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Batswana Fathers' Expressive Roles and Provision of Nurturance to Their Preschool Children

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the expressive roles played by fathers in Botswana in the early childhood years and the challenges they experience in executing care. Research shows that father involvement and care for children is very critical for a preschool child's development. In Botswana, however, majority of children find themselves growing up without a father figure. The study was carried out in the Central Region of Botswana. Ten preschools were randomly selected. Using the maximum variation/heterogeneous purposive sampling technique and simple random sampling technique, 40 fathers and 20 mothers were selected as sample. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to analyze quantitative data; qualitative data was categorised using codes and themes and analyzed descriptively. The findings revealed that fathers lag behind in executing the expressive roles in Botswana; factors, such as residential proximity, parental relationship, and societal culture, influenced fathers' involvement. Fathers' involvement in their children's lives influences their development and performance at preschool. The researchers recommended that both fathers and mothers need to be sensitized about the importance of executing fathers' expressive roles, through workshops and training.

Keywords: Education, early childhood care and education; expressive role, an engaged father; pre-school education, nurturance.

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1. Introduction

The education, care, and development of preschool children is vital and needs to be shared primarily by both parents (fathers and mothers), siblings and community for an optimum and overall development. A child is born of a mother and a father, ideally in a family setup. However, extensive research has shown that mothers are always available and provide care to their children, while fathers have not been very active in their children's care, education, and development. They continue to lag behind the mothers in terms of their involvement in care giving and parenting tasks (Durand, 2011).

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Fathering is a complex subject which is difficult to address easily, as it may be used to refer to either social or biological male parent. A social father refers to the child's non biological father, a mother's new husband or a stepfather, whereas a biological father, also called birth father, refers to a male parent who has conceived the child. In most instances, the father is the head of the family, and it becomes his duty to ensure that children's needs are all fulfilled, and also ensures a strong bond with his children (Milkie & Cathleen, 2012).

Historically, it has been important for fathers to be responsible and to provide for their children. Research by Richter and Morrell (2015) and Milkie and Cathleen (2012) shows that the fathering roles since 1900 fluctuated between fathers as providers (an instrumental role) and fathers as nurturers (an expressive role). Mostly fathers were seen to be adopting the instrumental roles, as providers, where they took up the responsibility to teach their children about the outside world, through firmness and authority. Instances where fathers were not earning and were unable to meet the providers' role, they were not perceived positively as good fathers (Richter & Morrell, 2015). Mothers on the other hand, functioned in expressive roles, as nurturers, and were mainly responsible for caring for and being affectionate towards their children (Milkie & Cathleen, 2012). Both these roles, however, are essential in guaranteeing care and development in young children for their development and education.

Researchers have developed great interest in re-examining the role of fathers and the significance of fathering (Ito & Izumi-Taylor, 2013). Fathers are mostly associated with the male parent who makes the biological contribution to the creation of the child; difficulty often is experienced in distinguishing between fathers and fatherhood (Sriram, 2012) and father involvement. According to McWayne, Downer, Campos and Harris (2013), fathers' involvement is more beneficial for academic purposes and for development of father child relationship in early childhood than in later life. Palm and Fagan (2015) define father involvement in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) as either directly or indirectly, in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) settings, which may include programme selection and participation in the activities and taking up the responsibility of a child's wellbeing. Studies by Ito and Izumi-Taylor (2013) further revealed that father involvement in ECE settings enhanced children's performance in various developmental aspects. Chopra (2012) found involvement important for a child to grow in a stimulating environment, with both fathers and mothers.

Fathers were all-powerful patriarchs who exercised enormous power over their families. According to Lamb (2010), "White fathers were viewed primarily as moral teachers during the colonial phase of American history" (p. 3). The relationship between the father and the child was distant and morally instructive, as too much affection was believed to lead to parental indulgence, ruining the character of children (Pleck, 2010). During industrialization however, when fathers went to work, they no longer acted as strict authority figures. According to Lamb (2010) the central focus of fatherhood then shifted from moral leadership to breadwinning and economic support of the family, when mothers became an essential figure of families, taking over the role as moral teacher and disciplinarian. Even today, the changing trend in the father's involvement in childcare is influenced by the dynamics of the world today, such as mother's employment status (Pleck, 2010). Despite the decline of patriarchy and the expanded importance of mothers in the nineteenth-century family life, fathers still play an important role in ECE. Lamb (2010) noted that today, father involvement is a symbol of modern fatherhood. Not all countries have shown a similar trend though; fathers in Japan, however, have increased their involvement slowly (Ishi-Kuntz, 2013).

The expressive roles involve parents being emotionally attentive and understanding of their own children. This role demands a more sensitive character and so, women usually play the expressive roles more often. The little research conducted on father's expressive roles, revealed that they can perform the roles of a nurturer just like mothers. Allgood, Beckert and Peterson, (2012) highlighted that the amount of time that fathers are involved in their children's lives (nurturant fathering) brings life satisfaction, especially to daughters in their young adult years. However, Pascal, Lewis-Moss and Hsiao (2011) observed that a father is likely to fulfil the nurturer's role when he is romantically involved with his child's mother. According to Richter and Morrell (2015) fathers who live with their children can take care of them and help out around the house. Easterbrooks and Goldberg (2009) conducted a study in California, on 75 toddlers that investigated associations between characteristics of fathering and toddler development through assessments of quality of attachment and task orientation in problem-solving situations. The study revealed that fathers as domestic labourers take responsibility for care

giving through activities such as feeding, diapering, arranging and babysitting, but the amount of quality time they spend together was less. In another study, Petts and Knoester (2018) found that fathers who work longer hours did not spend enough time in these care giving activities as domestic labourers. There is thus a necessity of allocating more time to fathers to enable them take full responsibility in care giving domestic activities that foster development of young children.

Father involvement provides emotional support and comfort to young children. Increased overall health and intellectual development experienced by children when fathers are present and involved occurs due to the improved emotional and psychological well-being of the child. When fathers undertake active important roles in raising and nurturing their children, they guide their children's overall development because their attitudes toward their children are crucial for development of positive social and emotional skills (Opondo, Redshaw, & Savage, 2016; Prior & Gerald, 2009). Bryan (2013) conducted a study on 47 low-income fathers to investigate their experiences, beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and expectations as providers. In-depth interviews revealed that although some fathers could not provide for their children, they spent quality time with them, to show the love that they had for them. This is crucial, particularly for preschool children who need comforting and love for their developmental needs. In another study, Gottman, Katz, and Hooven (2012) found that fathers' management of children's emotions at age 5 was significantly linked with children's positive peer relationships several years later, as compared to mothers' management. Wayne, Downer, Campos and Harris (2013) further revealed in another study that fathers' sensitive and challenging interactive play during toddlerhood contributed to their children's later emotional security at age ten, above and beyond mothers' parenting.

The traditional African society honoured the father or the eldest male as the head of the family or tribe, descent, and kinship (Richter & Morrel, 2015). In traditional African communities, fathers are the providers and protectors of the family. The African men, including Batswana (citizens of Botswana) men hunted very far away from home, others went to work in the mines in SA during apartheid, while mothers looked after the children. Saraff (2008) asserts that a father has to be a close friend to his children as this will enable him to constantly keep a check over their activities inside and outside home and help them become responsible citizens. Two parents balance children's developmental equation (Musick & Meier, 2010) by providing nurturing (softness) from the mothers and the hardness (toughness) from the fathers for proper upbringing, without creating an ultimate dysfunction (Richter & Morrel, 2015). Anecdotal evidences show that in the African family and society however, fathers are the ones with ultimate authority and responsibility.

1.1 Conceptualizing fatherhood in the context of Botswana

Having an involved father at home can make a big difference in the life of a young Motswana (Batswana) child, as in all other countries. The nutrition, health care, schooling of young children is encouraged and supported by their fathers' involvement (Richter, Chikovore & Makusha, 2010). On the contrary, failure to have a father role model causes children to be withdrawn in school and lack social cohesiveness (Richer & Morrel, 2015). Research shows that only 2 out of 5 men in Botswana have been raised in families with fathers (The United Nations Population Fund, 2016). Anecdotal evidence shows that majority of Batswana children (children born of citizens of Botswana) are not that fortunate as they find themselves growing up without a father figure, which could result in lagging behind in many aspects of their development.

With reference to the culture of Batswana, men have always been providers and tried to ensure that their children's school fees are paid for, leaving all the burden of family household and childcare responsibilities to mothers (Thupayagale-Tshweneagae, Mgutshini & Nkosi, 2012). Since Botswana gained independence in 1966, the common traditional nuclear and extended family structures changed and were replaced by single parent families, particularly the female-headed type of family. According to Maundeni and Nnyepi (2012), over two-thirds (2/3) of children aged between seven and seventeen years, do not live with their fathers and the traditional Botswana culture continue to expect children to be submissive to their parents and other adults for basic needs and other things. Studies related to preschool children are scarce, thus much is not known about it. The anecdotal evidence however, shows that Botswana is a country where fathers are not fully involved.

The changing family structure of single mothers, and head of the family thus, can have both short and long-term implications for the well-being of children, if women continue to engage in responsibilities that customize them to childcare daily routines alone, without the support of the fathers. The researchers thus would like to find out what role the fathers are playing, especially when lots of changes were brought in the country due to modernisation, especially in the ECE sector. The focus of this paper thus, is to investigate the expressive/nurturance roles fathers play in the development, care and education of their preschool children in Botswana, as the country builds a strong foundation for children's academic performance/achievement at later stage in their lives, and has long lasting effects on children's behavioural competencies (La Paro, 2010). It therefore was necessary to investigate fathers' direct involvement with their young children, and establish their involvement. Development in children takes place through complex mutual interactions between children and their environment (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2012). The primary individual and environmental influences with which children interact regularly over an extended period of time are that of both their parents before others such as siblings, peers and teachers.

This study adapted Palkovitz's (2014) Model of Paternal Involvement which focuses on ways in which fathers may get involved with their children and termed them the continua. The model consists of the time invested, degree of involvement, salience, directness, and proximity. According to the model, paternal involvement may be determined by the amount of time fathers invest on their children. In most cases, fathers may express the role of a nurturer either by choosing to spend much or less time doing certain things such as helping or playing with their children. The second continuum (the salience) as explained by the author denotes the degree to which fathers are involved in different tasks with their children. This continuum is closely related to the degree of involvement continuum, which could at times be extremely high depending on how parents feel about the activities they engaged in with their children. The model further presents direct/indirect involvement continuum, i.e. whether the fathers get involved directly with their children or indirectly get involved through third parties. Lastly, the model described proximity as the distance fathers live away from their children, which may influence fathers' involvement with their children. The researchers' adopted conceptual framework is as follows (Figure 1):

Note: Adapted from Palkovitz (2014).

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this study were to determine:

1. The extent to which fathers of preschool children execute the expressive role of a nurturer.
2. The views of the fathers about their expressive roles and nurturance of preschool children.
3. The challenges faced by fathers in imparting expressive role to their preschool children.

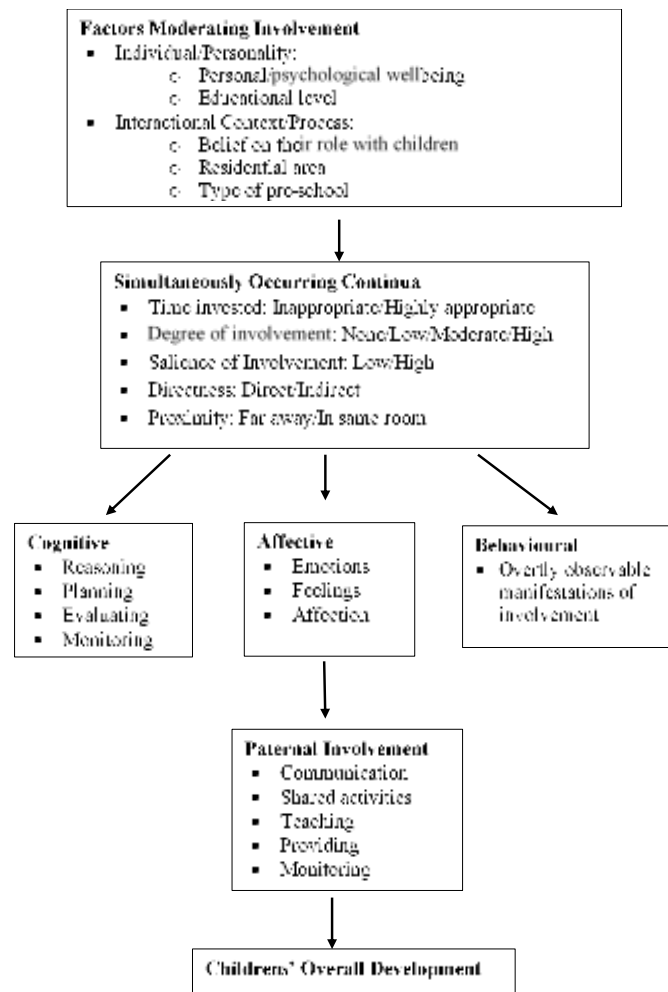


Figure 1. Paternal Expressive Role and Nurturance of Preschool Children

2. Methodology

The current study used a pragmatic paradigm, with a mixed method mode, using quantitative and qualitative research designs to complement the data collected data and analyse it further. The Maximum variation/heterogeneous purposive sampling, also called judgment sampling, was used to concentrate on people with particular characteristics, who could furnish with relevant information required for the study (Creswell, 2011). Simple Random sampling was also used for selecting the fathers and the mothers to be participants of the study. This study focused on the characteristics of fathers such as their age groups, educational background, the socioeconomic background, and working/non-working status. The expectation was that each participant would provide unique and rich information of value to this study.

Private preschools in the central region were selected as the population for this research study. Preschool classes, termed as the reception classes, have recently been introduced in public primary schools, countrywide (in 2014) where students do not have to pay any fees, so the researchers selected the private schools because the private preschools have a long history in operation; and it was also presumed that the parents of these children who were paying school fees, might actively participate in the study and bring in some valuable information.

The participants were the fathers and mothers of preschool children from ten (10) preschools of Serowe and Palapye areas of Central Region. The researchers selected 100 fathers using purposive sampling technique. Using random sampling technique, where all the fathers had equal chances of being selected (Braun & Clarke, 2013), a total sample of 40 fathers was selected, that included 20 married and 20 single fathers. This was done to diminish bias, thus enabling the researchers to get views from both married and single fathers. Information regarding parents' status was obtained from the school administrators. In addition, 20 mothers were randomly selected from a total of 50 mothers for the purpose of exposing them to selection at random. The idea was to get different views, thoughts and suggestions from the fathers and mothers, married/single/divorced of children attending preschools.

For triangulation purposes, multiple sources of data (questionnaire and focus group interview) and multiple approaches (quantitative and qualitative) to analyse data were used. The instruments were developed keeping in mind the conceptual framework that was adapted based on the Model of Paternal Involvement (Palkovitz, 2014). The items like factors moderating involvement, simultaneously occurring continua that affect paternal involvement and children's overall development was covered in the instruments.

A survey questionnaire was used to collect data from the fathers as it has an advantage of being cheap, and often have standardized answers that make it simple to compile data (Jones, Baxter, & Khanduja, 2013). The questionnaire included items about fathers' expressive roles in the overall development and care of preschool children. It comprised three (3) sections (A, B, & C). Section A gathered demographic or background information of respondents, comprising of five (5) items, age, type of family, education level, profession, and employment status. Section B consisted of twenty (20) statements in a four (4) point Likert-scale form. Section C comprised of four (4) open ended questions. In section A, the respondents ticked the answer they considered appropriate. In section B respondents ticked a box next to the statement they felt was the best answer ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, disagree to Strongly Disagree. Section C required the respondents to provide descriptive answers as per their choices. For the Yes/No responses, respondents were required to justify their responses. The researchers gave out forty questionnaires and there was a 100% return rate, showing that fathers willingly participated in the study.

A focus group interview was also conducted with the mothers of preschool children of the selected schools to probe on important issues like whether the fathers provide nurturance to their preschool children or not. The researcher/s focused on information based on the research objectives of the study. Two focus group sessions, involving ten mothers each, were arranged as "focus groups are normally comprised of six to ten people large enough to exchange ideas and opinions, but small enough for everyone to participate in the discussion" (Kothari, 2010). The duration of the interview did not exceed an hour with each group. The researchers facilitated discussion that covered the key issues and encouraged all the respondents participate in the discussion giving each one a chance to do so. A

research assistant recorded and observed the deliberations. The focus group interviews were held in the classroom at a convenient time for the participants. Qualitative data from the focus group interviews was recorded, transcribed, coded, and analysed according to the themes. The findings were triangulated with the quantitative data.

A research permit was secured from Ministry of Basic Education (MoBE) for conducting a study in preschools of the Central Region. A consent form which informed the participants that the research study was a way of involving the parents in the education of their young child, was used that helped them agree to participate voluntarily (McRae & Weijer, 2011). To ensure confidence from the targeted group, the rights to privacy, confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent and freedom to participate in this study was adhered to (Best & Kahn, 2016; Locke, 2013) by assuring participants that all information will remain confidential and all reference to child's names will be withheld. The researcher sought the parents' consent through a letter and convened a meeting with them to explain parents' role for participating in the study.

The topic being researched was sensitive to the participants; the fathers and mothers could have had reluctance in responding to the study. To overcome this, the researcher/s thus explained in detail the necessity for carrying out such a study to the participants and convinced them that the results would solely be used for research purposes and confidentiality would be maintained. The researchers presumed that getting accurate views of fathers might not be possible, therefore, to enhance the credibility of the study, used triangulation method by applying multiple sources of data (questionnaire and focus group interview) and multiple approaches (quantitative and qualitative) to analyse data.

3. Results and discussions

The quantitative data from the fathers' questionnaires and qualitative data from the open-ended questions of the questionnaire, and mothers' focus-group interviews were merged and discussed for triangulation purposes. First the fathers' opinions are presented, analysed and discussed followed by the mothers' views to determine whether there were any agreements.

3.1 Demographic data

The demographic data of fathers revealed that 22.5% of the fathers fell into the age-range of 18-30 years. It was found that (2.5%) were between 18-20 years; 12.5% between 21-25 year; 7.5% between 26-30 years. Majority (77.5%) were thus between 31-50+ years which implies that most of the fathers were mature, who perhaps had taken decisions regarding nurturing of their children (see figure 2 below) on their own.

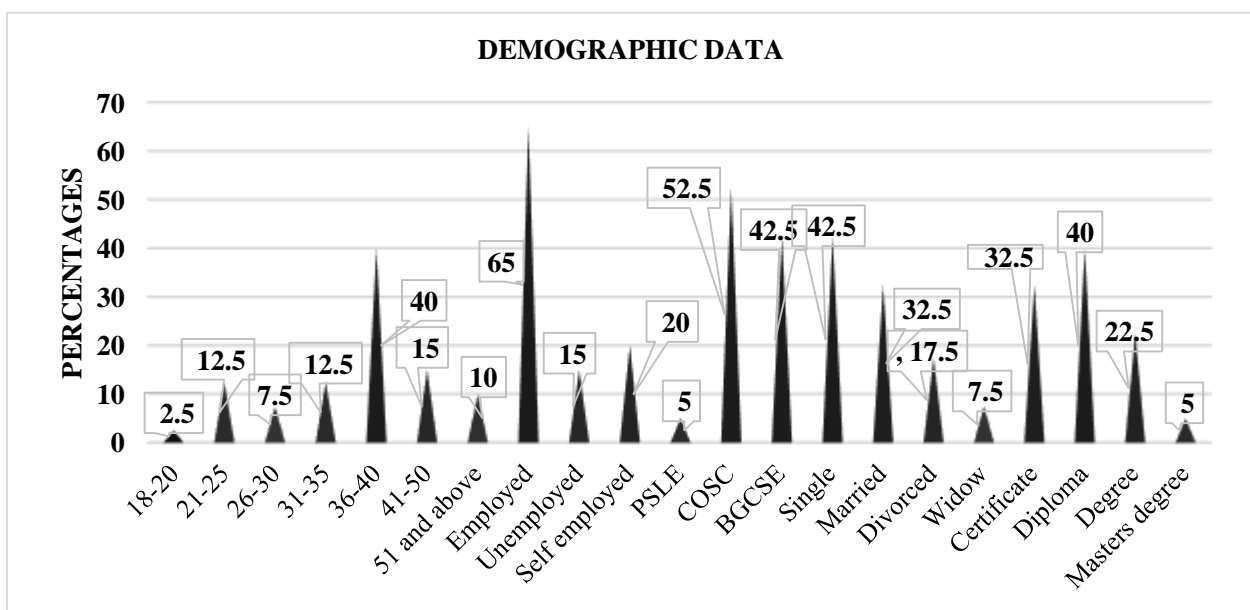


Figure 2. Fathers' demographic data

The educational qualifications of the respondents were quite impressive because they revealed a remarkable level of formal education. Almost 1/3rd of them, i.e., 32.5% (13) had certificate qualifications, 40% (16) acquired diploma qualifications, 22.5% (9) were graduates, and 5% (2) even acquired a Master's degree. This means that 2/3rd of the sampled fathers had diploma and degree qualification, and only 1/3rd had certificate qualification. The participants also revealed that 2(5%) had primary school certificate, while majority of the participants 38(95%) had COSC and BGCSE. This is an indication that the majority of fathers had achieved an adequate level of education.

In terms of the employment status, the analysis indicates that 6(15%) fathers were unemployed, 8(20%) were self-employed, while the majority 26(65%) were employed. The high percentage of employed fathers could probably indicate that these fathers were able to provide for their children, to a certain extent.

The information about the participants' marital status shows that 17(42.2%) of fathers were single, 13(32.5%) were married, 7(17.5%) were divorced, while 3(7.5%) were widowed. The high percentage of single fathers may be an indication that a lot of fathers had children before they could marry, or they probably were cohabiting with the childrens' mothers, which is very common in Botswana.

3.2 Fathers execute the expressive role of a nurturer

Table 1 presents findings from the questionnaire on how fathers execute the following aspects:

How fathers execute their expressive role was investigated using questionnaire. Findings are presented below. Table 1 presents findings from the questionnaire on how fathers execute:

Table 1.

How fathers execute the expressive role of a nurturer.

Statements	Agree	%	Disagree	%
Fathers talk to children about their school and assist them in their homework if any.	20	50	20	50
Fathers spend quality time with their children and show them the love that they have for their Children.	17	42.5	23	57.5

3.2.1 Fathers talk to children about their school and assist them in their homework if any

The findings show that half of the participants, i.e., 50% (20) always talk to their children about what they did at school and assist them in doing their tasks/activities at home. The other half, 50% (20), on the other hand indicated that they did not ask about what their preschool children did at school, nor did they assist or monitor them while doing their task/activities, if any.

The interviewed mothers also expressed concern that fathers are doing less in executing their expressive roles to their children particularly in assisting, monitoring and in school tasks/activities and some mothers suspected and said that:

- “this could be caused as men believe that preschool children are way too small to spend much time with, hence they always should have their mothers to nurture them”

The involvement of fathers exerts an influence on children's positive attitudes to school and help improve their performance (Goodall, 2013). The findings of the current study indicate that Batswana fathers partly supported preschool education and sounded positive about their role, but they did not actually perform it, probably as a result of cultural limits and pressure of fathers not expected to be expressive and nurturing.

3.2.2 Fathers spend quality time with their children and show them the love that they have for their children

The findings show that fathers do not spend quality time with their children as less than half of them, i.e., only 42.5% (17) of the participants agreed that they spent quality time with their children, while 57.5% (23) disagreed. This is suggesting that fathers do not always get time to spend with their preschool children. Our findings are consistent with a previous study conducted by Hofferth and Lee (2015) which found that the long hours taken by fathers at work has a negative relationship with the time they spend with their children. Fathers have a significant effect on the amount and quality of time

they spend with their children (Volker (2014). The findings of this study are also in line with previous research by Saraff and Stivastava (2008) highlighting that a father has to be a close friend to his children as this will enable him to constantly keep a check over children's activities inside and outside home and help them become responsible citizens. Generally speaking, in families, work and time with children often compete with one another, with parents spending more time in the workplace than they are able to spend at home (Yogman & Garfield, 2016). Thus, fathers should alter their lifestyle and habits in the best interests of their children (Morgan, Lubans, Callister et al, 2011).

3.3 Fathers' viewpoints on the expressive role of a nurturer

Table 2 depicts the views expressed by the fathers.

Table 2.

Fathers views on their expressive role of a nurturer

Statements	Agree	%	Disagree	%
Fathers should nurture their children by providing emotional support and comfort	34	85	6	15
Fathers should feel pressurized to participate in expressive roles	24	60	16	40
Fathers' past experiences with their own fathers is important for their involvement	28	70	12	30
Marriage and family therapists, should remind fathers of their roles in care and development of their children	34	85	6	15

3.3.1 Fathers should nurture their children by providing emotional support and comfort

Fathers are an important resource for their children, particularly if they invest time, money and emotional support which contribute to healthy child development (Carlson & Magnuson, 2011). As shown in Table 2, out of the forty participants, 85% (34) agreed that fathers should nurture their children by providing emotional support and comfort, while only 15% (6) disagreed with that statement, which could be an indication that Batswana fathers perceive providing emotional support and comfort for their children as a way of nurturing them. This was quite encouraging as research shows that children whose fathers partake some of the expressive role like reading regularly to them, had better academic outcomes and that also seemed to foster emotional security, and act as a vital means of transmitting shared values from one generation to the next (Buchanan & Flouri, 2010).

3.3.2 Fathers should feel pressurized to participate in expressive roles

Table 2 shows that 60% (24) of them agreed that fathers should feel pressurized indeed to participate in expressive roles; whilst only 40% (16) felt that fathers should not feel the pressure, and at all times fulfil the expressive role for their children. This indicates that the Batswana fathers feel that external pressure should be there to engage in expressive roles and nurture their preschool children. Although the findings show that the fathers do feel that they should perform the expressive roles for their children by providing emotional support and comfort, by talking to their children, monitoring, and helping them in their homework, it is also noteworthy that majority (60%) said that they need external pressure to execute their roles effectively.

3.3.3 Fathers' past experiences with their own fathers is important for their involvement

When asked whether the past experiences with their own fathers is important or not for their own involvement with their children, 70% (28) of the participants responded positively as shown in Table 2. The remaining 30% (12) participants, however, disagreed with this statement.

During the focus group discussion the mothers complemented the above findings as follows:

- Some fathers are disadvantaged by the fact that they grew up in single mother headed families where mothers did all the household chores and groomed them single-handedly; hence they never had an opportunity to be modelled by their fathers.
- Fathers give their sons an insight into the world of men, and prepare them for the challenges of life.

- Fathers possess a parenting style that is greatly different from that of mothers; variance is vital in healthy child development.

The findings thus suggest that fathers agreed that their past experience is important, the mothers too feel that mostly Batswana fathers stayed with, and thus were influenced by their mother, who had done everything single-handedly. The mothers further stated that the absence of fathers, who are uniquely positioned to bring positive benefits to their children, could not guide and prepare them to face challenges. The role of fathers as nurturers, were viewed by mothers differently in this study. It could thus be concluded that most of today's fathers could really have reaped the benefits of learning to be responsible fathers, if they had had an opportunity to grow in a family with a father figure (Clowes, Ratele & Shefer, 2013).

3.3.4 Marriage and family therapists should remind fathers of their roles in care and development of their children

Table 2 shows that a majority, i.e., 85% (34) of the respondents agreed that therapists should support fathers and remind them of their expressive roles, while only, i.e., 15% (6) disagreed with such an option. This is an indication that Batswana fathers believed that it is important for family therapists to always remind them of the important roles they should play as fathers. Literature endorse this view of the fathers as they endorse that therapists should use their skills to try and engage fathers in their children's lives for the benefit of both the fathers and their children; and provide basic childcare skills to help fathers become more effective parents (Lamb, 2010; Volker, 2014).

3.4 Challenges faced by the Batswana fathers

The researchers also analysed the challenges faced by these fathers in living up their expressive roles for providing nurturance. The responses from the questionnaire are picked up and analysed as follows (Table 3):

Table 3.

Challenges faced by fathers

Statements	Agree	%	Disagree	%
Societal culture limits fathers to execute and express their roles as child nurturers	28	70	12	30
Residential proximity between father and children affects the expressive role of a father	23	57.5	17	42.5
Parental relationship affects fathers' involvement and caregiving for their children	29	72.5	11	27.5
Fathers' armour and habits can fail them to spend leisure time with their children	35	87.5	5	12.5
Fathers' level of education affects participation with their children	22	55	18	45

3.4.1 Societal culture limits fathers to execute and express their roles as child nurturers

Table 3 shows that majority (70%) of fathers agreed that societal culture limits fathers to execute and express their roles as child nurturers, while only 30% (12) disagreed. Most mothers confirmed this finding by pointing out that:

- "Botswana culture advocates for fathers to be heads of families and they should satisfy only the bread-winner's role".
- 'It is disheartening to find fathers engaging in house-hold activities, 'what will people say?'

Studies suggest that fathers should feel the urge to take part in activities involving their children (Menon, 2013). The African culture endorses mothers as the primary care givers who offer unconditional love for their children and the family (Ratele, Shefer, & Clowes, 2012). This view has influenced the Batswana culture hugely, as fathers are often criticised when they nurture their own children, as these roles are historically delegated to mothers. It is also evident that many of today's fathers, who take on domestic chores or engage in care giving activities still feel that they are doing women's work and gain little positive self-identity or purpose in exercising these skills (Lamb, 2010).

This could probably be interpreted that if any father has an urge to participate in some nurturing activities, e.g., changing diapers, they will do it with fear of being scorned by anyone who can see them.

3.4.2 Residential proximity between father-children affects the expressive role of a father

As shown in Table 3, the findings reveal that 57.5% (23) respondents, agree that residential proximity of fathers with their children affect the role that fathers should play in care giving for their children, while 42.5% (17) disagreed.

The mothers commented that:

- It is not the distance that should inspire fathers to look after their children but their desire to do so.
- If fathers are determined to be involved in their children's lives, they will always do it irrespective of the distance.

Anecdotal evidence shows that due to high rates of divorce and childbearing outside marriage in Botswana, increasing numbers of children find themselves living apart from their biological fathers because fathers are less likely to be granted primary custody. The findings reveal that more than half of the Botswana fathers perceive the distance they live away from their children as an obstacle that prevents them from being fully involved with children. The mothers, however, differed in their views and felt that fathers should be determined to offer care to their children, even if they lived far away from them just like Nepomnyaschy and Garfinkel (2010), who opined that lack of co-residence should not necessarily prohibit fathers from remaining actively involved in the lives of their children.

3.4.3 Parental Relationship Affects Fathers' Involvement and Care Giving for their Children

Table 3 show that 72.5% (29), i.e., majority agreed that parental relationship limits fathers' involvement; only 27.5% (11) disagreed with the statement. It appears that fathers understood the importance of having a positive relationship with the mother of their children. The qualitative data confirmed that:

- When fathers and mothers did not get along well, it affected the involvement of fathers with their children.
- Mothers obstructed paternal involvement, when they did not share good relationship. Mothers complemented the fathers' statements by stating that:
- It is not possible to relate with someone you are not on good terms with.
- If we (mothers) are not in good terms with our children's fathers, in most cases we like seeing things done on our terms.
- We are important figures in the lives of our children, therefore, if we are in good terms with the fathers, then the level of participation of fathers in their children's lives might be improved.
- It should not go to the extent of affecting the relationship with their children.
- This should be maintained even in the event of divorce for the sake of children.

If parents' relationship is not good then it affects the father-child relationship and the fathers' expressive role is also compromised. The findings highlight that mothers' and fathers' collaboration will act as a key for fathers to gain access to their children. Research shows that fathers who are not married to their child's mother, or are divorced and non-custodial, are often prohibited by mothers from being as involved with their children as they would like to be (Berlyn, Wise & Soriano, 2008; Behson, Holmes, Hill et al., 2018).

3.4.4 Fathers' armour and habits can fail them to spend leisure time with their children

The result revealed that 87.5% (35) of the participants agreed that the armour and habits of manhood do contribute and fail most of them to spend leisure time with their children. Only 12.5% (5) opined negatively. The high number of fathers agreeing to the statement could mean that they have an understanding that if fathers, dwell much in manhood activities then that is likely to hinder them from spending time with children. The qualitative data revealed that Botswana fathers said that:

- Fathers must refrain from engaging in activities that make them fail to nurture their children.

Mothers on the other hand said that it is not armour, but their bad habits that affected their nurturance and stated as follows:

- Some fathers abuse drugs and alcohol as the contributory factor to their lack of support in care giving for their children.
- Fathers' involvement in multiple relationships is a challenge that hinders them to fully take part in their children's life.
- The high rate of divorce cases in the country might be the reason for some fathers in facing challenges of care giving for their children.

This could mean that if fathers desist from indulging in drug and alcohol abuse, which hinder their involvement, then they could see the need to improve their participation in executing the nurturer's roles. The qualitative data from the mothers' focus group interview concurred with those that were revealed by the fathers. Mothers also blamed the habits or the activities that some fathers engage in, believing that they play a key factor in failing them to execute their parenting duties. Batswana fathers should alter their lifestyle and habits in the best interests of the child (Morgan, Lubans, Callister et al., 2011).

3.4.5 Fathers' level of education affects participation with their children

Table 3 indicates that more than half of the participants, i.e., 55% (22) revealed that fathers' level of education is a barrier to participation with their children, only 45% (18) endorsed it otherwise. The demographic data also indicated that all the father respondents had had formal education, yet they do not perform the expressive roles. Literature indicates that the fathers with less than a high school education are less likely to be involved in their children's lives; the higher the father's level of education, the more likely he is to be closely involved with his children (Buchanan & Flouris, 2010; Nord, Brimhall & West, 2017).

Menon (2013) noted that even when fathers have limited schooling, their involvement in children's education remains a powerful factor in children's academic achievement, as these fathers have high aspirations for their children and their children develop as competent learners.

Literature shows that most accurate predictors of child's development is not the family income or parental educational level, but the extent to which parents become actively involved in them (Menon, 2013). The major issue thus is their willingness, attitude and cultural expectations. This study sees preschools helping fathers to become more involved. It is vital for parents having good level of education, regardless of socio-economic status or demographic and cultural background, as it is associated with earning of higher grades, attending school regularly, having better social skills, showing improved behaviour and adapting well to school by their children. Literature also shows that the educational level of children in the family depends on the level of the parents' education, which strongly affects the successful development of their children (Ceka & Murati, 2016; Menon, 2013). These fathers could probably be those who view the expressive roles being beneficial to their young children.

4. Conclusion

The current study draws on the roles of fathers in caring and developing their preschool children. It is presumed that a father's commitment is often determined by the demands made by the society, which in turn makes a father conscious of his responsibilities.

This study brought in the inter-relationships of the fathers and mothers of the child, and the proximity of the father and the child as issues. It shows that Batswana fathers do not provide care and nurturance to their preschool children; neither do they provide quality time to their preschool children; though a few talk to their children, help them and monitor their school tasks and activities. It also reveals that they are aware of the importance of provision of nurturance, care, and emotional support to their young ones, but believed that cultural pressure is required to remind them about their expressive roles. Both the Batswana fathers and mothers endorsed that the Batswana culture has a strong influence on fathers; and to conform to the expectations of the society, the fathers do not nurture their children.

Anecdotal evidence shows that Batswana men often have children from multiple partners, and most of these children are brought up by single mothers. The demography of Botswana shows that mothers serve as the heads in most of the families. The absence of their fathers thus, did not really prepare them for an expressive role. The Batswana fathers also indicated the importance of their past

experiences with their fathers, and emphasised that the fathers not being around when they grew up, probably did not provide them with any role models.

The study shows that fathers understand that they should perform the nurturers' roles but due to certain challenges, such as the influence of culture on fathering roles, they are unable to fully engage in their children's lives. The fathers talked about the assistance required from the marriage counsellor in reminding them about their expressive roles. The study highlighted the issue of the fathers' armour and habits that fail them to spend leisure time with their children. The educational background of the Botswana fathers, however, was not perceived as a challenge by the fathers. It is therefore evident that the society holds a very powerful role of bringing in some changes in the culture of Botswana.

A conclusion thus can be drawn from this study is that both fathers and mothers need to be sensitised regarding the importance of executing fathers' expressive roles, through workshops and training.

The Botswana Childrens' Act 2009, section 6, requires parents (fathers and mothers) or guardians protect their children by ensuring that their developmental and educational needs are taken care off. In light of this, the authors recommend that Botswana work policies should cater for working fathers as it is evident that many employed fathers often have to deal with how to balance work and parenting responsibilities. Such policies however, will afford fathers an opportunity to spend some time with their children.

It is vital that all the organizations that deal with families including the social welfare services, provide staff training in to equip fathers with some fathering skills and change the mind-set of mothers as well. Further, it is necessary for the community to create fathering programs which will stimulate mothers and fathers to work cooperatively. Such programs should be designed to facilitate fathers and mothers on the skills of parental partnership both inside and outside marriage. In most cases mothers tend to act as maternal gatekeepers, controlling fathers' engagement and involvement with their children. However, such collaboration will act as a key for fathers to gain access to their children.

The major limitations of this study were limited time, easy access and transportation, and social commitment amongst other reasons. The researcher/s thus narrowed down the study area to the central region of Botswana (Serowe and Palapye), which restricts the process of generalisation. More research on a larger scale, covering broader geographical area in Botswana, need to be carried out to identify the specific demands on fathers as well as the experiences of the fathers involved in the educational development of their pre-school children.

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