

1-1-2004

Father role identity : An exploration of the construct and its measurement

Michelle J. Gobetz
Edith Cowan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses>



Part of the [Family, Life Course, and Society Commons](#), and the [Psychology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Gobetz, M. J. (2004). *Father role identity : An exploration of the construct and its measurement*. Edith Cowan University. Retrieved from <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses/827>

This Thesis is posted at Research Online.
<https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses/827>

Edith Cowan University

Copyright Warning

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study.

The University does not authorize you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site.

You are reminded of the following:

- Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright.
- A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. Where the reproduction of such material is done without attribution of authorship, with false attribution of authorship or the authorship is treated in a derogatory manner, this may be a breach of the author's moral rights contained in Part IX of the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth).
- Courts have the power to impose a wide range of civil and criminal sanctions for infringement of copyright, infringement of moral rights and other offences under the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth). Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.

USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

Running Head: FATHER ROLE IDENTITY



Father Role Identity: An Exploration of the Construct and its
Measurement.

By

Michelle J. Gobetz

BSc. Hons (Psychology)

A Thesis Submitted for Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Psychology (Forensic)

At the Faculty of Community Services, Education and Social Sciences
Edith Cowan University

Date of Submission: November 2004

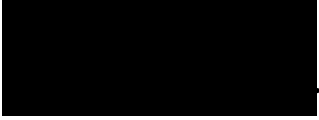
Abstract

There is relatively little research in respect of father's and their post-divorce contact with their children. Preliminary research suggests father's identification with the parent role may play an influential role in this contact. Though the Self Perceptions of the Parental Role Questionnaire (SPPR) has been utilised to measure father's identification with the parent role, the psychometric properties of this instrument have yet to be systemically investigated. The lack of psychometric information about the SPPR seriously limits this instrument's utility. The aim of the current study was twofold. Firstly, to determine the psychometric properties of a formal measure of parent role identity, the Self-perceptions of the Parental Role questionnaire (SPPR). Secondly, to explore the constructs *father role* and *father role identity*. Seventy four fathers completed the SPPR. From a sub sample of twenty five fathers the reliability of the SPPR satisfaction scale was found to be acceptable for research and clinical application (Cronbach's alpha .73, $r = .82$). The reliability of the Integration scale was low and could not be recommended for either research or clinical use (Cronbach's alpha .68, $r = .65$). Reliability of the SPPR's other two scales, competence and investment, was not clearly established because their Cronbach's alphas and test-retest reliabilities did not produce commensurate results. An exploratory principle components factor analysis did not support the factorial structure of the SPPR. Feedback suggested participants found the instructions and some items of the SPPR difficult to understand. The outcome of a qualitative analysis of interviews of a sub group of fathers ($n = 27$) was consistent with previous research and identity theory that fathers identified sub roles which make up the father role. These sub roles were the traditional, teacher, and shared experience and participation. Item analysis revealed the SPPR does not inquire about these sub roles. The qualitative data also

revealed the importance of father's perceptions of the parent role, rewards of parenting, sacrifices, confidence/competence, and sources of help and advice in the father role. Item analysis revealed the SPPR inquires only about rewards and costs and sources of advice. The qualitative data suggests the SPPR could be improved by adding items which inquire about perceptions of father sub roles, confidence/competency in these roles and sacrifices made to complete these roles.

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- (i) incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
- (ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or
- (iii) contain any defamatory material

Signature. 

Date...31/01/05.....

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincerest thanks and gratitude to all those who have helped and supported me during my studies and throughout my work in the preparation of this thesis.

To my family, for believing in me, and for their encouragement and support.

To my supervisors, Associate Professor Alfred Allan and Dr Ricks Allan for their expertise, guidance and perseverance in helping me to complete this thesis.

To all my friends and peers for their encouragement, support, valuable suggestions and assistance.

To the participants who were passionate about the topic and who were kind enough to give their time and share their experiences in order to make this thesis possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
TITLE PAGE	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
DECLARATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
INTRODUCTION	1
Definition and Clarification of Terms	10
Identity Theory	11
The Father Role	15
Father Role Identity and Post-divorce Contact	17
Measurement of Father Role Identity	19
AIMS	20
METHOD	22
Participants	22
Materials	23
Design and Procedure	24

	Page
RESULTS	27
Demographic Characteristics of Sample	27
SPPR Results	31
SPPR Scores	32
Relationship with Demographic Variables	37
Reliability and Validity of SPPR Scores	40
Feedback on the SPPR	43
Interview Data	45
Roles that Make up the Father Role	46
Rewards of the Father Role	48
Costs of the Father Role	51
Perceptions of Role Performance	53
Comparison of SPPR Questions with Interview Themes	57
DISCUSSION	61
Contact with Children	61
SPPR Results	62
Relationship with Demographic Variables	62
Reliability	66
Validity	67

	Page
Feedback on the SPPR	68
Qualitative Data Regarding Parent Role	69
Sub-Roles Important to Father Role	69
Rewards and Costs of the Father Role	71
The Concept of Satisfaction	73
Perception of Competence	74
Comparative Analysis	76
Limitations of this Research	78
Future Directions	81
Summary	82
REFERENCES	85
<u>Appendix A</u> : Copies of advertisements placed on notice boards	91
<u>Appendix B</u> : Information given to community newspapers to use in writing articles about the current study	93
<u>Appendix C</u> : Information document	94
<u>Appendix D</u> : Consent form	96
<u>Appendix E</u> : Demographic questionnaire	97
<u>Appendix F</u> : Original SPPR	98
<u>Appendix G</u> : Adapted SPPR	101
<u>Appendix I</u> : Interview questions	104

	Page
<u>Appendix J:</u> Checklist of information given to participants	105
<u>Appendix K:</u> Scoring key for SPPR	107
<u>Appendix L:</u> Themes identified by raters, and the final themes used in the current study, in each of the 4 areas asked about in the interview	108
<u>Appendix M:</u> Transcripts of interviews.	111

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Descriptive Statistics on the Four Scales of the SPPR	33
Table 2. ANOVA Results for Comparing the SPPR Scale Scores of Divorced/separated and Non-Divorced Fathers	37
Table 3. Correlations Between Demographic Variables and SPPR Scale Scores	38
Table 4. Correlations Between Demographic Variables and SPPR Scale Scores for Non-Divorced Fathers	39
Table 5. Correlations Between Demographic Variables and SPPR Scale Scores for Divorced/separated Fathers	40
Table 6. Results of the Principle Components Analysis	42
Table 7. Comments Participants Made	44
Table 8. Themes from the Interviews and the SPPR	59

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1. Level of education of the participants.	28
Figure 2. The number of children that participants had.	29
Figure 3. Actual level of contact that fathers had with their children, in days per month.	30
Figure 4. Amount of contact that was prescribed by legal proceedings, in days per month.	31
Figure 5. Results of the scores from the Investment scale.	34
Figure 6. Results of the scores from the Integration scale.	34
Figure 7. Results of the scores from the Satisfaction scale.	35
Figure 8. Results of the scores from the Competence scale.	35

Introduction

Separation and divorce are increasingly common outcomes of marriages in Australia, becoming a normal part of life in our society. In Australia today, approximately 43 percent of all marriages end in separation within 30 years of marriage (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001). For the year 2001, the number of divorces granted in Australia (55,300) was the highest annual number for the preceding 20 years (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001). It is estimated that approximately 59 percent of all divorces in Australia involve children under the age of 18 years (Funder & Smyth, 1996). Although it is recognised that divorce has become a normal life transition in our society, little is known about the impact of divorce on parent-child relationships. In 1999, almost one million Australian children lived with one parent, while the other parent lived elsewhere (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001). It is known that following divorce approximately 87 percent of children live with their mother, thus, in the majority of cases, the father becomes the non-residential parent (Smyth, Sheenan, & Fehlberg, 2001). The question then arises as to the impact that divorce has on the relationship between children and their non-residential fathers.

A national study conducted by the Family Court found that between 30 and 40 percent of divorced fathers do not have regular contact with their children (Gibbson, 1992). More recent reports into father child contact suggest that this finding is fairly consistent across studies (Smyth, 2004; 2003). The results are comparable with research from the United States, which suggest that between 20 to 30 percent of fathers do not maintain contact with their children after divorce. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that for those fathers that do maintain contact the frequency of contact decreases over time (Stone & Mc Kenry, 1998). These findings raise two

important questions. Firstly, how does the lack of contact between the non-residential father and the child impact on the psychological wellbeing of the children and on the father-child relationship? Secondly, what are the reasons that such a large percentage of non-residential fathers do not maintain regular contact with their children?

A review of the literature regarding the impact of contact, or lack thereof, between the non-residential father and the child on both the psychological wellbeing of children and on the father-child relationship, identified a limited, but fairly consistent body of research in the area. The majority of studies have reported that continued contact with the non-residential father is beneficial to the psychological wellbeing of children. Isaacs (1988) found that positive outcomes for children of divorced parents are linked to maintaining contact with the non-residential parent. Pagani-Kurtz and Derevensky (1997) examined the impact of contact (frequency and duration) on the child's self esteem. Regression analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between duration of visits with the father and the child's self-esteem. Simons, Lin, Gordon, Conger and Lorenz (1999) in attempting to explain the higher levels of adjustment problems in children of divorced parents, found that the level of father involvement was associated with the son's levels of externalising problems. Amato and Gilbreth (1999) reported that although frequency of contact with the father was not related to outcome in general, feelings of closeness to the father were positively related to the child's level of academic success, and negatively related to both internalising problems (for example depression or anxiety) and externalising problems (for example behaviour difficulties). Considered as a whole, the limited body of research in this area therefore suggests that continued contact between non-residential fathers and their children is beneficial to the psychological wellbeing of the child and to the parent-child relationship.

The majority of the limited literature regarding the impact of divorce on children, as discussed above, has been conducted overseas. Nevertheless, in an Australian article Rodgers (1996) concludes that overseas research on adverse effects of divorce is applicable here in Australia. In reviewing the overseas research he concluded that parental divorce is associated with several negative impacts, including; psychological distress, delinquency, recidivism, substance use, sexual precocity, adult criminal offending, depression and suicidal behaviour. More recently, the idea has been put forward that these negative impacts of divorce can be reduced by maintaining contact with the father (Lamb, Sternberg, & Thompson, 1997). Thus, continued contact with the father acts as a protective factor, reducing the likelihood that the child will experience the negative impacts of divorce listed above.

The importance and benefits of non-residential parent contact, or involvement, was recognised in Australia by the Family Law Reform Act 1995 (the Act). The Act outlines a number of the assumptions underpinning parental responsibility and the processes involved in making arrangements for children's welfare after parents separate (The Family Law Reform Act, 1995).

Part VII of the Act, regarding children, is particularly relevant here. The object of this section is to ensure children receive adequate parenting, and to set out the principles underlying parental responsibility and the rights of children. As section 60B2 states:

(a) children have the right to know and be cared for by both their parents, regardless of whether their parents are married, separated, have never married, or have never lived together; and

(b) children have right of contact, on a regular basis, with both their parents and with other people significant to their care, welfare and development; and

- (c) parents share duties and responsibilities concerning the care, welfare and development of their children; and*
- (d) parents should agree about the future parenting of their children.*

Thus, the Act proposed that parenting should be shared, advocating that children have a right to have contact with both their parents (Funder & Smyth, 1996). Judging by Funder and Smyth's (1996) research the Act seems to reflect community thinking in this regard. The study reported the results of a national survey on the topic of parental responsibility. A questionnaire was used to evaluate the attitude regarding parental responsibility in the general Australian population and the attitude to parental responsibility held by parents who were divorced just prior to the reforms. Similar beliefs about parental responsibility were found in the divorced and general populations, and it was concluded that the Australian population in general holds to a core set of parental responsibilities, regardless of marital status. Wide acceptance for the idea that care, contact and financial support for children should be shared was found. It was concluded that the opinions of the general population of Australia support the amendments set out in the Family Law Reform Act, 1995. Furthermore, other studies have reported that both children and fathers desire continued contact after divorce, thus adding further support for the ideals put forward in the Act (for example Dudley, 1991a; 1991b).

However, a recent review of the impact of the Act found, among other things, that there is no evidence of a change toward shared parenting, finding that many fathers do not maintain high levels of contact, even when this is ordered through the outcome of Family Court proceedings (Rhoades, Graycar & Harrison, 2001). This finding appears at odds with community support for the ideals of shared parenting and the fact that both fathers and children are expressing a desire for continued contact.

The question arises as to why a large percentage of non-residential fathers do not maintain contact with their children, despite legislative and community support for continued contact.

One area of investigation on this topic has examined the relationship between demographic characteristics and post divorce contact. The research to date has found that the amount of contact non-residential fathers have with their children is associated with several demographic variables (Erera, Minton, Pasley, & Mandel, 1999). Father involvement has been found to be influenced by the father's income, education level, the marital status of the father and the mother post divorce (Seltzer & Brandreth, 1994; Smyth, 2004; Wall, 1992), distance that father lives from child (Arditti, 1996; Erera et al., 1999), and age of the child (Stephens, 1996; Erera et al., 1999). Other variables that have been identified include; length of the marriage (Wall, 1992), child support (Arditti, 1996), socio economic factors (Arditti, 1996; Stephens, 1996), and other relationships in the father's life (Stephens, 1996).

While demographic variables can be used to understand and to make predictions about post-divorce contact, such variables cannot be used to change levels of post divorce contact. In addition, the research cited in the previous paragraph indicates that demographic characteristics only explain a certain amount of the variance in post divorce contact. The goal of research into the area should be to promote maintenance of contact between fathers and children, and not just to understand why some fathers do not maintain contact. Thus, research attention needs to be directed away from the static, unchangeable demographic characteristics. Research into dynamic factors, those factors that can be used to encourage or promote change, would be of greater benefit in this area.

A review of the research into dynamic factors highlighted three main areas of research into factors that impact upon levels of post divorce contact; *structural factors*, *father's relationship with the child*, and the *personal characteristics of the father*.

Structural factors refer to such variables as the father's relationship with the ex-partner and legal conflict or problems. In regards to the relationship with the ex-spouse a number of variables have been identified as predictors of post-divorce contact, including; levels of hostility between ex-spouses (Wall, 1992), the quality of the relationship between the parents following divorce (Ahrons, 1983), support (Arditti, 1996; Erera et al., 1999), and perception of obstruction by the former spouse (Kruk, 1992; Smyth, 2004). Other structural variables that have been identified include engagement of lawyers (Kruk, 1991; 1992) and the process of undertaking post divorce legal proceedings in general (Dudley, 1996; Kruk, 1991; 1992; Smyth, 2004).

A second area of research has focused on the influence of the father's *relationship with the child* on levels of post divorce contact. Wall (1992) reported that the father's perception of the quality of his relationship with his child/ren influences the amount of contact he has with his child/ren. The higher the perception of the quality of the relationship, the greater the level of contact the father is likely to have. Another study found that the father's perception of the quality of his pre-divorce relationship with his child/ren predicts levels of post-divorce contact (Kruk 1992). It is logical to suppose that the quality of the father-child relationship would impact upon the amount of contact the father seeks out with the child. It is also possible that a lack of contact would impact upon the quality of the relationship. Overall, the

research supports the idea that the quality of the father-child relationship, both prior to and after divorce, influences levels of post-divorce contact.

Personal characteristics of the father represents a third area of research into the variables that impact upon levels of post-divorce contact. This includes variables such as the father's psychological response to the divorce and the father's coping skills (Arendell, 1992; Kruk, 1991; 1992; Smyth, 2004). Divorce is a difficult life transition, and it is known that fathers experience emotional distress following divorce (see for example Dudley, 1996). The emotional distress includes grief over the loss of the marital relationship and also a change in their relationship with their children as they adjust to the role of a non-residential parent. Research has suggested that this emotional response to the loss of the relationship may have an impact on levels of post-divorce contact with the children (Dudley, 1996; Kruk, 1992). It has been reported that limiting or stopping contact with the child or children may represent one way for a father to cope with the emotional distress (Arendell, 1992) or may represent a psychological response to the loss experienced during the divorce process (Kruk 1992). Other research has suggested that a lack of post divorce contact may be a response to the loss of the pre-divorce parent-child relationship (Kruk, 1991), possibly reflecting a difficulty in making the transition to the role of non-residential parent.

In considering the transition to the role of a non-residential parent, it is clear that it involves a change in the amount of time spent together and, arguably, the quality of the parent-child relationship. In a recent article, Campbell and Pike (2002) noted this as a salient issue for non-residential fathers. In many cases, interaction between fathers and their children will no longer occur on a daily basis. However, when contact does occur the father will often be the sole caregiver for that period, such as for the weekend. Invariably, arrangements for contact, including times, places,

and the transportation of the children will need to be made with the residential parent. Thus, for non-residential parents to continue contact they need to successfully negotiate changes in the quantity of contact and the quality of the parent-child relationship, and negotiate contact arrangements with the former partner. This process requires an adjustment to the *role* of the non-residential parent. Father role refers to the self-meanings (those meanings attributed by the individual) and cognitions associated with the status and roles of a father (Ihinger-Tallman, Pasley, & Buehler, 1993). A related concept, father role identity, forms the focus of the current study.

The concept of *father role identity* refers to the degree to which the father identifies with the father role (Minton & Pasely, 1996). This concept will be discussed in greater detail in the next section. Father role identity has been linked to post divorce contact in a number of studies, with mixed findings. As a case in point, in 1992 the Family Court of Australia conducted a comprehensive study into the contact patterns of non-custodial fathers (Gibbson, 1992). One finding reported in the study was that a father's satisfaction with his role as a parent had a significant influence on the frequency of contact. Thus fathers who were most satisfied with their role as a parent, reported the highest levels of contact with their children. In contrast, is a recent study, which compared the factors influencing post-divorce contact in Israel and the United States (Erera et al., 1999). This study included the influence of the father's self-esteem, support from the ex-spouse, and psychological presence of the child to the father (i.e. the amount of time the father spends thinking about the child), on post-divorce contact. Father role identity, measured by the psychological presence of the child to the father, was not significantly related to levels of post divorce contact.

The potential link between the father role identity and levels of post-divorce contact was recognised by Ihinger-Tallman and colleagues (1993) in their attempt to explain what they regarded as mixed findings about predictors of post divorce contact. Based on *identity theory*, which draws from symbolic interactionism, Ihinger-Tallman and colleagues developed the *middle-range theory* of post divorce contact. The symbolic interactionist perspective is based on the idea that society influences individual social behaviour through its influence on the self (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). The theory proposes that the level of the father's identification with parenting roles, known as father role identity, is the central variable that affects post-divorce contact. The concept of father role identity arises from identity theory, which examines the various roles that each person takes on, such as parent, employee, community member and so on (Stone & Mc Kenry, 1998). According to the middle-range theory, when father role identity is high (that is when the father strongly identifies with the father role), the level of post divorce contact will be high. The middle-range theory further proposes that other variables, such as the demographic and spousal relationship variables, act to moderate the strength of the relationship between father role identity and contact.

A review of the literature was undertaken to further investigate the possible link between father role identity and post divorce contact. Four main areas were investigated. Firstly, a review of the key points of identity theory was pertinent in order to understand how identity theory may be important in explaining father absence after divorce. Secondly, research regarding the father role in western society was undertaken with a view to summarising what is known about the father role. Next, the literature reporting on the link between father role identity and post-divorce contact was reviewed. Finally, the measurement of the concept of father role identity

was reviewed. These four areas will be discussed next, but first it is necessary to define and clarify the terms father role and father role identity.

Definition and Clarification of Terms

A review of the literature in the area revealed that the terms father role and father role identity are used in different ways by different researchers. For example, father role has been used to refer to the tasks and responsibilities of the father (Seltzer, 1991) and to the self-meanings and cognitions associated with the status and roles of a father (Ihinger-Tallman, Pasley, & Buehler, 1993). Father role identity has generally been used to refer to the degree of a father's identification with the father role (Stone & Mc Kenry, 1998). However, some researchers have used the two terms as synonyms. For example, both terms have been used to refer to a set of rules, stated and unstated, governing social interaction within the family unit (for example, Madden-Derdich & Leonard, 2000). In addition, it was found that researchers do not always make it clear how they define the terms, making it difficult to know in which sense they are using these terms. The lack of common definition of these terms makes it difficult to compare research or draw firm conclusions about research in the area. Therefore, it is necessary here to define how the terms were used in the current study. *Father role* is defined as the self-meanings and cognitions associated with the status and sub-roles of a father. *Father role identity* is defined as the level of identification with the father role. A further term requiring definition is that of *sub-role*, which is used in the current study to refer to the various roles that make up the father role. The concept of sub-role is discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Identity Theory

Identity theory arises from the *social interactionist perspective*, which proposes that the self is made up of multiple identities that develop and are maintained through interaction with others (Burke & Reitzes, 1981; Fox & Bruce, 2001; Stryker, 1968). Identity theory is concerned with processes occurring at the individual level, such as role taking (Burke & Reitzes, 1981). The basic assumption underlying identity theory is that each person takes on a number of roles, for example, parent, employee, church member. These roles are organised along a hierarchy of salience based on how important the role is in the person's self-definition (Hoelter, 1983). To explain the concept in behavioural terms, the more salient a role, the more likely it is to be invoked in any given situation (Stryker, 1968). As an example, assume for a particular individual their role as an employee is higher up on the role hierarchy than their role as a church member. Thus, the employee role is said to be more salient and is more likely to be invoked, in a given situation, than the church member role. This refers simply to the probability of a given role being enacted across situations, taking into account the characteristics of the situation, such as the degree to which the enactment of a particular role is appropriate (Ihinger-Tallman et al., 1993). When a particular role is invoked, the individual will act in a way that is consistent with their definition of that role (Hogg et al., 1995). Thus, in the case of father role, this means that the more salient father role is for a given person, the more likely it is, for a given situation, that the father role will be invoked by that person, who will then engage in behaviours to do with fathering.

The proposed link between role salience and invocation of the particular role has been supported empirically. Mc Bride and Rane (1997) reported that believing that the father role is important (or salient) was correlated to high levels of

involvement in fathering. The study utilised a combination of diary keeping and interviews to measure levels of involvement in parenting. This variable was found to be significantly correlated to scores on a 15-item questionnaire that was designed to measure perceptions of the importance of the father role.

The question then arises as to what will determine where a particular role falls on the role hierarchy, or the level of role salience. According to the theory, it is the individual's level of commitment to a role that determines the role salience (Hogg et al., 1995). Commitment to a particular role is demonstrated by choosing to engage in behaviours associated with that role. In general, the level of commitment to a role is high when a person perceives that many of their social relationships are related to their occupancy (time spent engaging in the role) of that role. Thus, if they failed to occupy that role they would lose many social networks and experience a change in their self-concept (Hoetler, 1983). Hoetler investigated the concept of commitment using 378 college students. The findings supported the hypothesis that identity salience increases with commitment to a role.

Two additional concepts that impact upon role salience are the individual's perception of role performance and role satisfaction. Role performance refers to the individual's own perception of how well they are performing in a particular role (Stryker, 1968). A positive evaluation of performance for a particular role leads to an increase in self-concept, which in turn makes it more likely for that role to be invoked again (Burke & Reitzes, 1981). Role satisfaction refers to the number of rewards perceived to arise from invoking a role as compared to the costs of invoking the role (O'Neil, Greenberger, & Marks, 1994). Both a positive perception of role performance and a high role satisfaction are theorised to increase role salience.

In an extension of identity theory, Ihinger-Tallman and colleagues (1993) discuss the idea that each role consists of a number of sub-roles that make up that role. Thus, in the case of fathering, the father role is made up of a number of sub-roles that fathers undertake, for example nurturing, playing with, and providing for, their children. It has been further suggested that the sub-roles making up a role are organized on a hierarchy of salience (Ihinger-Tallman et al., 1993), which dictates which roles will be undertaken.

In regards to explaining levels of post-divorce contact between the father and child, one key concept arising from identity theory is role salience (Stone & Mc Kenry, 1998). Role salience is thought to increase father role identity, the degree of the father's identification with the father role. Thus, if the father role is highly salient, then father role identity will be high and the father is likely to engage in parenting behaviours. In regards to the issue of measuring salience of the father role the question then arises as to what are the behaviours associated with the father role in our society? Or, in essence, what are the various sub-roles that make up the father role? It is also necessary to address the question of whether this is a stable concept for all fathers or whether different fathers have differing views as to what makes up the father role. The need to address these questions was highlighted by Minton and Pasely (1996) in discussing their own research into the relationship between father role identity and fathers' involvement with their children. The research on the behaviours or sub-roles associated with father role is reviewed and discussed in the next section of the literature review.

At this stage, it is also important to examine the concepts of role performance and role satisfaction, which arise from identity theory. The theory proposes that both concepts impact upon role salience. According to identity theory, if a father perceives

his performance in the father role to be positive, then the role will be more salient, and in turn, he is more likely to engage in fathering behaviours. Although this idea has been proposed theoretically, in order to investigate the concept of role satisfaction, an understanding of the way fathers measure their own performance in the father role is required. This is perhaps particularly pertinent for divorced fathers who may for the first time be making parenting decisions on their own, without the aide of the other parent. A secondary question that arises from the theory is how fathers overcome the challenges of parenting. Successfully overcoming parenting challenges on their own would likely lead to a positive self appraisal of role performance.

In regards to perception of role performance, there is evidence to suggest that different groups of fathers may rate their performance in different ways or may base their performance ratings on different criteria. For example, Entwistle and Doering (1988) reported that working-class fathers rate their performance as a father based on their level of participation in parenting. In contrast, middle-class fathers based their performance ratings on how happy their child appeared to be. This area requires further investigation, which could lead to a better understanding of how fathers evaluate their own role performance.

Identity theory further suggests that role satisfaction is believed to lead to increased role salience, and in turn, to greater participation in fathering activities. According to the theory, role satisfaction refers to the relevant number of rewards perceived to arise from invoking the father role as compared to the relative number of costs. Although this has been proposed in theory, the concept has not been investigated theoretically. This leads to the question; what are the rewards and costs associated with invoking the father role? An investigation of this issue will help in both the measurement of the concept of role satisfaction and further development of

an understanding of the concept of role satisfaction as it relates to the father role identity.

The Father Role

Many writers have documented the changing roles of fathers in our society. For example, Pleck and Pleck (1997), document the change from fathers being viewed as providers or disciplinarians in the 1800s to the modern day view of fathers as nurturers, playmates, and caretakers, as well as providers. This change is further demonstrated by the type of research conducted within psychology. An example is the article entitled *Can Men Mother* published in 1986 by Risman, in which the researcher aimed to investigate whether fathers are able to undertake the tasks of parenting usually associated with mothers; nurturance and the day to day care of the children. It is not surprising that the article found that fathers were able to *mother*, what is relevant here is the fact the question was asked at all. Today, it is generally expected and accepted, that fathers are involved in the day-to-day care of children and it is unlikely such a question would be asked.

Further evidence in a shift away from the traditional view of fathers as providers comes from research with African American non-residential fathers (Hamer, 1998). The research suggests that African American fathers view their main role as to provide emotional support for their child and the child's mother. In contrast, the mothers expressed a belief that the father role entails financial provision, but as a compromise were willing to accept emotional support rather than no support. This study suggests a change in father roles and indicates that this change may be precipitated by fathers themselves. This is important in that it highlights the need for research in this area to be conducted using the fathers themselves as participants.

In order to understand and, in turn, to measure father role identity, which refers to the degree of identification with the father role, an understanding of what is meant by the term *father role* in today's society is needed. This requires definition of what the role of the father is and an understanding of the types of sub-roles carried out by a father. As discussed previously, the middle range theory proposes that each role consists of a number of sub-roles that make up that role, with the sub-roles organized on a hierarchy of salience (Thinger-Tallman et al., 1993). Thus, in the case of fathering, the father role is made up of a number of sub-roles that fathers undertake, for example nurturing, playing with, and providing for, their children. This is consistent with recent research that has been undertaken on *types* of fathering behaviours (Jain, Belsky, & Crnic, 1996). The study identified several categories of fathering behaviours, such as play behaviours or caretaking behaviours. The researchers reported that different fathers appear to spend the majority of their time in the father role on only one or two of these fathering behaviours. The study divided fathers into groups based on the types of behaviours most of their fathering consisted of. Thus, fathers were classified as playmates, teachers, disciplinarians, and caretakers, or a combination of these types. The research suggests that different sub-roles may have different importance for different father role identities.

This is important for researchers to note, because if research were to focus exclusively on sub-roles low on the salience hierarchy one may wrongly conclude that the father role was not being invoked and therefore is not salient. For example, if researchers examine only the caretaking behaviours, then some fathers would score low on father role salience because the father role is not salient to them. Whereas, other fathers would score low because the caretaking sub-role is low in salience and they engage more in the playmate sub-role. It would be difficult to distinguish the two

fathers unless instruments include all possible roles. Therefore, research is necessary to examine the sub-roles that make up the father role.

Father Role Identity and Post-divorce Contact

As previously discussed, father role identity formed the basis of the middle-range theory of father involvement proposed by Ihinger-Tallman and colleagues (1993). The theory proposes that the level of the father's identification with parenting roles, father role identity, is the central variable that affects post-divorce contact (Ihinger-Tallman et al., 1993). According to the theory, when father role identity is high, the level of contact will increase. The middle-range theory proposes that other variables, such as the demographic and spousal relationship variables, act to moderate the strength of the relationship between father role identity and contact. The original research reported by Ihinger-Tallman and colleagues found a .34 correlation between father role identity and post-divorce contact. The research examined four components of father role identity; role satisfaction, perceived competence, investment and perceived salience of the role.

The relationship of father role identity to participation in parenting was explored by Minton and Pasley (1996). The study compared non-divorced and divorced non-residential fathers on mailed out questionnaires, including the one that is particularly relevant for the current study, the Self-Perceptions of the Parental Role questionnaire (SPPR). The SPPR will be discussed in more detail in the following section. A total of 270 fathers participated in the study by Minton and Pasley. Non-residential fathers were found to perceive themselves as less competent and satisfied than did non-divorced fathers. Overall, higher scores on father role identity were associated with higher levels of involvement. The results of the study were found to support the main

proposition of the middle-range theory that role identity is an important variable influencing post-divorce contact.

Stone and Mc Kenry (1998) recently conducted a study to assess the middle-range theory in the United States. The study assessed the influence of father role identity and other variables, including demographic information, parenting role clarity, co-operation and conflict with ex-spouse, and satisfaction with the legal system, on post-divorce contact. A total of 101 divorced, non-residential fathers participated in the study. Participants were required to fill out a number of questionnaires measuring the independent variables, including the SPPR. The dependent variable, post-divorce contact was measured using a set of Likert scaled questions which required participants to indicate their involvement in a variety of parenting tasks. Stone and Mc Kenry reported that father role identity played a significant role in mediating the effects of the other variables, as well as having a direct effect on post-divorce involvement. Thus, the results of the study supported the middle-range theory, which proposes that father role identity influences levels of post-divorce contact.

Though limited, the research overall supports the theoretical link between father role identity and post-divorce contact. However, caution is warranted when evaluating the research. A few points that should be kept in mind by Australian researchers are that not all of the research is consistent, the majority of the research has been conducted overseas, and the concept of father role identity has been measured in a number of ways. This will be discussed in more detail in following sections. In addition, the unanswered theoretical questions regarding sub-roles, role performance and role satisfaction, need to be answered before a full understanding of the link between father role identity and post-divorce contact can be gained.

Measurement of Father Role Identity

As mentioned above, father role identity, and the various components of the concept have been measured in a variety of ways. For example, Gibbson (1992) investigated role satisfaction by asking three questions, which required the participants to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 how happy they were with their role as a parent, their overall relationship with their child, and their involvement with their child. Erera and colleagues (1999) measured role salience by examining the psychological presence of the child to the father. Specifically, they used a self-report measure of the amount of time the father spends thinking about the child.

A number of studies have utilized the SPPR to measure father role identity (Ihinger-Tallman et al., 1993; Minton & Pasley, 1996; Stone & Mc Kenry, 1998). The SPPR is an unpublished instrument that was originally developed by Mac Phee, Benson and Bullock in 1986. The scale was originally designed for use with married mothers of young children. The instrument yields four scores; Competence, Satisfaction, Investment, and Integration. In using the instrument to investigate father role identity, researchers have drawn parallels between the four scales and the concepts proposed by identity theory (for example Ihinger-Tallman et al., 1993). Thus, the concept of role performance is thought to be measured by the Competence scale, which measures how competent the father believes himself to be as a parent. The Satisfaction scale is taken to be a measure of role satisfaction. The Investment scale measures the expenditure of time on thinking about and learning about parenting behaviour and thus is taken to be a measure of role commitment. Finally, the Integration scale, which measures the degree to which the father role is integrated into all aspects of the parent's life, is thought to be a measure of role salience.

The SPPR is an existing measure that has been used in several research studies in the area (for example Stone & Mc Kenry, 1998; Minton & Pasley, 1996). Minimal psychometric data is available about the instrument. Mc Phee and colleagues (1986) reported test-retest correlations, ranging between .82 and .92, and alpha coefficients between .72 and .82. In addition, Minton and Pasley (1996) reported alpha coefficients between .65 and .85. The psychometric properties of the instrument, including the validity and reliability, have not been formally investigated. This makes it difficult to interpret results of studies obtained using the measure. In addition the questionnaire was originally designed for use with married mothers of young children. It is with this group that much of the existing psychometric data on the instrument was gathered. Thus, it is necessary to investigate the use of the instrument with fathers, divorced parents, and parents of older children.

Aims

In summary, the high number of divorces in Australia leaves many children living with one parent, usually the mother. Research suggests that contact with their father following divorce is good for children, and this is reflected in both the community attitude and legislation. Despite this, many fathers have little or no contact with their children after divorce. The question arises as to why this is the case and what can be done to encourage continued contact. Most research to date has focused on static factors, which cannot be changed. It would be more useful to examine dynamic factors that can be changed. One such dynamic factor is the degree to which a father identifies with the father role, father role identity. Identity theory suggests that father role is, made up of several *sub-roles*. Further, it suggests the degree of identification with the father role is, in part, determined by the concepts of role

satisfaction and role performance. An overview of the research indicated that there has been little empirical investigation of the sub-roles that make up the father role, or of the concepts of role satisfaction and role performance. Previous research has been conducted examining the link between father role identity and post-divorce contact using the SPPR, though the psychometric properties of the instrument have not been formally investigated for use with fathers. Further exploration of the link between father role identity and post divorce contact would require clarity about the father role identity construct and its measurement.

The aim of the current study was twofold: Firstly, to investigate the psychometric properties of an unpublished formal measure of parent role identity, the SPPR, specifically to investigate its use with fathers, and divorced parents.

Secondly, to explore the concepts of father role and father role identity by investigating the following issues:

- What are the sub-roles that fathers propose are important to the father role? Specifically, is this concept consistent across fathers or do different fathers highlight different sub-roles as being important?
- What are the rewards and costs fathers perceive as being associated with the father role? In order to gain a better understanding of the concept of *satisfaction* in terms of father role identity.
- How do fathers rate their performance in the father role? In particular, focusing on how fathers deal with problems or uncertainty regarding fathering, and with seeking advice or help.

The purpose of this exploration was to gather information about the concepts of father role and father role identity that could be used to evaluate the utility of the SPPR.

Method

Participants

A total of 74 fathers participated in the study. Both divorced and non-divorced fathers took part. The sample included some fathers who have minimal contact with their children and full time fathers.

As a cross-section of participants was required, participants were recruited from a variety of sources. Participants were recruited by placing advertisements on notice boards and through articles about the study in community newspapers. Recruitment took place across the northern, southern and eastern suburbs of the Perth metropolitan area. Questionnaires were also distributed through colleagues, other postgraduate students, and friends. In addition, some questionnaires were distributed through the Mums and Dads Forever Program run by Relationships Australia. Refer to appendix A for samples of the advertisements that were placed on notice boards and to appendix B for the information that was provided to newspapers. Recruitment of participants occurred throughout the data collection phase of eight months, with advertisements being repeated several times during this timeframe.

At the same time as the current study was being run, another study was taking place with fathers. The aim of the other study was *to try to explore the meaning of the construct satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the family law context*. While this was a completely separate study, for practical purposes advertisement for participants was shared. Thus, some participants took part in both studies.

Materials

An information document and a consent form, specifying conditions for participation and outlining confidentiality issues, were given to each participant. Refer to Appendices C and D. A set of demographic questions was also asked; see Appendix E for a sample of the demographic questionnaire.

The SPPR was administered to each participant. For the first four interviews the original SPPR, designed by Mc Phee and colleagues (1986) was given to fathers, refer to Appendix F for a copy of the original questionnaire. However, three of the participants expressed concern and confusion about the fact that the questionnaire asked about 'parents', when they had volunteered for a study about 'fathers'. Thus, the remaining 70 participants received the version of the questionnaire that was adapted by Stone & Mc Kenry (1998) for use with fathers, refer to Appendix G for a copy of the revised version of the questionnaire. The main difference between the two versions of the questionnaire is that for several questions in the adapted version the wording had been changed from 'parents' to 'fathers'. The data from the four original copies of the SPPR were still included in the results, as it was not thought that the change in wording would lead to significantly different results. Rather the wording was changed to ensure participants felt comfortable with the questionnaire.

During the first few interviews, it was found that the format of the SPPR was difficult for participants to understand and participants often required detailed instructions on how to fill in the questionnaire. Thus, a separate instruction sheet was designed and attached to the questionnaire. This was done to ensure that participants receiving the questionnaire by mail were given adequate instructions. In addition, it also ensured that all fathers received a standard set of instructions. Refer to Appendix H for a copy of the instructions that were given to fathers. The instructions given

verbally to the first few participants were very similar to those on the instruction sheet, thus it was considered that it was unlikely to lead to significant differences in results. For this reason, the data from the questionnaires that were administered prior to the introduction of the instruction sheet were still included in the results.

Design and Procedure

Of the 74 participants recruited for the study, 28 were divorced/separated fathers and 46 were non-divorced fathers. Participants were categorised as *non-divorced* if they were still in the relationship in which they first had children. Participants were classed as *divorced/separated* if the relationship in which they first had children had ended. Nine of the divorced/separated participants had since remarried or entered new relationships, but were classed as divorced/separated for the purpose of this study. The reason that the remarried fathers were classified as divorced/separated was because they either no longer had residency of their children or had shared residency. Therefore, in terms of parenting, they were in similar circumstances to divorced/separated fathers.

A group of 47 participants, group A, were required to fill in the questionnaires only. Eight participants from group A were divorced/separated, and the remaining 39 were not. A group of 27 fathers, group B, filled in the questionnaires and took part in the interview. Twenty of the group B participants had been divorced/separated, and the remaining seven had not. The interview questions were audio taped. Appendix I contains a list of the questions that participants were asked.

The majority of fathers were recruited in response to advertisements on notice boards at shopping centres and in community newspapers. When participants first responded to the invitation to participate in the study, they were randomly allocated to

group A or group B and given information about the study. Appendix J contains a checklist of the information that was given to participants.

Participants allocated to group B were informed that the study involves a short interview, and two questionnaires. The 27 participants in group B were also informed that part of the interview would be audio taped. If the participant agreed to participate, a time and venue was arranged to meet. The research was undertaken in private areas in public settings, arranged to be convenient to the participant, such as libraries and community centres. This was done to negate the need for the participant to travel far and ensure the safety of both the researcher and the participant.

At the meeting, the research project was explained to the participants. Participants were given the information document to read and then asked to sign a consent form. If participants consented to participation, they were then asked the demographic questions.

Half the participants were then asked to fill out the SPPR. Following the questionnaire, the participants took part in an interview. The other half of the participants undertook the interview first and then filled in the questionnaire. This was done to reduce the possibility that order of presentation of the questionnaire and interview would influence the results.

The interview consisted of five open-ended questions regarding father role identity. Responses to the interview were recorded on audio cassette by the interviewer. Refer to appendix I for a list of the interview questions

Participants that were allocated to group A, after responding to the invitation, were informed that the study involves filling in two questionnaires. The details of the study were then explained. Participants were informed that a questionnaire pack, containing instructions, the questionnaires, a stamped return envelope, and an

information and consent form would be posted to them. If the participant agreed to participate, contact details were taken down and a set of questionnaires was posted to the participant.

Some of the group A participants were recruited by handing out questionnaire packs through the Mums and Dads Forever Program, run by Relationships Australia, and through colleagues, other postgraduate students, and friends. The packs contained a set of instructions, an information document, a consent form, a demographic questionnaire, the SPPR, and a return envelope. Refer to appendix H for a copy of the instructions given to the participants. A total of 75 interview packs for Group A were posted or given out to participants. Of these, 49 questionnaires were returned, yielding a 65.3% return rate. Two of the questionnaires could not be used as they were incorrectly filled in or incomplete. Contact details for group A participants were destroyed after posting research materials to them, to assure anonymity for the participants. Thus, there was no follow up regarding unreturned questionnaires.

In order to establish test-retest reliability, some of the participants were asked if they would be willing to fill in the questionnaire a second time. If they agreed, their contact details were taken down. Two weeks after participation, the SPPR was posted to the participants who agreed to fill in the questionnaire a second time. A total of 23 participants completed and returned the retest of the SPPR.

All participants were asked if they would like to receive a summary sheet of the findings of the study, following the completion of the study. Those participants wanting to receive a summary were asked to provide their name and a postal address or email address. The names and addresses were stored separately from all other data.

Results

Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Demographic information was collected from all participants. Frequencies and descriptive statistics for the demographic variables were calculated in order to determine the characteristics of the sample. The mean age of participants was 46.2 ($SD = 8.30$) and ranged from 27 to 65. At the time of the study, 19 participants were single, 51 of the participants were married, and 4 were in de facto relationships. Thus, nine of the fathers who had been divorced or separated had since entered new relationships.

All participants had been in a relationship at the time that they had children. The majority of participants were married when they had children, and three had been in de facto relationships. Five participants had children from more than one relationship. The number of years that the participants had been in the relationship varied greatly. The mean length of the relationship was 17.6 years ($SD = 10.25$), with a range from 1 year to 38 years. For those fathers who had been divorced or separated the mean length of the relationship which ended in divorced/separation from was 9.1 years ($SD = 5.07$), this ranged from 1 to 20 years. In comparison, for the fathers who had not been divorced or separated, the mean length of relationship was 22.8 years ($SD = 9.14$), with a range of 3 to 38 years.

For the participants who had been divorced or separated, the mean time since their relationship ended was 7.4 years ($SD = 6.31$). However, this was quite varied, with a range from 9 months to 20 years.

Most participants had a tertiary education, defined here as Bachelor degree (30 participants). One participant had completed up to a primary school education, 15 participants had completed year 10, 9 participants had completed year 12 level, 11

participants had completed TAFE level education, and 6 participants had postgraduate qualifications. Participants’ education levels are illustrated in Figure 1.

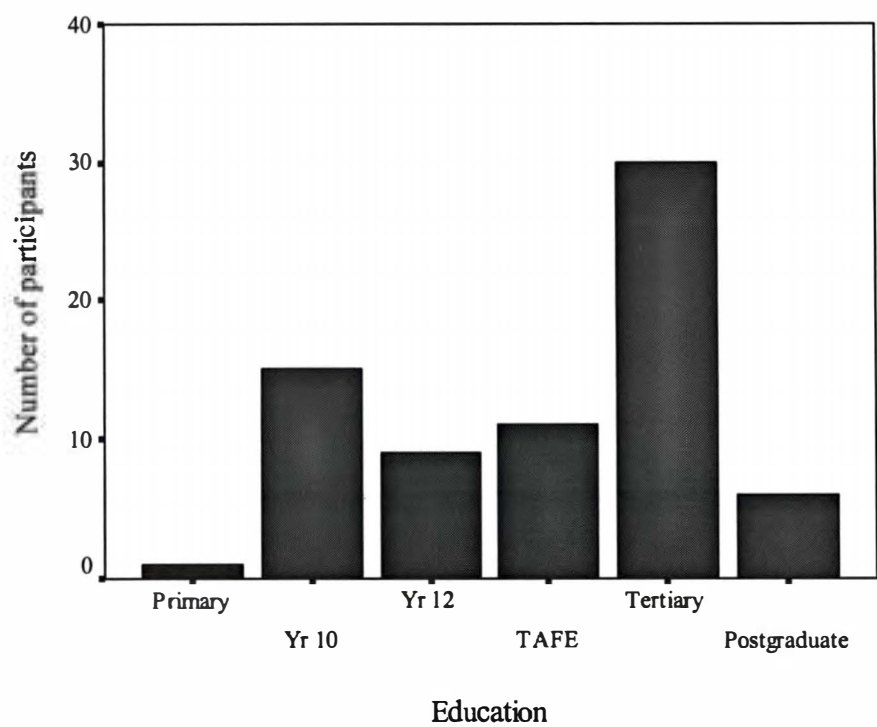


Figure 1. Level of education of the participants.

Most participants (39) were employed in professional occupations. Two participants were unemployed, 18 were tradespersons/labourers, 8 participants owned their own business, 2 worked in sales, and 2 participants’ main occupation was home duties. Sixty-one participants reported their income. The median income was \$50,000, with a range from \$0-\$250,000.

Most fathers (32) had two children. Twelve fathers had one child, 15 had three children, 10 had four children, 2 had five children, and 1 had six children. The number of children that the participants had is illustrated in Figure 2. The majority of fathers had children in the pre-primary and primary school age range (26 fathers), that is to say children under 12 years of age. Twenty-two fathers had teenaged children,

and nineteen fathers had adult children aged 20 years and over. The mean age of the children was 14.8 years ($SD = 7.63$), this ranged from 1 month old to 35 years old.

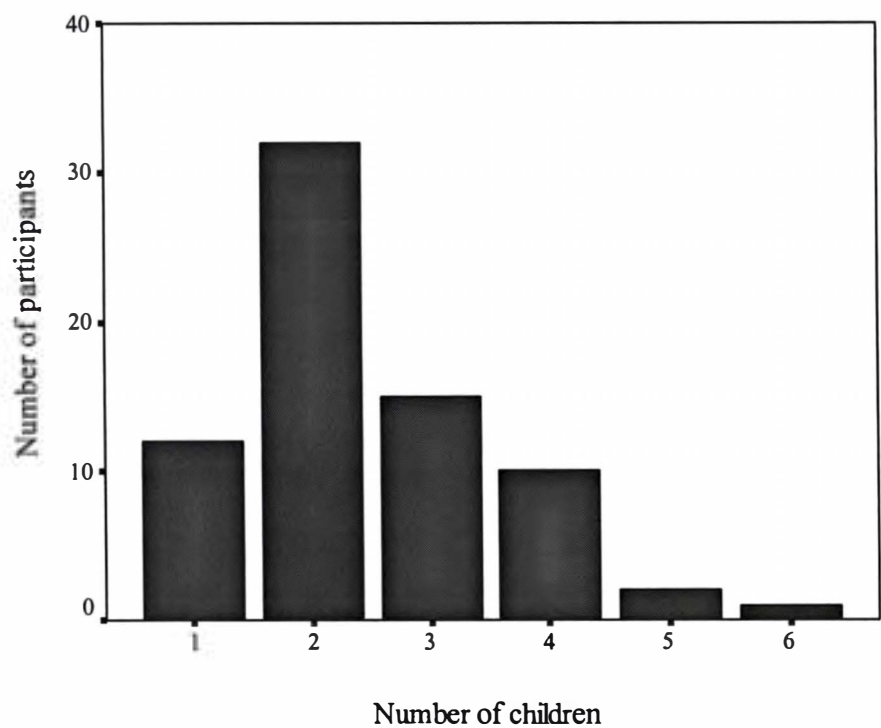


Figure 2. The number of children that participants had.

When examining the actual level of contact the divorced and separated fathers had with their children, the median was 5 days per month. Some fathers had no contact and others fathers were the residential parent of their children. Figure 3 shows the range of actual contact levels. For the 23 fathers who had contact prescribed by the Court, the level of contact prescribed by the Court was very similar to the actual contact variable for this group, with the median amount of contact being 5 days per month. The prescribed contact also ranged from 0 days per month to 30 days per month. Refer to Figure 4 for details of the prescribed contact arrangements. Only three fathers reported having less contact than was prescribed by the Court. In one case, this was due to the father choosing to move interstate. The other two fathers

reported that this was due to their ex-partner breaching the Court orders. In addition, two of the fathers reported that their ex-partners had relocated overseas, preventing the fathers from having any contact with their children. In these two cases there was no Court order in place regarding contact.

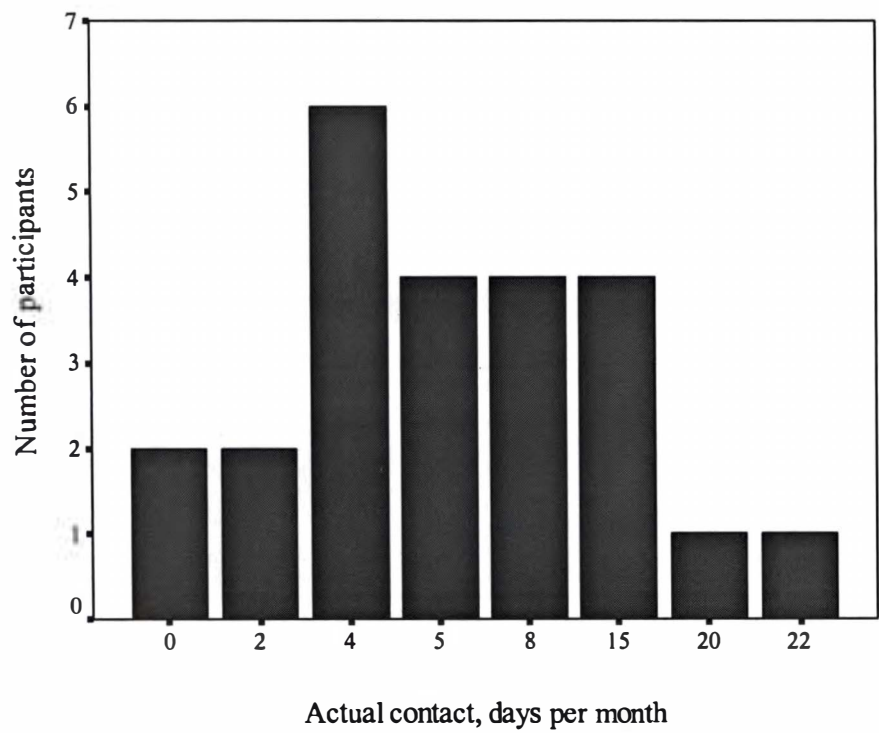


Figure 3. Actual level of contact that fathers had with their children.

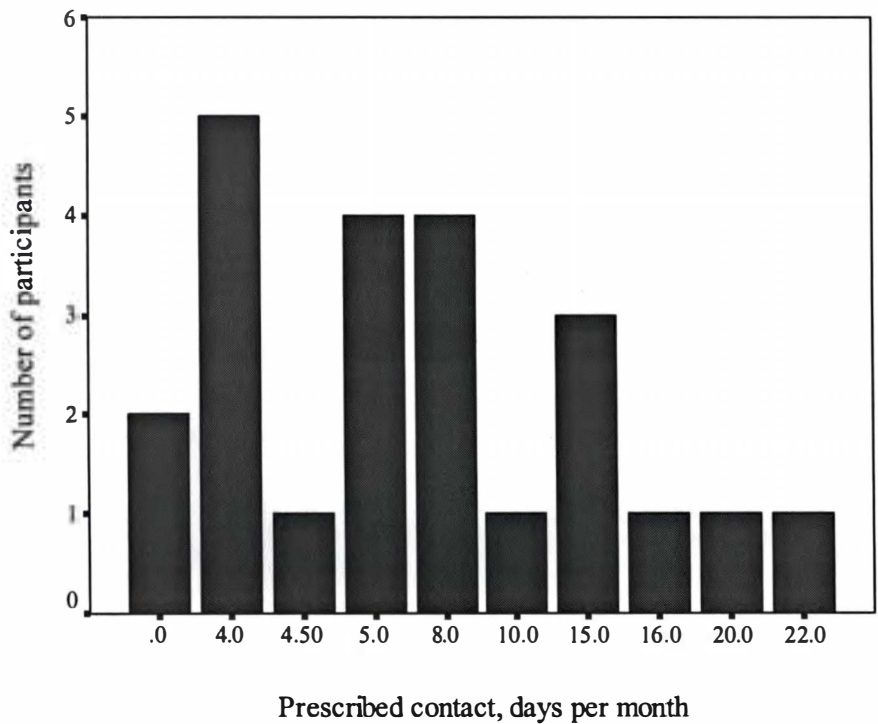


Figure 4. Amount of contact that was prescribed by legal proceedings.

When examining the relationship status of the ex-partners of divorced/separated fathers it was found that 13 ex partners were single, 1 was married, 9 were in a de facto relationship and 4 were unknown. The distance that fathers lived from their children ranged from 0 kilometres to 20,000 kilometres. The median distance was 15 kilometres.

Of the divorced or separated fathers, 4 of the participants were the primary carers of their children, 5 participants had a shared care arrangement, and 19 participants were the non-residential parent.

SPPR Results

Prior to scoring, each SPPR was screened for unanswered questions. Refer to appendix K for a copy of the scoring instructions. There were no instructions from the authors on how to treat unanswered items. Thus, in cases where only one question in

any scale was unanswered, the average score for the remaining items on the scale was calculated. This average was then substituted for the unanswered question and used to calculate the participants score on the scale in the usual way. This occurred on six of the questionnaires. In four cases, the unanswered question came from the Integration scale and in two cases from the Satisfaction scale. Where more than one item in a scale was missing the score for that scale was not calculated. This occurred in three cases, all of which were in relation to the Integration scale. Thus, in 8.11 percent of questionnaires at least one item was unanswered. In 3.2 percent of cases, more than one item from the Integration scale was unanswered, meaning that the Integration scale score could not be calculated.

SPPR Scores

The descriptive statistics of the four scales of the SPPR were examined. In interpreting the descriptive statistics it needs to be noted that the highest score possible for the Investment and Satisfaction scales is 25, whereas for the Integration and Competence scales the highest possible score is 30. Table 1 provides basic descriptive information for each scale. Compared to the possible range of scores for the different scales, the highest mean scores were in respect of the Integration and Satisfaction scales (the latter only slightly lower), followed by the Competence scale. The mean score for the Investment scale was, however, much lower.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics on the Four Scales of the SPPR

Scale	<i>N</i>	Range	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Investment	73	18	5	23	11.63	4.26
Integration	70	18	12	30	22.87	4.12
Competence	73	20	10	30	22.92	4.64
Satisfaction	73	14	14	28	21.85	3.36

Bar graphs were used to compare the pattern of results for each scale. Refer to figures 5, 6, 7, and 8. In each case the scores are not normally distributed. In the case of the Investment scale, the scores are positively skewed, meaning that the majority of participants achieved scores in the lower half of this scale. No participant achieved the maximum score of 25 for this scale. The highest score for the Investment scale was 23. For the remaining scales, Integration, Competence, and Satisfaction, the scores are negatively skewed, meaning that the majority of participants achieved scores towards the higher end of the scale. For each of these three scales, no participant achieved a score of less than 10, and at least one participant scored the maximum possible score. As the results do not reflect a normal distribution, this violates the main assumption of data analysis. However, ANOVA is relatively robust to violation of this assumption. It is generally accepted that if there are at least 20 degrees of freedom then univariate ANOVA is considered robust to violations of this assumption (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

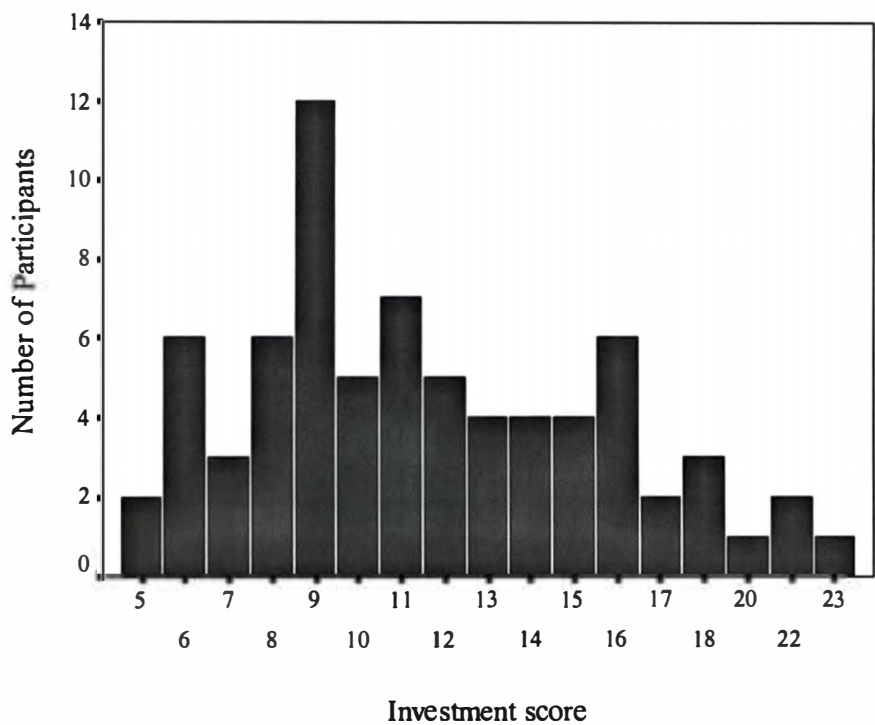


Figure 5. Results of the scores from the Investment scale.

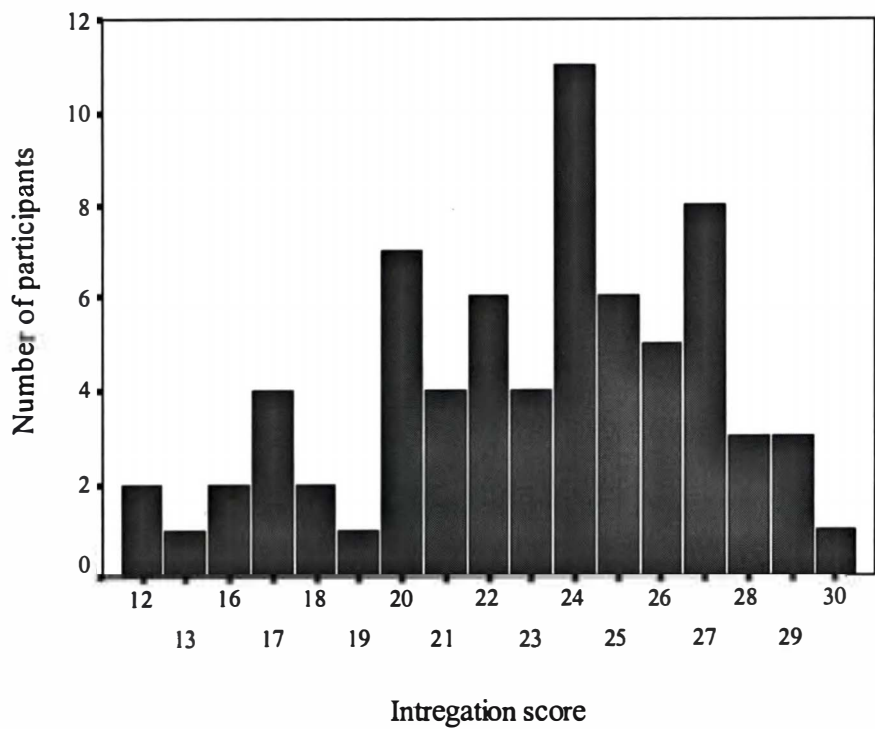


Figure 6. Results of the scores from the Integration scale.

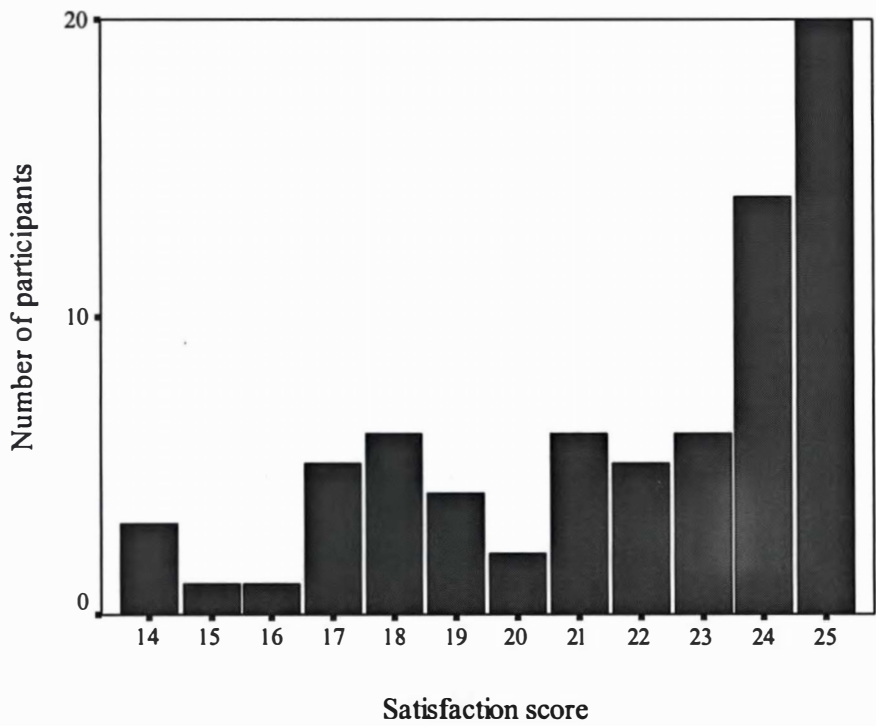


Figure 7. Results of the scores from the Satisfaction scale.

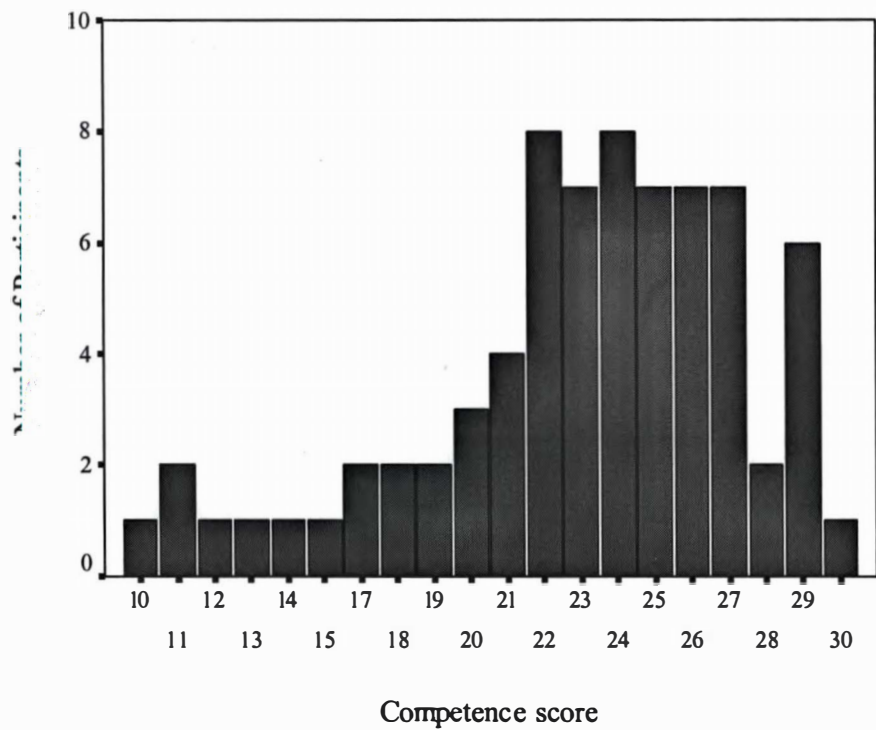


Figure 8. Results of the scores from the Competence scale.

Also, prior to ANOVA analysis the Levene statistic was used to test for homogeneity of variance, one of the assumptions of ANOVA analysis. Although ANOVA is a relatively robust technique the assumption of homogeneity of variance becomes particularly important when groups are not of equal sample size, as in the case of the current study. Levene's test for homogeneity of variance showed non-homogeneity for the Satisfaction scale ($p = .05$). For all the other SPPR scales the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met ($p > .05$). The SPSS regression approach was used and the cell means were given equal weight regardless of the sample size. The unequal sample size is therefore not a concern in respect of the non-homogeneity for the Satisfaction scale. However, present thinking is that non-homogeneity of variance can increase Type 1 error, even with equal samples (Keppel & Wickens, 2004). The simplest response to non homogeneity is to use a more stringent significance level. Keppel and Wickens suggest that the Type 1 error will be kept below the significance level if the alpha level is set at .025.

The mean SPPR scores for divorced/separated fathers were compared to those for non-divorced fathers, refer to Table 2 for a comparison of the mean scale scores for each group. A one-way analysis of variance was used to compare the differences in the means between the two groups. As comparing the same groups on more than one measure increases the chance of Type 1 error (false positive in concluding significance) a modified Bonferroni adjustment was used. The p value at which significance is found is divided by the number of comparisons conducted (Keppel & Wickens, 2004). In this case, an overall significance of .05 was used and four ANOVAs were conducted. Thus, for each of the comparisons the difference was regarded as significant if the p value was less than .0125, while the overall significance level remained .05. Results of the analysis of variance are included in

Table 2. No significant differences between mean scores were found, and the non-homogeneity of variance for the Satisfaction scale is therefore not a concern.

Table 2

ANOVA Results for Comparing the SPPR Scale Scores of Divorced/separated and Non-Divorced Fathers

SPPR Scales	Divorced/Separated			Non-divorced			<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Investment	28	12.21	4.18	43	11.35	4.38	.85	.36
Competence	28	23.25	4.69	43	22.88	4.56	.01	.91
Satisfaction	28	22.07	2.75	43	21.65	3.77	.23	.63
Integration	25	22.68	3.93	43	23.07	4.26	.36	.55

Note. The between groups *df* = 1 for all scales, and the within groups *df* = 69, except for the Integration scale where the within groups *df* = 66.
Relationship with Demographic Variables

Correlation coefficients were calculated to determine if there were any significant relationships between participants’ scores on the SPPR and the demographic variables. This was done to find out whether scores could be expected to differ for certain demographic groups. A significant correlation may indicate the need to interpret scores differently for different groups.

Where correlational analysis was used to investigate two interval level variables, Pearson product moment correlation was used. Where an interval variable and a dichotomous variable were compared, a point-biserial correlation was used. When comparing an interval level variable to an ordinal variable, Spearman’s rho was used. This information applies to all correlations undertaken for the current study

A significant negative correlation was found between the variable length of relationship and scores for the Integration scale, $r = -.26, p < .05$. The variable length

of relationship was not correlated to any of the other scale scores. Table 3 gives the results of the correlation analysis for this variable.

The majority of demographic variables were not significantly correlated with scores on the four scales of the SPPR. Non-significant variables include; participant’s age, current relationship status, number of children, child’s age group, education level and income. Refer to Table 3 for the results of the analysis.

Table 3
Correlations Between Demographic Variables and SPPR Scale Scores

Demographic Variable	SPPR Scales			
	Investment	Integration	Competence	Satisfaction
Participant’s age (years)	-.17	-.01	.00	-.10
Length of relationship (years)	-.02	-.26*	-.05	-.13
Current relationship status ^a	-.10	-.04	-.21	-.10
Number of children	-.16	-.24	.07	-.07
Child’s age group ^b	-.13	.10	.00	-.07
Education level ^c	.20	-.21	-.09	-.23
Income (dollars per year)	-.04	-.17	-.13	-.12

Note.
^a Categories of married or divorced/separated.
^b Categories of primary (0-12 yrs), teens (13-19 yrs) and adults (20+ yrs).
^c Categories of primary school, year 10, year 12, TAFE, tertiary, and post-graduate.
* $p < 0.05$

Separate correlation analyses were undertaken for the divorced/separated fathers and the non-divorced fathers. This was done in order to determine if different demographic variables were significantly correlated with the SPPR scales for the two

groups. In addition, some demographic variables only applied to divorced/separated fathers, and thus could only be analysed for this group.

In regards to non-divorced fathers, one demographic variable was found to be significant. Level of education was found to be significantly correlated to scores on the Investment scale and the Satisfaction scale. The remaining demographic variables were not significantly related to any of the SPPR scores for the non-divorced fathers. Table 4 gives the correlation results for the non-divorced fathers.

Table 4

Correlations Between Demographic Variables and SPPR Scale Scores for Non-Divorced Fathers

Demographic Variable	Investment	Integration	Competence	Satisfaction
Participant's age (years)	-.11	-.17	-.04	-.21
Length of relationship (years)	-.25	-.10	.03	-.11
Number of children	-.16	-.28	.19	.04
Child's age group ^a	-.22	.15	.04	-.13
Education level ^b	.43*	-.27	-.19	-.31*
Income (dollars per year)	.07	-.23	-.17	-.23

Note.

^a Categories of primary (0-12 yrs), teens (13-19 yrs) and adults (20+ yrs).

^b Categories of primary school, year 10, year 12, TAFE, tertiary, and post-graduate.

* $p < 0.05$

In regards to the divorced/separated fathers, the amount of contact prescribed by the Court was found to be significantly related to scores for the Integration scale. The other demographic variables were not significantly related to scores on the SPPR, including the variables specific to divorced/separated fathers. These variables included; time since divorce, actual amount of contact, and distance that the father

lived from the children. Table 5 contains the results of the correlations for the divorced/separated fathers.

Table 5

Correlations Between Demographic Variables and SPPR Scale Scores for Divorced/separated Fathers

Demographic Variable	Investment	Integration	Competence	Satisfaction
Participant's age (years)	-.11	-.05	.10	.15
Length of relationship (years)	-.30	.28	.10	.08
Current relationship status ^a	-.06	-.26	-.35	-.30
Number of children	-.13	-.19	.04	-.26
Child's age group ^b	.18	.10	.14	.05
Education level ^c	-.05	-.27	.20	-.13
Income (dollars per year)	-.19	-.04	-.01	.12
Time since divorce (years)	-.09	-.16	-.18	.09
Actual contact (days per month)	-.08	.29	.04	.17
Prescribed contact (days per month)	-.11	.47*	.36	.35
Distance from children (kilometres)	.19	-.17	-.07	-.05

Note.

^a Categories of married or divorced/separated

^b Categories of primary (0-12 yrs), teens (13-19 yrs) and adults (20+ yrs).

^c Categories of primary school, year 10, year 12, TAFE, tertiary, and post-graduate.

* $p < 0.05$

Reliability and Validity of SPPR Scores

A total of 25 participants agreed to fill in the questionnaire a second time. Of these, 23 questionnaires were returned. Test re-test reliability was investigated by comparing the 23 participants' scores on the first and second administrations of the SPPR. Test-retest reliability was found to be .71, for the Investment scale, .65 for the

Integrations scale, .45 for the Competence scale, and .82 for the Satisfaction scale ($p < .05$).

As a measure of internal consistency, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for each of the four scales. In addition, the standard error of the mean (SEM) was calculated. A high Cronbach's Alpha together with a low SEM indicates that an instrument is reliable. Cronbach's Alpha was found to be .67 for the Investment scale, 0.68 for the Integration scale, .74 for Competence, and .73 for Satisfaction. The SEM was found to be .50 for Investment, .49 for the Integration scale, 0.54 for Competence, and 0.39 for the Satisfaction scale.

A principle components analysis was undertaken to determine factorial validity. The factor loadings were examined to determine if the data supports the division of the SPPR into the four separate scales. Refer to Table 6 for results. Fourteen items loaded onto factor one, which explained 23.45 % of the variance. All five items from the Satisfaction scale loaded on this factor. In addition, five of the six Competence items, and four of the six Integration items loaded on factor one.

Factor two, which explained 11.53 % of variance, corresponded well with the Investment scale. All five Investment items, and no other items, loaded onto this factor. In regards to factor three, five of the six Integration items, and four of the six Competence items loaded on this factor. Factor three explained 9.76 % of the variance. The fourth factor accounted for 7.46 % of the variance. Three Satisfaction items, two Competence items, one Investment item, and one Integration item loaded on this factor.

Table 6

Results of the Unrotated Principle Components Analysis

Item	Scale	Component			
		1	2	3	4
7	Integration	.76	.21	.28	-.18
12	Satisfaction	.77	-.13	.26	-.35
21	Competence	.68	.13	-.12	-.16
20	Satisfaction	.67	-.13	-.10	-.05
4	Satisfaction	.65	-.16	.06	-.46
11	Integration	.62	.15	.48	.09
8	Satisfaction	.62	.01	-.05	.08
14	Competence	.61	-.03	-.39	.05
6	Competence	.53	-.13	-.33	-.19
16	Satisfaction	.51	.20	-.02	.33
2	Competence	.42	.20	-.05	.26
3	Integration	.39	.06	.23	-.08
9	Investment	-.01	.82	.02	-.02
13	Investment	-.05	.73	-.20	.11
1	Investment	.30	.68	-.47	-.12
5	Investment	-.12	.60	.16	-.32
18	Competence	.49	-.10	-.56	.34
10	Competence	.22	-.01	-.49	.38
15	Integration	.41	.29	.45	.28
22	Integration	.16	-.18	.37	.22
17	Investment	-.33	.31	.36	.16
19	Integration	.24	-.10	.33	.69

Note. The relevant scale for each item is indicated.

Feedback on the SPPR

After completing the SPPR participants were given an opportunity to provide feedback or comment on the SPPR. A total of seven participants provided feedback. Six provided feedback on specific items and one provided a general comment. Two comments were made in regard to question 22, two in regard to question 15, one made in relation to question 11, and one in regard to question 19. One comment was made that applied to both questions 5 and 9, and one was made that applied to both questions 15 and 22. Table 7 gives the specific comments made in relation to each item. Note that seven comments were made about items from the Integration scale and two comments were made about items from the Investment scale.

In regards to the comment made about the items from the Investment scale, which was *But you do still consider other points of view* (participant 33), the parent was explaining that although he doesn't actively try to learn about being a parent he does still consider other points of view about parenting. In regards to the Integration questions, the comments made all address aspects of parenting that are raised by the questionnaire that may be perceived as being negative, for example, having less time to oneself or changing the marriage. In some cases, a comment was made to explain that what appears to be a negative aspect might not actually be a negative. For example, in relation to question 11 one participant commented, *The kids become part of yourself, so it's not having less time for yourself* (participant 4). Thus, the participant did recognise that he has less personal time, but he did not consider this to be negative, explaining that he considered spending time with his children to be spending time on himself. In other cases, comments were made when the participant did not believe either statement in a particular question to be true. For example, in relation to question 15, which states "Some fathers feel that having children did not

change their marriage but for other fathers, being a parent gets in the way of being a good husband", one father commented that he did not agree with either statement. The father made the comment *It did change relationship but did not get in the way of being a good partner* (participant 17). The general comment that was made was *You need to balance a stable life for children and the need to move for your work* (participant 7).

Table 7

Comments Participants Made

Item Number	Scale	Item content	Comment(s)
5	Investment	Some parents want to learn everything possible about being a parent but other parents feel that they already know all they need to know about parenting.	<i>But you do still consider other points of view</i> (participant 33)
9	Investment	Some parents don't think too much about how to parent; they just do it but other parents try to learn as much as they can about how to parent.	
11	Integration	Some parents resent the fact that having children means less time to do the things they like but other parents don't mind having less free time for themselves.	<i>The kids become part of yourself, so its not having less time for yourself</i> (participant 4)

Table 7 Continued

15	Integration	Some fathers feel that having children did not change their marriage but for other fathers, being a parent gets in the way of being a good husband.	<i>It did change relationship but did not get in the way of being a good partner (participant 17)</i> <i>Having kids does change marriage not necessarily get in the way of being a good husband, it may do the opposite (participant 15)</i>
15	Integration	See above	<i>It depends on the age of the children, now that they are older I</i>
22	Integration	See below	<i>have more time to do the things I used to (participant 41)</i>
22	Integration	Some parents feel that their lives are restricted or confined since having children but other parents don't stop doing things they like to do just because of their children.	<i>Your lives are changed but not restricted (participant 19)</i> <i>A 'good parent' would need to forgo at least some of the things they like to do (participant 15)</i>
19	Integration	For some parents, having children means that they can't do the things they used to like to do but for other parents, having a child doesn't change their lifestyle very much.	<i>It does change lifestyle but through compromise and sharing parents can still pursue other interests (participant 15)</i>

Interview Data

The audio tapes of the complete interviews were transcribed. Two raters were asked to independently read the interview transcripts and identify major themes arising from the interviews. Both raters were experienced researchers undertaking post-graduate qualifications in psychology. Thus, the raters had specific training regarding psychology and law in general, but did not have detailed knowledge in the

area of fathers' roles. This was done to ensure that the raters' identification of themes was not biased by prior knowledge of what has been identified in the literature and by the themes covered by the SPPR. In addition, the raters were not aware of the participants' score on the questionnaire.

The raters were asked to identify the main themes occurring in each of the four areas that were asked about in the interview. The four areas are; roles that make up the father role, rewards of the father role, costs of the father role, and perceptions of role performance. Both raters noted that saturation point was reached, indicating a relatively high number of participants. The themes identified by the raters were quite similar. The themes identified by each rater in the four areas were then collated and integrated, to form a final set of themes for each of the five areas. The raters were asked to review the final set of themes. Both raters indicated approval of the final set of themes. It is the final set of themes that were used as the results in the current study, as discussed in the following section. Appendix L contains the themes provided independently by each rater, and the final themes as used in the current study. For complete transcript of the interviews refer to Appendix M.

Roles that Make up the Father Role

The first area encompassed the roles that fathers identify as making up the father role. Fathers were asked what being a father means, and how they view their roles as fathers. Three themes were identified in this area; traditional role, teacher role, and shared experience and participation.

Traditional role.

One theme was the traditional role of financial provision and protection of their children. Most fathers expressed a strong view that a large part of the father role was to ensure the material support of their children and to protect their children from any harm. Responses representing examples of this theme are:

Being a parent is somebody who... protects their children and provides for them (participant 19)

Protection of the kids, keep them safe, take care of creature comforts (participant 25)

...a traditional provider (participant 13)

Teacher role.

Another theme included teaching and equipping children with the necessary skills for their future. This involved teaching morals, providing guidance, teaching independence and imparting knowledge. Many of the participants expressed concern and a strong desire to ensure that their children acquire some of the father's values, beliefs and morals, or at least are aware of their father's values. Some examples of answers that expressed this theme include:

...about my morals, standards, being instilled in him, how he's educated. At the moment, he's getting it all from his mother (participant 2)

A father means that I can bring up my children with my values, with my interpretation of what right is all about (participant 16)

To impart what you've learned through life to your children (participant 17)

...having played a part in shaping the people that they become (participant 72)

Shared experience and participation.

The final theme in this area was sharing experiences with the child and active participation in the day-to-day tasks of parenting. This encompassed a range of activities, from recreational activities, such as engaging in play and taking them to the park and beach, to parenting tasks, such as cooking and bathing. Some examples of participant's answers that expressed this theme include:

...the interaction that I have with him, the play time, or just teaching him numbers, or basic house duties' (participant 20)

...help feed and dress the kids, play with them (participant 29)

I could go and play cricket with them or baseball, or take them to cricket (participant 1)

Rewards of the Father Role

The second area encompassed the rewards that fathers received from acting in the father role. Fathers were asked to describe the rewarding things about being a parent. Most fathers provided examples of many aspects of parenting they found to be rewarding. Three main themes were identified in this area; watching children grow, the relationship with the child, and spending time together. A fourth theme was that a small number of participants did not identify any rewards to parenting.

Watching children grow.

The first was watching their children grow, develop and learn new skills. This referred to all aspects of development, that is, physical, emotional, and psychological.

This included watching their child reach achievements and knowing that they are happy. Examples of participants' answers that illustrate this theme are as follows:

...and the other thing obviously is you just watch them learn and grow and experience things and their conquests, as they start to learn to walk and talk, just to watch them is a great feeling (participant 4)

Things like when you watch your kid, like my daughter at the moment is two and she is saying "thank you" (participant 11)

...when she is happy and achieves things, and gets good marks, then I'm happy (participant 15)

...just seeing probably the successful role out of your kids, any achievement big or small, you can see the smile on their face (participant 8)

Relationship with the child.

A second theme that emerged in the area of rewards of parenting was the type of relationship that they had with their children. This was characterised by a loving, unconditional bond, and was based on trust. Many fathers described this as unique to the father-child relationship and described it as the major reward of parenting. Some answers that illustrate this theme are provided below.

I think, the rewards are, have a lot to do with establishing a loving relationship with a child, your own child, ... that's very different between other loving relationships (participant 19)

To love them and be loved, the relationship with your kids (participant 3)

The love that you get in return, the unconditional love that you get in return (participant 18)

...just the bonding and the friendship that you got with your children
(participant 5)

Spending time together.

A third theme was, just spending time with their children. Many fathers expressed the view that one of the rewarding aspects of parenting was to spend time with their children. This is linked to the theme of sharing experiences that emerged under the role of the father. Fathers described that carrying out this role of sharing experiences and spending time with their children was one of the most rewarding aspects of parenting for them. Some examples of the answers given by fathers that relate to this theme are:

Spending time with them... yeah just spending time with them (participant 10)

Spending as much time with the children as I can, spending quality time with them, just enjoying them... (participant 5)

Spending time with the children (participant 27)

Few rewards.

Finally, it is worth noting that there was a small group of fathers who stated that there are few rewards to parenting. These fathers were unable to describe aspects of parenting that they found rewarding. This contrasted with the majority of fathers who emphasised that parenting was one of the most rewarding aspects of their lives and were able to describe many aspects of parenting that they found rewarding. Some examples of the answers given by those fathers who did not find parenting rewarding are as follows:

They are few and far between (participant 24)

I don't know that there's that many to be honest (participant 22)

Costs of the Father Role

A third area that fathers were asked about was the costs associated with the father role. Fathers were asked to describe some of the sacrifices they make as parents. Three main themes emerged in this area; parenting is not considered a sacrifice, lifestyle changes, and relationship changes.

Parenting not considered a sacrifice.

Firstly, there was a strong theme from most fathers that while they recognised that they gave up things for their children that they did not perceive this to be a sacrifice. The majority of fathers mentioned this as the first part of their answer when asked about the sacrifices they make as a father. Many also reported that giving things up for their children was simply part of a parent's responsibility, and so it was not considered to be a sacrifice. A good example of an answer that clearly illustrates this point is:

Oh, well there are no sacrifices. You'd do anything for your children so I can't see that it's a sacrifice not watching your favourite TV show or not going down the pub and drinking like I used to be drinking. It's not a sacrifice; I've done it because I decided to do it. I wouldn't do it if I didn't want to. So anything to do with the children isn't a sacrifice. It's just something you want to do. (participant 5)

Some other examples include:

*I don't think that I sacrifice, I really don't. If I do, I don't notice it.
(participant 7)*

*It's not really a sacrifice though, because you want to see your children
(participant 12)*

*I don't see as sacrifices. Because, you know, I committed to taking on a
fathering role. So it was just an extension of that. (participant 18)*

I see them more as obligations than sacrifices (participant 22)

Lifestyle changes.

One strong theme that emerged was that lifestyle was one area where things were given up, or sacrificed. Most fathers recognised that parenting was associated with sacrifices in lifestyle. This included giving up travel, career advancement, loss of financial freedom, a decline in social activities, and of course, a major lifestyle sacrifice mentioned by fathers of young children was sleep. Almost all fathers identified at least one area of their lifestyle that had been changed or given up due to being a father. Some examples of the answers given in this theme are:

*I have really sacrificed my career, because if it wasn't for my belief in staying
with my family then I would be off overseas developing my former career in
mineral exploration (participant 8)*

Sleep! (participant 9)

I guess it is all monetary, the sacrifices (participant 10)

*I'm sacrificing any sort of personal life, because I can't go anywhere or have
a social life; it's just me and him, which is not a problem. (participant 13)*

*Well I guess the lifestyle that we live. I mean I don't choose to live in the city,
I'm a country boy... but it is very convenient for education and those sorts of
things. (participant 15)*

Relationship changes.

Another theme identified was sacrifices in relationships. Fathers reported that they felt parenting led them to make sacrifices in their relationship with the mother of the children, or with their new partners. These included time spent together with their partner, the amount of attention received from their wives, and the amount of time available to develop new relationships following divorce. Some examples of answers given in regard to this theme include:

I think, to a degree, you limit your opportunities to develop other relationships, particularly when they are young and growing, you can only focus on a finite number of close relationships (participant 19)

Relationship with your partner, the loss of privacy and less time for one another, you have to treasure and nurture the relationship (participant 72)

... all of a sudden [the father] has got this other person in the house, and what he used to have with his partner giving him all the attention, is taken away (participant 11)

Perceptions of Role Performance

Perceptions of their own competence in the parent role was the fourth area explored in the interviews. Participants were first asked which areas of parenting they felt most and least confident about. Next, they were asked where they turned to for help when they had a question about parenting.

Confidence in parenting ability.

Almost all fathers expressed high levels of confidence in their parenting ability and stressed that parenting is a learning process, meaning that they are constantly learning new skills. Examples of answers expressing this theme include:

Generally, I'm pretty confident because I take the role of being a father pretty seriously (participant 4)

I'm 99 percent sure that I'm right (participant 6)

I feel confident that, well it's a learning process. You don't sort of go well you need a full bag of skills to be a parent, you need this or that, it's a learning process. (participant 8)

I don't feel any lack of confidence about anything. I feel completely confident and comfortable with anything to do with parenting really. (participant 10)

Areas that fathers expressed particular confidence with were those such as teaching their children new skills and imparting morals and values. In general, fathers expressed the greatest confidence with the concrete tasks of parenting. Some examples of areas fathers expressed confidence in include:

More confident would be from an educational point of view and trying to guide them towards the best path to go in their education (participant 17)

The interaction that I have with him, the play time, or just teaching him numbers, or basic house duties (participant 20)

I'm very confident with homework, a confident, you know, role model (participant 22)

I am quite capable of looking after a house and cooking for people (participant 8)

Some fathers also expressed confidence in their abilities to provide emotional support and nurturance to their children. Some examples of answers expressing this view include:

Certainly just support and being there for the children (participant 18)

Getting him to deal with his mother, I think I'm good at that, because he is still in one piece...his mother is making him suffer really badly actually (participant 13)

I'll often lead them through a discussion or dilemma (participant 22)

By contrast, other fathers reported that emotional support was one of the areas they felt least confident about. Many fathers expressed a view that emotional support and nurturing was more the role of a mother, or was an area in which women have more developed skills than men. This is evidenced by answers such as:

I'm less confident with emotional nurturing, I guess because of my generational upbringing, you know, less comfortable displaying emotions, especially negative social emotions, such as crying (participant 28)

The bits I'm not confident with are the relationship bit; I think women are more better at relating with people (participant 8)

Other areas of least confidence included health problems and issues arising from having adolescent daughters. Some fathers expressed that lack of confidence in such areas came from a lack of knowledge. Others expressed a view that women or mothers were innately better able to deal with such issues. Some examples include:

As a father, of course, I mean having a daughter is a, there are certain areas that I certainly leave much more to my wife. As they grow up, you know, I mean she is a young teenager, so certain areas of a girl's education I think is probably more appropriate for my wife. (participant 15)

I ended up apologising to my doctor because every time there is something wrong with him I take him straight to my doctor. But what else can I do, I don't know if it's normal or not. (participant 2)

Parenting resources.

Many fathers expressed having good resources to call upon when they had questions regarding parenting. A wide range of different social supports and sources of information were mentioned by the participants. It is interesting to note that many fathers brought up this topic themselves, before being asked. It was often brought up in relation to the questions about their confidence in their own parenting ability. The resources that fathers used included their own parents, their parents-in-law, their friends, men's groups and books. Some examples in this area include:

I know exactly where to go for what information I need. I know which government departments are set up to help parents and there is a fair bit of it around. (participant 24)

I ask friends, and I used to belong to a men's group, or sometimes in a magazine I may come across something (participant 26)

My current mother in law had three children; one was special needs child, so she is very good for advice (participant 28)

I'll ask, people to tell me. Friends, family. Basically if I'm not sure of something I will ask, never hurts to ask. (participant 6)

On the other hand, some fathers reported that they never accessed outside support or advice. Some fathers expressed that this was due to not needing help. Other fathers reported that they believed trial and error or instinct were the best methods of solving parenting problems. Some examples of answers in this area include:

'Didn't ask anything, it never felt strange or foreign. It felt like it belonged, I like children. (participant 25)

Do not really have any doubts or uncertainties ... no, I don't think I have any real problems (participant 1)

So I just think at the time and I might meditate and I believe at the subconscious level sometimes you can sort things out. So I have to work out through all that. (participant 3)

Comparison of SPPR Questions with Interview Themes

Results from the interview data were compared to the SPPR to explore further the utility of the questionnaire for use with fathers. The main themes arising from the interview were compared to the topics covered in the questionnaire.

Firstly, the themes arising from the interview were compared to those that were covered on the questionnaire. Some themes were found to be similar to individual scales of the questionnaire, while others were not covered in detail on the questionnaire.

In regard to the three themes arising about the role of the parent, these were not mentioned specifically on the questionnaire. The questionnaire does not ask about specific roles, such as nurturer, provider, protector, role model. Many fathers were able to describe the types of roles that parenting entailed. They expressed a strong

view that teaching their children and ensuring they developed strong morals and values were a part of parenting. Thus, although the questionnaire examines how fathers perceive they are performing as parents, it is not designed to assess specifically the different aspects of the parent role.

In addition, when talking about the rewards of parenting the fathers talked about the different aspects of parenting that they found rewarding. The SPPR does contain questions about how satisfying or rewarding parenting is to fathers, but asks fathers to rate this rather than asking about the different aspects they find rewarding. In contrast, the Integration items on the SPPR examine several specific areas in which sacrifices are made due to being a parent. For example, questions ask about the impact of parenting on relationships and lifestyle. As discussed above these correspond to the themes mentioned by the fathers in the interview.

In regards to the competence items on the SPPR, parents are asked to rate their overall perception of their competence as parents but are not asked about specific areas in which they are or are not confident. During the interview, most fathers talked about their overall confidence in their parenting ability and gave examples of areas in which they felt most and least confident.

Many of the fathers listed several sources, which they turned to for advice or support in parenting matters. Similarly, the Investment items on the SPPR did ask about some specific sources. In addition, there were more general statements expressing the view that they did not require advice or help with parenting. This was also expressed during the interview by some parents.

Overall, some of the themes from the interview were covered specifically by the SPPR. Other themes that were covered in detail at interview were covered only in general terms by the SPPR. In addition, some themes from the interview were not

covered by the questionnaire. Refer to Table 8 for a summary of the themes covered in general and specifically on the questionnaire and at interview.

Table 8

Themes from the Interviews and the SPPR

Theme	SPPR Questionnaire		Interview	
	General coverage	Specific aspects covered	General information emerged	Specific aspects emerged
Parent role	✓			✓
Rewards of parenting	✓		✓	✓
Sacrifices made	✓	✓	✓	✓
Confidence/competence	✓		✓	✓
Sources of help/advice	✓	✓	✓	✓

A number of the items on the SPPR appear to relate to some of the themes that the fathers discussed. Five main themes that could be linked to specific questions were identified. These areas are described below.

Firstly, in regards to sacrifices made by fathers, one theme that many fathers mentioned was that although they recognised that they gave up things, they did not regard it as a sacrifice. This appears to be similar in content to Item 7 (Integration scale), which states *Some people feel they end up making too many sacrifices for their children but for other parents, there are more rewards than sacrifices in rearing children*. This question contains a statement weighing up whether the father believes that parenting involves ‘sacrifice’.

A second area of similarity relates to the theme of sacrificing lifestyle. This is similar in content to two items that question whether fathers have sacrificed their

lifestyle for their children. Item 11 (Integration scale) states *Some parents resent the fact that having children means less time to do the things they like but other parents don't mind having less free time for themselves.* Item 19 (Integration scale) states *For some parents, having children means that they can't do the things they used to like to do but for other parents, having a child doesn't change their lifestyle very much.*

A third area of similarity relates to the perception of sacrifice in regards to personal relationships. During the interviews, one theme that arose was that some fathers felt that being a father led them to make sacrifices in their personal relationships. This is similar to the content of items 3 and 15, from the Integration scale. Item three states *Some parents feel that they don't see enough of their friends since they've had children but other parents see their old friends just as often, or they have made new ones.* Item 15 states *Some fathers feel that having children did not change their marriage but for other fathers, being a parent gets in the way of being a good husband.*

Some of the participants expressed extreme confidence in their abilities as father, not identifying any areas in which they in were not confident. Other fathers expressed confidence but did identify one or more areas that they were not confident in. Items 10, 14, and 21 (Competence scale) on the SPPR were on this topic. Item 10 states *Some parents feel that they are doing a good job of providing for their children's needs but other parents have doubts about how well they are meeting their children's needs.* Item 14 states *Some parents often worry about how they're doing as a parent but other parents feel confident about their parenting abilities.* Item 21 states *Some fathers aren't sure they were suited to be parents but parenting comes easily and naturally to other parents.* For each of these three items one-half of the statement expresses extreme confidence in ones parenting abilities.

In the interview, many of the participants were able to identify one or a number of sources that they turned to for help or advice about parenting. Other parents reported feeling no need to seek outside help or advice. This is expressed in the content of Items 1 and 13 (Investment scale). Item 1 states *Some parents do a lot of reading about how to be a good parent but other parents don't spend much time reading about parenting*. Item 13 states *Some parents feel it's a must to keep up with the latest childrearing advice and methods but other parents would rather deal with their children on a day-to-day basis with what they already know*. In both of these items, one half of the statement expresses a view that the parent does not need to seek outside help or advice for parenting issues.

The remaining items on the SPPR did not correspond directly, in terms of content, to the themes brought up in the interview.

Discussion

The aim of the current study was twofold: The First aim of the study was to investigate the psychometric properties of an unpublished formal measure of father role identity, the Self-Perceptions of the Parental Role questionnaire (SPPR), specifically to investigate its use with fathers, and divorced parents. The second aim was to explore the construct of father role identity. The interview data were compared to the SPPR results to examine if ways might be found to develop the utility of the SPPR as a future measure to investigate the link between post-divorce contact and father role identity.

Contact with Children

For the current study, only 14% (four) of the participants had two or less days contact per month. This is in contrast to literature reports that 30 to 40 percent of the

fathers had little or no contact with their children (see for example Gibbison, 1992). For the majority of participants the actual level of contact with their child was the same as that prescribed by the Court, with only three fathers reporting having less contact than was prescribed by the Court. This was not unexpected given the way that participants were recruited for the study. One would not expect that fathers who fail to keep in contact with their children would volunteer for a study about fathers. On the contrary, it was expected that fathers who volunteered for the study would be those who are motivated to maintain contact with their children. The fathers from this study that did not have contact with their children, reported that the lack of contact was not their choice and that they desired to have contact with their children, consistent with the expectation that the volunteers for the study would be those who desired continued contact.

SPPR Results

Relationship with Demographic Variables

Previous research regarding post-divorce contact indicated that demographic variables are significantly related to levels of contact (Erera et al., 1999). As father role identity is thought to be related to levels of contact (Thinger-Tallman et al., 1993), and contact is known to be correlated with demographic variables (Seltzer & Brandreth, 1994), thus, it would make sense to expect a correlation between the demographic variables and measures of father role identity. In addition, if SPPR scores differed for certain demographic groups, this could indicate the need for SPPR results to be interpreted differently for different groups.

For the current study, it was found that the longer the participant was in the relationship the lower his Integration score, a measure of the degree to which he has

integrated the parent role into his life. The Integration scale is the scale that is designed to measure role salience. This result appears to be counterintuitive. One would expect that over time the parent role would become more integrated with other aspects of the person's life. This result may actually reflect a difference between divorced/separated fathers, who have shorter relationships, and non-divorced fathers, who have longer relationships. It may be that the divorced fathers in this study place more emphasis on the parent role compared to non-divorced fathers. This hypothesis would be supported by the fact that almost all divorced fathers desired greater contact with their children. This possibility was investigated by comparing the Integration scores of divorced/separated and non-divorced fathers. However, no significant differences in SPPR scores were found. Thus, it appears unlikely that the significant correlation between length of relationship and Integration is a by-product of a correlation between length of relationship and whether or not the father has been divorced.

Another possible explanation was that fathers of adult children, who had high scores for length of relationship, scored lower for Integration due to the different nature of being a parent of an adult as to a dependent minor. However, the variable age group of children was not significantly correlated to scores on the SPPR, suggesting that the Integration scores of fathers of children under 12 years old, teenagers, and adults were similar. Thus, the significant relationship between Integration and length of relationship could also not be explained by differing scores of fathers with older and younger children. An explanation for this seemingly counter-intuitive score has not been found. However, even though the correlation between length of relationship and Integration was significant, the size of the correlation was small.

Further, it was found that, for the divorced fathers, those with higher levels of contact prescribed by the Court scored more highly on the Integration scale. This indicates that fathers who had higher levels of contact prescribed, had integrated their role as parents into their lives to a greater degree than those with lower levels of prescribed contact. This result is not surprising. It would make sense that a father who has more regular contact with his children is able to integrate his role as father with the other important roles in his life. On the other hand, for a father who only sees his children occasionally, this role would be quite separate from the rest of his day-to-day life. Alternatively, it is possible that those fathers who are more successful at integrating the father role into the rest of their life are also more likely to be granted higher levels of contact by the Court.

It was also found that non-divorced fathers with higher education levels scored more highly on the Investment scale, a measure of the time that the father invests in thinking about or learning about the father role. These results suggest that non-divorced fathers with higher education levels perceived that they invested more time thinking about or learning about the parent role. This may be a reflection of a link between education level and the importance placed on parenting. Alternatively, it may not reflect differences in time invested in the parent role, but rather differences in perceptions of the time invested in the parent role.

A related finding from the current study was that non-divorced fathers with higher education levels scored lower on the Satisfaction scale, which measures the amount of satisfaction that fathers get from acting in the father role. This could reflect higher standards for satisfaction in more highly educated fathers. Alternatively, it could reflect a cognitive difference in the ways that fathers judge the satisfaction they gain from parenting, with less educated fathers making more positive judgements than

those made by more highly educated fathers. It is also possible that this finding is linked to that discussed in the previous paragraph, regarding Investment. It may be that because more highly educated fathers invest more in the parent role they expected greater rewards, or satisfaction from this role.

The question then arises as to why education only correlated significantly with the Satisfaction scale and the Investment scale for the non-divorced fathers. It was hypothesised that the significant results for the non-divorced fathers may have been a reflection of a greater range of education levels for the non-divorced fathers and that the sample of divorced fathers may have had a restricted range of education levels. However, the range of education levels for both groups was equivalent. The different Investment scale results for divorced and non-divorced fathers, may be related to the time they invest in the father role respectively. It is possible that relative to non-divorced fathers with higher education, divorced fathers with higher education invest less time in the parent role. If they are not the primary carers of their children, there may not be a practical reason for them to spend as much time thinking about and learning about the father role, as there are for their non-divorced counterparts. This would be in accordance with the finding for the Satisfaction scale. If the more educated divorced fathers invest less time in the parent role than their non-divorced counterparts, they may expect less satisfaction from the role and thus not rate their satisfaction as low as the non-divorced fathers. However, this is just speculation and will have to be investigated. None of the previous studies investigated the relationships between demographic variables and the SPPR scores. Thus, it is not possible to compare results from the current study to those from previous studies. At this point, it is not clear why significant correlations between education and Investment and Satisfaction were found for the non-divorced fathers only.

Overall, the majority of demographic characteristics were not correlated with the results of the SPPR. Where significant correlations were found, the demographic variables were correlated with one or two of the scales, and correlation coefficients were fairly small. Additionally, the significant correlations may have been due to chance. As a larger number of variables were included in the analysis (Table 4 and Table 5 each include over 20 variables), with a type one error rate of .05 at least one of the correlations for divorced/separated fathers and one for non-divorced fathers would be expected to be significant by chance. Thus, considered as a whole, that results of the correlational analysis suggests that SPPR scores are likely to differ little for different demographic groups. Thus, it is unlikely that the SPPR would need to be interpreted differently with certain demographic groups.

Reliability

Ideally, reliability coefficients should be a .9 or higher for clinical decision-making and .7 or higher for research and screening purposes (Groth-Marnat, 2003; Murphy & Davidshofer, 2001). Compared to these guidelines, the results from the current study indicate that the SPPR should not be used for clinical decision-making. The Satisfaction scale was found to be the most reliable scale, with a test-retest coefficient of .82 and a Cronbach's alpha of .73, adequate for research and screening purposes. While the Cronbach's alpha of .74 for the Competence scale is adequate for research and screening purposes, the test-retest reliability ($r = .45$) is unacceptably low. For the Investment scale the test-retest reliability ($r = .71$) is adequate for screening and research, but the Cronbach's alpha of .67 is too low. For the Integration scale both the Cronbach's alpha and test-retest reliability (.68 and .65 respectively) are too low.

The size of the reliability coefficients is affected by the length of the instrument and the size of the sample used in the investigation (Groth-Marnat, 2003) and this should be taken into account when judging the reliability of the findings. The SPPR is a relatively short instrument, consisting of 22 items only (5 or 6 items per scale) and this may have impacted on the internal consistency findings. It should also be noted that the sample size used to investigate test-retest reliability was relatively small ($n = 25$). If a larger sample is used the test-retest reliability the error of measurement is reduced. In addition, only one test-retest interval was investigated, while the results may have been different for different intervals. While the results of the current study indicate low to moderate reliability, further research with larger samples and various test-retest intervals is recommended before drawing conclusions about the reliability of the SPPR.

Validity

Similar to the original research with the SPPR (MacPhee et al., 1986), conducted in the United States with mothers of young children, the current study supported a four-factor structure of the SPPR. However, only factor two of the current study corresponded to a scale of the SPPR, the Investment scale, with all the Investment items, and no other items loading on factor two. The other three factors contained a mixture of items from all the scales, and many items loaded on more than one factor. Thus, the results of the factor analysis do not appear to support the division of the SPPR into the four scales. However, in the case of the present study, caution is warranted in interpreting the results of the factor analysis due to the size of the sample. Only 74 participants were included in the current sample. As a general rule, a factor analysis requires a minimum of 20 cases per factor or five cases per item

(Cohen, Swerdlik, & Phillips, 1996). Thus, between 80 and 110 participants would have been required as a minimum number for factor analysis. The original study of the instrument by Mac Phee et al., (1986) had 528 participants, which is more than adequate for factor analysis. Thus the results of the factor analysis undertaken by the original authors, which identified the four scales of the SPPR, are likely to be more reliable than that undertaken by the current study.

When considered in terms of identity theory, it makes sense that clear factors are not found. Identity theory suggests that role commitment (Investment scale), role satisfaction (Satisfaction scale) and role performance (Competence scale) all influence levels of role salience (Integration scale). Thus, it would be expected that all four scales are related. Therefore, clear factors would not be expected on a factor analysis.

In considering the validity of the SPPR, the current study did not support the factorial structure of the instrument. This may have been due to the small sample size. However, as mentioned above, given that the four factors are theoretically related, separate factors would not be expected. In regards to discriminant validity, the trend of the results appeared to support the predictions made. Thus, there appears to be some limited support for the validity of the SPPR. Further research would need to be undertaken with a larger sample size before conclusions could be drawn regarding the validity of the SPPR.

Feedback on the SPPR

In considering the participants' feedback on the SPPR, it appears that the Integration scale was the most problematic. The majority of participants' comments were made about questions from the Integration scale. Some of the participants made

comments that explained that what may be perceived as a negative aspect of parenting, such as giving up one's free time, was not actually a negative thing. Other comments were made when a participant did not agree with either statement for a particular question. It is noteworthy that the majority of the unanswered items were also from the Integration scale.

It is also worth noting here that the format of the SPPR was difficult for participants to understand. Thus, a separate instruction sheet was designed and attached to the questionnaire, ensuring that all fathers received a standard set of instructions.

Qualitative Data Regarding Parent Role

Qualitative research was conducted to investigate the following issues: 1. What are the sub-roles fathers propose are important to the father role? 2. What are the rewards and costs fathers perceive as being associated with father role? 3. How do fathers rate their competence in the father role? Results for each of these questions are discussed in turn.

Sub-Roles Important to Father Role

Three main sub-roles were identified by fathers as making up the father role, which will be referred to as, the traditional role, teacher role, and shared experience and participation.

Firstly, fathers expressed the view that one of the major sub-roles of a father is the traditional role, to provide for the children, ensuring that all of their material needs are met, and to protect their children. This corresponds to the traditional view of fathers as *breadwinners* in our society. However, most fathers acknowledged other

aspects of the father role that they consider important. These encompass the second and third sub-roles identified by the participants.

The second sub-role was that of teacher, with fathers acting as teachers to their children. This sub-role consisted of a father passing down values, beliefs, and morals to their children. Fathers expressed the view that an important part of the father role is to shape their children's value system, ensuring that they grow up to become good and moral people. It is interesting to note that many of the non-residential fathers complained that this was a role they were unable to fulfil, expressing the belief that the residential parent has more influence in shaping this aspect of the child's development.

The third sub-role that emerged regarding the father role was shared experience and participation. Thus, the participants viewed the father role as an active role that includes regular interaction with their children and carrying out the day-to-day tasks of parenting.

In summary fathers were consistent in their view of the sub-roles that make up the father role. They expressed the view that the fathers fulfil three main sub-roles: the traditional role, teacher role, and shared experience and participation. The majority of fathers referred to each of these sub-roles. Thus, the results support previous research that suggests that fathers occupy different types of roles (Jain et al., 1996), and theoretical propositions that the father role is made up of different roles (Ihinger-Tallman et al., 1993). This is an important finding because it highlights the need for any research into father role identity to focus on all of the sub-roles. Results could be skewed if researchers were to measure only one of the sub-roles. Whilst fathers in the current study endorsed the traditional father role of provision of material support and protection, they also endorsed less traditional roles, such as interaction

and active participation in the child's life. This is in line with current research regarding the change in father roles in our society (Hamer, 1998; Pleck & Pleck, 1997).

Rewards and Costs of the Father Role

Rewards.

Most fathers provided several examples of the aspects of parenting that they found rewarding. Fathers reported three main areas of rewards, referred to here as watching children grow, the relationship with the child, and spending time together.

Many fathers reported that seeing their children develop, learn new skills and meet their developmental milestones was one of the most rewarding aspects of parenting to them. Fathers expressed feeling a sense of pride in their children's achievements as they mastered new skills. This encompassed all aspects of development, including physical, emotional, and psychological development.

A second reward of parenting was the unique type of relationship that fathers have with their children. It was described as a unique bond characterised by unconditional love and trust.

Another reward was just spending time with their children. Many fathers expressed the view that one of the rewarding aspects of parenting was to spend time with their children. This is linked to the theme of sharing experiences that emerged under the role of the father. Fathers described that carrying out this role of sharing experiences and spending time with their children was one of the most rewarding aspects of parenting for them.

A small group of fathers reported there being few or no rewarding aspects to parenting. These fathers contrasted significantly with the majority of fathers who were

able to describe many rewards of being a father. This is a noteworthy finding, when considered in the context of father role identity and post divorce contact. The finding suggests that some fathers do not receive any satisfaction from acting in the father role. Thus, according to identity theory, these fathers would have little motivation to maintain contact with their children, which may provide one reason as to why some fathers do not maintain contact. However, the fathers in the current study who reported they receive little or no satisfaction from the parent role still reported being motivated to maintain contact. Thus, the motivation may come from other factors, not just the level of satisfaction that they receive.

Costs.

Most participants identified two areas of costs or sacrifices, lifestyle and relationships. However, when asked about the costs of being a father many of the fathers pointed out that although they recognise that they do give things up, or make sacrifices, in order to fulfil their roles as fathers, they do not regard it negatively. Thus, the participants expressed the view that giving things up for their children was simply part of the role of a father, and something that they do willingly. They did not regard this as having the negative connotations associated with the word *sacrifice*, as used in the SPPR.

Many fathers mentioned that they felt they had *sacrificed* or given up things associated with their lifestyle in order to fulfil their roles as parent. Lifestyle sacrifice included the areas of finance, career advancement, social life, and travel. The majority of fathers mentioned at least one area of lifestyle sacrifice.

Many fathers also expressed the view that fulfilling their role as fathers necessarily impacted upon their personal relationships. Married fathers expressed the

view that being a father lead to sacrifices in their marriage, such as spending less time with their spouse or receiving less attention from their spouse. Divorced fathers expressed the view that parenting made it more difficult for them to form new relationships, or impacted on any new relationships they did form by reducing the quality of time available to spend with their new partners.

The Concept of Satisfaction

The concept of role satisfaction relates to the perception of the number of perceived rewards gained from a role compared to the number of costs (O'Neil et al., 1994). The higher the relative level of reward, the more satisfying a role is to the individual. In summary, the rewards of father role in the current study were watching their child develop, watching children grow, the relationship with the child, and spending time together. The two main areas that fathers identified in relation to the costs of the father role were lifestyle sacrifice and sacrifices in relationships. In addition, it is noteworthy that most fathers identified many rewards to parents, and a considerable number of fathers did not consider the things that they gave up or changed in regards to their lifestyle and relationships to be *sacrifices* as such, which suggests high satisfaction levels. This is consistent with the high overall mean scores for the Satisfaction scale of the SPPR found in the current study.

The information gathered in regards to the rewards and costs of father role could be useful in both understanding and measuring the concept of satisfaction with the father role. Those fathers who perceive there to be no rewards associated with parenting are, in theory, unlikely to be satisfied with the parent role. Similarly, those fathers who do not perceive there to be costs or *sacrifices* with parenting are, theoretically, likely to be highly satisfied with the father role. Knowing the rewards

and costs that fathers identify could aid future measurement of role satisfaction. Questions could be tailored to ask about the specific concepts that have been identified.

Perception of Competence

The concept of role performance refers to the individuals own perception of how well they are performing in a particular role. A positive evaluation of performance in a role leads to an increase in self-concept, which in turn makes it more likely for that role to be invoked again (Burke & Reitzes, 1981). In the current study, fathers expressed particular confidence in teaching their children new skills and imparting morals and values. In general, fathers expressed greatest confidence with the concrete tasks of parenting. Some fathers also expressed confidence in their abilities to provide emotional support and nurturance to their children. In contrast, other fathers reported that providing emotional support was one area where they felt least confident.

Other areas of least confidence included health problems and issues arising from having adolescent daughters. Some fathers expressed that lack of confidence in such areas came from a lack of knowledge. Others expressed a view that women or mothers were innately better able to deal with such issues. Thus, some fathers expressed greatest confidence in the areas of parenting traditionally associated with fathering, and less confidence in the areas traditionally associated with mothers' roles.

Overall, fathers generally expressed a high level of confidence in their parenting abilities. This is inline with the mean Competence score of 21.85 out of 30 obtained on the SPPR, also suggesting that fathers felt highly confident in their parenting ability. The consistency between the self-report data and the SPPR

Competence scores indicates validity of the Competence scale. High perception of competence and high SPPR scores for competence may reflect the fact that participants in the current study were more highly educated than would be expected for the general population. It may be that highly educated fathers also view themselves as more competent.

The majority of fathers expressed having good resources to call upon when they had questions regarding parenting. A wide range of different social supports and sources of information were mentioned by the participants. The resources that fathers used included their own parents, their parents-in-law, their friends, men's groups and books. It is interesting to note that many fathers brought up this topic themselves, before being asked about it. It was often brought up in relation to the questions about their confidence in their own parenting ability.

In contrast, there was a small group of fathers who reported that they never accessed outside help or advice concerning parenting. Some of these fathers reported that this was because they never had any questions or problems about parenting. Other fathers reported that they believed that instinct or trial and error were the best methods of solving parenting problems, and thus, they did not need to access outside resources.

The information developed from the exploration of this topic could be used to guide further research. Research questions aimed at measuring the fathers' own perceptions of their performance in the father role could be targeted at the areas mentioned by participants in this study. For example, the results suggest that future research would need to examine role performance both with the concrete tasks of parenting and the provision of emotional support. In addition, the research suggests that although the father role may have changed to incorporate more tasks traditionally believed to be the mother role, some fathers do not feel as competent in such roles.

Comparative Analysis

One purpose of exploring father role and father through interviews was to use the data to examine if ways might be found to develop the utility of the SPPR as a measure of father role identity. Five general areas from the interview, parent role, rewards of parenting, sacrifices, confidence/competence, and sources of help/advice, were compared to the topics on the SPPR. For each of the general areas from the interview, several themes arose covering specific detail about the topic. For the SPPR, specific information about only two of the five topics was covered. Specific aspects of sacrifices and sources of help/advice were covered on the questionnaire.

Identity theory, as reviewed previously in the introduction, suggests that the father role is made up of a number of sub-roles. This proposition was supported by the results from the interview. Further, identity theory suggests that the salience, or importance, of father role is determined by each father's perception of his role performance and role satisfaction. Information about these concepts arising from the exploratory interviews shed light on some areas in which the SPPR could be improved.

Firstly, as noted above, the interview data supported the theoretical proposition that father role is made up of several sub-roles. The three main sub-roles arising from the current study were; the traditional role, teacher role, and shared experience and participation. This finding highlights the need for research into father role identity to consider and investigate the father role in a wider sense, and not focus on only one sub-role. The SPPR does not contain questions about specific sub-roles of fathering. Rather the questions are about the father role in general. It would be possible to add questions to the SPPR, based on the interview results, that could examine which of the sub-roles fathers consider important. Important results could be

found in terms of the way different fathers rate the importance of the various sub-roles. It is possible that the sub-roles that fathers consider most important would influence the amount of contact. For example, one plausible hypothesis that could be investigated is whether fathers who consider the traditional role of providing for their children to be more important than the teacher role have less contact with their children. This hypothesis could be predicted based on the fact that the traditional role of providing for children can be fulfilled without direct contact with children, by going to work and earning an income, whereas the teacher role cannot. Thus, by including questions about sub-roles of the father role, the utility of the SPPR as a measure of father role identity for use in future studies regarding the link between post divorce contact and father role identity may be improved.

In regards to the concept of satisfaction, the results from the interviews identified a number of costs and rewards of the father role. The concept of satisfaction refers to the relative number of costs to rewards of parenting. Knowing the rewards and costs that fathers identify could aid future measurement of role satisfaction, as questions could be tailored to ask about the specific concepts that have been identified. The SPPR does not ask about specific rewards or costs of parenting. It may be useful to include information about specific, identified, rewards and costs of parenting, as this could allow a more accurate measurement of satisfaction and how it influences post divorce contact. For example, different types of rewards or costs may be related more strongly to levels of post divorce contact.

Further, in regards to satisfaction, the information suggests that some fathers identified few or no rewards, fathers who, in theory, are likely to be unsatisfied in the parent role. Other fathers identified no sacrifices, fathers who are, in theory, likely to be highly satisfied. The SPPR contains questions about the costs and rewards of

parenting, and allows options for identifying no costs or no rewards. This aspect of the SPPR is supported by the interview data.

In relation to role performance, several fathers in the current study regarded their competence in the concrete tasks of parenting differently to their competence in providing emotional support and the tasks more traditionally associated with the mother role. This suggests that to obtain an accurate assessment of fathers' perceptions of their role performance, researchers need to examine all areas of parenting. The SPPR does not contain questions about role performance in specific areas of the father role, but rather asks about overall performance. It is possible that adding questions about performance in different areas would yield more useful information in the investigation of the link between father role identity and post divorce contact. Similar to the hypothesis suggested in regards to sub-roles, it is possible that those fathers who feel most competent in traditional roles will spend most of their time providing for their children, and thus will have less contact than fathers who feel most competent in providing emotional support, an aspect of parenting that requires more direct contact.

In summary, the SPPR covered some of the aspects of information provided at the interview. As discussed above, there were a number of areas that the SPPR did not cover in detail, for example sub-roles. Inclusion of additional information may improve the utility of the SPPR as a measure of father role identity.

Limitations of this Research

As with all research, some limitations to this study stem from the methodology utilised and reduce the ability to generalise from these findings. As the participants in the study were self-selected, it may be that only those interested in fathering

participated. Thus, this study may have sampled only fathers interested in the role and who place importance on the role. It is quite possible that different results would have been found with a sample that was less interested in the father role.

Another consequence of the self-selection of the sample was that an uneven number of divorced and non-divorced fathers took part in the research. The majority of participants were married. This means that the findings of this study about the SPPR are based mainly on use with a married population. This may limit the ability to generalise the findings to a divorced population. However, the correlation with demographic data was fairly similar for divorced/separated and non-divorced fathers. The significant correlations found in the current study were relatively small. In addition, no significant differences in SPPR scores were found between the divorced/separated fathers and the non-divorced fathers. This suggests that the findings apply to fathers in general, not just married fathers.

The majority of fathers that were interviewed were divorced, which means that the data gathered about father role identity reflects mainly the views of the divorced fathers. In terms of demographic characteristics, the 74 participants in the current study represented a fairly diverse sample. A high level of diversity of the sample makes it more likely that the sample is representative of the general population, and reduces the possibility that the results have been biased by demographic factors. A range of age groups, education levels, occupations and incomes were represented. Participants also differed in terms of the number of children, and age range of children. Although a large range of education levels was represented, there were more participants from the higher levels of education. Approximately 18% of Australians have a University level education (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2002), whereas in the current study 36 of the participants had a university level education, which is

approximately 47%. Thus, fathers with a university education were over represented in the current study. Overall, the diverse range makes it likely that the sample was representative of the general population in respect of demographic variables. However, over representation of certain groups suggests the sample is somewhat atypical, which may act to limit the generalisability.

The sample size for the quantitative part of the current study was relatively small, which limited the usefulness of some of the statistical techniques that were employed. This was the case with both the factor analysis and the discriminant validity. Thus, it is not possible to draw firm conclusions about the validity of the SPPR based on the current research.

Despite these limitations the study makes a contribution to knowledge in this area. The sample size for the qualitative data was relatively large, reaching saturation point, which adds weight to the results. The current study is also the first Australian study to examine the psychometric properties of the SPPR for use with fathers in general, and divorced fathers specifically. It also provides a valuable first exploration of the concepts of role satisfaction, role performance and perceived competence, as they relate to father role identity, with Australian fathers. It also provides information about the sub-roles that Australian fathers consider to be important to the father role.

The current study is also the first Australian study to compare interview data to the SPPR and to provide information about its utility. Valuable suggestions on how to improve the SPPR as a measure of father role identity have been made, which could be used in future research to investigate the link between post-divorce contact and father role identity.

Future Directions

Several directions can be suggested for future research following on from the current study. One line of research would be to continue an investigation into the psychometric properties of the SPPR. Initial results suggest the questionnaire is of low to moderate reliability, meaning that some scales may be suitable for research or screening purposes. This result needs confirmation through investigating different test-retest intervals and by additional research with a larger sample size. A larger sample size would also allow further investigation of the validity of the instrument.

Another line of research could investigate the utility of modifying the SPPR to make it easier for participants to understand the format of the questionnaire. This could be done by including more explicit instructions, as was the case in the present study. Alternatively, the format of the questionnaire could be changed, perhaps utilising a Likert style scale with the alternative form of each question placed at either end of the scale. Other modifications could be made to individual items on the instrument, such as the items identified by participant feedback on the Integration scale.

On a similar line, additional items could be added to the SPPR, based on the interview data. Items could be added to investigate the relative importance of specific sub-roles, the specific rewards and costs of the father role, and to measure levels of competence in different areas of parenting. As previously discussed, the inclusion of such questions may make the SPPR more suitable for future research into the link between father role identity and post-divorce contact.

Research would need to be conducted to determine the usefulness of any change in format or item content, and the impact of such changes on the psychometric properties of the instrument. It should be noted that the generalisability of future

research could be maximised by using a larger sample size and recruiting participants in such a way that a self selection bias does not occur.

The next step for research would be to use the SPPR to investigate whether father role identity is linked to levels of post-divorce contact. This research would be best conducted after any modifications to the instrument are made and a thorough understanding of the psychometric properties of the instrument has been gained.

The current research study focussed on the role identity of fathers. It would be useful to have similar information in regards to the mother role identity. Similar research could be undertaken to investigate the concept and measurement of mother role identity.

Summary

In summary, the degree to which a father identifies with the father role, father role identity, is proposed to be linked to levels of post-divorce contact. An overview of the research indicated that there is relatively little research in respect of the factors that influence father role identity and the measurement of father role identity. Further exploration of the link between father role identity and post divorce contact would require clarity about the father role identity construct and its measurement. Thus, the current study aimed to investigate the psychometric properties of an unpublished formal measure of father role identity, the SPPR, and to explore the concepts of father role and father role identity.

The overall reliability of the SPPR instrument was found to be low to moderate, a level that is considered to be suitable for a screening test or research. The factorial structure of the questionnaire was not supported by the current research. Trends in the results indicated discriminant validity, though significance could not be

investigated due to small sample size. However, the limited sample size of the current study cautions against drawing conclusion as to the validity of the SPPR based on these results. Additional investigation of both reliability and validity is recommended before conclusions are drawn. The Integration scale was found to be problematic, with most of the unanswered items and the feedback relating to this scale. This was also the scale with the lowest reliability. Thus, it may be beneficial to investigate the utility of some changes to the Integration scale. Inclusion of more specific instructions with the instrument is recommended, as many participants found the format of the questionnaire difficult to understand. Alternatively, changes to the format of the questionnaire, to make it more intuitive to understand, could be investigated.

The interview data supported the theoretical proposition that father role is made up of several sub roles. The three main sub-roles arising from the current study were; the traditional role, teacher role, and shared experience and participation. The majority of fathers referred to each of these roles. Thus, the results support previous research and theoretical propositions that suggests that fathers occupy different types of roles (Ihinger-Tallman et al., 1993; Jain et al., 1996), and is in line with current research regarding the change in father roles in our society (Hamer, 1998; Pleck & Pleck, 1997).

In regards to the concept of satisfaction, the results from the interviews identified a number of costs and rewards of the father role. Knowing the rewards and costs that fathers identify with could aid the future measurement of role satisfaction, as questions could be tailored to investigate the specific concepts that have been identified. Further, the results suggest that some fathers identified few or no rewards; fathers who, theoretically, are not likely to be satisfied in the parent role. Other fathers identified no sacrifices; fathers who are likely to be highly satisfied. The information

gathered in regards to the rewards and costs of father role could be useful in both understanding and measuring the concept of satisfaction with the father role.

Overall, the majority of fathers expressed great confidence in their father role performance. In general, fathers were most confident with the concrete tasks of parenting. Some fathers also felt confident in providing emotional support to their children, while others perceived this as an area they were least competent in. A positive evaluation of performance in a role leads to an increase in self-concept, which in turn makes it more likely for that role to be invoked again (Burke & Reitzes, 1981). The information developed from the exploration of this topic could be used to guide further research, and aid in the measurement of role performance. In addition, the research suggests that the father role may have changed, incorporating more tasks traditionally believed to be the mother role, and that some fathers do not feel as competent in such roles.

Comparative analysis of the data obtained from the interview and the SPPR revealed that although the SPPR gives a general measure of father role salience, role satisfaction and role performance, it does not yield specific information about these concepts. Additional questions could be added to investigate the relative importance of the sub-roles of fathering, specific rewards and costs, and perceptions of role performance across different areas of parenting. By measuring these concepts more specifically, a better understanding of the link between father role identity and post-divorce contact could be gained.

References

- Ahrons, C. (1983). Predictors of paternal involvement postdivorce: Mothers' and fathers' perceptions. *Journal of Divorce*, 6, 55-69.
- Amato, P. & Gilbreth, J. (1999). Nonresident fathers and children's wellbeing: a meta-analysis. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 61, 557-573.
- Arditti, J. (1996). Fathers' involvement and mothers' parenting stress postdivorce. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 26, 1- 23.
- Arendell, T. (1992). After divorce: Investigations into father absence. *Gender and Society*, 6, 562-586.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2002). *Australian Social Trends 2002: Education* [On-line].
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2001). *Population Divorce*. [On-line]. Available: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/1A5EB5DD3702915FCA2569DE002139D5?Open&Highlight=0,divorce>
- Burke, P., & Reitzes, D. (1981) The link between identity and role performance. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 44, 83-92.
- Cohen, R., Swerdlik, M., & Phillips, S. (1996). *Psychological Testing and Assessment: An Introduction to Tests and Measurement*. Mountain View: Mayfield Publishing.
- Campbell, R., & Pike, L. (2002). Working with contact father families: insights from therapy. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy*, 23, 101-107.
- Commonwealth of Australia. (2001). *Out of the maze: Pathways to the future for families experiencing separation* (Family Law Pathways Advisory Group). Canberra: Commonwealth departments of the Attorney-General and Family and Community Services.

- Dudley, J. (1991a). Increasing our understanding of divorced fathers who have infrequent contact with their children. *Family Relations*, 40, 279-285.
- Dudley, J. (1991b). The consequences of divorce proceedings for divorced fathers. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 16, 171-193.
- Dudley, J. (1996). Noncustodial fathers speak about their parental role. *Family and Conciliation Courts Review*, 34, 410-426.
- Entwies, D. & Doering, S. (1988). The emergent father role. *Sex Roles*, 18, 119-141.
- Erera, P., Minton, C., Pasley, K., & Mandel, S. (1999). Fathering after divorce in Israel and the U.S. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 31, 55-82.
- Family Law Reform Act, 1995 (Commonwealth).
- Fox, G., & Bruce, C. (2001). Conditional fatherhood: Identity theory and parental investment theory as alternative sources of explanation of fathering. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63, 394-404.
- Funder, K., & Smyth, B. (1996). Family law reforms and attitudes to parental responsibility. *Family Matters*, 45, 10-15.
- Gibbson, J. (1992). *Non-Custodial Fathers and Access Patterns*. (Research Report No: 10). Sydney: Family Court of Australia; Office of the Chief Executive.
- Groth-Marnat, G (1999). *Handbook of Psychological Assessment*. Brisbane: John Wiley & Sons.
- Hamer, J. (1998). The definition of fatherhood: In the words of never-married African American custodial mothers and the noncustodial fathers of their children. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 25, 81-104.
- Hoetler, J. (1983). The effects of role evaluation and commitment on identity salience. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 46, 140-147.

- Hogg, M., Terry, D., & White, K. (1995). A tale of two theories: A critical comparison of identity theory with social identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 58, 255-310.
- Ihinger-Tallman, M., Pasley, K., & Buehler, C. (1993). Developing a middle-range theory of father involvement postdivorce. *Journal of Family Issues*, 14, 550-571.
- Isaacs, M. (1988). The visitation schedule and child adjustment: a three year study. *Family Process*, 27, 251-256.
- Jain, A., Belsky, J. & Crnic, K. (1996). Beyond fathering behaviours: types of dads. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 10, 431-442.
- Keppel, G. & Wickens, T. (2004). *Design and Analysis: A Researcher's Handbook*. New Jersey; Prentice Hall.
- Kruk, E. (1991). Discontinuity between pre- and post-divorce father-child relationships: New evidence regarding paternal disengagement. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 16, 195-227.
- Kruk, E. (1992). Psychological and structural factors contributing to the disengagement of noncustodial fathers after divorce. *Family and Conciliation Courts Review*, 30, 81-101.
- Lamb, M., Sternberg, K., & Thompson, R. (1997). The effects of divorce and custody arrangements on children's behaviour, development, and adjustment. *Family and Conciliation Courts Review*, 35, 393-404.
- Madden-Derdich, D. & Leonard, S. (2000). Parental role identity and fathers' involvement in coparental interaction after divorce: fathers' perspectives. *Family Relations*, 49, 311-318.

- Mc Bride, B. & Rane, T. (1997). Role identity, role investments, and paternal involvement: Implications for parenting programs for men. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 12, 173-197.
- Mac Phee, D., Benson, J., & Bullock, D. (1986). *Influences on Maternal Self-Perceptions*. Paper presented at the biennial International Conference on Infant Studies, Los Angeles.
- Minton, C. & Pasely, K. (1996). Fathers' parenting role identity and father involvement: A comparison of Nondivorced and divorced, non-resident fathers. *Journal of Family Issues*, 17, 26-45.
- Murphy, K. & Davidshofer, C. (2001). *Psychological Testing: Principles and Applications*. New Jersey; Prentice Hall.
- O'Neil, R., Greenberger, E. & Marks, S. (1994). Patterns of commitment to work and parenting: Implications for role strain. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 56, 101 – 113.
- Pagani-Kurtz, L. & Derevensky, J. (1997). Access by noncustodial parents: Effects upon children's postdivorce coping resources. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 27, 43-55.
- Parkinson & Smyth (2003)
- Pleck, E. & Pleck, J. (1997). Fatherhood ideals in the United States: Historical dimensions. In Lamb M. (Ed). *The Role of the Father in Child Development*. Brisbane: John Wiley & Sons.
- Rhoades, H., Graycar, H., & Harrison, M. (2001). The First Three Years of the Family Law Reform Act 1995. *Family Matters* 58, 80-83.
- Risman, B. (1986). Can men "mother"? Life as a single father. *Family Relations*, 35, 95-102.

- Rodgers, B. (1996). Social and psychological wellbeing of children from divorced families: Australian research findings. *Australian Psychologist*, 31, 174-182.
- Schill, T., Ramanaiah, N., Conn, S. (1990). Development of covert and overt hostility scales from the Buss-Durkee Inventory. *Psychological Reports*, 67, 671-674.
- Seltzer, J. (1991). Relationship between fathers and children who live apart: The father's role after separation. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 53, 79-101.
- Seltzer, J. & Brandreth, Y. (1994). What fathers say about involvement with children after separation. *Journal of Family Issues*, 15, 49-77.
- Simons, R., Lin, K., Gordon, L., Conger, R., & Lorenz F. (1999). Explaining the higher incidence of adjustment problems among children of divorce compared with those in two-parent families. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 61, 1020-1033.
- Smyth, B. (Ed.). (2004). *Parent-Child Contact and Post-Separation Parenting Arrangements* (Research report 9 ed.). Canberra: Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- Smyth, B (2003). *Post Separation Fathering: What Does Australian Research Tell Us?* Paper presented at the Fatherhood Research in Australia Seminar University of Newcastle, New South Wales.
- Smyth, B., Sheenan, G., & Fehlberg, B. (2001). Post-divorce parenting patterns: A summary of findings from the Institutue's Australian Divorce Transitions Project. *Family Matters*, 59, 61-63.
- Stephens, L. (1996). Will Johny see daddy this week? An empirical test of three theoretical perspectives of postdivorce contact. *Journal of Family Issues*, 17, 446-494.

- Stone, G., & Mc Kennry, P. (1998). Nonresidential father involvement: A test of a midrange theory. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology, 159*, 313-336.
- Stryker, S. (1968). Role salience and role performance: The relevance of symbolic interaction theory for family research. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 30*, 558-564.
- Tabachnick, B. & Fidell, L. (2001). *Using Multivariate Statistics*. Sydney; Allyn and Bacon.
- Wall, J. (1992). Maintaining the connection: Parenting as a noncustodial father. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 9*, 441-456.

Appendix A

Copies of advertisements placed on notice boards

Father's Wanted

Two Doctor of Psychology students at Edith Cowan University need help from fathers.

Volunteers are urgently needed to participate in a study about the role of fathers in today's society. Fathers play a very important role in society, but the role has changed in recent years.

The researchers would like to talk to many different fathers, including fathers who are full time parents, young fathers, and older fathers.

Volunteering for the study will give you a chance to talk about your experiences as a father.

The research involves completing a questionnaire and/or a short interview.

If you can help, please contact Janelle on [REDACTED] or Michelle on [REDACTED]

Fathers Wanted

Volunteers are urgently needed to participate in a study about fathers' interactions with their children.

Two Doctor of Psychology students at Edith Cowan University need help from married and divorced fathers.

Fathers play a very important role in society. This study investigates fathers' roles as parents and divorced fathers' experiences with the legal system.

Volunteering for the study will give you a chance to talk about your experiences as a father.

The research involves completing a questionnaire and/or a short interview.

If you can help, please contact Janelle on [REDACTED] or Michelle on [REDACTED]

Appendix B

Information given to community newspapers to use in writing articles about the current study.

Dear (editor)

We are Doctorate of Psychology students at Edith Cowan University. We would like to have an article published about our research project.

Our project looks at the role of fathers as parents and divorced fathers experiences of the legal system. We are hoping to recruit married and divorced fathers as volunteers for our study. We believe this is an important area to research because of the changing role of families in our society. The experiences and roles of fathers have typically received little research interest.

The attached document (see below) contains information about our study. If you are interested in writing an article about our study, please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have.

Janelle can be contacted on [REDACTED]

Michelle can be contacted on [REDACTED]

Thank you for your help,
Janelle Hawes and Michelle Gobetz

In Australia approximately 43 percent of all marriages end in divorce (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001) and 59% of all divorces involve children (Funder & Smyth, 1996).

Following divorce approximately 90% of children live with their mother (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998).

Several studies have found that positive outcomes for children of divorce are linked to maintaining contact with the father (for example, Isaacs, 1988).

The Family Law Reform Act, 1995, acknowledges that children have a right to have contact with both parents, following divorce. Continued contact with the father is valued by society, and has been linked to better outcome for children.

Michelle Gobetz and Janelle Hawes, Doctor of Psychology students at Edith Cowan University, need volunteers to participate in a study about father's interactions with their children.

They are investigating fathers' roles as parents and divorced father's experiences of the legal system.

Volunteering for the study will give fathers an opportunity to talk about their experiences as a father and could provide useful information that may be used to make recommendations to the Family Court of WA.

The research involves completion of 1 questionnaire and 1 short interview.

Any information you provide as part of this study will be strictly confidential.

Fathers interested in participating in the study can contact Janelle on [REDACTED] or Michelle on [REDACTED]

Appendix C

Information document: Participants in Group A

You have been invited to participate in a study about father's interactions with their children. The research is being conducted by Michelle Gobetz and Janelle Hawes, who are both Doctor of Psychology students at Edith Cowan University. They are working in conjunction with Dr Alfred Allan and Dr Lis Pike, who are supervising the project. The research has been reviewed and approved by Edith Cowan University's Human Research Ethics Committee.

This research group is interested in investigating fathers' roles as parents. Participating in the study will give you an opportunity to talk about your experiences as a father. This research could provide useful information that may be used to provide advice to the Family Court.

The research involves completion of a questionnaire. This will take approximately 15 minutes.

Any information you provide as part of this study will be strictly confidential and will not be released by the investigators unless required to do so by law. The information gathered from this study will be used in Doctoral projects, may be used in publication, and may be scrutinised by the supervisors or the university Ethics Committee. However, no participant will be identified.

As some people may find the topic of the research to be sensitive, there is a remote possibility that you may feel distressed due to participating in the study. In the unlikely event that you experience distress, please be assured that counselling will be available by contacting Edith Cowan University Psychological Services Centre on 9301-0011.

You may refuse to participate in this study, refuse to answer a particular question(s), or withdraw from the study at any time, without prejudice.

If you have any questions about this information or about the study please feel free to ask the researcher.

Please keep this information document, and if you have any questions about the research in the future, please contact one of the researchers on the numbers below. Alternatively, if you have any concerns about the project or would like to talk to an independent person, you may contact Dr Craig Speelman (Head of School) on 9400 5724. If you wish to obtain a short summary of the findings from this study, please leave your name and contact details with the researchers. This study aims to be completed by October 2003.

Michelle Gobetz	9400 5006
Janelle Hawes	9400 5006
Dr Alfred Allan (supervisor)	9400 5536

Thank-you for your co-operation,
Michelle Gobetz and Janelle Hawes

Information document: Participants in Group B

You have been invited to participate in a study about father's interactions with their children. The research is being conducted by Michelle Gobetz and Janelle Hawes, who are both Doctor of Psychology students at Edith Cowan University. They are working in conjunction with Dr Alfred Allan and Dr Lis Pike, who are supervising the project. The research has been reviewed and approved by Edith Cowan University's Human Research Ethics Committee.

This research group is interested in investigating fathers' roles as parents, and divorced fathers' experiences with the legal system. Participating in the study will give you an opportunity to talk about your experiences as a father. This research could provide useful information that may be used to provide advice to the Family Court.

The research involves completion of a questionnaire and a short interview. This will take approximately 1 hour. The interview will be audio taped.

Any information you provide as part of this study will be strictly confidential and will not be released by the investigators unless required to do so by law. The information gathered from this study will be used in Doctoral projects, may be used in publication, and may be scrutinised by the supervisors or the university Ethics Committee. However, no participant will be identified.

As some people may find the topic of the research to be sensitive, there is a remote possibility that you may feel distressed due to participating in the study. In the unlikely event that you experience distress, please be assured that counselling will be available by contacting Edith Cowan University Psychological Services Centre on 9301-0011.

You may refuse to participate in this study, refuse to answer a particular question(s), or withdraw from the study at any time, without prejudice.

If you have any questions about this information or about the study please feel free to ask the researcher.

Please keep this information document, and if you have any questions about the research in the future, please contact one of the researchers on the numbers below. Alternatively, if you have any concerns about the project or would like to talk to an independent person, you may contact Dr Craig Speelman (Head of School) on 9400 5724. If you wish to obtain a short summary of the findings from this study, please leave your name and contact details with the researchers. This study aims to be completed by October 2003.

Michelle Gobetz	9400 5006
Janelle Hawes	9400 5006
Dr Alfred Allan (supervisor)	9400 5536

Thank-you for your co-operation,
Michelle Gobetz and Janelle Hawes

Appendix D

Consent form

Consent Form

I, _____ confirm that

- I have read the information sheet that forms part of this document.
- I understand the information.
- I was given an opportunity to ask questions.
- Any questions I had have been answered to my satisfaction.
- No pressure is being put on me to participate
- I agree to participate in this research study, realising that I may withdraw at any time; and
- I voluntarily sign this consent form.

Signature of Participant: _____ Signature of Witness: _____

Appendix E

Demographic questionnaire

Demographic Questionnaire

Please fill in the following questions. They are designed to help us gather demographic information about the people who participated in our study, such as the average age of participants. If there are any questions you would prefer not to answer please feel free to leave them blank.
Please do not write your name on this sheet.

Your current age? _____

Level of education completed (eg year 10 or TAFE)? _____

Your occupation? _____

Income (a rough estimate)? _____

How many children do you have? _____

Ages and gender of your children? _____

Your present marital status? _____

If currently in a relationship: length of relationship? _____

If divorced or separated:

Are you divorced or separated? _____

Length of the relationship? _____

Time since divorce/separation? _____

Frequency of contact with children (days per month)? _____

Distance that you live from children? _____

Contact with children that was prescribed by legal proceedings? _____

Ex-partner's present marital status? _____

Appendix F

Original questionnaire

SELF-PERCEPTIONS OF THE PARENTAL ROLE

David MacPhee, Janette B Benson, and Daniel Bullock

INSTRUCTIONS

The following questions ask about how you see yourself as a parent. There are no right or wrong answers. Instead, we are interested in your opinions about the parental role and how you are doing as a parent. Please put a checkmark in only 1 of the 4 boxes for each question. Check the one that *best* describes you. For example, if you kind of like spinach, you would check the one box as shown below:

Really True for Me	Sort of True for Me			Sort of True for Me	Really True for Me
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Some people like spinach.	BUT	Other people don't like spinach.	<input type="checkbox"/>

REMEMBER: Check only *one* box per question.

1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some parents do a lot of reading about how to be a good parent.	BUT	Other parents don't spend much time reading about parenting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some parents have clear ideas about the right and wrong ways to rear children.	BUT	Other parents have doubts about the way they are bringing up their children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some parents feel that they don't see enough of their friends since they've had children.	BUT	Other parents see their old friends just as often, or they have made new ones.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some parents often wish they hadn't had children.	BUT	Other parents rarely regret having had children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some parents want to learn everything possible about being a parent.	BUT	Other parents feel that they already know all they need to know about parenting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some parents often can't figure out what their children need or want.	BUT	Other parents seem to have a knack for under- standing what their children need or want.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Really True for Me	Sort of True for Me				Sort of True for Me	Really True for Me
7.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some people feel they end up making too many sacrifices for their children.	BUT	For other parents, there are more rewards than sacrifices in rearing children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some adults are more content being a parent than they ever thought possible.	BUT	For other adults, being a parent hasn't fulfilled them like they had hoped it would.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some parents don't think too much about how to parent; they just do it.	BUT	Other parents try to learn as much as they can about how to parent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some parents feel that they are doing a good job of providing for their children's needs.	BUT	Other parents have doubts about how well they are meeting their children's needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some parents resent the fact that having children means less time to do the things they like.	BUT	Other parents don't mind having less free time for themselves.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some adults would hesitate to have children if they had it to do over again.	BUT	Given the choice, other adults wouldn't think twice before having children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some parents feel it's a must to keep up with the latest childrearing advice and methods.	BUT	Other parents would rather deal with their children on a day-to-day basis with what they already know.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some parents often worry about how they're doing as a parent.	BUT	Other parents feel confident about their parenting abilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	For some mothers and fathers, the marriage is just as strong after having children as before.	BUT	For other mothers and fathers, being a parent gets in the way of being a good wife or husband.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	For some parents, children mostly feel like a burden.	BUT	For other parents, their children are a main source of joy in their lives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Really True for Me	Sort of True for Me			Sort of True for Me	Really True for Me
17.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some parents are concerned about the parental role; they think or worry about it a lot.	BUT	Other parents usually don't fret about being a parent; they take it more as a matter of course.	<input type="checkbox"/>
18.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some mothers and fathers think that they are not very effective parents.	BUT	Other mothers and fathers think they are pretty capable as parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>
19.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	For some parents, having children means that they can't do the things they used to like to do.	BUT	For other parents, having a child doesn't change their lifestyle very much.	<input type="checkbox"/>
20.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Being a parent is a satisfying experience to some adults.	BUT	For other adults, being a parent is not all that satisfying.	<input type="checkbox"/>
21.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some mothers and fathers aren't sure they were suited to be parents.	BUT	Parenting comes easily and naturally to other parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>
22.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some parents feel that their lives are restricted or confined since having children.	BUT	Other parents don't stop doing things they like to do just because of their children.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix G Adapted questionnaire

The following questions ask your opinion about the fathering role and how you're doing as a father. Please put a checkmark in only 1 of the 4 boxes for each item. Check the one that **best** describes you as a father.

	Really True for Me <input type="radio"/>	Sort of True for Me <input type="radio"/>				Sort of True for Me <input type="radio"/>	Really True for Me <input type="radio"/>
1.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Some parents do a lot of reading about how to be a good parent.	BUT	Other parents don't spend much time reading about parenting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Some parents have clear ideas about the right and wrong ways to rear children.	BUT	Other parents have doubts about the way they are bringing up their children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Some parents feel that they don't see enough of their friends since they've had children.	BUT	Other parents see their old friends just as often, or they have made new ones.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Some parents often wish they hadn't had children.	BUT	Other parents rarely regret having had children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Some parents want to learn everything possible about being a parent.	BUT	Other parents feel that they already know all they need to know about parenting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Some parents often can't figure out what their children need or want.	BUT	Other parents have a knack for understanding what their children need or want.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Some people feel they end up making too many sacrifices for their children.	BUT	For other parents, there are more rewards than sacrifices in rearing children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Some adults are more content being a parent than they ever thought possible.	BUT	For other adults, being a parent hasn't fulfilled them like they had hoped it would.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Some parents don't think too much about how to parent; they just do it.	BUT	Other parents try to learn as much as they can about how to parent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Some parents feel that they are doing a good job of providing for their children's needs.	BUT	Other parents have doubts about how well they are meeting their children's needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Some parents resent the fact that having children means less time to do the things they like.	BUT	Other parents don't mind having less free time for themselves.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Some adults would hesitate to have children if they had it to do over again.	BUT	Given the choice, other adults wouldn't think twice before having children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Some parents feel it's a must to keep up with the latest childrearing advice and methods.	BUT	Other parents would rather deal with their children on a day-to-day basis with what they already know.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Some parents often worry about how they're doing as a parent.	BUT	Other parents feel confident about their parenting abilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Really True for Me	Sort of True for Me				Sort of True for Me	Really True for Me	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>				<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
15.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Some fathers feel that having children did not change their marriage.	BUT	For other fathers, being a parent gets in the way of being a good husband.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	For some parents, children mostly feel like a burden.	BUT	For other parents, their children are a main source of joy in their lives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Some parents are concerned about the parental role; they think or worry about it a lot.	BUT	Other parents usually don't fret about being a parent; they take it more as a matter of course.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Some fathers think that they are not very effective parents.	BUT	Other fathers think that they are pretty capable as parents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	For some parents, having children means that they can't do the things they used to like to do.	BUT	For other parents, having a child doesn't change their lifestyle very much.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Being a parent is a satisfying experience to some adults.	BUT	For other adults, being a parent is not all that satisfying.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Some fathers aren't sure they were suited to be parents.	BUT	Parenting come easily and naturally to other parents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Some parents feel that their lives are restricted or confined since having children.	BUT	Other parents don't stop doing things they like to do just because of their children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix H

Instructions given to fathers with the questionnaire

Self Perceptions of the Father Role Questionnaire

This questionnaire has a format that is quite different to usual questionnaires so please read the instructions and look at the example carefully.

Instructions:

Each question contains two statements about the way some fathers do things.
For each question:

- First choose which of the two statements is most like you.
- Then indicate whether that statement is ‘sort of true’ or ‘really true’ for you.

If you are unsure about a question give it your best guess or answer for how you feel most of the time.
If you have any comments about any of the questions please write them at the end of the questionnaire.

Example:

Really True for Me <input type="radio"/>	Sort of True for Me <input checked="" type="radio"/>	Some People like spinach.	BUT	Other people don't like spinach.	Sort of True for Me <input type="radio"/>	Really True for Me <input type="radio"/>
--	--	---------------------------	-----	-------------------------------------	---	--

There are two statements for this question. Each one describes how some people feel about spinach.

To answer this question first choose which statement is most like you. You need to decide: do you belong to the group that like spinach? or to the group that don't like spinach?

Once you have chosen a statement then indicate how strongly you agree with it. Mark with an X whether that statement is ‘sort of true’ or ‘really true’ for you.

If you kind of like spinach you would answer the question the way the example is marked.

Appendix I

Interview questions

1. What does being a father mean to you? (or, if too difficult, prompt 'How do you see your role as a father?')
2. What are some of the rewarding things about being a father?
3. What are some of the sacrifices you make as a father?
4. When we think of all the different things parents do, all the tasks of parenting, what are some areas you feel most confident about and some areas you feel less confident about?
5. When you have any questions or any doubts about parenting where do you turn to or how do you try to resolve the questions?

Appendix J

Checklist of information given to participants

Group A participants:

- ❑ Michelle Gobetz and Janelle Hawes, Doctor of Psychology students at Edith Cowan University
- ❑ We are conducting a study about fathers roles as parents and divorced fathers' experiences with the legal system
- ❑ Participation is voluntary
- ❑ Any information will be confidential, individual participants will not be identified.
- ❑ Volunteering for the study will give you an opportunity to talk about your experiences as a father and could provide useful information that may be used to make recommendations to the Family Court of WA
- ❑ The research involves completion of 1 questionnaire.
- ❑ As some people may find the topic of the research to be sensitive, there is a remote possibility that you may feel distressed due to participating in the study. In the unlikely event that you experience distress, please be assured that counselling will be available by contacting Edith Cowan University Psychological Services Centre on 9301-0011.
- ❑ The questionnaire will be posted to you with a return envelope, an information document and a consent form.

Group B participants:

- ❑ Michelle Gobetz and Janelle Hawes, Doctor of Psychology students at Edith Cowan University
- ❑ We are conducting a study about fathers roles as parents and divorced fathers' experiences with the legal system
- ❑ Participation is voluntary
- ❑ Any information will be confidential, individual participants will not be identified.
- ❑ Volunteering for the study will give you an opportunity to talk about your experiences as a father and could provide useful information that may be used to make recommendations to the Family Court of WA

- ❑ The research involves completion of 1 questionnaire and 1 short interview, which will take approximately one hour.
- ❑ As some people may find the topic of the research to be sensitive, there is a remote possibility that you may feel distressed due to participating in the study. In the unlikely event that you experience distress, please be assured that counselling will be available by contacting Edith Cowan University Psychological Services Centre on 9301-0011.

Appendix K
Scoring key for SPPR
Self Perceptions of the Parental Role

<u>Item</u>	<u>Scoring (L to R)</u>				<u>Scale</u>
1	5	4	2	1	Investment
2	5	4	2	1	Competence
3	1	2	4	5	Integration
4	1	2	4	5	Satisfaction
5	5	4	2	1	Investment
6	1	2	4	5	Competence
7	1	2	4	5	Integration
8	5	4	2	1	Satisfaction
9	1	2	4	5	Investment
10	5	4	2	1	Competence
11	1	2	4	5	Integration
12	1	2	4	5	Satisfaction
13	5	4	2	1	Investment
14	1	2	4	5	Competence
15	5	4	2	1	Integration
16	1	2	4	5	Satisfaction
17	5	4	2	1	Investment
18	1	2	4	5	Competence
19	1	2	4	5	Integration
20	5	4	2	1	Satisfaction
21	1	2	4	5	Competence
22	1	2	4	5	Integration

Scales

Investment: 1, 5, 9, 13, 17

Integration: 3, 7, 11, 15, 19, 22

Competence: 2, 6, 10, 14, 18, 21

Satisfaction: 4, 8, 12, 16, 20

Appendix L

Themes identified by raters, and the final themes used in the current study, in each of the 4 areas asked about in the interview

Roles that make up the father role identity

Themes from Rater 1	Themes from Rater 2	Final themes used in study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of material support • Teaching and equipping children to be prepared for their future • Sharing experiences and active participation • Caring and protecting them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide for family; financial support, • Teach; role model, pass on knowledge, mould children • Protect them/nurture • Flavour for some fathers: more about material support rather than emotional support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional role • Teacher role • Shared experience and participation

Rewards of the father role

Themes from Rater 1	Themes from Rater 2	Final themes used in study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watching development • Experiencing new kind of love and bonding • Time spent together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unconditional love, loving relationship, trust • Watching them grow up and spending time with them • Note: small group say there are not many rewards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watching children grow • Relationship with the child • Spending time together • Few rewards

Costs of father role

Themes from Rater 1	Themes from Rater 2	Final themes used in study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong theme that almost all fathers said while they made sacrifices, they didn't see these in that respect. Maintained that it was all worth it, and didn't see it as a negative consequence. Stressed that sacrifice is part of a parent's responsibility. • Limiting/stopping work was also 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No time to self/socialise, loss of freedom • Decreased relationship with partner, • Financial; no money/limit to ability to earn (divorced) • Note: for many there is no 'sacrifice' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parenting not considered a sacrifice • Lifestyle changes • Relationship changes

<p>important. Especially for divorced fathers who either lost (lots) in the divorce settlement and so had to start over or found it difficult to care for the children and work also.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal relationships – either with wife (lack of attention) or new relationships (no time, children have to come first) • Lifestyle – cutting back on socialising, losing friends in the process 		
---	--	--

Perceptions of role confidence

Themes from Rater 1	Themes from Rater 2	Final themes used in study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all fathers expressed extreme confidence in their abilities and stressed that they constantly learn along the way and showed very little fear in what lay ahead. • Very confident with concrete tasks, eg. educating/teaching • Not confident dealing with problems that they don't feel equipped for (emotional issues, female issues) • Some not confident caring/health of young children • Parenting resources accessed by fathers are; family, friends, mothers, books, other parents • While a few stressed they learn from own mistakes, equal numbers appeared eager to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most positive about concrete things like teaching • small group say confident with emotional support • Note: overall, generally confident • Least confidence with things you can't control like health problems • Some not confident with emotional support • Parenting resources include partner, parents/in laws, friends, men's groups, • A few never felt the need to ask for help, either due to confidence or a belief that one can only learn by making mistakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most expressed high confidence • Areas of particular confidence were teaching skills and imparting values • Some fathers confident with emotional support, some weren't • Areas of lack of confidence include issues with daughters and health problems. • Many have good resources; a wide range of social supports and sources of information were mentioned • Other fathers never access help

develop good parenting skills, by accessing outside help		
--	--	--

Appendix M

Transcripts of the interviews.

Participant 001 (000 on tape 1, side a) –divorced Q

1. What being a father means/Role of father

Being a father to me, um, well first its umm, keeping the family together, especially having boys, I've got two boys, but not only that I spend a lot of time with the boys, do a lot of their sporting activities with them, its been a really great experience, I wouldn't change, now they are older we have a great time, go away with the trail bikes, really have a great time together, what the hard part is, is, I have the boys week about, then mum met a new partner and they decided to move further away and didn't want to travel to the same school that the boys went to, it went to court, went to a full trial. So that's the situation, I spent a lot of time with the boys. Now I see the boys three weekends out of four now, they spend most of the school days with their mum.

2. Rewards

Umm, yeah I guess, umm, seeing the boys, seeing the boys, develop, I know when my, umm, my ex first left Chris was very young and I had the role of toilet training him, which probably most dads don't, achievements, going to school and things like that, when they do well at sports and things that you sort of encourage them with, seeing them develop from that age to what level they've reached now, but it is difficult with the boys having the two separate homes, two parenting styles, but the boys seem to adapt, but they will tell you a lot of things that go on in the other home, what happens when you have two different environments. Umm, what else can I say? To see them grow up and be healthy and be there for them.

3. Sacrifices

Yes, well, when ahh there mother left early on there was quiet a lot of sacrifice because chris was still very you, so I stopped working to bring them up, for ah was ah a good year. Also at the time I was upset and lost motivation and everything. But as far as the business goes, umm its not so much of a chore, I'm with the children now, not working as long hours, which meant less income because a lot of the other umm, people I dealt with didn't understand the shorter hours. But it meant I could go and play cricket with them or baseball, or take them to cricket. Then when the kids were older we went to the week about, and it meant that when their mum had them I could pick up the extra work then.

Really I guess because I didn't sort of have any other relationship for many years the boys were just my life really, so I spent a lot of time with them. I guess there wasn't any other sacrifices. But I know when you have relationships with other women sometimes even though they have children you miss your children a bit.

Not any other sacrifices really. Sure you spend more money on them than yourself, maybe your lifestyle, can't have same lifestyle as you had before, but I think it's all worth while really.

4. Areas most and least confident about

I mean I have fairly strong views I believe in, ummm, I feel I'm a good dad. I mean I have two young boys. I'm pretty happy with the role. Umm, my ex partner and I have different ways of doing things. But the point is children aren't hurt or abused in any way it just comes down to fact we don't see eye to eye on certain things. Yeah, no, I think I'm a very good dad.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

Don't really have any doubts or uncertainties. Just think its sad for the children. I mean I was brought up in a family where there was no marriage break up or anything and mum and dad were always there for the children. It was just part of the family role. The boys in that respect, they don't have that. Ahh no I don't think I have any real problems.

Participant 002 (000 on tape 1, side b) –separated, getting a divorce Q

1. What being a father means/Role of father

Ahh, its everything, its my whole life, it means the world to me, everything I do at the moment seems to be for him. Whether its all the legal stuff, with the lawyers, during the week when I haven't got him I'm going out buying things, about my morals, standards, being instilled in him, how he's educated. At the moment he's getting it all from his mother.

To educate him, to protect him, umm, make sure he is a happy three year old who enjoys his life as much a possible, and anything I can do to make that happen, I will.

2. Rewards

Seeing his, face, his smile, he calls you dad you know, first time its ever happened to me. My ex has two older children and when I met her the younger boy was two, and he started calling me dad you know. And when my son was born it was different. When I was a father to the other son I didn't know any different and I thought it would be the same when my sons was born but its different. I mean I love them both the same, or I did, I don't see the other one any more now. Its just, when its your own son, like I heard him the other day in the playground play with other kids, and it was so cute you know.

3. Sacrifices

Ummm, I don't really see any. I used to be pretty selfish, I used to put myself first all the time, and now I think about him all the time, and that has amazed people that know me, or knew me years ago. But, since I get him on Sundays, so when I go out on Saturdays I make sure I don't get home tanked so I'm as bright eyed as possible for him. But I don't call it a sacrifice because I don't mind doing it, you know. I don't really see any sacrifices.

4. Areas most and least confident about

Oh, I'm pretty confident. At the moment I'm trying to get his diet sorted out, all he wants to eat is Mc Donalds all the time. I've gone to that family centre place at Joondalup and got some books. Was very concerned about his diet and he always has colds and stuff. I ended up apologising to my doctor because every time there is something wrong with him I take him straight to my doctor. But what else can I do, I don't know if its normal or not. But I am pretty confident with him and the doctors reassure you. So those are a few things I'm a bit unsure about.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

Try and speak to somebody professional. I mean I can ask my mum but shes sort of as bad as me with the worrying about it so I try to go to professionals, mainly for health stuff you know.

Participant 003 (120 on tape 1, side b) separated, getting divorced - I (accent very difficult to understand and mumbles)

1. What being a father means/Role of father

Taking care of the children and help them grow. Help them mature to the full extent of their ?? Care about them and provide for them. Always a balance, they might have some strong areas you want to encourage, try to give them choices. So to provide an environment where they can grow and be happy and enjoy life. Equip them for the future.

2. Rewards

To love them and be loved, the relationship with your kids. You have a connection with them.

3. Sacrifices

Well, I, I, ahhh, I don't think you can say there are sacrifices. I am a person who believes in being passionate about things. In one situation, you may do something and not call it a sacrifice because you want to do it. In another situation, you may consider the same thing to be a sacrifice because you don't want to do it and there is no flow of energy back to you. Maybe I am putting too much emphasis on the word sacrifice. I don't believe in having a long term attitude that I sacrifice things, that it decreases your energy.

4. Areas most and least confident about

I don't generally judge people or judge myself, I just see everything as, as, you have some tools, and you have a situation, and you have to take a decision. It may not be best decision. After maybe, I can see how I can improve this decision. In the teaching profession, they say 'labelling is disabling'. So I make the decision, and if it has dramatic consequences I will think about it more, wait until I am confident.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

I am very artistic so I don't have rules, I don't believe in having rules. So I just think at the time and I might meditate and I believe at the subconscious level sometimes you can sort things out. So I have to work out through all that. I mean you could have preconceived ideas about how to deal with things, but kids change. I have no problem analysing a problem and coming up with creative ways to deal with it.

Participant 004 (000 on tape 2, side a) separated, getting a divorce -Q

1. What being a father means/Role of father

Guide your children and bring them up in the best possible way you can, to give them the best possible life I guess. And to me being a father is role, your not actually a father unless you're their being a Dad, and actually doing things, being with them. Being a dad is a role rather than a biological father type of thing.

2. Rewards

Oh, you know their smiles and their hugs and that sort of stuff, that's always amazing. Umm, one of my greatest regrets is that when the marriage was ahh broke up, no longer come home at night and see my little fellow, only 18 months old crawling up the hallway saying 'dad, dad, dad', when I came home from work. But what can you do, you know. And the other thing obviously is you just watch them learn and grow and experience things and their conquests, as they start to learn to walk and talk, just to watch them is a great feeling. Its good.

3. Sacrifices

Oh, you don't have money to go out and doing everything you want to, and obviously there is the time factor to go and do those sort of things. You need the money to support them and give them and education. But I mean its, you know, part of the responsibility of being a parent isn't it.

4. Areas most and least confident about

Generally I'm pretty confident because I take the role of being a father pretty seriously. So I talk to a lot of people about different ways of doing things with kids. I know people that are in childcare, and you know obviously, I talk to them about different things at times, and here what they say. And I might sort of say 'oh that's a good different way of doing it' and I might try it.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

I ask questions. Friends, you can see how their children relate to people and if they are doing well then can see what they do. Books, I have read a few books on it, but mostly just through other people, mostly by seeing other peoples children and how well they bring them up.

Participant 005 (113 on tape 2, side b) – separated, getting a divorce - I

1. What being a father means/Role of father

Spending as much time with the children as I can, spending quality time with them, just enjoying them, enjoying watching them grow up. Before I had children I never had a lunch break at work at all. But since my child was born everyday I have a lunch break, because they change and grow everyday. Just being part of that, watching the kids grow, just being part of their up bringing. Being a father, its, its just the proud moments that you get and just the bonding and the friendship that you got with your children.

2. Rewards

Rewards are watching children grow, just being part of their upbringing. Umm just being called 'dad', just having a little boy coming running into you, because to them, you know, you're the biggest thing in the world. Dads don't cry. Just being part of a little child's upbringing. Now the worlds a big cruel place, but to a little kid dad's a hero. Just being part of a little child's life.

3. Sacrifices

Oh, well there are no sacrifices. You'd do anything for your children so I can't see that it's a sacrifice not watching your favourite tv show or not going down the pub and drinking like I used to be drinking. Its not a sacrifice, I've done it because I decided to do it. I wouldn't do it if I didn't want to. So anything to do with the children isn't a sacrifice. Its just something you want to do. And you can't say times a sacrifice. I'd rather spend it with my kids than anyone else anyway.

4. Areas most and least confident about

I'm 99 percent sure that I'm right. Probably would be a little less sure with the daughter when she's older (laughs), but not really. I have made mistakes, everyone makes mistakes, its just part of learning. If the kid makes a mistake, just do it again. It's the same with adults. Nobody is perfect, as we go through life we're going to learn all the way through. And hopefully some of that learning is going to rub off on the children.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

I'll ask, people to tell me. Friends, family. Basically if I'm not sure of something I will ask, never hurts to ask.

Participant 007 (000 on tape 3, side a) divorced fulltime parent - Q – difficult to understand

1. What being a father means/Role of father

Ummm.... Changing the mistakes that my parents made and trying to not make them, and I stress trying. Looking to create a better future.

2. Rewards

Watching them grow, seeing them, protecting them. It is the most satisfying thing, there is no other reason for being on the planet, it is the only reason for being here.

3. Sacrifices

I don't think that I sacrifice, I really don't. If I do, I don't notice it.

4. Areas most and least confident about

There is no book that is going to tell me this is the right way and this is the wrong way, so the best I can do is if I make a mistake to correct the mistake. And even if that just means going up and cuddling my daughter and saying "I'm sorry sweetheart, your dad's just a bastard". I do my best. I don't feel confident about any area, I just take each as it comes. No, well, I suppose I do, being with my children I am confident in the fact that what I teach comes through.

Participant 008 (078 on tape 3, side b) separated, getting a divorce - I

1. What being a father means/Role of father

Umm, I had to really think hard about this because during this trial process, my father had a relapse of, of, cancer and he died, he died on the 17th of March last year and he was 80 and for the last couple of years my father and I had worked on a house in Bassandean, we were doing things around the old house and the garden, and we had a lot of time to talk. It really stuck home to me what my father had done for me as a boy, and I would do the same for my son or my daughter. And it really, I suppose its classified as the moral of the story, doing what's right and why its right. Because as you go through life, its much more complicated with kids these days than it was with me as a child, but the way in which, you get through is by morals. If you are a moral person, you are good, you have a set of values, then you don't need to know all the rules because by obeying your morality you wont break any laws. And just because there isn't a law against something doesn't mean its not wrong. See that's the thing governments set the laws, its democratic, its supposed to be moral to. Those moral people set up the laws that everyone should abide by, but that's only for when they don't. So I want to be able to provide my kids with the type of morality that they can be successful with out getting tied down by rules. That's probably it in a nut shell. And all the skills that you need to become self reliant.

2. Rewards

Oh, well, just seeing probably the successful role out of your kids, any achievement big or small, you can see the smile on their face. And also, particularly they like to perform when you're there, so they can see your response.

3. Sacrifices

Oh, I suppose so far I have really sacrificed my career, because if it wasn't for my belief in staying with my family then I would be off overseas. Developing my former career in mineral exploration.

4. Areas most and least confident about

I feel confident that, well.... it's a learning process. You don't sort of go well you need a full bag of skills to be a parent, you need this or that, it's a learning process.

Ummm... I am quite capable of looking after a house and cooking for people, I did that for many years in the fieldwork I used to do, and that just gets translated into looking after a family. From that point of view, I am confident. (show some recipes he has published in men's magazines and talks about helping other guys)

The bits I'm not confident with are the relationship bit, I think women are more better at relating with people, guys just go and get on with things and do things. Umm, the way my kids, I suppose, relating to my kids on a verbal level. My son's getting old enough now that we can do that. He used to, he couldn't talk to me cause I was too much of an authority figure, he used to talk to his mum, who would then talk to me. I didn't mind that because at least then he would talk and his mum and me would know. As for my daughter I really feel that it's a big grey area umm I think that you have certain things, accessories and nail polish and things like that... ummm it's a really interesting thing.

(Tape quality poor... muffled)

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

As a parent, you relate to other parents at school or kindergarten, but it is traditionally the female parents, no guys.

(difficult to understand, relates a story about some of the mothers at school not being sure how to respond to him, but others being really helpful –treating him as another mother).

Participant 009 (250 on tape 3, side b) married - I

1. What being a father means/Role of father

Ahh, strength, understanding, learning to be a father and learning to be a child. They say when you become a father you, well, all the bits of information from your childhood come back, how you were treated and what you went through.

2. Rewards

Ahhh.... umm... getting woken up at 4 in the morning.... (laughs). Seeing him smile, seeing the recognition in his eyes when he understands something he has been struggling for. Watching him and his mother playing. Thinking about him when you are at work.

3. Sacrifices

Sleep!, Ummm, until you get used to the whole concept you think you are sacrificing, you think you are losing something, but you are not looking at the gains. Jacobs just turned 6, about half way through last year, so five and a half, I sat back and thought about it and realised there are no sacrifices.

4. Areas most and least confident about

Yeah, fairly confident. Confident enough so that if I don't know anything, I can work it out or ask. Not the normal fatherly things, reading, drawing, going to galleries, going to movies. When there see things through his eyes, and he is teaching me about it.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

Asking people, mother(inlaw), talk to wife.

Participant 010 (296 on tape 3, side ?) divorced, separated, separated - I

1. What being a father means/Role of father

I don't know that you can really put it into answers. Well, I have 3 kids... from 3 different relationships, at the moment one son lives in NZ, see him 2 months a year. Other son don't see often either. Daughter, I have a lot of contact.

My role as a parent differs with all 3. With my younger daughter I was very concerned about the way she was being brought up and thought I needed to be a major parent there. The other two kids, I've always had close relationships with but I was always working away so I never had a lot to do

with their early upbringing, more with their later upbringing. Never changing nappies or any of those parenting things with my sons, but later with my daughter.

2. Rewards

Umm... that the kids like you, spending time with them, watching them grow, yeah just spending time with them.... mm, yeah.

3. Sacrifices

Sacrifices? Ummm well, I yeah. Career... I used to work on prawn trawler, when first son was born, worked on that for 10 years, but lost a lot in the divorce. I then drove trucks interstate for five years trying to get back what everything that I had lost from the first one. Then my second son was born, umm... she shot through to NZ with my son, a lot of sorting out there, went to NZ to try to sort things out. I guess it is all monetary, the sacrifices.

4. Areas most and least confident about

I don't feel any lack of confidence about anything. I feel completely confident and comfortable with anything to do with parenting really.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

Well, I suppose as most parents would say, you try something out, what has worked in the past. It's about learning.

Participant 011 (000 on tape 4 , side a) divorced, now de facto - I

1. What being a father means/Role of father

Well, I would say, being a father, umm, takes on quite a few roles. For me a father is quite a support person in the marriage. And obviously when a child is born that child has a closer bond to its mother, and Dad, his role, is supportive, he is the one that goes out to work and tries to work around the family structure. For me, I mean I've told myself, you are the one you help keep the family ticking along by going to work. And when you come home you get that opportunity to go to what we call the zero hour, which is the hour where the children, around about 5 o'clock, they are getting a bit tired and cranky and they really want their bed. And for me it was a hard time as well. I think, as far as I'm concerned, especially when it comes to young boys, I don't think.... I think, that a boy can't really enter man hood unless he has his father. He needs that role, that role model, he needs that strength and stability. I'm not saying that it is all based on strength, but there is a sensitive side also and he needs to learn to see the differences between the two. In a relationship it takes two people to work, and its not easy, its not an easy thing at all, there's a lot of stresses on both parties. On the female side of that, or the wife, there is a hormone change. The male there is also a change as well, it might not be hormonal, but all of a sudden he has got this other person in the house, and what he used to have, with his partner giving him all the attention, is taken away. But I think it is very important to have a father that has good contact with the children. We are living in a very litigated society, and its too easy for people to see things, and men, as far as I'm concerned, there is a pendulum, and the pendulum has swung more for women than for men. It is very sad, there is a structure where there is drug use, alcoholism, violence. We have to look back at where it all stems from, not having a stable family. As a father I think I've lost so much in the last 6 years, but I've gained also, gained a lot of knowledge.

2. Rewards

The rewards of being a father is actually watching your child grow. Unfortunately, we are pushed in such a way that men are having to go out and work, now six days for definite, sometimes seven. The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer, and unless you've got money handed down to you, you know a house and a car, there is no other way. I think the rewards are being able to spend time, and forget about what's happening on the outside, shut out the work.

Things like when you watch your kid, like my daughter at the moment is two and she is saying "thank you". And I think it is brilliant to hear her saying that. But that's good because she is learning. That's the rewards, watching the kids grow.

3. Sacrifices

Umm, I think sacrifices?... I don't think, I think there is a bit of a loss. Umm... they used to say that when a man left home he found a wife to replace his mother. And its like, you bounce off

people, you know what I mean? And ... well you lose that attention from your partner, because this wee baby has come a long, and you can feel, umm well not jealous but neglected. Hmm, sacrifices, well, I think the biggest sacrifice that any man can make is let his children go. Think, well if that's what she wants, and I'll just have to take it on the chin. Financial sacrifice, emotional sacrifice, there is a turmoil, your emotions, your feelings, you loose a lot of things. You sacrifice your sleep. I think sacrifice is quite a sharp word, I mean you make the choice. If I was an alcoholic, or a big socialiser I think I would have to sacrifice certain things in order to keep the family stability. But I don't think it's a sacrifice.

4. Areas most and least confident about

The doubts for me were being a new father. You've got these big meaty hands, and this baby is very resilient, and you don't realise that, its like holding butter in your hands, feel it melting. You feel a bit clumsy. When you're trying to be a father, and you've got your wife telling you you're not doing it right, you're not holding them right. Because that child has grown in them, men don't realise what that feels like, and then a long comes dad with his big clumsy hands, and it seems rough. I think men don't get enough hands on before the baby comes along, even to see after the baby comes along where men can fit in, and this is why I say its sort of like men are on the back leg.

For a female, I think it's a natural instinct, handed down with her mothers cake recipe.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

I was generally very confident with my kids. But I didn't have them long enough, not after two. Can only give you 0 -2. Kids are very innocent, until they go to school and the teachers take over.

Participant 012 (383 on tape 4, side b) divorced, de facto, then separated - Q

1. What being a father means/Role of father

To me it means you arrange things for your children, so they can come into this world securely, you know, with happiness and love.

(prompt)

Someone, that you're always there for them, all the time, full time.

2. Rewards

Everything. Laughs.....Well, their running around, their talking or walking, or crawling, it's everything.

3. Sacrifices

Travelling 1000 km once a fortnight, that's quite a bit. And the first two visits was just for an hour or two on a Sunday. But that was to do with some restraining order bullshit. But yeah.... Ahh sacrifices. For 5 years travelling that far, and then later for 500 km. So a lot of money goes into travelling. Now from what I gathered later on, which I made the partner do in the last year, was to travel half way or do half and half.

So there are a lot of sacrifices. It's not really a sacrifice though, because you want to see your children.

4. Areas most and least confident about

Ahh... well, I'm confident in them all really because I do them all.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

Relax. Well there was trouble with my oldest boy last weekend. The mother lets him do whatever he feels like. Its basically just, you, know from instinct, or what your parents did. You learn from your parents. Some people were brought up rough. My wife was brought up with a bad parenting, from her father not from her mother.

Participant 013 (430 on tape 4, side b) de facto, then separated, fulltime father

1. What being a father means/Role of father

Umm... I don't know. Umm, it's a hard first one isn't it.

(prompt)

First, it was a traditional provider, because my partner didn't work and I worked three jobs. But after a while it was more than a provider, it was everything. Then after a while she left. And that's all it is now. My life is just parenting and working. I don't really have anything else anymore.

2. Rewards

They're all little things. Like since his mum left he has been really upset so I put him to bed late a night so he sleeps through the night. But if he has his nightmares in the night, he'll come into my room, and half asleep he'll curl his fingers through my hair and say 'I love you Dad' and fall asleep.

Its those sort of things that I find rewarding. Just the cute things.

3. Sacrifices

Career advancement, travelling, money. I have been pretty much broke since the split. I had lined up something in IT, before my son was born IT was the biggest industry in the world, and I had lined up very high paying jobs in Europe, and then found out I was a father and couldn't go. That sort of thing. Even got through selection to join the defence industry in Canberra and then couldn't go.

Sacrificed a lot of things, mainly work, also friends. You then find out who your friends really are. Umm and now I'm sacrificing any sort of personal life, because I can't go anywhere or have a social life, its just me and him, which is not a problem.

The sacrifices are long and hard. I've been working a few years now and I've never spent a pay check on myself yet, not one.

4. Areas most and least confident about

Getting him to deal with his mother, I think I'm good at that, because he is still in one piece. The people at Day Care centres always say, with other kids going through divorces the kids fall to pieces and my kid's not. His mother is making him suffer really badly actually.

Umm, I also excel at discipline, because if you could put a camera in my lounge room or my ex-partner's lounge room, you'd see a different child, with her he is running around madly and breaking things. I don't punish him but I also don't let him have his way. I've never smacked him or hit him or even yelled at him, but he does what I say.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

Asking my mum and my dad, which is not the easiest thing in the world because they are just recently separated. Umm, more people come to me than I go to them. I'm the first of my friends, the first of my brothers and so people come to me. They see me doing a really good job and want to know how I do it.

Which is nice, but no, I don't really have any one I can talk to. My mum and my dad seem to get along, particularly my dad, sort of raising me with out any description of abuse, so I use him as my benchmark.

Participant 015 (000 on tape 5, side b) married - Q

1. What being a father means/Role of father

That's very philosophical (laughs) (prompt). Oh.... well, my role in my particular situation, it's a very important role, crucial role, umm, but as a guy, the household I suppose, because I'm not a particularly active father in that sense, my wife is a very dominant person in that respect. I take a much more of a, I wouldn't say secondary necessarily.... I suppose supportive role. And ahhh... Not really sure.

2. Rewards

I get great, umm, I'm thrilled when my daughter, I've only got a daughter, when she is happy and achieves things, and gets good marks, then I'm happy. If she doesn't that makes me unhappy or sad, if she has got some difficulty in her life or some emotional problem, well that effects me. As a parent, I want to see her happy and fulfilled and if that's the case I am happy with that.

3. Sacrifices

I do make some minor sacrifices, I think, but they are only minor.
(asked for example)

Well I guess the lifestyle that we live. I mean I don't choose to live in the city, I'm a country boy. But my wife and daughter like the city, and of course it is very convenient for education and those sorts of things. So I consider that a sacrifice, a minor sacrifice.

The expense of course, the cost of education, a good education, the commitment that you have to make, whether you've got one child or six or ten you have to be committed, if you send them to a school you have to support them. We send our daughter to a private school, and we know, or we believe that it is worth the expense, but it is also a commitment. It's not just a matter of sending them off to a school and expecting them to get a better education just because you are paying for it. They'll only get the benefit if you are really involved.

4. Areas most and least confident about

As a father, of course, I mean having a daughter is a, there are certain areas that I certainly leave much more to my wife. As they grow up, you know, I mean she is a young teenager, so certain areas of a girl's education I think is probably more appropriate for my wife. Not that I would shy away from it if I thought I had to.

And I guess in the dealing with the education system, because my wife is a teacher she has great experience in that area, where I feel less confident, if my daughter has some difficulty or challenge at school or understanding the subject material or stuff, I don't have the confidence in that area. So I suppose I take a very secondary role in that sort of thing.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

Talk to my wife (laughs). I mean we do, we communicate well, and if there are issues, we talk about it.

Participant 016 (742 on tape 5, side a) divorced, de facto, separated - Q

1. What being a father means/Role of father

A father means that I can bring up my children with my values, with my interpretation of what right is all about. And to be there emotionally, financially, to give my children the stability in life that I experienced when I was a little boy.

2. Rewards

The most rewarding things, to see your children grow everyday, to want to experience life... ummm, for them to achieve and to show you how they have achieved. To impart what you've learned through life to your children.

3. Sacrifices

Sacrifices is putting myself second or third down the list, ahh... sacrifices that I have done at present is to shift myself away from a situation where I was not being a help, I was more so being a hindrance at that stage. To take myself out, which I believed would then better my children in the long run.

4. Areas most and least confident about

Some areas of being confident is, when I do see my children, I can give them the interaction between family. I think that's very important. My family, my ancestors, my grandparents and so forth, their grandparents.

Less confident... That I don't see them day to day, I don't experience what they go through day to day. If you are being replaced or not being replaced, you still can't impart your values onto your children. Yes they do get some values, and they may get some values from you, but inevitably you don't have to decide what track they take. And if they see someone everyday, a different mum or a different dad, and that's maybe not the right terminology, but if they see another person everyday then that certainly would confuse them for a state of time.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

In this instance I was with my little boy for three years, I believe that parenting is learning everyday. You are bound to make mistakes, he who does not make mistakes is therefore a liar, he says he does not make mistakes, you don't learn if you don't make mistakes. Umm I think you turn to what you believe in, what you've been taught.

Participant 017 (191 on tape 5, side b) married - I

1. What being a father means/Role of father

Well, I see it as I've got major influence in my role as a father. I've got two boys, ones 13 and the other is 11. And I feel my role, number one, being a friend, I feel I've made a big effort from the time they were born to be their friend and yet to be able to set goals, set deadlines umm... set boundaries as appose to deadlines. So I've worked on that since the times since we've had our children. And at times it worked and at times it just caused so much hassles, when you are trying to cross the boundary from being a friend to being a parent, and a friend to being an educator. I see my role as being a provider for them and being a good example, provide for their education, umm another thing I really want to do with them is just really motivate them to be able to got out there and tackle things and enjoy life and just not to be afraid of any challenges. I guess from my own upbringing there were times when I would have like to have done more but due to family circumstances and maybe my own parents being cautious, you know, they didn't motivate, they didn't encourage me. I feel quite a huge part of my work is just encouraging them to go out there and see what's to be seen and what's to be done out there.

2. Rewards

Umm, I guess just seeing that my children are still children, that they haven't just grown up and left all the children's values. Its getting the big hug and the big kiss, and even now my boys are nearly 12 and 13 they still show quite a bit of affection and to me that's a goal. To see them developing in themselves with out I over influencing the behaviour and their ordinariness, I would call it, of being a child. Achievements, I think that's another rewarding thing.

And also failures, particularly for my oldest child, who struggles constantly in school, I guess in a way I feel that the reward in that is it makes me look at myself as a person, and also challenges me to look at other strategies to help him to move along.

3. Sacrifices

Umm, the first one is sleep, because for the first five years of our children's, particularly the oldest guy, we didn't get a nights sleep. I guess one of the things, for my self, is I just love travel and I feel since we've had the children, for want of a better word, I've just been tied, umm our first son was born two years after we were married. And I guess in hindsight, had I got my time back again I would have been in absolutely no hurry whatsoever to have children. So I think that is one of the big sacrifices, I felt I could no longer be myself, I was now somebody else for them. So the times that I had to do what I wanted to do I felt were very limited from the time my first son was born, and more so from the time my second son.

You're always kind of clock watching, checking to see am I there for the, and that's not to say I'm a kind of prisoner to them but its just that it puts a different focus on everything you do. In the back of my mind I always say 'what are the consequences of my actions'.

Financially initially it was a huge sacrifice. I just found that any money at all that I had, it was just going to them. But I think for me the big thing for me is travel, and seeing the world, and I can't do it, at least for another 5 or 6 years. That's just a personal thing for me.

4. Areas most and least confident about

More confident would be from an educational point of view and trying to guide them towards the best path to go in their education As in the sense of putting the focus on language, putting the focus on the science subjects, and less of a focus if they are less sort of arts inclined, putting less of a focus on that.

Confidence, the other thing would be I suppose not to be afraid of the challenge, not to be afraid to stand up for what they believe is right for them. And while it may not be 100% right on the adult side I feel confident in trying to look at it through the eyes of a child. Now having said that, it has often fallen back on me in trying to set boundaries for them, kind of a resistance from them, particularly the youngest boy, who will constantly resisting what I am asking him to do, constantly challenging me.

So the negative side was how to deal with the conflict that all of this causes. It is almost as if I am a double parent. On one side I'm advocating empowerment, advocating being able to stand up for your self, on the other side I am sort of putting him down. And sometimes I'll talk to my wife, and at least I can say there is something going in there.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

Gosh, I take it out on exercise. I just walk away initially, because I have to unwind myself. And I am not the type that will shoot first and then reflect later. The other thing would be in myself, I would look on myself as negative, almost a failure in this interaction, and I ask 'have I failed

myself or have I failed the child?' and I guess as they are getting older I'm looking at myself as a failure rather than my child being a failure. And it's as if I say they should be a better child and then I think 'are they a better child in my eyes or in other people's eyes' and I have to say 'well whose motive is at the back of all this' and I have to just stand back, and I find that very hard to deal with.

One of the books that I am reading at the moment is actually called 'raising boys', I say why didn't I read this book when the child was born. We did a pre-marriage course that was compulsory in the context of the Catholic Church and you know you went through all this religious aspects. And you know if we had a 6-month or a 12 month course on the hows of parenting it would have been an awful lot better for me. And I guess I so often feel that I'm a failure, I just going to sport. But in the meeting of them again, trying to resolve that, I try not to hold a grudge.

Participant 018 (425 on tape 5, side b) married - I

1. What being a father means/Role of father

Primarily as carer, first and foremost, then as a leader as best I can. Obviously, you try and be, because of the children I've had and their ages, you try to be their best friend but you also try and be a role model as well. So disciplinarian is probably also the other strong point of father, but with that also love, unconditional love.

2. Rewards

The love that you get in return, the unconditional love that you get in return. That's just amazing. When I met my wife I took on her three children earlier, and had, you know, no problem loving them as much as I did their mum. So I experienced wanting to support and help out and what have you. And then when we had another three children, it was interesting the change that I had, even a greater level of understanding, sort of dealing with infants at a young age and trying to lead them from that point, so I am sure there is a chemistry that changes in men, especially when they go through the whole birthing process, and you're just on adrenaline for weeks, as probably other men have said, and that never leaves you. It's just like yesterday when they're born and you tend to remember everything they did, all the good parts.

3. Sacrifices

Umm. I don't see as sacrifices. Because you know I committed to taking on a fathering role. So it was just an extension of that.

Having no money, being woken at whatever time, or being available. I suppose there are a lot of sacrifices, but again it came down to I love their mum, and we're doing this together, and it all goes in, all the support goes in regardless.

4. Areas most and least confident about

That's a good question. Most confident... Certainly just support and being there for the children. You've always got the early stages when a child comes in, you feel insecure because you don't know what you're doing. You very quickly sort out what's right and what's not. When I've had queries I've generally gone and asked somebody. I'm always concerned that I'm not a good enough father, that I could have done this more. I think the biggest issue I always have, but that I deliberately changed in my lifestyle, was working so hard, the biggest battle was always trying to be there. So I, especially when the younger three came along, I cut back the work hours. Made the sacrifices I suppose at a financial level, but I just didn't want to not be there. That's probably been the biggest sacrifices, trying to balance up work, and spending enough time with the my wife, without the kids and with the kids.

This is the most important time for them, whatever happens now is set for the rest of their lives so I've tried to be there. It always bothers me that it's not enough. I get to assemblies and parent-teacher days, but I don't think it's enough.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

Generally, just a network of friends, through the schools there is a lot of parents with similar aged children, established over the years. And I think just by talking about things you realise you're not Robinson Crusoe, they've all experienced like things. I was at the advantage, because I had married my wife, I mean she is a lot older than I am, so my wife has brought a lot of experience in childrearing. So it made it a lot easier when the younger three came along. I just found we both had different strengths.

Participant 019 (177 on tape 6, side a) divorced - I

1. What being a father means/Role of father

Well, it's really being a parent first and a father second. Being a parent is somebody who nurtures their children, protects their children and provides for them, in a broader sense, but also gives them an education. They are both obvious answers, in the spiritual, cultural, religious, the broadest possible sense. That's the role of a parent, to provide a role model for the children.

As a father, as oppose to the mother, I think then the role has a lot to do with your own, partly from your own experiences, in terms of gender experience, and provide a gender role for each of the children. And I think the other component of that is to share that with somebody else, with the other parent. So that's how I see it, as a sort of sharing the responsibility, providing an education, and some kind of, you know, their welfare.

2. Rewards

I think, the rewards are, have a lot to do with establishing a loving relationship with a child, your own child, a person that's very different between other loving relationships. So it's a lot to do with the nature of the relationship between a parent and a child. And there's an enormous amount of unconditional trust that comes very early in that, so that's an important element in that.

So the rewards is being able to establish that kind of relationship. I think the other rewards are being able to participate in the growth of someone like that and really guide that process and channel that if you can, and to help them if they need help, and to be there at time if they're a success and when they are enjoying themselves, and to participate as a group and to grow as a group.

I'm sure there are others, I haven't thought about it really.

3. Sacrifices

I think you sacrifice a lot of time, and I think its an expensive process and you have to be prepared to give up not just time but a lot of the material things that you might otherwise have.

But I never saw that as a problem, and when we were a family it was a very easy thing to do. So I think the major sacrifice is time. And I think, to a degree, you limit your opportunities to develop other relationships, particularly when they a young and growing, you can only focus on a finite number of close relationships, and beyond a certain number you just can't. So I think those are the sacrifices, oh apart from sleep.

4. Areas most and least confident about

I've always felt very confident as a parent and I'm not sure why that is. Its partly because I am very open with people, so I don't really have anything to hide. Its also because I am very confident in the way I think children should be treated, which is very much as equals and so that helps, and they respond to that. Initially I felt a little concerned that I might not be able to be as effective as a parent once we were separated. Although sometimes that is implied by the mother, I think the response I get from the children is still pretty good. So I don't feel particularly undermined, I mean I don't feel that I've lost that. I feel quite confident as a parent to be honest with you. I don't feel there are any areas. Its all such a great challenge and interesting and fun and enjoyable, that I've enjoyed every aspect of it and always looked forward to it. As soon as we are together, again it is usually pretty easy to pick up where we left off. And I speak to them on the phone so I've never had any reservations.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

When we were together, the first thing obviously would be to discuss it with the other parent. And so the answer to that question now, is I felt for quite a while since the separation that I am in rather uncharted waters, I don't have any points of reference. So that's difficult. I don't know who I would turn to in those circumstances, I would probably speak to friends who had children. Oh, and my own parents.

Participant 020 (339 on tape 6, side a) married - I

1. What being a father means/Role of father

To be as, I don't know, I was brought up to be the male leader of the house with responsibility, as opposed to the female roles sort of showing basic sort of, I don't know, manners, maybe, the softer things in life as opposed to bringing in the bread. But sharing those roles, as well as behavioural responsibilities, especially because my child is male as opposed to female. I would think that the roles of a father would change to do with the sex of the child. But my main role is to ensure that

the household is fed, well my wife is doing the feeding, but to make sure there still is income there and the house is stable, over and above the basic daily duties, without sounding to sexist. But still to be involved in daily stuff as much as possible, but its more a case of ensuring that the wife and mother can relax knowing that they don't have to worry about income.

2. Rewards

Going to work and getting away from the child (laughs). Just for moments, because you get home and you see wife and mother tearing her hair out and you then only really have 2 or 3 hours to play with your child, but it hasn't been all day, even if you've had a hell day.

Getting away, whilst its kind of negative it is reality as well and I've spoken to many other fathers and they say its great to get to work and have a release, which is definitely a down side for the mums. But I guess its just part of the female thing, that mothers are just naturally at one with their baby, well half the time anyway.

Rewarding... seeing my child grow, when I get home you see what growth they've had with the direction of where they've been during the day and what they've learned from my partner. And it teaches me to re evaluate and what to really value in life, so of course they teach you lessons about life, what you expect and what to accept.

3. Sacrifices

I tend to think that the mother makes a hell of a lot more than the father does. Males can obviously be a lot more selfish than females. And the females, given their total commitment, they don't have a choice.

But sacrifices are time, definitely to do what you want when you want. Time is obviously the major factor for me. But the reality that I pick up at the other end evens out what other small instances of things I may miss out on. But generally around home I don't feel that I really miss out on much, apart from some time to expose my interests, sport or whatever.

4. Areas most and least confident about

My child has allergies problems, peanuts and things, and that's one area that I haven't upheld full responsibility of understanding. I know what the basic problem is but I should be stronger in that area.

But I feel that the interaction that I have with him, the play time, or just teaching him numbers, or basic house duties. Obviously restricted of time during the day when working, as opposed to what a mother would have. I go home and teach him something and the mother would say 'I already taught him that 3 days ago', and I'm sure sometimes they just keep their mouths closed and say 'well done'.

So making him feel very comfortable is something that I find very important, especially at this age now where sometimes they are just very weird in the morning and don't want to have any one touch them, and that's what I focus on to make him feel very comfortable, where ever he is.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

Being a male I probably just try and BS my way through it, where as a mother would try and do all the right moves and find out. Or as a male we might just try and release the responsibility onto the mother. I have talked to my mother on occasions to try and learn, both on just basic education on raising children, and the other side of it is what her experiences were with raising me because my blood is in my child so I would think that he would have some sort of traits from me, as well as from my wife. If I can find out more about myself, that may help me understand my child.

Participant 021 (500 on tape 6, side a) married - Q

1. What being a father means/Role of father

Just cope with the problems as they come along.

2. Rewards

I suppose seeing the kids grow up and learn to achieve and I suppose do well. In my case my daughter has done really well, still to find out about my youngest son. Of my two sons one has done sort of quite well, and the other one is still finding out about things. That's what it is.

3. Sacrifices

All the money and a lot of time and distraction. You can't get things down that you might have wanted to do or you've got to post pone it or it gets too late or you get too tired or you haven't got

the money any more. And then of course there is sacrifices that come about because your children aren't as healthy as maybe they should have been and you've got to cope with things like scoliosis. And things like diabetes and things that just come out of the blue that you never new were going to happen.

4. Areas most and least confident about

I didn't have any problems. No I didn't have any lack of confidence. Its always a bit distressing when you find that your daughter has got to have an operation but you just have to put your self in the care of the doctors and the system and you've just got to go along with them, donate the blood for the operation so there is the service there in case anything goes wrong, because I had the closest match to Claire. You've just got to nurse, you change the dressings and things like this. And she's a very good child in the sense that she wanted to come out of hospital and she worked at getting better. She didn't just stay there as long in fact as she might have. You compare that to the girl in the next bed who just complained all the time. Claire was determined to come out before Christmas so she'd have Christmas at home, as she had been doing for 12 years, and so she came out of hospital 3 days early. The doctor said 'oh I don't know, but if you do that someone's going to have to change the dressings' the wound was about 600 mm long and 88 stitches so it took a lot of care, but she got over that. And similarly when Steven developed juvenile diabetes, you just have to cope with the fact that he is going to have to have injections and things all the time and he's got to go to hospital for clinics and assessment and that, so its just part of the gem, you just have to cope. But you don't sit back and say 'oh woe is me, how do I cope' you just have to get on with it and find a way. I don't know whether it is because of those things that the kids have had a positive attitude, they don't go around getting into drugs or vandalism or that sort of thing, which seems to be the in thing these days, I don't know why. So that's been good and they've been quite successful in there studies.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

Usually try and talk about it. Sometimes, it works, sometimes you get into a raving argument. But they sort of work themselves out. The biggest problem has been my wife, she's had really fixed and rigid ides about he kids. But usually we talk about it, sometimes you work it out or come to an understanding. Other times you find you didn't have all the information, you're just out of the loop and the all of a sudden you find out and understand 'oh that's why you wanted to do that'.

Participant 022 (?200ish on tape 6, side b) divorced – Q tape a little damaged in some parts.

1. What being a father means/Role of father

Probably the two main things, is provide for their needs, housing and so on. But in our world, where those things come pretty easily, more importantly is to provide for their psychological development, in the widest sense, be it educational or spiritual. I temper both of those things, presumably, the keys to which are people, and I will not impress upon them religious views or even matters of philosophy. I temper most things that I say with 'This is dad's view, this is why', just give them some alternatives. I wont hie my ah prejudices, if you like, I wont hide my distaste for some things and my joy for others. My overall philosophy is provided you are a good person you can't go too wrong. You ought to be who you are.

2. Rewards

I don't know that there's that many to be honest. They are pretty umm, what's the word for it, intuitive. They're a bit scant sometimes. Sometimes I get sporadic regrets as I think about them, things like when I lost my temper years ago. And I'll look at photos of when they were kiddies and I'll think 'how could I be such a bastard at times'. I don't know if I get rewards, that's why this question is a bit hard. I don't see parenting as something where you seek rewards, you get satisfaction from.

3. Sacrifices

I don't see too many of those, although I do make them, no doubt. One of course, freedom. I see them more as obligations than sacrifices. You may think I am just picking words here but I'm not. I feel obliged to stay here for example, because they're at school, a sacrifice is something different. That's one thing, obviously, I've led a fairly constrained life in terms of a typical father, family, role, from a young age, I wonder if I'll get a midlife crisis. I'd like to do some of the things that I would have done as a younger man, travelled and so forth. I don't find kids constrain me. I've still got my motor bike and sometimes they come with me, and sometimes they don't. I don't find that

I'm not able to do everything that I might do if they weren't there, but I don't find that I feel cornered. I feel cornered by other things. Regulations and stuff (refers to legal system). I don't hate the kids for that, because they were used as a pawn against me. It's not really them, it's their mother.

4. Areas most and least confident about

I'm very confident with homework. Confident, you know, role model. Confident, not quite Mr Brady, but I'll often lead them through a discussion or dilemma. I try not to insist. I feel very powerless at times. My strength is probably getting them to think about what they are doing. I do that well.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

I don't have any family here. Having a girlfriend I can bounce ideas off. Particularly miss, having another parent to , not really play, well a bit like 'good cop bad cop'. When they're with me they can't turn to someone else for emotional support so I've got to be careful about being harsh or more extreme parental behaviour. We all lose our temper (damaged bit)

Participant 024 (370 on tape 6, side b) married – I, fulltime father

1. What being a father means/Role of father

To me it means being responsible for my kids upbringing, which means making sure they are good citizens. I think that's the most important thing, just so they are decent citizens, community minded, not selfish. So that they fit into, well I was going to say.... I don't mean fit into society... umm, well people that respect other people is probably the biggest thing.

2. Rewards

They are few and far between. I think the ones that matter most to me are eventually seeing that they are the sort of people that respect other people, so that they don't turn out as failures, in inverted commas. By failures I don't mean that they've got to have academic skills and that sort of thing, I don't worry too much about that sort of thing. I mean that they are good decent people.

3. Sacrifices

There's heaps, and you've got to understand I've been in the full time carer role. Its different for blokes that are out working. You do lose the capacity to do what you want to do, you've got to cater for the kids needs. And I haven't objected to that. I've been quite happy to. Where as anyone who was goal focused and had their career in mind, I think would find it really hard to put the kids first. But I have always done that, I've put the kids first, and just happy to make the sacrifices. You know, own career and things that I wanted to do, just put that into the background.

4. Areas most and least confident about

Now that they're teenagers, all the psychology stuff, you know how people think and discreet ways to manipulate they're behaviour without being confrontational. See I have no psychology background, I have an engineering background. You can get away with it when the kids are little because they don't ask to many hard questions. When they're teenagers they ask the hard questions, and they're not stupid. If you haven't got the understanding they'll go somewhere else. The problem is if they're asking you, you want to be in a position to help them. So I've found that a bit of a challenge, keeping up with them in the last couple of years. And certainly when they were little, we were out in the country, there were no parenting centres or no family to help, so I just did things according to what I thought was best, without any parenting information or coping.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

I remember going to the library occasionally, but we were out in the country and it was a bit of a chore getting there. And books weren't really helpful. I mean you can read a book and it's a bit far away from what's happening on the real scene but certainly these days, being in the city, and working in places like the parenting information centre, I know exactly where to go for what information I need. I know which government departments are set up to help parents and there is a fair bit of it around.

Participant 072 (not taped) divorced, fulltime father - I

1. What being a father means/Role of father

A father should be equally involved in every aspect of their upbringing. In my family, and in what I believe there are not gender specific roles, in both homes I did 90% of the domestic work. To be caring, role model, loving, as parents to be complimentary and supportive of one another.

2. Rewards

It is the most satisfying thing. Watching a child grow to adulthood, let them free, respect them and admire them, and to develop an adult relationship with them, having played a part in shaping the people that they become.

There is a sense of awe, the preciousness of life. I'm an educator by profession and instinct, I wanted my kids to be thoughtful, sensitive, open-minded.

3. Sacrifices

Time, especially in teaching, work takes up a lot of time.

Relationship with your partner, the loss of privacy and less time for one another, you have to treasure and nurture the relationship.

4. Areas most and least confident about

We were both always confident that we would be good parents; we were good teachers and started with a good knowledge base. I grew up without a father. So I guess I had no real role model but could make my own choices on how to parent. I had had a series of self-chosen surrogate fathers, and I could choose from them.

I was confident about anything to do with education.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

When married and had our first child I was advised to choose one person and only get advice from that person, but that person took Wendy's side. I had one other chosen friend to turn to but in the main did it on my own.

When I was 20 I stood trial as a conscientious objector, it was a life shaking experience, and that really confirmed my capacity to deal with anything, gave me confidence.

Participant 150 (tape 7) divorced - Q

1. What being a father means/Role of father

Protection of the kids, keep them safe, take care of creature comforts, all the obvious stuff, but to me... umm... they feel your strength, you reassure them but also deal with their fear and their curiosity.

Inculcate values that they can live by for their whole lives.

Expose them to situations where they can grow, but being careful because they are delicate.

Loving them, strength, and consistency.

2. Rewards

Share the experience of them growing up and experiencing new things. Bask in their wonder as they discover things.

Help them recognise their interests. Just get happiness from looking at them do simple things, digging in the sand, reaching for a blossom, eating a meal.

I think it is a privilege to share in the growing of another human being.

3. Sacrifices

Work, the work you do most of the time isn't what you would chose to do. So you sacrifice labour and attention to another's needs so you can get money when you would rather do something else. When you are single, you can quit easily but now you have something else to think about. But I didn't think of it as a sacrifice.

In an unhappy marriage it is a sacrifice, you love your children but you may not be happy with your wife. Men are attracted to other women and if unhappy at home it becomes a temptation, becomes pressure. You feel like you are sacrificing that to tow the line and keep working hard when you are not treated with respect at home. You wonder what for, but then you look at the children.... They are innocent.

4. Areas most and least confident about

Except for changing nappies (which my wife wouldn't let me) I felt confident about everything. Any nervousness was only about my wife, what she thought. I knew I could protect, cook for, wash for them, and take them to the movies.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

Didn't ask anything, it never felt strange or foreign. It felt like it belonged, I like children.

Participant 151 (tape 7) divorced - Q

1. What being a father means/Role of father

Hmm..... its to pass on knowledge, mm yeah.

2. Rewards

See them learning new things, the amazement in their faces.... Just experiencing things.

3. Sacrifices

My ex-girlfriend didn't understand me spending time with him on weekends, because she didn't have kids.

And because he is only there every second weekend it is hard for him to make friends.

No, not really a sacrifice.

4. Areas most and least confident about

Since my older son doesn't come regularly, I've tried to be, well, don't know how to get him down, but when he does come I try to be very positive.

Otherwise, I am very confident.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

I ask friends, and I used to belong to a men's group, or sometimes in a magazine I may come across something.

Participant 152 (tape 7) divorced - I

1. What being a father means/Role of father

Ahh... well its limited, limited to the opportunity given, only two days per fortnight, more of a babysitter.

2. Rewards

Spending time with the children, but again this is limited, and then what time you do get is negative experience, its not positive because it is so limited. Again like a babysitter, just like the next-door neighbours minding the kids for the weekend, not really being a dad.

3. Sacrifices

Before the divorce?... well I don't really see any, I saw my children as often as I wanted to, it was all positives.... I would put them to bed, spend birthdays with them, all of that.

Now, its all sacrifices, I don't see them wake up, except for the two days a fortnight, I don't see them on their birthdays, or on mine, don't see their school work come home.... Just like a babysitter.

4. Areas most and least confident about

I am confident with anything. They are only 4 and 6 and nothings come up yet that I'm not confident about.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

I ask my ex-mother-in-law.

Participant 153 (tape 7) separated (was de facto) - Q

1. What being a father means/Role of father

Umm... going back to primitive times, the hunter-gatherer role versus the nurturer role. Males are obviously stronger and more aggressive, so their role is to prevent harm to children. It sounds old fashioned, I know.

(refers to divorce here) In most circumstances, the child is better off with the mother, if she is a fit and proper parent, because of the bond with the mother. I believe there is scientific support that there is a bio-psychological bond between a child and their mother. Its just pure biological fact.

2. Rewards

The first time they walk up to you with their arms up and say 'daddy', and then they keep doing it, even when they are 11 or 12.....

Its not an easy question to answer. Umm Knowing that part of you has continued into the next generation. I know I have faults but don't see as many of them in her, so maybe it is the better parts of me, my better traits, that have continued into the next generation.

3. Sacrifices

Independence.

Freedom, you lose a certain element, even in my situation. Every second weekend, you acknowledge certain things aren't suitable, so you adjust your lifestyle. They're not sacrifices though, its just life. I think the phrase the best interests of the child is very important here.

4. Areas most and least confident about

I'm most confident about guiding and protecting, I have a very protective nature. And also just providing someone to talk to from a different perspective than she gets at home. Sometimes she will talk or ask me about her home life, and I can be a resource for her.

I'm less confident with emotional nurturing, I guess because of my generational upbringing, you know, less comfortable displaying emotions, especially negative social emotions, such as crying. It that, my current partner is very helpful. Also, I guess prepubescent girls and their fathers tend to go on separate paths. I'm lucky she gets on very well with my partner, I work six days a week so that on the weekends with me she spends all day Saturday with her.

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

My current partner, my mother in law, I actually get along very well with her, as she's only 8 years older than me, my current partner being 15 years younger than me. My current mother in law had 3 children, one was special needs child, so she is very good for advice. I also have a sister in law in the eastern states with two special needs kids.

Participant 154 (not taped) divorced (no contact with children), remarried (two children) - I

1. What being a father means/Role of father

My first daughter was conceived before marriage, and my education told me I should look after her. I could have let it go. After that, because I am from a Jewish family, I've got very strong family ties. Being a father means I can support and look after their education, and to support their mother.

2. Rewards

The way I feel with my present children, when they go to school and sport and show what they've learned and the their development.

I feel I lost many years of my life and my first children's lives by not being a part of that.

3. Sacrifices

I would do anything necessary to make sure they are happy. In the Jewish religion we would look after their own life before our own. I would do anything to show the children from my first marriage that I wanted to be there for them.

4. Areas most and least confident about

Because I am busy and spend a lot of time in the business my current wife is not happy. She feels let down if I come back too late. Then I try to stay longer the next morning and help feed and dress the kids, play with them.

I can't breastfeed thought.

I bath them. Sometimes I cook, though not often, One of the biggest pleasures I had was when my youngest daughter did news at school and said "I love my Dad because he always plays with me".

Umm... I also practice gym with them

5. Where turn to for advice/when unsure

That depends what is available. I have been to a sole father's group.