues to do so (Statistics for Wales, 2008, p.1, Chart 1). However, not all of these children will have parents or legal guardians. Stats Wales (2016) found that there are a total of 5,600 children looked after by local authorities within Wales. By basic calculation the population of children, excluding those in care, should be over 354,000. These children will have at least one parent, of which the results of this research can be applied.
Furthermore, despite appearing to be similar research existing prior to this study, parenting is an area which changes and evolves regularly in western society. Long (2004, p.121) declared that “In recent decades, we have witnessed a significant increase of the interest of parenting”. This rise in curiosity of the parenting world suggest that changes are occurring and bringing in attention. Thus one could argue that regular up-to-date research is both necessary and useful.

It is hoped that the results of this dissertation will provide parents with insight into whether or not parenting views, styles and abilities can, and do, vary depending of a parent’s gender, and raise the questions ‘is this a good thing?’; ‘do things need to be changed?’, and ‘what can be done?’, among many other questions.

1.3 Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study is that there will be a common correlation between a parent's gender and particular parental views, styles and abilities. Moreover, a specific prediction is that fathers will be stricter with, and have more rules for, daughters than with sons, and that fathers with female partners will be heavily influenced by them in terms of their parenting styles and abilities.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

To carry out primary research, a literature review is often required in order to fully gain an understanding of the research topic, in addition to detecting any gaps in research that should be considered during the present study.

In this chapter, the literature review will be completed, using a thematic framework to link similar sources together. Webster and Watson (2002, p. xvi) support the method of thematic structuring by declaring “A literature review is concept-centric. Thus, concepts determine the organizing framework of a review”. The themes have been chosen based on commonly mentioned topics and influential factors from the research literature found. A proportion of the articles portrayed more than one theme. Once the articles have been described and explained in one theme category, they will only be referred to again in later themes to avoid unnecessary repetition. The themes identified from the literature search are ‘family structure’, ‘culture’, ‘child’s gender’, ‘employment and income’, and ‘changing roles’.

All sources before the year 2000 have been excluded for the purpose of this review, due to being classed as ‘out-dated’, and because of the quick-paced changing of parenting views and information. This is backed up by Holden (2010 ,p.4) who reported that “…perceptions of children and how to raise them differ over time…”.

The majority of the sources gathered for this literature review will be research, however several books will also be examined. For the critical analysis and evaluation of the research papers or articles, Moule and Hek’s (2011, p. 160-161) Critical Appraisal Framework (See Appendix G) will be used as a guide to evaluate.
2.2 General Relevant Literature

This first section consists of the relevant literature that does not fit into a particular theme.

“Fathers and Mothers differ, just as males and females differ” (Popenoe, 2009, p. 10). This suggests that the literature will demonstrate that there is a difference between Fathers and Mothers in the way they perceive and behave in relation to parenting.

Moreira and Canavarro (2015) conducted a study in Portugal to investigate the differences between Mothers and Fathers in attachment and caregiving representations, as well as mindful parenting. Kabat-Zinn (2003, p.145) described this method of parenting as “the awareness that emerges through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment". According to the researchers, this was the first study to examine mindful parenting differs between Mothers and Fathers.

The study involved several methods in order to collect the data that they required, including an Experiences in Close Relationships-Relationships Structures Questionnaire, a Mental Health Representation of Caregiving Scale Questionnaire, and an Interpersonal Mindfulness in Parenting Scale. The data collection method that they used was Preliminary analysis.

The participants who took part were 439 parents, 67% of which were Mothers. The sample was either randomly selected from 2 schools, or was from people of the general community that had been recruited through the researcher’s associates. The limitation of using people you know of is that sampling bias can occur. They may have chosen them because they believe they will get the results they want.
Family structure, employment and education of the participants were also noted; 89% were married or cohabiting with their partners, 82% were in paid employment, and 70.4% had basic or secondary qualifications.

For ethics, they explained that consent forms and information sheets were distributed to participants, and written informed consent was collected from the parents. No mention of an ethical committee or potential ethical issues was given. It appears that the participants were not vulnerable, so ethical issues are less likely to be a problem.

The researchers found that Fathers had higher levels of avoidance, and higher egoistic motivations to providing help in parenting. Whereas Mothers had higher levels of mindful parenting, and reported higher perceived ability to provide effective help and recognising other’s needs.

The majority of the limitations of this research were concerning the sample. One influencing factor they did highlight was age; the Mothers were significantly younger than the Fathers who participated. This raises the question of whether age could have impacted the results. Neiss’ et al. (2009, p. 7-9) study would imply that age does in fact impact views and responses. They found that hormone levels change with age and as a result older individuals act less emotionally in situations, as well as processing any emotion they do feel differently to younger individuals. This may explain the results.

Likewise, as 67% of the participants were female, it can be argued that gender bias is an issue. The lower number of the males in the study could mean that the results are not completely representative of the whole parenting population, but more towards Mothers instead. This could also mean the comparison between Mothers and Fathers in the study created unreliable and invalid data. Utting (2007, p.13) confirmed that an outstanding gap is “…a lack
of gender differentiation; the vast majority of participants in parenting studies have been mothers”.

In addition, 89.3% of participants were married or cohabiting. Considering there were 2 million single parents in the UK in 2015 (Office for National Statistics, 2015, p. 4) it would make sense to include more single parents within a study based on parenting. However, as females took up 90% of the single parents (Office for National Statistics, 2015, p. 7), it can be debated that the higher percentage of females in the study represents the single parents also.

A potential research problem is geographical location. Due to the sample only containing participants who live in Portugal, then the researchers applying the results to the whole parenting population without any consideration of other cultures or ethnicities, they could be accused of ethnocentrism. The Oxford English Dictionary defined ethnocentrism as “regarding one’s own race or ethnic group as of supreme importance” (1989, p. 424).

Another issue with the sample is that only biological parents were included in the study. This excludes adoptive parents from participating, and may mean that same-sex parents were not included either. Again this affects the representation, and in turn impacts the validity and reliability of the results.

Despite all of the limitations, there are some strengths. Firstly, the rationale and hypothesis were strong. Secondly, the literature review presents a good range of sources.

The findings support the notion that gender does in fact have an influence in parenting styles and opinions, especially when it comes to mindful parenting styles.
Another study that found differences in the parenting styles of Mothers and Fathers was by Rinaldi and Howe (2011), who investigated how parents report their own, and their partners, parenting styles. It gave particular focus to how these parenting styles contributed to the internalising, externalising, and adaptive behaviours of their toddlers.

The families volunteered to participate by contacting the researchers directly. The participants were 59 families (59 Mothers and 59 Fathers), 86.4% of which were white, and 100% of which were cohabiting or married to their partners. Moreover, 68.9% of participants had a total household income of $70,000 or more. Also, 51.1% of Mothers had college/university training, whereas only 22.2% of Fathers did.

Like the previous research study, a couple of types of questionnaires were used as the method of data collection. To start with, a Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire was distributed to assess 3 main styles of parenting, using a 5 point Likert scale. Then the Behaviour Assessment Scale for Children 2 was used to measure adaptive and problem child behaviours. The data produced from these were analysed using descriptive statistics.

For ethics, parents received an information letter explaining the research, as well as a consent form to sign. In addition, privacy and confidentiality was respected by transporting the completed questionnaires in sealed envelopes.

The results found higher permissive parenting from Mothers and higher authoritarian parenting from Fathers. Although this suggests that Mothers and Fathers differ in parenting views and styles, parallel to the study mentioned before, the study does however state that overall there was a congruency between maternal and paternal parenting styles. This means that despite the differences, they work well together and are compatible. This contrasts to the previous research in this review by Moreira and Canavarro (2015) as the
differences are discussed to be positive, rather than regarding the differences as a negative factor parenting.

The researchers justified the research by saying that the study offers new information on parents’ views of their own parenting, as well as their partners.

A strength of this study is the use of up-to-date sources within the literature review; most of the sources were created in the 21st century. Campbell et al. (2017) gave using up-to-date sources as an important tip to consider when carrying out a literature search and review.

Once again, the limitations of the study are mostly related to the sample. Firstly, only married and cohabiting couples were included, which again excludes lone parent families. Furthermore, the participants were homogeneous; they were primarily white, of middle social class, and well educated. Mitchell and Jolley (2013, p.135) aforesaid “…choosing homogeneous participants will decrease the extent to which the results can be generalised…”.

There is one strength of the sample that can be noted though. There were an equal amount of men and women participating in the study, resulting in a true representative sample of the parenting population.

A further piece of literature comes from Stephens (2009) who explored how gender differences in parenting styles might impact the parent and child relationship.

The sample consisted of 180 Texas State University undergraduate students. Once more, there were more females in the study than males; 95 males and 207 females. All participants grew up living with both parents.
The data collection began with a basic demographic survey, which was followed by a Parental Bonding Inventory. This entailed 50 questions using a Likert scale. The data was analysed using chi-squares, t-tests, and correlations.

The paper states that participants were informed of the study’s purpose, their right to withdraw, and were instructed not to write their names anywhere on the paper to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

What is more, the paper explains “there were consent forms that were available for participants to sign”. This implies that although they were available, they were not compulsory for participating.

Stephens asserted that participants took part for extra credit for a psychology class, which one may argue is coercion. Participants may have given responses that they think the researchers want because they have been persuaded to participate to receive the extra credit.

Annas and Gordin (1992, p. 191) detailed the main principles of The Nuremberg Code. The Nuremberg Code paper was established as a result of the human experiments carried out by Nazis in World War Two. It sets out what is and what is not acceptable when carrying out research involving human participants. With regards to coercion, it stresses that researchers should minimise the risk of it. Additionally, they explained that the presence of coercion or incentive to participate can make it difficult to give full, genuine consent and exercise their right to withdraw.

A further issue of this study is that the participants being students, not parents themselves, and brings into question whether they were the right sample for this research. Although they were reflecting on their own childhood experiences and relationships with their parents, this is retrospective information which can be unreliable as it relies solely on memory recall.
Loftus and Palmer (1974) confirmed this with their experiment of memory recall. They found that memory can be easily distorted, consequently making the memories of the participant’s childhood experiences with their parents not completely accurate.

The findings mostly exhibited support towards stereotypical roles of parenting. For example, Fathers appeared to be considerably more overprotective of their Daughters than their Sons compared to Mothers.

The results also illustrated gender expectations of childcare being the responsibility of Mothers. Almost half of the participants felt closer to their Mothers growing up, and 66.7% claimed their Mothers spent more time taking care of them.

Yet, the research paper later contradicts itself by concluding similar styles between Mothers and Fathers in terms of caring and overprotection. This insinuates that the researchers were biased and attempted to frame the paper a certain way that would benefit them. This would also suggest that it is not a reliable piece of research.

### 2.3 Family Structure

The literature within this section propose that family structures play a role in the apparent link between parental gender and their perceptions, styles, and behaviours.

First of all comes from Demuth and Brown (2004). They aimed to discover whether family structure impacts the likelihood of adolescent delinquency, with a comparison between the genders of the parents.

The sample comprised of 16,304 adolescents from various types of families in the USA; 9, 505 with two biological parents, 3,792 with single Mothers, 525
with single Fathers, 2,039 with a Mother & Stepfather, and 443 with a Father & Stepmother.
These participants were selected using a ‘multi-stage, stratified, school-based cluster sampling procedure’ for surveys.

The dependent variable that was measured was delinquency, which was done using an additive scale of ten items, and the independent variable of family structure was measured by five dummy categories (the family types).
For direct controls, they tapped direct parental controls using a three-item supervision index, followed by a four-item parent involvement index.
Similarly, for indirect controls they tapped parental controls using a four-item scale of parent closeness.
Data analysis involved weighing all analyses using the survey estimation procedure found in STATA software.

The findings displayed higher reported levels of delinquency from single Father Families, perhaps because they might be more permissive than Mothers. Single Father Families are the only ones out of all the family types who have no influence from a Mother. This suggests that Mothers and Fathers have differing parenting styles and behaviours. It also implies that despite this, Fathers who have a female partner in the family are heavily influenced by their styles and behaviour. To back this further, the results showed that the family type with the least reported levels of delinquency were those living with two biological parents, who is Mothers would have greater involvement in childcare decisions than Stepmothers, and therefore would influence the Fathers more.

An advantage of this study is the large, national sample of various family types. Breakwell et al. (2006, p. 119) endorses the desirability of a large sample by saying that “Generalisations about the population are likely to be more convincing to others when there is a well-drawn large sample”.

17
Conversely, the study highlights that they used a variety of family types but it does not incorporate same-sex parents. This would be especially important when comparing the impact of parental gender because the influence of two parents with the same gender may produce varying results to those of opposite genders.

What is more, ethics of any sorts were not conversed in this research paper.

A replication of this study would generate beneficial data, as long as adaptations were to be made to the weakness areas of this study.

In opposition to the former study in this section, which disregards same-sex parents, there is a study by Biblarz and Stacey (2010).

They led a desktop study which accumulated two types of sources; those which compare same-sex parent families to opposite-sex parent families, and those which compare single Mother families to single Father families. They aimed to do this in order to determine whether or not growing up with both a Mother and a Father matters. Their sources were obtained through assorted database searches.

They discovered that benefits usually linked to married heterosexual families also seem to be present within female same-sex families, and possibly in male same-sex families. Moreover, they concluded that parental gender correlates with parent-child relationships in an interesting way.

From this, one could infer that maybe family structure is not as significant as parental gender after all.

**2.4 Employment & Income**

There are many studies on parental gender and employment. For the sake of this review, two have been selected.
To begin with, Fuegen et al. (2004) investigated how gender and parental status affects employment decisions.

The sample was made up of 196 undergraduate students from two universities. There were 58 females and 49 males from the Midwestern University, which was 90% white. Plus there were 66 females and 21 males from the Eastern University, which was 72.4% white. Participants were allocated to either one of four experimental conditions or a control condition. All experimental groups received a job description and resume, and were asked to evaluate the applicant. However, 50% of them had resumes with a female name and the other 50% had male names. Likewise, 50% received resumes of a single individual with no children, and the other 50% an individual who was married with two children. The control group, on the other hand, were simply given a job description and were told to make a judgement based on what the ideal applicant would be. The data was analysed using Preliminary analysis.

In relation to ethics, deception is possible but participants were debriefed about the true purpose of the study at the end of data collection. Other than that, ethics was not mentioned. Where deception is probable, is fully informed consent possible?

Findings showed a mixture between locations of perceptions of the parent or non-parent as higher status for the job. Yet, overall both the male and female parent applicants were viewed as less committed to the job role. Mothers especially were disadvantaged compared to Fathers in getting the job. This suggests that perhaps gender stereotypes for parents still exist. For example the male as the breadwinner.
It can be assumed that employment impacts parental views, which may explain why Fathers are often reported to have different parenting styles and behaviours, as they are more likely to be in employment.

Once more, the sample raises the most weaknesses with this study. More females participated than males, suggesting that Gender Bias or Gynocentrism is a risk.
In addition, students were asked of their opinion on employment. Surely it would make more sense to use managers of businesses? The students would have been unlikely to have had experience in the area.

Another study, by Cinamon and Rich (2002), explored the gender differences in parental roles, and the implications these can have on work-family conflicts.

The sample was based on 123 participants. 178 were from the computer work sector (21 males & 73 females) and 35 were lawyers (21 males & 14 females). 79.3% of participants were parents.

Human Resources Managers ordered secretaries to distribute two questionnaires to the participants. The questionnaires assessed and measured participant’s designations of importance to work and family roles. The Multivariate analysis of variance was used once the data was collected.

Like many of the other studies, the questionnaires were sent back by sealed envelope. The true purpose of the study was printed on the first page of the booklets given to participants.

They found that men spent more time in work and women spent more time on childcare. Nevertheless, one-third of men and women both allocated high importance to family roles, indicating a change in traditional gender role attitudes within the family.
A strong point of this paper is the literature review as it is not one sided or biased like many. As well as this, there was a large sample with two different occupations, which increases the generalisability of results.

2.5 Changing Roles

One re-occurring theme, even within literature used in the other theme sections, is the changing roles of Mothers and Fathers.

According to Park et al. (2013), “attitudes towards men and women have changed considerably”. OECD (2010, p.8-11) backs this idea up with their survey findings. The study’s outcome showed that women’s employment has increased massively since 1970 in the majority of the countries listed (See appendix I). They also found that ‘dual-earner ship’ families were the most common family type in 2007 and had become the norm (see appendix I). These statistics suggest that the traditional roles of Mothers being the child carers have changed.

An actual full piece of literature for this theme comes from Trifan et al. (2014), who inspected the change in authoritarian parenting practices and family roles over the last fifty years.

The first two cohorts of this study were obtained through a prenatal clinic. They asked every 4th pregnant woman that visited the clinic to participate.

The first cohort, used in 1958, consisted of 212 children, 202 mothers and 183 fathers. 93.2% were born in Sweden, and almost all of the men were employed but only 19.3% of women were.

This was a longitudinal study, whereby parents answered questionnaires about their own upbringing at the clinic.
The second cohort was made up of the same children in 1981, when they had turned 25 years old. All but five of the original children chose to participate, 121 being males and 86 being females. 25.4% had their own children now and 80% worked full-time. They were asked to complete the same questionnaire that their parents had previously answered.

The third cohort, in 2011, was identified by Statistics Sweden, and they were sent questionnaires if they were parents and born in Sweden or other Nordic countries. These participants were sent questionnaires.

The researcher discovered a 93% decrease over the fifty years in the likelihood of being slapped in childhood, as well as a decrease in Fathers being stricter.

Overall, the findings from all three cohorts revealed that parents’ roles have changed from the stereotypical ones of Fathers as decision-makers and Mothers as caregivers to shared roles. Despite a smaller gap in differing roles, Mothers remained to be viewed as the most supportive parent, suggesting that despite all the changes over time parental gender still impacts their views, styles and behaviours.

2.6 Culture

All the main pieces of literature in this whole review were studies carried out in Western countries. This would make the results inapplicable to other places in the world if culture impacts parental behaviours and perceptions.

Lavi and Slone (2012) researched into the roles of parental warmth and authority-control in Jewish Israeli and Arab Israeli Children.
The sample was comprised of 193 children and their parents. 88 of these were Jewish Israeli families, and 105 of these were Arab Israeli families.

The children were sent home with letters to give to their parents, who were then contacted by telephone and asked to participate. The chosen data collection of questionnaires were administered at their homes. After the responses were gathered, the data was analysed using Multivariate Analysis of Covariance.

The results showed that Arab parents reported superior levels of authoritarian and permissive authority-control. Furthermore, they determined that the findings represent a transformation in traditional gender roles of Mothers and Fathers. It appears that Mothers and Fathers do in fact deal with childcare instances differently but not in the traditionally expected way.

The literature review in this research paper is strong. The sources are relevant to the context of the study because they discussed political violence of Israel. Moreover, they included the two main population groups which makes the results representative of the cultures in Israel.

One particular strength is that the ethics were thought through and measures were put in place to prevent ethical issues. Firstly, they received approval from their university ethics committee, as well as the Ministry of Education. Next, the researchers acquired written informed consent from the parents. Lastly, they affirmed that the anonymity and confidentiality of participants was assured.

A study by Zervides and Knowles (2007) runs along the same lines. They investigated changes in parenting styles between generations, and the influence of culture.
The sample consisted of 65 participants with at least 1 child, and who lived in middle class, suburban areas. Also, the participants were of similar age and education levels.

The participants were in two groups. 34 were Anglo-Australians (23 females & 11 males) and 31 were Greek-Australians (18 females & 13 males).

The data collection methods were two questionnaires. One was a demographic questionnaire, and the second was The Parental Authority Questionnaire to measure perceptions of parenting styles of participants’ parents. These were given to participants using the snowball technique. The data analysis method was the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Version 13.

The ethics section of the paper was thorough. They explicated that the responses were posted in sealed envelopes, and remained anonymous. Furthermore, completion of the questionnaires was taken as consent, and participants were assured of their right to withdraw.

The result exhibited that in both groups Mothers were more authoritative and Fathers were more authoritarian. This means that Fathers are stricter and have more rules but Mothers are more supportive to help the children meet expectations. Nonetheless, they reported little difference between genders in permissive parenting. This suggests that generally Mothers and Fathers do differ in parenting styles and views, but share some also.

Both of the studies within this theme did not identify any limitations of the study in the paper, which is a limitation in itself. Researchers are expected to pinpoint limitations and address them in the write up of a study because they can impact the data, as well as highlight changes that may be needed in future replication of the research.
Cronin et al. (2015, p.178) endorses this by commenting that “…while all research studies have some limitations, it is important…what those limitations are and how they impact on the findings”.

Although both of these studies are based in Western countries as well, they do demonstrate that the impact of parental gender is also influenced by culture.

It has been established that it can vary in any country, not just outside of western society.

Wales is where the current study of this dissertation is situated. As Wales has now had the Welsh Assembly in the past few decades which holds more power exclusive to the country it may be useful to conduct its own research that is centred to the nation and its’ culture.

2.7 Conclusion

To summarise, it seems that generally the studies related to parental gender impacting parenting styles, behaviours and perceptions, conclude that there is in fact a variance between Mother and Fathers. Also, the literature highlighted a number of contributing factors such as income, location, employment, education, age, culture and family structure, among many others.

This literature review has resulted in several adaptations to the original plan for primary research as part of this dissertation.

To begin with, unequal gender representatives seem to be common in the samples. It is important for studies comparing gender for there to be an equal amount of participants from both sexes. Thus, in the research for this dissertation, an equal amount of female and male participants will be ensured.

In order to accomplish the comparison of parental gender, not only heterosexual couples will participate in this research. Homosexual male and
female couples will be welcomed to participate because families with parents of the same gender may give insight into the effects of parental gender. Additionally, from the literature review it can be gathered that family structure has a role, so as many parent types as possible should be included. That being said, single parents will not be involved because couples make it easier to make the comparison as they are from the same household and environment. Single parent families do not have a partner to compare to.

Although the focus will be on parenting styles, behaviours and perceptions, due to this review the participant’s ethnicity, employment and education will be asked about. This will produce an idea of what type of sample is being used. However, income will not be spoken about out of respect for privacy.

As mentioned in the culture section of this chapter, there is a lack of parental gender research in Wales. Since one’s culture might affect the results, it would be useful to conduct new research instead of generalising results of previous studies from elsewhere. Therefore, the current study will be carried out in Wales. Also, it has been established that parenting is changing constantly so new research is justified.

It is vital to keep in mind throughout that parenting is a delicate topic area. Participants may have been influenced by social desirability, and create defensive strategies to avoid judgement from others. Hence the questions should be approached carefully.
Chapter 3: Design & Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the chosen design and methodology for the primary research of this dissertation. It will define the methods, and identify any strengths and weaknesses of these. As well as this, there will be a brief look into the planning of the data collection, the final process of data collection, and any instruments required to carry it out. To complete the chapter, validity and reliability will be contemplated.

3.2 Sampling

The sample will be made up of participants from the target population, which in this case is parents with children under the age of ten, who are living in Wales.

The justification for the age category of participants’ children is that often a child is considered aged ten or under. The Association for Young People’s Health (2015, p.1) reported that “Adolescence is usually defined as 10-19 years”, so it can be assumed that those before this age range are classed as children.

Perhaps this is due to puberty and behaviour changes. The Royal College of Psychiatrists (2017) states that girls can begin periods from the age of eleven, and boys can begin puberty from the age of thirteen. This may affect their behaviour, and therefore how parents would deal with them. Hence, parents of children under the age of ten felt an appropriate route to go with.

The number of participants is hoped to be ten; five couples. However this may not be the case depending on the response rate. It is also anticipated that a female same-sex couple and a male same-sex couple will participate so that it will give further insight into the possible impact of gender on parenting views, styles and abilities.
The sampling method chosen to obtain participants is convenience sampling. Moule and Hek (2011, p. 95) commented that this type of sampling is usually chosen because it is easier as participants are accessible. Participants will either be contacted due to being known to the researcher as people who fit the criteria, or they will apply to participate through seeing an advertisement on social media (see appendix B). Those who are deemed appropriate to participate and are available to do so at the time of research, will be chosen to take part.

3.3 Data collection Method

After deliberating many data collection methods for this research, interviews were ultimately chosen as the most appropriate for this dissertation topic. Moule and Hek (2011, p.115) described interviews as “A data collection technique, usually face-to-face, whereby the researcher asks the participants a number of questions”.

Due to the topic of parenting being so broad, the type of interview selected is semi-structured. This means that there will be a list of questions for guidance, but the interviewer has the ability to ask other questions if felt necessary. Olsen (2011, p. 36) explicates that semi-structured interviews are beneficial because they allow the interviewer to ask new questions related to concepts raised by the participants.

Like all data collection methods, there are strengths and weaknesses to using interviews in research. Although interviews can be more time consuming and can cause participants to be less honest in order to avoid judgement, they can produce more in-depth data, allow the researcher to further explain questions if needed, and have higher response rates compared to the alternative methods that were considered for this research such as questionnaires (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003, p. 308).
Mcneill and Chapman (2005, p. 59-60) maintain that the biggest issue for all types of interviews is interviewer effect, also known as interview bias. This can occur when aspects of the interview are misinterpreted, which can influence the participant’s responses.

Due to the interviews for this research being face-to-face, there is a risk of this issue arising. For example, the interviewer may unintentionally give off an intimidating impression through body language. This could make the participant uneasy and cause them to give less detailed responses, or even lie to avoid judgement or embarrassment.

There are measures that can be implemented to prevent this. Grinnell and Unrau (2008, p. 262) advised that asking the questions consistently, and recording the interviews for referring to later, can aid in reducing the likelihood of interview bias.

3.4 Planning of Data Collection

Before the actual interviews take place, quite a large amount of time was put into planning the questions. The draft questions were created based on the outcome of the literature review, as well as the original question and aims of the dissertation.

The questions were elected because they either gave important indications for the comparison, such as the participant’s gender, or they were questions that will give information on the participant’s parenting views, styles and abilities.

After the draft questions were decided on, a pilot study was conducted. Blaxter et al. (2010, p. 138) described piloting as when researchers “...try out research techniques and methods...” They added that often when this is done to test the effectiveness, amendments are made.

The pilot study for this research was on an extremely small scale; 2 couples were asked to participate who are known to the researcher and fit the criteria.
This was done to test if all the questions asked were appropriate for the final interviews, and to ensure that the questions will extract the information needed in attempt to answer the research question. It may also detect any errors that would need to be adapted before the actual research takes place. The participants of the pilot study were not included in the final research so that the actual participants did not know the questions beforehand.

The questions were mostly open-ended, so they would generate qualitative data. Some view qualitative research as advantageous because it involves “…people in their own territories and interacting with them in their own language or terms” (Taylor, 2005, p. 102). This suggests that qualitative methods create atmospheres where participants are more likely to be comfortable and able to give open, honest answers to the questions.

Holloway (2005, p. 52) on the other hand, remarks that qualitative methods are time consuming, especially in relation to transcription and analysis of the data attained from these methods. Despite this, it can be argued that these disadvantages are worth the expense to achieve in-depth and realistic responses as opposed to the limited questions options they are usually given to respond within quantitative methods.

Nevertheless, several of the questions in the interviews will be closed and therefore produce quantitative data. This is because there are only a certain amount of answers that can be given, and it is more fitting to analyse the data by constructing charts to present the responses.

The interview questions (see appendix C) were narrowed down massively from the original draft list, and had been reworded ever so slightly. This was done as a result of feedback from the pilot study participants.
3.5 Process of Data Collection

The procedure of data collection will begin by obtaining the participants. As mentioned previously, some participants have been contacted directly and asked to participate, whereas others will have seen the advertisement on social media and apply to participate.

After arranging the interviews, the research will commence. The participants will first be asked to read the information sheets, which will inform them on the details of the research so that they are fully aware of what the research involves, if they wish to continue. If so, they will then be asked to sign two consent forms; one for them to keep, and one for the researcher to file.

Once all the documentation has been taken care of, the main part of the research will begin. The main instrument that will be used is a Dictaphone, to record the interviews. This enables the researcher to listen back to them at a later date, and transcribe. This method was decided to be more appropriate than transcribing during the interview because it reduces the chance of mishearing or forgetting anything that is spoken by the participants.

The questions will be read out one at a time, giving the participants plenty of time to think, respond to the questions, and elaborate if required. As stated earlier in this chapter, the interviews are semi-structured. So although the participants will be asked the guide questions, each interview may vary in time and structure because spontaneous, but relevant, questions could be asked.

After each interview is completed, the participants will be given the opportunity to ask any questions they might have. Following this, the participants will be reminded to take home their copy of the consent forms, as well as the information sheets, which contains the researcher email details in case they need or wish to make contact in the future.
3.6 Data Analysis

After the data is collected from the interviews, data analysis must be carried out, so that the findings of the research will be presented and discussed accordingly.

The qualitative data will be analysed using thematic analysis. This concerns “...identifying themes in the responses, and analysing using interpretive techniques to discover what they might mean” (Gabrium, 2012, p. 197).
This technique is suitable for the topic the answers are based on opinion, and therefore the research question is difficult to give a definite answer without interpretation.

To use thematic analysis, King and Horrocks’ (2010, p. 153, figure 9.1) diagram, demonstrating the stages in the process of thematic analysis, was used as a guide (see Appendix H).
The data will first be read through thoroughly to ensure familiarity with the information. Then the texts will be searched for the purpose of ‘codes’, which will be manually highlighted and added to a list. These code lists will be narrowed down and organised into potential theme categories. This will be visualised through a thematic map, to help decide which themes are key and will be included in the dissertation. This method makes the findings clearer and more comprehensible.

Before choosing this method of data analysis, both the strengths and weaknesses were considered. Alhojailan (2012, p. 40-42) acknowledged many strengths of using thematic analysis in research, such as the flexibility and the ease of replicating in future research. However, he also pointed out several weaknesses of the method that need to be kept in mind. One being possible misinterpretation, and another being bias due to only selecting themes that suit the researcher’s agenda.
The quantitative data will be analysed using descriptive statistics, which according to Bonnel and Smith (2014, p. 137-138) is when “The results are put into tables to present the findings and are described”. It is generally used for questions that aim to discover a particular answer such demographic aspects like their genders or ages. This is a more structured and manageable way to present quantitative data, but like most analysis techniques there is still a risk of misinterpretation of the data.

3.7 Validity & reliability

It is imperative for the study to ensure reliability and validity where possible so that the results can be classed as fair and accurate. In order for research findings to be considered valid and reliable, the study needs to be replicable. Although data collection is always open to error within reason, it should be kept to a minimum (Moule and Hek, 2010, p.103).

Firstly, sampling adequacy contribute towards validity and reliability. The sample needs to be appropriate, that is it must be representative of the target population so that the results can be generalised and applied to them (Morse et al. 2002, p.18). The pilot study and recording of the interviews also aid in ensuring validity and reliability.

In addition, Morse et al. (2002, p.18) also recommend thinking theoretically as a verification strategy for validity and reliability. This encompasses verifying the new data by using pre-existing data from other research, as well as known and relevant published theories. This creates a solid foundation for the discussion of results.
Chapter 4: Ethics

According to Wiles (2013, p. 9), “Researchers inevitably experience ethical issues in the process of conducting research”. Therefore it is imperative that ethics are considered in the planning of research, as well as throughout the conducting of the study.

Wiles (2013, p. 12) also presented four factors that contribute to ethical decision-making within research; ethical frameworks, ethical regulation, legal regulation, and individual moral framework.

Any researcher should have individual moral ethics as a core value when working participants. All individuals have their own perceptions of what is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’, nonetheless society has a set amount of shared ethical principles and norms, which should be naturally incorporated into research (Wiles, 2013, p. 12).

Protecting the participants within this research project was planned using ethical principles and frameworks. Appendix F is a table, which sets out the main ethical principles and human rights for research involving human participants. This can be used as a guideline of what is acceptable treatment of the participants.

Moreover, most research requires ethical approval from an ethics committee prior to starting the project. This encompasses following ethical review procedures, usually by submitting an application with the proposed research along with copies of any documents that are to be given to the participants (Moule and Hek, 2011, p. 42-43).

In this instance, Cardiff Metropolitan University have their own ethics committee. The requirement for this dissertation to receive ethical approval was completion of the provided application form, which involved explanations of the planned research, any ethic complications anticipated, and what will be
implemented to prevent these or at least reduce the likelihood of them occurring.
Along with this was sent the proposed questions for the interviews (see Appendix C), participant information sheets (see Appendix E), and consent forms (see Appendix D).
The committee met and reviewed all of the documents, then sent them back with advised amendments. The proposal was then adapted and resent to the committee, which was reviewed again and later approved. Research was then allowed to commence.

Wiles (2013, p. 5) explains that the majority of research in the United Kingdom is subject to ethical regulation. The ethics committee, as mentioned previously, decide whether the research is legally ethical. However, it is still essential to keep legislative aspects in mind when dealing with participants.
This research project specifically does not involve participants who lack the mental capacity to consent, or participants under the age of 16, thus there are not many laws relevant to this study.
Two laws mentioned by Wiles (2013) that did arise during planning, are the Data protection Act and the Human Rights Act.
The Data Protection Act (1998) states that data should be kept securely, and that the agreed confidentiality and anonymity should not be breached.
Under the Human Rights Act (1998), all of the participants have human rights. Article 3 is the right to freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment, so the participants must be kept from harm during the interviews. Likewise, during the interviews when asking for family information, their privacy should still be respected, due to Article 8, the right for private and family life.

During planning, several potential issues were identified, and preventative measures have been put in place to reduce the risk of them arising.
The first issue is lacking informed consent. As this study is overt, the participants are aware that research is being undertaken, and they are
informed through the information sheets that they received beforehand. Therefore it is unlikely informed consent would be an issue.

The next issue is deception, which similarly to informed consent is not likely to occur due to the information sheets and overt-nature of the research resulting in the participants being fully aware of the reality of the study. Also, the participants were verbally informed of the aims, and were given the opportunity to ask any questions they may have had.

Another ethical issue is the right to withdraw from research at any point. Again, the participants are made aware of this through information sheets and consent forms.

Lastly, in line with the legislation declared previously, the privacy and confidentiality of participants must not be breached. For this research, participants will remain anonymous by only being referred to by pseudonyms. The physical data and documents will be kept securely in a locked drawer, and any computerised data and documents will be password protected.
Chapter 5: Results

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is comprised of the results from the interviews that were carried out as primary research for this dissertation.

The first section is for the quantitative results, which are made up predominantly of demographic data. This will be analysed using descriptive statistics.

This data has been displayed within assorted types of charts. These charts were produced using Microsoft Excel 2011. The charts will be exhibited under sub-categories, along with descriptions of what they represent and show.

The second section is for the qualitative results, which will be analysed using thematic analysis and presented in subcategories for each theme. These themes will be structured alphabetically.

What both the qualitative and quantitative results may suggest, and possible reasoning for the results, will be discussed later in Chapter 6.

There were a total of ten participants out of those who were invited to participate and those who applied to participate. A few individuals who applied were denied participation based on criteria eligibility. For example, single parents or parents with children over the age of ten only.

Participation rates were very high; all final participants went through with the interviews and have not withdrawn consent as of yet.

Although the interviews were semi-structured, and therefore had guide questions, the outcome of the interviews were that the guide questions were stuck to and no spontaneous questions were asked because they were not
felt needed in the moment. Some couples were interviewed together, whereas others preferred to be interviewed separately. They were given the option to choose what made them more comfortable.

5.2 Quantitative Results

5.2.1 Participant Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Couples</th>
<th>Type of Relationship</th>
<th>Number of Children (&amp; Gender)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Jack &amp; Sarah Anderson</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>1 girl and 2 twin boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rosie Peters &amp; Callum Irving</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>2 girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Steven &amp; Danny Roberts</td>
<td>Homosexual</td>
<td>1 boy (adopted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ellie Harrison &amp; Daniel Jones</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>2 boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Seren Hughes &amp; Rachel Williams</td>
<td>Homosexual</td>
<td>1 boy (Rachel’s biological son)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Details of the Participants

Table 1 sets out which of the participants were coupled with whom.

The second column states whether the couple is heterosexual or homosexual. Three of the couples (60% of the participants) were heterosexual, and two couples (40% of the participants) were homosexual.
The third column contains the amount of children that participants have under the age of ten. It is evident that none of the participants had more than three children under the age limit.

The table shows that two couples (40% of the participants) had one child, both of them being boys. However both of these couples are homosexual, meaning that both the parents cannot be biological parents.

The third couple adopted their son, whereas the son of the fifth couple is the biological child of the participant, Rachel, but is not the biological child of the other parent, Seren.

Similarly, two of the couples (40% of participants) had two children. Conversely, these two couples have different gendered children. Couple two have two girls, and couple four have two boys.

Lastly, one couple (20% of participants) had three children, of which were one girl and two twin boys.

It is important to note that none of the participants had children outside of their current partnership.

### 5.2.2 Gender

![Figure 1: The Gender of Participants](image)

**Figure 1: The Gender of Participants**
Figure 1 is a bar chart for the genders of the participants. It shows that out of the ten participants there were five males and five females. Percentage wise this would be 50% either way.

5.2.3 Age

![Age Range of Participants](image)

Figure 2 is another bar chart, this time presenting the age range categories that the participants fall into. It is clear that one of the participants are aged ‘up to 18’, ‘46 to 55’ or ‘56 plus’.

The age range with the most participants is ‘26-35’ with five participants (50%), followed by three participants (30%) being in the ‘36-45’ age group. ’18-25’ has the fewest amount with two participants (20%).

The mean age of the participants has been calculated as 32.6 years.
5.2.4 Ethnicity

Figure 3: The Ethnicity of Participants

Figure 3 is a pie chart that demonstrates the ethnicities of the participants. All ten participants (100%) reported to be the same ethnicity, White British.

5.2.5 Level of Education

Figure 4: Participant’s Highest Level of Education

Figure 4 is also a bar chart. The chart illustrates which was the highest education level for the participants. It shows that one participant (10%) said ‘No Qualifications’, five participants (50%) said ‘GCSEs’, one participant (10%) said ‘BTEC Diploma’, two participants (20%) said ‘A Levels’ and one
participant (10%) said ‘Undergraduate Degree’. No participants (0%) claimed to have a postgraduate degree.

5.2.6 Employment Status

![Pie chart showing employment status](image)

*Figure 5: Participant’s Employment Status*

Figure 5, an alternative type of pie chart called a doughnut chart, is on the participant’s employment statuses. It reveals that the majority of participants, at 60%, were ‘Full-time employed’. 30% of participants were ‘Part-time employed’ and 10% of participants were ‘Unemployed’. This means that nine out of ten (90%) of the participants were in employment of some sort.

5.2.7 Their Partner’s Parenting Styles & Views

![Bar chart showing parenting styles](image)
Figure 6: Whether Participants believed their Partner’s Views Differed from their Own.

Figure 9 represents the data from the question ‘Do your views and parenting styles ever differ from your partners?’ They were also asked ‘If yes, how?’ except that created qualitative data so it will be discussed in Section 3.3. Eight participants (80%) answered ‘Yes’, and two participants (20%) answered ‘No’.

5.2.8 Does Men & Women’s Parenting Differ?

![Pie chart showing 100% answered Yes](image)

Figure 7: Whether Participants Believed Men & Women have Different Parenting Styles, Views and Behaviours.

Figure 10 outlines the participant’s views on whether men and women normally have different parenting styles, views and behaviours. The pie chart reveals that 100%, all ten participants, answered ‘Yes’ to the question.
5.3 Themes from the Qualitative Data

5.3.1 Age

This theme is based on the age of a child as a motivating factor in participant’s answers in relation to parenting decision making, and responses to given scenarios.
Four participants mentioned this theme, three of which were females.

“Obviously depending on the age...”  
(Interview Quote 1: Sarah Anderson)

“Depending on their age...”  
(Interview Quote 2: Jack Anderson)

“Depending on how old they are...”  
(Interview Quote 3: Rosie Peters)

“At this age...but if he was older...”  
(Interview Quote 4: Rachel Williams)

5.3.2 Anger

This theme is related to the feeling of anger as a parent.
Novaco (1994, p. 330) defined anger as “…a negatively toned emotion...toward someone or something perceived to be a source of an aversive event”.
Four participants talked about anger, in one word or another. Two of these were male and the other two were female.
5.3.3 Basic Needs & Wellbeing

This theme was commonly mentioned as something that parents do, or should, prioritise and consider as the upmost important factor for their children.

Freitas and Leonard (2011, p. 9) explained that according to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, Basic or fundamental needs are “…air, food, clothing, and shelter; these are survival or physiologic needs”.

Five participants declared basic needs and wellbeing during their interviews. Rosie Peters spoke twice about basic needs-related topics in her interview. When asked what factors are most important for their child/children, Seren Hughes listed food, and Callum Irving listed a good home life.

“A good parent] always puts their child’s basic needs first. So food, drink, a roof over their head”  
(Interview Quote 9: Rosie Peters)
5.3.4 Boundaries

This theme was selected as a result of two participants very clearly stating the importance of having boundaries in place when parenting. Boundaries can be described as “the limit of a subject or principle” (Cambridge University Press, 2017).

“I think I would react differently to my daughter getting bullied than my sons. I would be angrier about it”

(Interview Quote 15: Jack Anderson)

5.3.5 Child’s Gender

Several participants referred to their child(ren)s gender for determining how they would respond to given scenarios. It was acknowledged by four participants, three of which were males.

“It is important that they feel safe...have a good balanced diet, they have regular sleep times”

(Interview Quote 10: Rosie Peters)

“Also giving them good food [makes a good parent]”

(Interview Quote 12: Ellie Harrison)

“Basic needs like food [are important]”

(Interview Quote 11: Rachel Williams)

“Someone who has boundaries [is a good parent]”

(Interview Quote 13: Danny Roberts)

“There’s that line between allowing them to be their own person [to showing them love and affection]”

(Interview Quote 14: Rosie Peters)
“If they [his daughters] were boys I think I would be harsher and come down a bit harder on them, definitely sterner”  
(Interview Quote 16: Callum Irving)

“If his sons were being bullied] I would tell them to man up a little”  
(Interview Quote 17: Daniel Jones)

“It [parenting] is different if he [her son] was a girl. Like if he was a girl and being bullied I would be angrier”  
(Interview Quote 18: Rachel Williams)

“Women are much more loving and caring towards children”  
(Interview Quote 20: Jack Anderson)

“Yes [their parenting styles and views] do vary on occasions”  
(Interview Quote 19: Jack Anderson)

“Yes [their parenting styles and views differ] usually to do with discipline. However on some days he [her husband] can be the soft parent, whilst I can be the firmer one. And vice versa”  
(Interview Quote 21: Sarah Anderson)

“If I say no or there is a consequence, I stay by it. Whereas my husband will soften”  
(Interview Quote 22: Rosie Peters)

“No, I bet my husband would though [treat the children differently depending on gender]”  
(Interview Quote 23: Rosie Peters)
5.3.7 Discipline

This theme was created due to some of the participants noting discipline as a response to given scenarios. Mitra (2012, p. 1) expounded that discipline, although often thought of negatively, should be viewed as teaching rather than punishing or sanctioning. Discipline is used by parents to help their children learn appropriate behaviour.

Three participants spoke of discipline. Two of these participants were female.

“[She would] make them apologise and punish them”
(Interview Quote 27: Sarah Anderson)

“[He would] give them a suitable form of discipline, like removing the iPad, TV or bike”
(Interview Quote 28: Jack Anderson)

“I’d probably just tell them off [if the child stole sweets]”
(Interview Quote 29: Ellie Harrison)
5.3.8 Failure

Another theme that was considered a parental norm by a handful of participants was the feeling of failure, both as a parent and for the child. Failure can be outlined simply as “lack of success” (Oxford University Press, 2017)

“*It is normal for every normal parent to think they are bad at some point*”

*(Interview Quote 30: Jack Anderson)*

“*[He] sometimes make mistakes or wish I had done things differently*”

*(Interview Quote 31: Danny Roberts)*

“*[It is common for a parent] to feel like you always fail*”

*(Interview Quote 32: Rosie Peters)*

“They [a good parent] allow children to be children, and make their own mistakes”

*(Interview Quote 33: Rosie Peters)*

“When they [children] do things wrong when they are older, you [a parent] can feel like it is your fault, like how you raised them”

*(Interview Quote 34: Seren Hughes)*

5.3.9 Fun / Play

This theme is based on the importance of fun and play for a child. Both Daniel Jones and Ellie Harrison said that fun is an essential factor for their children. One other participant, whom is male, commented on fun in the interviews.
5.3.10 Happiness

Happiness was listed by eight out of ten participants when they were asked to name factors that they consider most important for their child/children.

However, only one participant spoke about happiness of their child without being probed to specify what they view as important for their child. This participant was female.

“As long as the child is happy and healthy I don’t think there is a specific good [type of] parent really”

(Interview Quote 36: Rachel Williams)

5.3.11 Internet

Although the Internet generally is very broad, this theme has been seen in a negative light. Two participants raised this topic in terms of the given bullying scenarios involving their child/children.

“Girls can be more critical and bitchy though [when bullying]. Especially with the internet today”

(Interview Quote 37: Ellie Harrison)
5.3.12 Love

Four participants (three males and one female) listed love when they were
told to give elements of their child/children’s lives that they view as vital.

A few participants spoke of love when explaining how to be a good parent and
the best ways to respond to problems regarding their child/children.

“Explain you’ll love them no matter what”
 (Interview Quote 39: Sarah Anderson)

“[A good parent is] someone who is loving”
 (Interview Quote 40: Jack Anderson)

“They [a good parent] are somebody who shows love and
affection but doesn’t mollycoddle them”
 (Interview Quote 41: Rosie Peters)

5.3.13 Negative Religious Views

Most of the participants had indifferent opinions about religion. Yet, three
participants did mention religion, both negatively though.

“I don’t really want him to be religious”
 (Interview Quote 42: Seren Hughes)
5.3.14 Non-Biological Children

Although not applicable to all participants, this subject was briefly brought up in answers by three participants who had a non-biological child. They explained that this was a factor that influenced their parenting. Two of the participants were a same-sex couple who have adopted a child. The other was also part of a female same-sex couple, however the child was only one of the parent’s biological child.

“As part of our adoption...”  
(Interview Quote 44: Steven Roberts)

“We learnt how to cope with situations, through therapeutic parenting, as part of the adoption”  
(Interview Quote 45: Danny Roberts)

“It’s her son really though, so I can’t properly tell him off”  
(Interview Quote 46: Seren Hughes)

5.3.15 Prioritising Childcare

A priority is “A thing that is regarded as more important than others” (Oxford University Press, 2017). Four participants, to determine the distinction
between good and bad parenting, stated this theme. Three of these participants were male and one was female.

“Ones who choose nights out over parenting [are bad parents]”
(Interview Quote 47: Jack Anderson)

“I think somebody who makes decisions based on themselves instead of their child [is a bad parent]”
(Interview Quote 48: Danny Roberts)

“A parent who is there for their children – putting them first [is a good parent]”
(Interview Quote 49: Callum Irving)

“[A good parent] always puts the child’s basic needs first”
(Interview Quote 50: Rosie Peters)

5.3.16 School

Four participants (two males and two females) listed education as a paramount factor in their child(ren)s lives.

Additionally, when questioned about what they would do in a bullying scenario, two participants mentioned involving the school.

“[If her child was being bullied] I would approach the school”
(Interview Quote 51: Rosie Peters)

“[He would] try to meet with the parents and headmaster to resolve it”
(Interview Quote 52: Jack Anderson)
5.3.17 Similar Parenting Styles & Views

This theme was established because the interview responses indicated that some of the participants thought they had similar parenting styles and perceptions. Most of the participants used the word ‘We’, speaking about both of the parents together.

It is important to highlight, however, that the first two quotes within this theme are by one of the same-sex couples.

“Yeah, we’re mostly the same [parenting styles]”
(Interview Quote 53: Danny Roberts)

“Yeah, again I agree”
(Interview Quote 54: Steven Roberts)

“It doesn’t matter if you are a man or a woman”
(Interview Quote 55: Seren Hughes)

5.3.18 Socialising

This is an additional element that some of the participants listed as important to their child’s wellbeing. Three participants stated this, two of which were female.

“[It’s important that] they are able to socialise”
(Interview Quote 56: Rosie Peters)

“We make sure he [his son] has lots of groups of friends”
(Interview Quote 57: Steven Roberts)
5.3.19 Stability

This theme stems from the discussions during the interviews, where stability and other related words were brought up. Three males and three females spoke about stability-related topics. Several participants listed stability and routine as important factors for their child/children.

“I encourage different friendship circles”

(Interview Quote 58: Sarah Anderson)

“Everything has to be consistent for a child”

(Interview Quote 59: Steven Roberts)

“Someone who is balanced...and routine [makes a good parent]”

(Interview Quote 60: Steven Roberts)

“Someone who is stable, consistent and has a routine. I believe a good parent would give their child this”

(Interview Quote 61: Danny Roberts)

“[A bad parent] has no routine”

(Interview Quote 62: Sarah Anderson)

“[Bad parenting is when] there’s no balance between work and home life”

(Interview Quote 63: Daniel Jones)

5.3.20 Strictness

Being strict is “strongly limiting someone’s freedom to behave as they wish, or likely to severely punish someone if they do not obey” (Cambridge University Press, 2017).
Five participants (three females and two males) used the term strict to describe themselves or their partners.

“I’m not very strict”  
(Interview Quote 64: Seren Hughes)

“If I say no or there is a consequence to something, I stand by it”  
(Interview Quote 65: Rosie Peters)

“I’m quite strict”  
(Interview Quote 66: Rachel Williams)

“We take it in turns to be the stricter parent”  
(Interview Quote 67: Steven Roberts)

“I’m probably stricter than my wife”  
(Interview Quote 68: Callum Irving)

5.3.21 Supportive Parenting

This theme is about how the participants believed they would respond to particular situations their child/children could be in. Three participants (two males and one female) clearly mentioned this, but most of the participants hinted at it or touched on the topic.

“We would support him in whatever he [their son] wants to do”  
(Interview Quote 69: Steven Roberts)
5.3.22 Teaching & Learning

This theme was spoken of in relation to both sides of the child-parent relationship. Five participants (three males and two females) mentioned this.

“We have to try and teach or show him [their son] the right way [good behaviour]”  
(Interview Quote 72: Danny Roberts)

“We had to go to training classes where we were given guidance to follow”  
(Interview Quote 73: Steven Roberts)

“Parents who teach values to their children [are good parents]”  
(Interview Quote 74: Sarah Anderson)

“Parenting is learnt. It’s taught, it’s a cycle”  
(Interview Quote 75: Rosie Peters)

“It’s important that children have regular sleep times to grow and learn”  
(Interview Quote 76: Rosie Peters)

“I would make sure I educated my child not to use those [racist] comments in the future”  
(Interview Quote 77: Callum Irving)
5.3.23 Time

Time is a theme expressed by five participants, three of which were females and two of which were males.

“...depending on who’s the busiest”  
(Interview Quote 78: Steven Roberts)

“A good parent is somebody who takes time to talk and listen to their children”  
(Interview Quote 79: Rosie Peters)

“[It’s important to] listen to their problems, make time for them”  
(Interview Quote 80: Ellie Harrison)

“I just think giving your children time – Spending time with them is the biggest thing”  
(Interview Quote 81: Daniel Jones)

 “[A bad parent is] someone who doesn’t spend time with them”  
(Interview Quote 82: Seren Hughes)

5.3.24 Treatment of others

Quite a few of the participants view how their child/children treat other as very significant to them. One participant listed niceness as an important characteristic, and another listed respect. One couple agreed between the two of them that their child being polite and having manners was important to them.

“He [his son] needs to know to treat others how he wants to be treated”  
(Interview Quote 83: Danny Roberts)
Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is a critical discussion of the results from the interviews that were carried out as part of this study. The findings presented in chapter 5 will be referred to and examined in more detail such as what the results may suggest, potential reasoning for particular results, and what the results might mean for the research question and hypothesis.

Additionally, theory, literature and research will be used to evaluate the findings, and the results from male and female participants will be compared in aid of answering the research question, as well as confirming or disproving the hypothesis.

Lastly, limitations of the study will be touched upon in relation to how they may have influenced the results.

6.2 Discussion of Results

Table 1 merely displays the couple’s pseudonyms, along with the type of relationship they have with their partner (homosexual or heterosexual), the number of children each couple have, and the gender of those children.

Although it was initially planned to turn this data into charts, it proved to be more organised and clear in a table format. This information is self-explanatory but was included as it provides a sharper idea of the sample engaged in this study.
One question that could be raised by this table is whether or not the number of children a parent has any influence in the overarching research issue. As it can be seen, no single parents were involved in the research. This was done purposely as couples were required but the outcome of sample selection also unintentionally excluded step-parents.

This is a small research study therefore the sample was also minute. This should be kept in mind though when attempting to generalise the results to the target population.

Reliability and validity was aimed to be kept to a high level, however there is an issue with consistency, which may impact this; some couples were interviewed together and some were interviewed separately. This was adapted to whichever made them more comfortable but this consequently makes the research conditions inconsistent. Yet, the questions were kept the same through each interview, despite being semi-structured so they were able to be altered as the interviews occurred. This increases consistency.

Many of the studies from the literature review had uneven numbers of male and female participants. In this sample there were an identical amount of male and female participants. This was thought to be extremely important, as gender is a central part of this whole study. Having the same amounts of Mothers and Fathers results in equal gender representatives in the parenting population. Accordingly, results are then more likely to be generalised to the target population.

The gender of a child was also brought up during numerous paternal interviews. The male participants, with the exception of the same-sex couple, declared that they would be more protective and strict with daughters. This proves a section of the hypothesis that predicted this.
Several of the Fathers also said that they would be/are harsher with boys but give them less rules. One male participant even said they would use ‘man up’ as a response to a gay son.

The mean age of the participants was 32.6 years old, which is advantageous in terms of generalisability of results and representation of the target population because as of 2014 first-time Mothers were most likely to be within the 25-34 age group (Office for National Statistics, 2015, p. 2).

Figure two does show that there were no participants under the age of 18 or over the age of 46. Although the mean age of participants matched the most common age group for having babies, if age is decided to be a major influencing factor then perhaps participants from all age group would be more effective.

Figure three shows that the sample is constructed of all white British participants. As written in the literature review formerly, researchers must be careful or they can be accused of ethnocentrism. In other cultures, parents may act and view things completely differently, so results of a non-ethically-diverse sample should not be applied to other cultures as if they are more important. The Office for National Statistics (2011, p.1) reported that white British individuals take up 86% of the populated but are decreasing over time. This means that although the sample of the current study does represent the majority, the decreasing numbers should be taken into consideration.

Next, figure four displays the highest education levels of the participants. It shows that apart from one participant, everyone had qualifications of some kind. A relevant query is does an educated person equate to a better parent?

Figure five illustrates that all but one participant were in employment. This contradicts traditional gender roles of the Father as the breadwinner.
Although it does correspond with certain literature review findings that say the majority of parents are in employment and the notion of the male breadwinner decreasing. In the current study, social class and income were not asked out of respect for privacy.

In relation to the age of their children, three female participants said age determines how they react to, or treat, their child. Only one male participant brought this up. Some people argue that men have more closed minds than women. If this is the case, maybe Fathers have set styles and views for parenting, whereas women are more open-minded and can adapt easier. This is only hypothetical though, it cannot be deduced from the results of the study.

In addition, no parents with children over the age of ten were accepted to participate. If they had been, would the results be different? The participants definitely seem to think age impacts parental decision-making.

The following theme is Anger. More Fathers mentioned anger related words than Mothers, though one still did say they would react angrily to scenarios. This coincides with labels of Fathers as the more aggressive and stern parent. In spite of that, Adams (1991, p.6) carried out research to resolve the ‘fact’ that men are more aggressive than women biologically. He concluded that gender differences of anger characteristics are a myth. Thus, it can be assumed that the higher reported levels of anger of Fathers in this study are purely coincidental and based on the individuals rather than men as a collective.

Furthermore, basic needs and wellbeing were raised as vital factors in a child’s life. All of the participants who fully mentioned this theme, without being asked to give important factors, were Mothers.
Lipe and Beasley (2004, p. 61) backed by saying “Physiologic needs always take precedence”. They specified that according to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, food, drink, clothing, warmth and comfort are the first needs that must be met before satisfying any other needs.

This suggests a difference in what Mothers and Fathers perceive as important. Though it can be debated that the reasoning for the Fathers not mentioning this could be that they presumed basic needs were obvious enough not to be verbalised.

Boundaries are another theme. Both male and female participants discussed boundaries. This advocates similar gender perceptions in relation to setting rules and drawing a line. However, actually sticking to the rules, and sanctioning for breaking them, in actual reality may be a different matter to perceptions.

Likewise, discipline was stated as a reaction to poor behaviour by many of the participants. Primarily, there does not appear to be any gender differences in how parents discipline. However, the females who mentioned discipline only said that they would do it but did not specify what or how, whereas the male participants gave examples. This implies Mothers may not always go through with said discipline. This supports the stereotype of Mothers being softer.

A further factor that supports gender stereotypes is socialising. More women prioritised their children socialising often. Plus love, which 75% of pps who spoke about love were surprisingly male. This disputes the literature review, which found that Mothers are more loving and caring.
Themes that also had results standing against gender differences impacting parenting include having regrets and making mistakes, happiness, supportiveness, learning and teaching, treatment of others, and stability.

That aside, eight of the participants had barely anything to say about religion. All the women responded to religious scenarios with impartial reactions. Whereas two of the male participants vocalised negative views about Islam, suggesting that women are more accepting of different beliefs and that men are more strongly opinionated.

Three of the participants had a child that was not biologically their own; one couple adopted & one same-sex couple had a child that was only one of theirs biologically. The adoptive couple shared most views, possibly because they were on the same ground. It could be maintained that they share similar views because of gender though. With the homosexual female couple, one had the child before their relationship began, and they had different views. The non-biological mother felt she was not able to fully discipline the child as it was not fully hers. Is this because of gender or because of the even versus uneven standpoint with the child.

In respect of strictness, it was inconclusive. With the heterosexual couples, there tended to be one parent who was stricter (usually the male). Yet with the male homosexual couple, they take turns to be stricter. This suggests that usually that males are stricter.

When participants were asked if they thought their styles and perceptions ever differed from their partners, they stated differences but throughout the interview agreed on most answers. Most of the participants used the word ‘We’ when answering, speaking about both of the parents together.
However, as mentioned before, the male same-sex couple were the most insistent that they had similar opinions and styles. Again, the explanation for this could be that neither of them had birthed the child so they are in the same position.

When asked if they thought men and women normally parented differently, all ten participants said yes. Is what they think and what is the actuality of the situation the same?
Chapter 7: Conclusion

The first major research carried out as part of this dissertation was the literature search and review. From that chapter it can be deduced that overall the previous studies found differing styles, perceptions and abilities when parental gender is concerned.

Be that as it may, the review did find a significantly smaller gap in differing roles and gender expectations compared to the past. This was supported by the results of the current study, which found that although there were still some predictable gendered views, there have been changes.

Moreover, it was discovered that stereotypes & traditional gender roles still exist in smaller doses, and at times the styles and perceptions are neutral between genders. The findings even highlighted that there are occasions where parental gendered expectations or predictions can be the opposite way around. For example, the male participants focusing on love as an important factor for their child/children more than the female participants.

In other words, there were some aspects that swayed more towards Mothers rather than Fathers, and vice versa. There were some that were practically of equal value to Mothers and Fathers too. So arguably parental styles, perceptions and abilities of males and females are not the same, but are similar.

Nevertheless, when asked directly if there are differences, almost all participants said yes. Could this be based on society’s shared views of gender roles and stereotypes, rather than actual fact? They might think there are differences because that is what has always been said and presumed, but that might not actually be the case.
Also like the literature review, the present study found common themes are fundamental in this subject, some of which were in both chapters such as employment and changing roles.

With reference to the hypothesis, there is a slight link between parental gender and one’s views, behaviours and styles, however it is not always straightforward. As well as this, the findings suggest the prediction of Fathers being more protective of Daughters is accurate.

One could claim that it is both the parental gender, as well as the child’s gender together as a mixture, which affects a parent’s style, perceptions and abilities.

Although there is still not a definite answer to the research question, it did assist in informing the target population that parenting and parental gender is not as black & white as one would assume.
Chapter 8: Recommendations

As mentioned in chapters previous to this one, parenting changes regularly along with society. Hence future research and replication of this study, is recommended. However, there are several adaptations to this study that would be necessary for replication, and a few new dynamics that are advised for any future research related to this one.

Firstly, although interviews were chosen due to the strengths, there are probable issues with it such as interviewer bias, participants giving into social desirability and the Hawthorne effect.

Subsequently, a mixed methods approach is advocated in order to obtain data that will not be affected by the fact that the interviews are face-to-face with the participants. This could be doing interviews as well as questionnaires that can be filled out alone, or interviews as well as covert observations of parents with their children.

Wiles (2013, p. 26) describe covert research as studies of which the participants are unaware of research and have not consented to participate. Although ethical issues must be taken into consideration with this.

With the interviews, it was discovered from this study that interviewing the couples together made them open up more and
elaborate on their answers, especially the males. It is believed that this is due to being more comfortable and the couples encouraging each other’s answers. Keeping the interviews consistent this way would be advantageous to both the researchers and the participants. Another interesting angle to take future research into is varying the sample such as different social classes, types of employment, education levels, and age groups.

Moreover, accessing participants that are diverse ethnically will be interesting to see if the results are similar to this 100% white British study. From this it would also be possible to determine whether the findings from the current research are applicable to other cultures.

A larger sample would be useful also, potentially based on the whole of the UK. Along with the larger sample should be various types of families included such as single parent families, step-parent families, transgender parents, in addition to including more same-sex parents.
Bibliography


The Royal College of Psychiatrists (2017) *Surviving Adolescence – A toolkit for parents, teachers, young people and anyone who*


Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Approval Letter

Thursday, 23 March 2017

BSc (Hons) Health & Social Care
Cardiff School of Health Sciences

Dear Applicant

Re: Application for Ethical Approval: Perceptions of Parenting: The Impact of Gender

Project Reference Number: 9090

Your ethics application, as shown above, was considered by the Applied Community Sciences Ethics Panel on 22/03/2017.

I am pleased to inform you that your application for ethical approval was APPROVED.

Minor issues may still need addressing before you commence any work – if so these will be listed below.

1. Remove the end of the sentence highlighted on the Participant Information Sheet: The interview is semi-structured, so the researcher has a list of questions as a guide but stray away to other questions.
2. Amend the start date on the application form.

Where changes to the information sheet, consent form and/or procedures are deemed necessary you must submit revised versions to the relevant ethics inbox. If you are a student – your supervisor must do this on your behalf.

Note: Failure to comply with any issues listed above will nullify this approval.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. Your Ethics Application has been given a Project Reference number as above. This MUST be quoted on all documentation relating to the project (E.g. consent forms, information sheets), together with the full project title.
2. All documents must also have the approved University Logo and the Version number in addition to the reference and project title as above
3. A full Risk Assessment must be undertaken for this proposal, as appropriate, and be made available to the Committee if requested.
4. Any changes in connection to the proposal as approved, must be referred to the Panel/Committee for consideration without delay quoting your Project Reference Number. Changes to the proposed project may have ethical implications so must be approved.
5. Any untoward incident which occurs in connection with this proposal must be reported back to the Panel without delay.
6. If your project involves the use of human samples, your approval is given on the condition that you or your supervisor notify the HTA Designated Individual of your intention to work with such material by completing the form entitled “Notification of Intention to Work with Human Samples”. The form must be submitted to the PD (Sean Duggan), BEFORE any activity on this project is undertaken.

This approval expires on 13/22/2018. It is your responsibility to reapply / request extension if necessary.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Professor George Karani
Chair of Applied Community Sciences & Protection Ethics Panel
Cardiff School of Health Sciences

Tel: 029 20416855
E-mail: gkarani@cardiffmet.ac.uk

Cc: Aubrey, Joanne

PLEASE RETAIN THIS LETTER FOR REFERENCE
Appendix B: Participant Advertisement Poster

Participants needed

For a university study

Looking for parents willing to take part in an interview on their views on

more information or volunteer for the research please contact

The research will be anonymised and confidential. If you would like

- You and your partner have an hour to spare
- Same sex or heterosexual relationship
- Married or cohabiting
- Children or a child under the age of 10

Katie Johnson - st200@cardiff.ac.uk
Appendix C: Interview Guide Questions

Interview questions

Elaborate as much as you wish with your answers. Do not hesitate to ask if you want further explanations of the questions.

1. How many children aged 10 or under do you have?

2. Is your partner of the opposite or same sex?

3. Do your views on parenting ever differ from your partner’s, and if so how?

4. What gender is your child(ren)?

5. Do you think men and women have different parenting styles?

6. What would you describe as a good parent?

7. What would you describe as a bad parent?

8. Do you think it’s normal for everyone to feel like a bad parent at some point?
9. Pick 5 factors that you consider most important for your child(ren)? (e.g. happiness, education, religion, health etc.)

The participants will then be presented with a number of scenarios and will be asked how they would respond if it was their children experiencing it.

The scenarios:

- The child has stolen sweets from the shop
- The child wants to join a religion/ convert to a different religion
- The child has been bullying someone
- The child is being bullied by someone
- The child has come out as/shown signs of being gay or transgender
- The child made a racist joke/comment that they heard at school

Think back at the scenarios that were just presented, do you think that you would react/ deal with it differently depending on the gender of your child?
Appendix D: Participant Consent Form

Interview Participant Consent Form

Title: Perceptions of Parenting: The Impact of Gender
Project Researcher: xxxxx
Reference Number:

Participant Name: __________________

Participant to complete this section: Please initial each box

☐ 1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

☐ 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.

☐ 3. I agree to the interview being voice recorded

☐ 4. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.

__________________________  _______________________
Signature of Participant       Date

__________________________  _______________________
Signature of Researcher        Date

*When completed, 1 copy for participant & 1 copy for researcher to file.
Appendix E: Participant Information Sheet

Project Researcher: xxxxx

Reference Number:

Project Title: Perceptions of Parenting: The Impact of Gender

Background:
This study is being conducted for the purpose of a dissertation for a third year Cardiff Metropolitan University student, who is working towards their Health and Social Care degree. The project researcher is aiming to become a social worker, and work with children and families, which is why they are interested in the topic of parenting views.

Am I right for this study?
All participants must be one of two parents of a child aged 10 or under, and be living in Wales.

You have been selected through convenience sampling. This means that you were easily available at the time of research. You were either contacted directly and asked to participate due to meeting the criteria, or you saw the request for particular participants on social media.

What Does Participating Involve?:
Participating is completely voluntary and therefore you are able to withdraw from the study at any time.

The interview will take place at a university study room.

If you choose to consent to participating, you will be presented with a number of questions to answer. The interview is semi-structured, so the researcher has a list of questions as a guide but stray away to other questions. The questions will be verbally asked questions by the researcher. This will be voice recorded.

What happens to the results after participation?
All of the results from the participants will be collected and analysed for the written dissertation. The answers from the different genders will be compared, reoccurring themes will be identified, and a few
Statistics will be collected in order to create charts. The main method of data analysis that will be used is Thematic Analysis.

All responses will remain anonymous and confidential. Participants will be given pseudonyms (fake names) to protect your identity.

What are the benefits of taking part?:
There aren’t any direct benefits for you from participating in the study. The results will contribute towards the dissertation, but will also give insight into whether parenting views can differ when gender is concerned.

Are there any risks involved?:
There aren’t any risks thought to be involved from taking part in this study.

Participants of the interviews will be asked to choose a location that they feel safe in, this will be agreed on prior to meeting.

Privacy and Confidentiality:
In line with the Data Protection Act (1998):

- All participants and their data will remain anonymous when presented within the written dissertation.
- All data will be stored safely and securely.
- Any actions or decisions will be made lawfully, with your rights protected.
- Only the researcher, and potentially the dissertation supervisor, will have access to the interview recordings.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any queries.

Project Researcher: st20059504@outlook.cardiff.ac.uk
Dissertation Supervisor: jaubrey@cardiffmet.ac.uk
## Appendix F: Ethical Principles Table

### Ethical principles & human rights in research
Table 4.1, p. 36

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The principle of veracity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Telling the truth, being honest, and being sincere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The right of participants to have full disclosure before participating in research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The principle of Justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Being fair to participants and not giving preference to some over others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participant’s needs must come before the objectives of the study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A duty to avoid discrimination, abuse or exploitation of the participants on the grounds of race, religion, sex, age, class or sexual orientation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The principle of beneficence (or non-maleficence)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The research should benefit both the individual participants, and society in general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A duty to do good and prevent harm (physical, psychological, social and economic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A duty of care to protect the weak and vulnerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Defence of the weak, vulnerable or incompetent (advocacy role)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The principle of fidelity and respect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The building of trust where the researcher is obliged to safeguard the welfare of participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A duty to respect the rights, autonomy and dignity of participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The right to self-determination (the freedom to decide whether to participate or not, and to withdraw at any time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The right to privacy and respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The right to anonymity and confidentiality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G: Critical Appraisal Framework

The Purpose of the Study
• Is the knowledge sought already available?
• Is there an important reason for the research to be undertaken?
• Are the potential outcomes of the study realistic?
• Was the researcher(s) appropriately qualified/supported to undertake the research?
• Are there any concerns about any funders of the researcher in relation to the process of the research described?

Research Problem and Research Questions
• Is the problem significant and researchable and have all the potential ways of solving the problem been considered?
• Are all research questions and hypotheses developed directly from the problem?
• Did the research place unethical or unrealistic demands on participants?

Literature Review
• Was there a search of a wide range of literature pertinent to the topic?
• Was there a search strategy with named databases and key search terms?
• Was the review balanced and not biased?
• Was the literature critically appraised?
• Was any conflicting evidence clearly presented?
• Did the literature review provide rationale and direction for the research?
• Is the literature review up to date?
• Were there any limitations of the literature identified?

Ethical Issues
• Ethical issues should be considered all stages of the study.
• Is there evidence of approval from the appropriate Research Ethics Committee?
• Were any governance issues dealt with appropriately?
• There should be clear evidence that privacy, dignity, anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study.
• The researcher should have identified ethical issues related to the study.

Sample Selection
• Was an appropriate sampling strategy used?
• If a random sample was selected, was it genuinely random?
• Were any biases in the sample group identified?
• Was the target population identified in a quantitative study?
• Was there a clear account of how participants were recruited and selected to take part in the study?
• Was there any coercion in recruiting participants?
• Was there clear evidence that participants gave informed consent?
• If the participants were vulnerable, has this been clearly considered in the study?
• Were all the participants accounted for throughout the study, i.e., did the numbers add up?

**Research Design and Data Collection**
• Was the design of the study appropriate to the research questions?
• Was an appropriate method of data collection used?
• Are the advantages and disadvantages of the method(s) discussed?
• Were the participants protected from physical and psychological harm?
• Was the issue of ‘deception’ dealt with appropriately in observational studies?
• Were the data gathered by appropriate people?
• Was the researcher’s role and relationship with the participants fully considered?
• Were the data authenticated in qualitative studies?

**Results and Analysis of Findings**
• Were the result and analysis linked back to the original research question?
• Were the results and analysis manipulated in order to favour particular findings?
• Was there any evidence of lost data?
• Was there evidence of a statistician’s input into complex quantitative analysis?

**Conclusions, Recommendations, and Limitations**
• Were the conclusions and recommendations based on the results of the study?
• Was it clear that there was no intention to mislead or give false conclusions?
• Was the sample selected considered in relation to the recommendations?
• Did the researcher acknowledge any limitations?
• Were limitations of the findings of the study identified, as well as limitations of the study design and techniques?

**General Points**
• The researcher should acknowledge sources of support and funding.
• When critically appraising research, readers should acknowledge their own limitations and gain assistance when necessary.
• The role of service users and carers in the research should be explained.
Appendix H: Stages in the process of thematic analysis

**Stage One: Descriptive Coding**
- Read through transcript
- Highlight relevant material & attach brief Comments
- Define descriptive codes
- Repeat for each transcript, refining descriptive codes as you progress

**Stage Two: Interpretive Coding**
- Cluster descriptive codes
- Interpret meaning of clusters, in relation to research questions & disciplinary position
- Apply interpretive codes to full data set

**Stage Three: Overarching Themes**
- Derive key themes for data set as a whole, by considering interpretive themes from theoretical and/or practical stance of project
- Construct diagram to represent relationships between levels of coding in the analysis

Quality checks at any stage of the process

Figure 9.1 – page 153
Appendix I: Gender Brief Charts

Gender Brief (2010) OECD p. 8

![Women's Employment/Population Ratio (1970-2008)](chart1)

Age 15-64

- France
- Italy
- Netherlands
- USA
- OECD


p. 11

![Employment patterns among couple families with children aged 0-14, 2007](chart2)

Notes: 1) No distinction between full-time and part-time employment in the data for Japan and the US
Source: OECD Family Database >LMF6