

The Implications of Child Maltreatment, a Subjective Maternal Perspective from
Cape Town.

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Abstract

This study aims to gain an understating about the maternal perspective of childhood maltreatment and the implications thereof in Cape Town. The African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) describes child maltreatment as “the intentional, unintentional or well intentional acts that endanger the physical, health, emotional, moral and the educational welfare of the child.” According to Artz, Burton, Leoschut & Ward (2015) 1 in 5 teenagers reported experiencing sexual abuse, 1 in 3 teenagers experiencing physical abuse, 16.1% of teenagers experiencing emotional abuse and one fifth of teenagers experiencing neglect (a non-physical form of maltreatment). To address this topic, Erikson’s theory of the psychosocial development was used in line with a qualitative research approach. This ensured that rich data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews with five mothers from Cape Town. The key themes that emerged was defining child maltreatment, awareness of child maltreatment and the implications thereof, and the under-reporting of child maltreatment. This study contributes to the body literature by providing a maternal insight into the happenings of child maltreatment.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Contextualisation

This research study prioritises the maternal perspective of child maltreatment and the implications thereof in the context of South Africa, Cape Town. According to Pelzer (1999), an American scholar, it is very difficult to define child maltreatment in the context of such a diverse continent like Africa. This is because in some cultures it may be accepted to discipline one's child physically where in other cultures that may be frowned upon (Peltzer, 1999). However, The African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) describes child maltreatment as "the intentional, unintentional or well intentional acts that endanger the physical, health, emotional, moral and the educational welfare of the child. These acts are those morally unacceptable to the community that may endanger the well-being of the child, although the child may or may not perceive these acts as abuse. Child neglect is the denial of the basic rights and needs of the child by parents, school, peers, governments and cultural community, occurring as acts of omission and or commission" (Peltzer, 1999). The research uses the above definition of child maltreatment given by the ANPPCANN to distinguish the difference between child maltreatment and disciplining a child.

With that definition in mind it is also important to highlight that there are different types of child maltreatment. There are non-physical forms of child maltreatment such as emotional abuse and neglect and physical forms such as sexual abuse and physical abuse (Madu & Peltzer). The research focuses on all forms of child maltreatment as they all affect the development of a child (Wurdeman, 2015).

1.2. Rationale

This problem presented in this research is gaining an understanding about the maternal perspective of child maltreatment and the impact it has on child development in Cape Town, South Africa. The World Health Organisation reported in 2014 that approximately 50.6% of the global population experienced physical forms of child maltreatment while 52.6% experienced non-physical forms of child maltreatment (Beardslee, Beatriz & Molnar, 2016). This is ideally why scholars such as Alink, Bakermans-Kranenburg, Stoltenborgh & Van IJzendoorn (2015) and Beardslee et al. (2016) state that child maltreatment is a global health issue. A

research study that was done in South Africa showing the prevalence of child maltreatment is The Optimus Study (Artz, Burton, Leoschut & Ward, 2015).

The Optimus Study that was done in 2015 on child abuse, violence and neglect (which are all forms of maltreatment) in South Africa looked at the experiences of teenagers ages 15 to 17 of childhood maltreatment (Artz et al., 2015). What Artz, et al. (2015) found was that 1 in 5 teenagers reported experiencing sexual abuse, 1 in 3 teenagers experiencing physical abuse, 16.1% of teenagers experiencing emotional abuse and one fifth of teenagers experiencing neglect (a non-physical form of maltreatment). When compared to the global statistics of child maltreatment these numbers were either higher than or equivalent to them (Artz et al., 2015). It is hypothesized that for this reason if child maltreatment is classified as a global health issue then it is most certainly a cause for concern in South Africa. The concern lies predominantly in the fact that child maltreatment impacts the development of a child (Wurdeman, 2015).

Some of the effects that child maltreatment has on child development include changes to the physical, emotional, mental, reproductive, social, and behavioural wellbeing of the individual (Beardslee et al., 2016). These effects have consequences such as re-victimisation, developing mental disorders, participating in high risk behaviours and misuse of substances (WHO, 2016). With all these factors at play, it is very easy for the person to neglect important aspects of their life such as school, work, and family (Artz et al., 2015). This then becomes a systematic issue where there is loss in economic productivity and increase costs to treat these issues (Artz et al., 2015).

This research study prioritises the maternal perspective of child maltreatment and the implications thereof in the context of Cape Town, South Africa. In using Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development, the research will pinpoint exactly how childhood maltreatment and the implications thereof on a developing child are interlinked (Wurdeman, 2015). The research will contribute to the body of knowledge on child maltreatment in South Africa while bringing a new maternal perspective to the conversation. In doing this, the research will highlight the increasing need for

interventions to prevent child maltreatment in turn creating a space for healthy child development.

The maternal perspective is of great value to this research as it will provide the researcher with an understanding about how aware mothers are about the implications that child maltreatment has on their child. Another reason why a maternal perspective is important is because according to a study done by Mboori-Ngacha, Mudany, Nduati & Rutherford (2013), 62% of the participants said that most of the disciplining was done by their mother.

1.3. Problem Statement

This problem presented in this research is gaining an understanding about the maternal perspective of child maltreatment and the impact it has on child development in Cape Town, South Africa. As stated previously the study done by Peltzer (1999) is one of the few studies that has been done about perspectives on the research topic in such a close proximity, geographically, to this study. A study that was done in Cape Town, however, looked at the prevalence of child maltreatment and the implications of it in terms of job opportunity and wages (Casey, Fang, Fry, Ganz, Hsiao, Ward & Zheng, 2018). In saying this, there is a gap in the research that this study fills by incorporating a maternal perspective and by conducting the study in Cape Town. This problem needs to be addressed as child maltreatment causes massive amounts of stress and this alters the nature of our nervous systems causing negative changes within our body and behaviour (World Health Organisation, 2016). Gaining a maternal perspective on the matter will help in

1.4. Research Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study is prioritising the maternal perspective of child maltreatment and the implications thereof in the context of Cape Town, South Africa. A specific research objective is to bring awareness to the short- and long-term effects of experiencing child maltreatment. These effects include re-victimisation, developing mental disorders, participating in high risk behaviours and misuse of substances (WHO, 2016). The awareness that this research hopes to achieve is not just amongst the maternal figures in the community but amongst the community as a whole. This is important because as Erikson illustrates in his theory, child

maltreatment and child development does not happen in a vacuum (Knefelkamp et al.,1978). It is all influenced by the child's own biology as well as the external environment that the child grows up in (Knefelkamp et al.,1978).

1.5. Research Question

What is the maternal perspective of child maltreatment and the implications thereof, in Cape Town?

1.6. Hypothesis

This study looks at the maternal perspective of childhood maltreatment and the implications thereof, in Cape Town. The researcher hypothesis's that gaining an understanding about the maternal perspective of childhood maltreatment and the implications thereof, will aid in creating awareness programs and educational workshops. These programs and workshops main aim will be to reduce the rate of childhood maltreatment to grow and nurture healthy minded individuals. In saying this, the main aim of the research is not to prove a hypothesis, but rather narrow the study down using more research questions (Gabriel, 2013).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that I have chosen for the research topic is Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development Theory. This theory fits the research topic because Erikson considers the external environment in which the child develops as well as the child's internal biology when it comes to child development (Knefelkamp, Widick & Parker, 1978). The development of a person is placed into a social context which is why his theory is known as a psychosocial model (Knefelkamp et al., 1978). The social context that is mentioned above consists of the social institutions (parents, family, schools) and the culture in which the person was born into (Knefelkamp et al., 1978). There are eight stages in Erikson's theory and as individuals progress through these stages they will be faced with what Erikson calls crises (Wurdeman, 2015). The catch to these stages is that the individual can only advance to the next stage once they have faced the previous one (Wurdeman, 2015). How individuals deal with a crisis indirectly affects their life (Wurdeman, 2015). If one stage is not completed and the person continues to age, the following stage will subsequently be difficult to resolve (Wurdeman, 2015). These stages may either result in a biological trait or a social behaviour (Wurdeman, 2015). Stage one is trust vs. mistrust, and if this stage is not resolved effectively, the remaining seven stages will all be affected (Wurdeman, 2015). For an infant to achieve trust in stage one, they must be able to rely on their caregivers to meet their basic needs (Wurdeman, 2015). If caregivers do not fulfil this duty by neglecting or abusing the infant, the stage will most likely result in mistrust (Wurdeman, 2015). Erikson (as cited in Wurdeman, 2015) argues that "individuals who have experienced neglect as a child tend to develop mistrust in their relationships as adults." This is just one example of the long-term effects of child maltreatment. Child maltreatment such as verbal abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse have all proven to negatively affect the ongoing develop of an individual (Wurdeman, 2015). Stages one to five caters for ages 0 to 18 years old and because this research is focused on child maltreatment, only these stages will be referenced (Knefelkamp et al., 1978).

It is hypothesized that if a child experiences maltreatment during these stages, it can cause negative outcomes which in turn means that the child is laying a foundation for unhealthy personality traits. By gaining a maternal perspective on child maltreatment

while using Erikson's theory of child development, how and why certain people behave and function the way they do, could be uncovered. It will also highlight what form of child maltreatment occurs in Cape Town and at what age maltreatment is experienced. This will help in deepening the understanding of the implications that child maltreatment has on child development.

Berger & Font (2015) consider that the age at which a child experiences maltreatment has a very big impact on the development of a child by stating that "studies suggest that earlier onset is generally more strongly associated with adverse developmental outcomes." This statement supports what the research hypothesizes which is that if child maltreatment is experienced at different developmental periods it will have different effects on the child's socio-emotional and cognitive development which ultimately will affect the personality traits that the child develops.

It is important to look at the maternal perspectives of the implications of child maltreatment on a developing child as mothers are the primary caregivers (Berlin, Brooks-Gunn, Howard & Martin, 2011). If it is not the biological mother, then it is often another female-figure who has mothered a child before (Berlin et al., 2011). In line with this, it is important to gain an understanding about their Perspective on childhood maltreatment is.

In the literature review below, it is demonstrated by the use of different studies as to how Erikson's theory interlinks with childhood maltreatment.

2.2. Literature review

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the maternal perspective of child maltreatment and the implications therefore in Cape Town, South Africa. A study done by Mboori-Ngacha et al. (2013) looks at the perceptions of three different tribes in Kenya about discipline versus child maltreatment. Because the line between discipline and child maltreatment is blurred, Mboori-Ngacha et al. (2013) did research to unpack this phenomenon. The population for the study was 538 adults with children under the age of 18 (Mboori-Ngacha et al., 2013). Some of the statistics that emerged were that 20% of the participant's believed that whenever their child

misbehaved, they needed to be beaten (Mboori-Ngacha et al., 2013). 62% of the participants said that disciplining such primarily be done by just the mother which supports the research taking on a maternal perspective (Mboori-Ngacha et al., 2013). 63% of the participants admitted to knowing that punishment such as caning, pinching, slapping, pulling ears, and denying food could cause fainting or even death, yet they continued to do it (Mboori-Ngacha et al., 2013). A study that was done in Ethiopia was referenced where 87% still used corporal punishment to discipline their children and of that group a further 4% admitted to inflicting trauma while punishing their children (Mboori-Ngacha et al., 2013). These alarming figures highlight the importance of my research topic. Children all over the world are willingly being punished by people that are supposed to love and care for them. Mboori-Ngacha et al. (2013) propose that the only way to address these issues is to understand the perspectives of what appropriate forms of discipline are and what the community constitutes as child maltreatment. This finding speaks to the research question, that seeks to gain insight into the maternal perspective about child maltreatment to find the gaps in their understanding and educate them, in hope of decreasing the rate of child maltreatment in Cape Town.

The second study that was done in Africa was based on sexual abuse in Zimbabwean schools. One hundred and fifty student teachers were used as participants in a study to monitor the presence of sexual abuse of pupils in the schools (Shumba, 2014). Sexual abuse was defined as teachers having sexual intercourse with pupils, having affairs with pupils, impregnating them as well as any other form of sexual assault such as inappropriate touching (Shumba, 2014). Shumba (2014) reports in their findings that it is very clear that sexual abuse is happening at schools in Zimbabwe, especially by the male teachers. This study ties into the research because schools are meant to be a safe place for children to get an education and teachers are meant to validate that safe space but if any type of abuse is happening at school the child is longer in a safe space. In the study, it is not highlighted whether the parents are aware of the abuse that is happening which is concerning because sexual abuse can have long-lasting physical and mental effects on the child. The study at hand will be able to pick up on whether mothers even think of the possibility of their child being sexually abused at school which will aid in developing an intervention to address the matter.

Kaplan (2005) did a study in Africa looking at the psychological health of African children. They concluded that African children face enormous amounts of trauma daily in the form of witnessing violence and/or being maltreated (Kaplan, 2005). The word trauma can be used interchangeable with maltreatment or it could be used to describe the consequence of maltreatment i.e. post-traumatic stress disorder (Kaplan, 2005). This is important to note because it illustrates how this study is interdisciplinary. The word trauma is derived from the medical word wound (Kaplan, 2005). That means that the concept of trauma stays the same, but it can be used across disciplines (Kaplan, 2005). This literature relates to the study as it highlights once again the hardship of being a child living in Africa. The literature can also be used to demonstrate Erikson's theory. It is not being maltreated alone that causes significant psychological damage to a child but witnessing violence has similar effects (Kaplan, 2005)

Lachman (1996) states that it is extremely difficult to define child maltreatment in the context of Africa. This is because of the blurred lines between child maltreatment and discipline across cultures (Lachman, 1996). Lachman (1996) add onto this and says that it is difficult to report and call out child maltreatment because it is still a very private act that happens when no one is watching. This is where the researcher hopes that this study will uncover exactly happens behind closed doors. That is why the study looks at a maternal perspective on the phenomenon. According to Wolfe (as cited in Lachman, 1996) the risk factors for child maltreatment include the family's socio-economic context, the child needs (if they are disabled or not) and intimate partner violence. These are very present risk factors in Cape Town, South Africa which could be why the rate of maltreatment is generally higher than the global average (Artz et al., 2015). Some implications outlined in this study, of experiencing child maltreatment include a lowered self-esteem, a challenging child-parent relationship and finding it difficult to interact with the greater society (Lachman, 1996).

Madu & Peltzer (2000) identified similar risk factors to that of Lachman (1996) while unpacking the reasons behind why child maltreatment is underreported. All forms of child maltreatment hold stigma but the worst of them all is sexual abuse (Madu &

Peltzer, 2000). Sexual abuse is associated with shame, not just for the victim but for the entire family (Madu & Peltzer, 2000). This is because it is almost always someone the family knows that is doing the abuse (Madu & Peltzer, 2000). This shame prevents victims from coming forward and allows the perpetrator to continue with their behaviour which fuels the cycle of abuse (Madu & Peltzer, 2000). This literature relates to the study at hand because one of the study's objectives is to eventually decrease the prevalence of child maltreatment. This objective cannot be achieved if the cycle of abuse is silently happening. This literature also relates to Erikson's theory as it illustrates how society impacts the way in which child maltreatment is dealt with.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Paradigm

Neuman & Cresswell (as cited in Thanh & Thanh, 2015) defines a paradigm as consisting of three aspects, namely: ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Ontology refers to the nature of reality (if it is socially constructed or not), epistemology refers to the theory and attainment of knowledge and methodology refers to the means in which that knowledge is acquired (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

This research study adopts an interpretivist paradigm. Ontologically an interpretivist paradigm believes that reality is socially constructed and that there are multiple forms of reality (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). The research highlights exactly this as the maternal perception of child maltreatment is subjective and is largely influenced by their cultural beliefs and traditions (Peltzer, 1999). Therefore, their perceptions are of a socially constructed reality. Epistemologically, the research cannot be separated from the researcher (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). In line with this study, the researcher has a deep interest in the topic and is determined to stay true to the nature of the subject. Methodologically, interpretivism seeks to collect in-depth data about lived experiences (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Therefore, it uses a qualitative approach to go about collecting rich data (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). A qualitative approach generally comprises of methods that ask broad questions (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). These methods include ethnographies, focus groups, interviews, and observations (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). These forms of data collection fit the study well as the study is looking at gaining deep insight on the topic of child maltreatment. For the purpose of this study a qualitative data collection method will be used, specifically, a semi-structured interview.

Interpretivists view the world as Willis (as cited in Thanh & Thanh, 2015) states as “different people and different groups have different perceptions of the world.”

Different people based on their culture, traditions, and history will have different opinions on what constitutes child maltreatment (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

Interpretivism is a very subjective paradigm where the narrative of the participant is essential (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). This is crucial for this study because when it comes to child maltreatment and child development there are a lot of different narratives to be told (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). These narratives and experiences are

used by the researcher to interpret the data (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Interpretivism also focuses on unpacking a phenomenon which is exactly what this research is aimed at; unpacking child maltreatment in Cape Town, South Africa (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Though, interpretivism uses a qualitative approach to methodology it is still very fluid in ways of collecting data (Thanh, & Thanh, 2015). The researcher can use multiple forms of data collection strategies as they see fit (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). This is important for this study because there will be some sort of structure while still allowing the participant to lead the data collection process. This will eliminate the 'researcher' and 'researched' dichotomy and rather have a conversation which is important to make the participant to feel comfortable (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

3.2. Research Design

The best suited conceptual approach for this research is a qualitative research design (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is because a qualitative research design works hand in hand with an interpretivist paradigm (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). As mentioned above a qualitative research design seeks to gain in-depth data from the participant by using methods that pose open-ended questions (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). This research design addresses the research purpose and objectives as it provides the space for the participant to be as open as honest as possible (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is important to achieve as the research is looking at maternal perspectives on child maltreatment to develop a new theory.

The researcher will be working inductively. This means that instead of trying to prove a hypothesis, the scope of the study will be narrowed by using the research questions (Gabriel, 2013). The two main factors at play in the research is child maltreatment and child development which got narrowed down to the research question. The research question posed by this study involves looking at the relationship between child maltreatment and child development from a maternal perspective. An inductive approach either focuses on unpacking a brand-new phenomenon or understating a different perspective of an existing phenomenon (Gabriel, 2013). The research looks at a maternal perspective on child maltreatment which is a different perspective on an existing phenomenon. Inductive research aims to develop a theory from the data that is collected (Gabriel, 2013). The theory that

will developed from this research will highlight the maternal perspective on child maltreatment in Cape Town, South Africa. After analysis of the data, the newly developed theory must be situated within the existing theories in the discipline (Gabriel, 2013). The theory that emerges from this study will fill the gap in the research done on child maltreatment in Cape Town as it will be an exploratory study.

Exploratory research is not interested in developing a solution to a problem but rather to be used a means to a solution (Dudovskiy, 2018). The research at hand will not provide a solution to problem of child maltreatment in Cape Town, however, it can influence the development of interventions. Exploratory research also study's phenomena that has not been clearly defined yet (Dudovskiy, 2018). As identified in the introduction, child maltreatment is very difficult to define in a diverse country like South Africa. That is why the research will be taking on an exploratory design, to help in creating an inclusive definition from a maternal perspective. Dudovskiy (2018) states that "when conducting exploratory research, the researcher ought to be willing to change his/her direction as a result of revelation of new data and new insights." This coincides with the epistemological position of the interpretivist paradigm which says that the research and the researcher cannot be separated from one another (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). When looking at the maternal perspective of child maltreatment as a phenomenon, the researcher will have to go with the flow of where the participants take the research. The researcher should not force the research into a particular direction.

The researcher will make use of a non-experimental design when conducting the research. The goal of a non-experimental design is to gather data by means of observation and to be purely descriptive (Panacek & Thompson, 2007). In this case, a non-experimental design will work well in representing the research as the research looks at describing and understating the maternal perspective of childhood maltreatment. A non-experimental study takes a retrospective view of things (Panacek & Thompson, 2007). Essentially, this means that it gathers data on events that have already occurred as opposed to future occurrences (Panacek & Thompson, 2007). This is relevant to the research as a maternal perspective is something that forms after an experience. A questionnaire or survey is used when applying this design to one's research as it is a descriptive form of gathering data

(Panacek & Thompson, 2007). This type of data collection can often be invalid and/or unreliable because it is not scientific at all which is why it falls under the non-experimental design (Panacek & Thompson, 2007). As this research is not looking to prove anything scientifically, the data collection will be appropriate. In this relation to the study, the data collection method was by means of a semi-structured interview.

The maternal perspective of child maltreatment and the implications thereof is a very subjective research topic, therefore, there are no models or theories that this phenomenon fits into. That is why this study will be based solely off a literature assessment. A literature assessment is “a search and evaluation of the available literature in your given subject or chosen topic area” (Royal Liberty Fund, 2020). With the research topic not needing to fit into a particular model, the researcher conducted a literature assessment on the topic and will use that in going about conducting the study. The study also comprises of many different concepts and factors including child maltreatment, child development, impact, society, and maternal perspective. These different factors fall into different disciplines, but all come together to unpack the phenomenon at hand.

That is essentially why the research will make use of an inter-disciplinary design. An inter-disciplinary design integrates the knowledge and methods from different disciplines to develop an appropriate approach to conduct the study (Aboelela, Bakken, Carrasquillo, Formicola, Gebbie, Glied, Haas & Larson, 2007). The disciplines that this study pulls from is Psychology, Biology and Sociology. Psychology because as a result child maltreatment one could develop mental disorder. The phenomenon of child maltreatment, however, is also relevant to community psychology. Biology comes into play when the study looks at the implications of child maltreatment on child development. Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development illustrates how child development is not just biological but also social which falls under Sociology.

3.3. Population and Sampling

A research population is a very large group of people or objects that have a commonality (Explorable.com, 2009). That commonality is in form of certain characteristics that will help answer the research question. In terms of this research

study, the research population is biological mothers living in Cape Town, who have mothered a child from gestation until adolescence. The research question that was answered was, 'what is the maternal perspective on childhood maltreatment and the implications thereof, in Cape Town?'. The need for the mothers to be biological comes from research done by Choi & Sikkema (2016) who made the point of stating that prenatal exposure to maltreatment impacts the child just as much as postnatal maltreatment. Mothering up to adolescence is relevant as Erikson states that the most crucial phases in the development of a child is from stage 1 (birth) to stage 4 (adolescence) (Knefelkamp, Parker & Widick, 1978). The research that is being done will benefit this group of individuals, however, because this group is so large, a sample will be pulled from it to use as participants for the study (Explorable.com, 2009).

The unit of analysis refers to the sample and how the material produced by the sample will be analysed (Bengtsson, 2016). For example, is the data being collected at different times in the sample's life, will the data be split into different genders or will it be looked at in its entirety (Bengtsson, 2016). With regards to this study the unit of analysis were the five biological mothers pulled from the population (Bengtsson, 2016). In line with the definition of unit of analysis, the data was analysed as its entirety as opposed to being broken up into different time frames or genders (Bengtsson, 2016). This is because the aim of the study is to analyse the mother's perceptions of child maltreatment at that specific moment in their life (Bengtsson, 2016). Child maltreatment was then the unit of observation as it is the material that was analysed (Bengtsson, 2016).

A sample is essentially a small group of people or objects who embody the characteristics of the population that will be used as the participants (Explorable.com, 2009). Five biological mothers that have mothered their child from gestation until adolescence were pulled from the population and formed the sample (The reason as to why the sample size was so small will be addressed under the 'sample size' heading). The sample does represent the population, characteristically, as they are all biological mothers who have mothered their child/ren from gestation until adolescence. They all also identify as being coloured, however, there is a difference in their age, socioeconomic status, educational background and where

they reside in Cape Town. The age of the participants ranges from 28 to 47 with one having grade 9, another having only matric while the other three have university degrees. These participants were chosen using a sampling method.

A sampling method is the process of selecting the sample from the population to be the participants for the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2020). The sampling method used in this study is purposive sampling (Nieuwenhuis, 2020). Purposive sampling is choosing individuals from the population that foster the key aspects of the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2020). It is a criteria-based sampling method (Nieuwenhuis, 2020). This method is ideal for this study as it required the participants to embody strict characteristics. These characteristics included being a biological mother of a child from gestation till adolescence as well as residing in Cape Town. The researcher has identified that this sample represented the population and provided rich data on their perception of child maltreatment.

The sample size for a qualitative study varies depending on the aim of the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2020). It is recommended, however, that once data saturation has been achieved then the data collection process is considered complete (Nieuwenhuis, 2020). Data saturation is when similar themes start to present itself in the raw data (Nieuwenhuis, 2020). The researcher originally had eight participants for the study but three dropped out as they either no longer felt comfortable enough to speak on the topic of child maltreatment or they did not have time to be interviewed. Though five participants are not an ideal number of participants for a qualitative study, there were themes that were established during the data collection process.

3.4. Data Collection Method

This study is a qualitative study which means that the data collection method needed to ask broad questions to gain an in-depth understanding about the topic (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). There are different forms of data collection methods that do this namely, questionnaires, surveys, focus groups, and interviews (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). For the purpose of this study semi-structured interviews were used as a means of collecting data. A semi-structured interview is structured in such a way that a conversation forms between the interviewee and the interviewer (Thanh & Thanh,

2015). This is different from a structured interview which is normally a question answer session (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Semi-structured interviews have open-ended questions with conversational prompts rather than direct/specific questions about the topic (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). The semi-structured interview for this study consisted of a 'getting settled in' introduction which included questions about their demographic information, seven conversational prompts and a conclusion to end off the interview. This type of data collection method suited the study well as the study looks at the maternal perspective of child maltreatment and the implications thereof. This particular data collection method allowed the researcher to gain an understanding of child maltreatment from mother's perspective as opposed to seeking right or wrong answers about the topic (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). By allowing the conversation to flow, the researcher created a space for the participant to be more trusting and open (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

There were a few steps that needed to be taken before the interview could be done (Bolderston, 2012). The first step was contacting the potential participants to debrief them on the topic and find out whether they are willing to be interviewed (Bolderston, 2012). The researcher did this by reaching out to eight potential participants via an instant messaging app. Initially they all responded positively and were willing to do the interview. The second step was to arrange a suitable time and date they would be able to do the interview (Bolderston, 2012). The researcher sent out another message getting confirmation about the logistics of the interview as well as sending out the consent form. The consent form either needed to be signed and scanned back to the researcher or the potential participant had to provide written consent in the form of a message. The researcher also explained that the interview had to be telephonically due to the unforeseen circumstances of the Coronavirus. Five of the potential participants replied stating their preferred time and gave written consent. Three of the potential participants expressed that they either no longer felt comfortable about topic of child maltreatment or they were too busy to arrange a time. As the participants were mothers, it was understandable that during a time of home-schooling and maintaining a job that making time for an interview may not have been a priority for them. There were no consequences for them when they dropped out, however, it did leave the study with less data to analyse. With the five confirmed participants the data collection process went ahead, and the researcher

conducted the telephonic interviews. After collecting the data, the researcher transcribed the interviews into Word documents on their personal laptop to ensure that no-one else could access the interviews. After the transcription process, the researcher analysed the data.

3.5. Data Analysis Methods

Qualitative data analysis methods aim to analyse the attitudes, perceptions and understanding from a group of people about a certain phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis, 2020). In this instance, the maternal perception of child maltreatment was analysed by using the thematic analysis method. “Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For example, three main themes emerged when the researcher analysed the data. They are defining child maltreatment, awareness of child maltreatment and the implications thereof and the under-reporting of child maltreatment. Finding these common themes in the data helped the researcher to identify the main concerns about how mothers living in Cape Town feel about child maltreatment.

A benefit about using thematic analysis which also runs throughout the research approach is that it is flexible (Braun & Clarke, 2006). With all the different aspects of the research approach being flexible, it allowed rich data to emerge in the analysis phase (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This was an important aspect to grasp an understanding about the maternal perception of child maltreatment in Cape Town.

When it came to the coding process and finding emerging themes, the researcher used an inductive approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This means that instead of finding material within the data that fit into existing themes, they rather coded the data and formed new themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This was ideal for this study as it offered a new way of looking at the topic of child maltreatment so essentially a new theory was developed (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

When doing an inductive thematic analysis, there are six phases that needed to be followed (Moules, Nowell, Norris & White, 2017). These phases are, familiarization, assigning initial codes to describe the data, searching for themes across the codes,

reviewing the themes, defining, and naming the themes, and producing the analysis report (Moules et al., 2017).

The familiarization phase started when the researcher transcribed the interviews (Moules et al., 2017). This is because the process of transcribing the interview from an audio file to a Word document, allowed the researcher to reengage with the material at their own pace (Moules et al., 2017).

Once the transcription was complete, the researcher started to assign initial codes to the data (Moules et al., 2017). This was done by highlighting points in the interview that stood out to the researcher. The codes that emerged were the understanding or presenting a definition of child maltreatment, emphasizing the importance of awareness around the implications of child maltreatment, and opinions for why child maltreatment is underreported in Cape Town. These codes stood out to the researcher as they believed it laid the foundation for understanding the maternal perception of child maltreatment in Cape Town.

Phase three involved producing themes from the codes that were highlighted (Moules et al., 2017). Themes are broad and can be seen as a collective name for a group of codes (Moules et al., 2017). The process of putting codes into boxes and calling it a theme was a bit challenging for the researcher as some codes fit into multiple themes (Moules et al., 2017). This meant that researcher had to perform the process of elimination and figure out which codes best suited a theme. The three themes that the researcher came up with based off the codes that emerged was defining child maltreatment, awareness of child maltreatment and the implications thereof, and the under-reporting of child maltreatment.

Before the researcher could settle on these three themes, they had to review the themes which is phase four of the data analysis process (Moules et al., 2017). The process of reviewing themes involves looking at them and the codes that fall under them and confirm that there are no contradictions or overlapping between them (Moules et al., 2017). The researcher reviewed the themes by comparing them and concluded that were independent of each other and were relevant to the research aim which is gaining a maternal perception of child maltreatment in Cape Town.

By phase five of the process, the researcher needed be able to tell a story about the theme by naming and describing it (Moules et al., 2017). This is also the phase where if the researcher cannot tell a coherent story about the theme then they may need to revisit the previous phases to distinguish if their themes are rigid enough (Moules et al., 2017). For this study, the researcher could tell a story about each of the themes that they had developed. The theme *defining child maltreatment* refers to the different ways in which the participants defined the term child maltreatment. Only one participant knew exactly what child maltreatment meant, the other four were unsure about the term. This led the researcher to think that child maltreatment in Cape Town is high because 80% of their participants did not know what is classified as child maltreatment. The second theme is *awareness about child maltreatment and the implications thereof*. The researcher felt this was an important theme as their participants emphasized the importance being aware of the implications that child maltreatment has on the developing child. They went as far as to say that if parents and caregivers knew the implications of it, it would reduce the experiences of child maltreatment. The third and final theme is the *under-reporting of child maltreatment*. The researcher identified this as an important theme because it explains why child maltreatment is under reported in Cape Town. The participants expressed that the reasons for under reporting child maltreatment could be because of the stigma that is attached to the act. The stigma that they are referring to here, as they elaborated on, was the fact that most child maltreatment is done by family members or people who are close to the family. Another important reason why the participants suggested that child maltreatment is under reported in Cape Town is because of the lack of resources and urgency within the police department in dealing with the crisis. For example, one of the participants said she does not have the time and patience to go and sit at the police station and write up a report on someone who mistreated her child. This is extremely concerning for the researcher which is why they included it as a theme.

The sixth and final phase in the process of thematic data analysis is producing a report (Moules et al., 2017). This phase goes into more detail with explain the story behind each theme and why those themes are relevant (Moules et al., 2017). This section is unpacked under the following heading.

4. Interpretation and findings

The aim of this research study is to gain insight into the maternal perspective of child maltreatment in Cape Town. Data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews and the data analysis phase of this research study produced three main themes. These themes are *defining child maltreatment*, *awareness of child maltreatment and the implications thereof*, and the *under-reporting of child maltreatment*. These themes were identified by completing the five previous phases of doing a thematic data analysis. The current phase of the research process is to interpret the analysed data and present those interpretations as findings. Those findings will then be discussed in relation to the aim of the study and the other literature that has been presented. Essentially, in this phase, the researcher is providing answers to the research question which states: what is the maternal perspective of child maltreatment and the implications thereof, in Cape Town?

The way the findings will be presented is by firstly pulling abstracts from the interviews and literature review and comparing that in relation to each theme (Anderson, 2010). Then a flow diagram will be used to illustrate how all three themes are connected (Verdinelli & Scagnoli, 2013).

4.1. Theme 1: *Definition*

This theme refers to how accurately the participants defined the concept of child maltreatment. Yes, the aim of the study is to get a maternal perspective on the matter and not a correct answer. However, how the participants define the concept helps the researcher to understand what their perspective is based off. Out of the five participants, only participant five gave a description that encompassed all the aspects of the definition without the prompts from the interviewer. This could be because they had an educational background in psychology and worked as a teacher. Participant five's definition was as follows "child maltreatment is any form of physical, emotional, sexual, or mental abuse or neglect of a child. This can range from anything such as beating a child or simply ignoring their needs".

The literature states that child maltreatment is defined by The African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) as "the

intentional, unintentional or well intentional acts that endanger the physical, health, emotional, moral and the educational welfare of the child.” (Peltzer, 1999).

With only participant out of the five being able to effectively describe what child maltreatment is, leads the researcher to propose that child maltreatment is high in Cape Town and South Africa because mothers do not know what it means to maltreat a child (Artz et al., 2015).

Participant three for example describes child maltreatment as “Child maltreatment is when people hit children with maybe their hand or sometimes a slipper and then the child cries a lot.” This participant views child maltreatment as being purely physical – which it is not. The participant also seems okay with the fact that the child cries a lot after getting physically disciplined. This may have negative impacts on a child’s development.

4.2. Theme 2: Awareness of Child Maltreatment and the Implications Thereof

The research objective of this study is to spread awareness about what child maltreatment is and how child maltreatment affects the development of a child. Some of these effects from the literature include “re-victimisation, developing mental disorders, participating in high risk behaviours and misuse of substances” (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2016). In spreading awareness and educating the public on these implications of child maltreatment, the researcher hopes the number of cases will start to decrease.

Participant one’s opinion is in line with the researchers hope of decreasing the number of cases by saying “if there was a nationwide campaign that brings awareness about the needs of children and how they need more from us than just food, shelter, and clothes” then it would be possible.

To illustrate what the participant meant by a child needing more than just food, shelter, and clothes, Erik Erikson can help. Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development helps us to understand if a child experiences neglect or abuse during one stage of their life then that feeling will be transferred onto the subsequent stages

of their life too (Wurdeman, 2015). This can result in the child developing trust issues when growing up so yes, caregivers are not just responsible for providing food, shelter, and clothes for their child but love and empathy too (Wurdeman, 2015).

4.3. Theme 3: *Under-reporting of Child Maltreatment*

In relation to underreporting, both participant three and five had similar views on the topic. Participant three expressed their disappointment with the police by saying “because we tried to report something at the police station, and it took long to be seen to ... So, I can understand why people don’t want to report it because the process is so long.”

Participant five, when asked about why child maltreatment is so underreported in Cape Town, they said, “... also, our justice system fails us all the time”. Participant five also suggested that if there was awareness about the topic “coupled with the reassurance of a better justice system and the government delivering on the promises to provide facilities to underprivileged areas”, will more people start reporting the act.

The literature, however, did not identify the lack of urgency of the police or the government in dealing with child maltreatment as a reason why child maltreatment is underreported. Madu & Peltzer (2000) suggested that child maltreatment is underreported because of the stigma attached to the act. Participant two and four did mention this by explaining that sometimes it is just easier for caregivers to sweep child maltreatment under the rug because the maltreatment is being done by people they know.

This flow chart (Figure 1) will illustrate how all three themes are connected to answer the research question and address the research aim. The research question and aim are to gain an understanding on the maternal perspective of child maltreatment and its implications on child development in Cape Town.

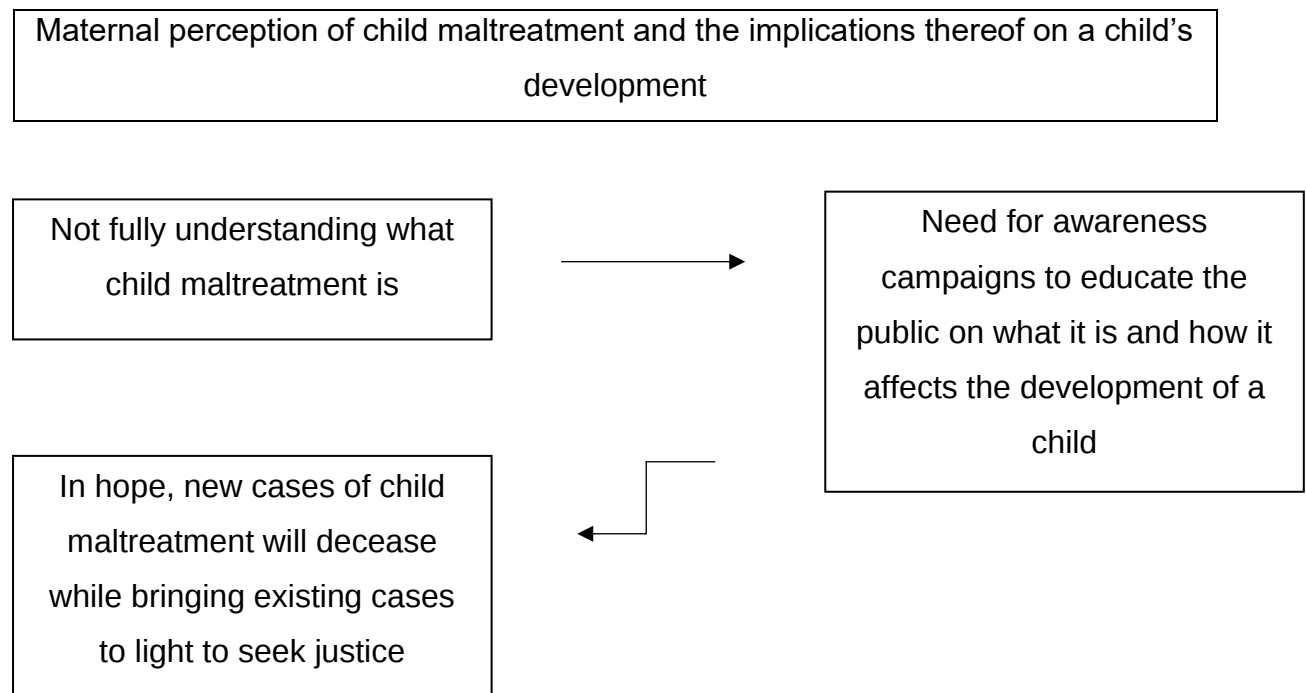


Figure 1.

This figure illustrates how important it is for there to be awareness campaigns about the definition and implications of child maltreatment on a developing child. This is because the society can start rethinking their discipline styles and how they treat their children which in turn will hopefully decrease the number of new cases and bring existing cases forward.

As this research used a non-experimental approach the validity and reliability may have been compromised, however, the researcher did everything to ensure this was limited (Panacek & Thompson, 2007). The ways in which the researcher maximised the responses was by one, not making the interview too long and moving to the next prompt when the researcher felt the interviewee was going off track (Panacek & Thompson, 2007). Two, the researcher made sure to not ask repetitive questions as this would have caused the interviewee to lose interest (Panacek & Thompson, 2007). Three and lastly, the researcher made sure that the interviewees chose the time most convenient for them so that the researcher could have their full attention (Panacek & Thompson, 2007). All of these were out into place to ensure these findings are as valid and reliable as possible (Panacek & Thompson, 2007).

In conclusion, three themes emerged from the data, namely, defining child maltreatment, awareness of child maltreatment and the implications thereof and the under-reporting of child maltreatment. Steps such as ensuring the interview was not long, picking up on the interviewee's enthusiasm to answer, and ensuring the interviewee was not distracted were used to maximise the validity and reliability of the findings.

5. Conclusion

The research question asked, 'what is the maternal perspective of child maltreatment and the implications thereof, in Cape Town?'. This question was answered by means of the integration of the literature review and findings from the interviews. The maternal perspective on child maltreatment and its implications is that mothers do not understand the complexity of physical and non-physical forms of child maltreatment. This is demonstrated by their lack in understanding of what child maltreatment. There is also no urgency from their side to report any form of child maltreatment as they have no hope in the government to do something about it. The research problem is the high rate of child maltreatment in Cape Town. The way in which that was addressed was by this study contributing to the body of literature on child maltreatment in Cape Town. The body of literature on this topic is very small so the researcher hopes this study will encourage the development of more awareness programmes. The research goal was achieved by gaining an insight into the maternal perspective of child maltreatment and the implications thereof in Cape Town.

The findings from study may help to put other studies into perspective. If not, this study could encourage future research on the topic. If this study is to be replicated it is important to note that a lot more participants are needed to get a better understanding. This study was limited with the number of participants which could have affected the findings dramatically.

Apart from the number of participants limiting the study, the notion of having to do telephonic interview instead of in-person interviews also limited the study. This is because to do qualitative research effectively, the interviewer needs to be able to read the body language of the participant. This was not possible over the phone. A semi-structured interview also involves having a conversation which is a lot easier to do in person than over the phone, therefore, this aspect limited the study as well.

The main ethical concern that arouse was the sensitivity of the topic, but the researcher ensured the participants that anonymity and confidentiality were held in the greatest respect.

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Appendix 1: Consent Form



Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants To whom it may concern, My name is Kirsten Adams and I am a student at Varsity College. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Johrine Cronjé about the maternal perspective of child maltreatment and the implications thereof in the context of Cape Town, South Africa. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of the maternal perspective of the implications of child maltreatment on child development. I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.
What will I be doing if I participate in your study? I would like to invite you to participate in this research because you are one of the candidates that meet the requirements for the study. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to get your perspective on the topic of child maltreatment in Cape Town by means of an interview. You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.
Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study? Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your perceptions of child maltreatment. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.
Do I have to participate in the study? • Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary; • If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so; • Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.
Will my identity be protected? I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only

my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at Varsity College, will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.

What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my Honours in Psychology. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:
Kirsten Adams

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Consent form for participants

I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by Kirsten Adams about gaining insight on the maternal perspective of child maltreatment in Cape Town.

This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:

- I agree to be interviewed for this research.
- My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
- My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
- I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
- I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

Signature	Date

Appendix 2: Consent Form to Record Audio



CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO OR VIDEO RECORDING

Consent form for participants	
I, _____, agree to allow Kirsten Adams to audio record my interviews as part of the research about gaining insight on the maternal perspective of child maltreatment in Cape Town. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that: • My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private. • The recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer. • Only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.	
Signature	Date

Appendix 3: Semi-structured Interview Prompts

Getting settled

Prompt: How have you been coping during the lockdown?

Demographic information

Prompt: Could you please disclose as much demographic information as you feel comfortable, for example, age, ethnicity, education, and which part of Cape Town you reside in.

Research question

Prompt: What is your understanding of child maltreatment?

Prompt: What are your thoughts on child maltreatment being a societal issue rather than an individual issue?

Prompt: Under what circumstances do you think children are more likely to be exposed to child maltreatment?

Prompt: Do you think that child maltreatment has any implications on the development of a child?

Prompt: Do you think that it is possible to prevent child maltreatment?

Prompt: Why do you think child maltreatment is under reported in Cape Town?

Prompt: Do you agree or disagree with the statement: Child maltreatment fuels the cycle of poverty? Explain

Conclusion

Thank you so much for participating in my research study, I really appreciate it.

Prompt: If you have any questions or concerns feel free to express them now

Appendix 4: Clearance Letter



30 June 2020

Student name: Kirsten Adams

Student number: 20119745

Campus: Varsity College Cape Town

Re: Approval of Honours in Psychology Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and your supporting documents and instruments are in order to proceed. We hereby provide you with permission to proceed with your research.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

Supervisor: Johrine Cronje

Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC): Dr Marizanne Grundlingh

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.

Please note: The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample.

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.
3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.
4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

Appendix 5: **Report Summary Document. Title:** The Implications of Child Maltreatment, a Subjective Maternal Perspective from Cape Town.

Research Purpose/ Objective	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors/ Sources	Literature Review – Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Method(s)	Ethics	Key Findings	Recommendations
To gain an understanding of the perception that mothers have about childhood maltreatment and its implications in Cape Town	What is the maternal perspective of child maltreatment in Cape Town?	To bring awareness to how childhood maltreatment is physical and psychological which affects the development of a child's personality and behaviours in a negative way	Beardslee, W.R., Beatriz, E.D., Molnar, B.E., Knefelkamp, L., Parker, C.A., Widick, C. World Health Organisation	Theme 1: Childhood maltreatment Theme 2: Context Theme 3: Beliefs, values, and norms	Paradigm: Interpretivism Epistemology: I want to understand the complex reality of child maltreatment from a mother's perspective Ontology: Reality is a social construction	Qualitative Population: Population Parameters Any woman who has/had a child between the ages of 0 – 13 years old	Semi-structured interviews	The topic was a sensitive one to open up about. I addressed any of the participants concerns by ensuring them that anonymity and confidentiality were in place	Three main themes emerged from the research. Defining child maltreatment, the need for more awareness, and reasons for why child maltreatment is underreported	Something that this always recommended when doing research is do more research on the topic. Research in different contexts and from different perspectives. research on theories is also very important. This study could have used an additional theory to ground it more effectively and demonstrate the severity of the implications of child maltreatment on a developing child.
Research Problem	Secondary Questions/ Hypotheses/ Objectives	Key Concepts	Key Theories	Theme 4: Social pressures	Axiology: Research should be informative and true to its nature. Research should be skewed but the researcher's point of view needs to be articulated as well	Sampling	Data Analysis Method(s)	Limitations	Key Contribution	
The lack of awareness about how damaging childhood maltreatment is to a developing child	To understand why childhood maltreatment is happening	Child maltreatment, impact, maternal perspective, child development	Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development	Theme 5: Poverty Theme 6: Lack of awareness Theme 7: Mirrored behaviour		Non – probability Sampling method Purposive Size 5 participants	Unit of Analysis Mothers perception Data Analysis Method Thematic analysis	The biggest limitation was having to do the interviews over the phone. This is because the researcher was unable to look at their participants body language which is an important aspect in qualitative research	This research will add how important it is for there to be widespread awareness campaigns about child maltreatment. This will allow the next generation to grow up and be mentally healthy.	

