

**EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS WHO ARE UNDER PRESSURE  
FROM THEIR ADOLESCENT CHILDREN**

**by**

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*'I become afraid of my children when they are angry'*  
(said by a mother of her teenage son, aged 15 and daughter, aged 13)

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ACA Marais

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FROM THEIR ADOLESCENT CHILDREN**

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**SUMMARY**

Most adolescents place pressure on their parents. The pressure varies, so there must be factors that contribute to the variance. An important objective of the investigation was to determine such factors from the parent's side and from the adolescent's side. It was also important to determine the most important factors in family functioning, and in the wider social context that affect the placement of pressure on parents by adolescents. A sample of 177 high school adolescents and their parents was used. Variables such as age, gender, family structure, working circumstances of parents, birth order position of adolescents, peer pressure, the parent-adolescent relationship, self-concept and personality were included in the study. The results indicate that the pressure that parents experience is associated with parental variables rather than adolescent variables. Parental self-concept, personality, and the parent-adolescent relationship (from the parent's side) explained almost 63% of the variance in the pressure that parents experience. The conclusion can be made that it is not adolescents who deliberately plan to place their parents under pressure, but rather parents who make themselves vulnerable to such a situation. Any remedy or guidance programme will have to focus primarily on the parent, and the success of such a programme will depend on the way in which it supports the self-concept of the parent.

Keywords: parent; adolescent; parent-adolescent relationship; pressure; parent self-concept; parent self-efficacy; personality

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**Student number: 608-242-4**

I declare that 'EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS WHO ARE UNDER PRESSURE FROM THEIR ADOLESCENT CHILDREN' is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SIGNATURE

MRS ACA MARAIS

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DATE

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **AWARENESS AND ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM, AIM AND PROGRAMME OF THE RESEARCH**

#### 1. Awareness of the problem

Adolescence is characterised by prominent developmental changes in the physical, cognitive and personality domains. Another important, but often problematic domain is social development. As adolescents develop socially they form relationships outside the family. Although most parent-adolescent relationships remain intact and supportive, adolescents gradually distance themselves from their parents (Laursen & Collins: 2004:337), and rapidly expand their social networks (Laursen & Collins 2004:352).

Adolescents are exposed to the influence of adults other than their parents, for example their teachers, and they spend more time with their peers. They take responsibility for many of their daily activities, share more personal information with their friends than with their parents, and seek greater autonomy from their parents in order to develop their own identity (Afifi, Caughlin & Afifi 2007:81; Beveridge and Berg 2007:25-52). By mid adolescence, adolescents spend more time with their peers than with any other social partners (Berk 2009:607). Consequently, the importance of parents in adolescents' lives depends less on their authoritative presence, and the experiences they have previously shared with their children. During this transition the balance between the adolescent's desire for autonomy and the parents' desires to maintain control over their teenager's decisions and activities becomes problematic. Adolescents do not always want to accept authority from their parents as they did when they were younger. They want to be treated like their peers and wish to enjoy the freedom that they perceive some of their peers have. Thus, the desire for autonomy on the part of adolescents can lead to conflict. Parents frequently want to keep the authority they have had in the past and do not want to adapt to their adolescent's increasing

independence. While adolescents gain some independence from their parents, they are still dependent on them in many ways, for example financially. A situation where the increasingly independent adolescent is still dependent on his/her parents for important resources can lead to conflict and pressurisation of parents.

A considerable amount of research has been carried out regarding the placement of pressure *by parents* on their adolescent children (Lessard, Greenberger & Chen 2010:73-83; Scull, Kupersmidt, Parker, Elmore & Benson 2010:981-998). The research indicates, *inter alia* that parents place pressure on their adolescent children by expecting them to spend long hours studying and achieving academically (Hongyan 2003:337-353; Luthar & Becker 2002:1593-1610; Luthar, Shoum & Brown 2006:583-597). They also pressurise their children to excel in sport (Fraser-Thomas & Côté 2009:3-23). Furthermore, parents place pressure on their children with regard to other aspects of everyday life and behaviour, such as their eating habits (Lessard, Greenberger & Chen 2010:73-83).

In contrast with research on the pressure parents place on their adolescent children, little research has been carried out regarding the placement of pressure *by adolescents* on their parents. The research that has been carried out is limited to certain situations. Some studies have examined how pressure is placed on parents in contexts such as advertising, and related communication fields (Palan & Wilkes 1997:159-169). They pressurise their parents to purchase certain goods, such as name brand clothing or preferred foods. In the field of communication, research has shown that adolescents pressurise their parents by avoiding certain topics or by withholding information. Adolescents primarily avoid discussion of relationship issues, such as rules or behaviours that strain interpersonal relationships, negative life experiences, friendships, dating experiences and sexual experiences (Golish & Caughlin 2002:78-106; Guerrero & Afifi 1995:276-296).

Extreme situations where adolescents subject their parents to intense verbal and physical abuse have been researched (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095; Laurent & Derry 1999:21-26). Some adolescents threaten or intimidate parents by using displays of anger and physical violence such as hitting, to influence their parents to alter certain rules or boundaries (Agnew & Huguley 1989:699-711).

Research has been done with regard to the adolescent's placement of pressure on parents in the areas of advertising, communication and where extreme cases of pressure have occurred. However, there are numerous situations where adolescents are likely to pressurise their parents. For example, adolescents prefer to make their own choices regarding clothes and hairstyles. Adolescents consider these issues as not having consequences for others, and therefore beyond the boundaries of concern by parents (Smetana, Metzger, Gettman & Campione-Barr 2006:201-217). However parents may not like or approve of their adolescents' appearance, and may think that the choice of hairstyle or dress is unflattering, too revealing or 'way out'.

The imitation of adult behaviours can lead to the placement of pressure on parents. Many adolescents see their parents in social situations consuming alcohol and enjoying themselves. It is likely therefore that those adolescents will also want to drink alcohol, and will apply pressure on their parents to allow them to do so (Bahr, Hoffmann & Yang 2005:529-551). Similarly, adolescents who observe a family member smoking cigarettes are likely to place pressure on parents to allow them to smoke (Miller, Poole, Armer, Cameron & Cheng 2006:1-24). They may reason that if a family member smokes, there is no reason why they should not.

Other issues that can lead to the placement of pressure on parents by their adolescent children are curfews (Allison & Schultz 2004:101-119). Adolescents usually wish to determine the time when they should return home from an evening spent socialising. Most parents believe that dangerous or inappropriate



behaviour occurs if their adolescent children stay out too late. They therefore prefer that their children return home earlier than most adolescents think is appropriate. Disagreement on this issue often leads to the placement of pressure on parents to allow a later curfew time.

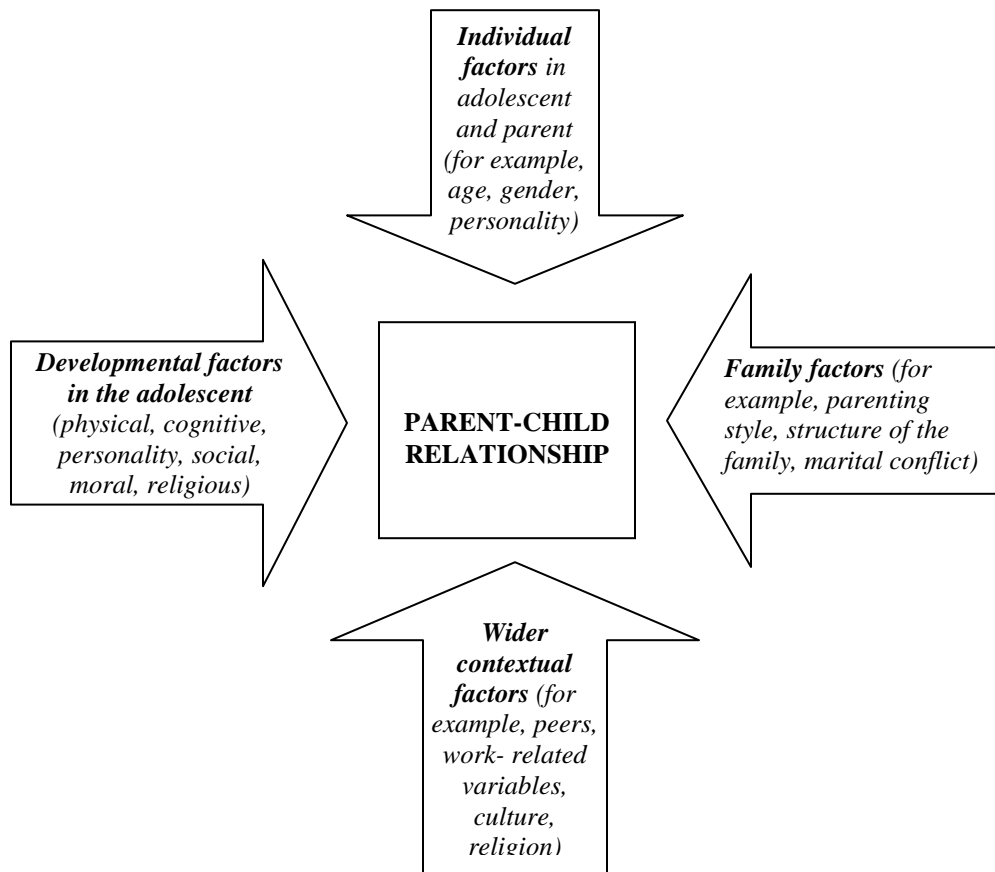
Parents may dislike their adolescent's choice of friends. Parents might think that certain friends have a negative influence on their children, and refuse permission for their adolescent child to spend time with them. Adolescents see the choice of friends as a personal decision, and usually place pressure on their parents to allow them to socialise with their choice of companions.

It is clear that there is a variety of situations in which adolescents are likely to place pressure on their parents. These situations occur in most families and are often everyday occurrences. However, no research has been carried out with regard to these situations and the pressure placed on parents by their adolescent children.

We can assume that most, if not all adolescents place pressure on their parents, or at least try to. Some succeed in doing so, some do not. Some place severe pressure on their parents, others apply less pressure. Some place pressure continually across different situations, while others apply pressure infrequently, in only certain circumstances. Since the pressure varies, there must be factors that contribute to the variance. For the educational psychologist these factors are important. If major factors can be identified which relate to the placement of pressure on parents by adolescents, these factors can be used in an educational guidance model to assist parents who experience such pressure. As already pointed out, very little research has been done in this regard. To identify possible factors which relate to the pressure placed on parents, we will have to fall back on factors that relate to the parent-child relationship in general. Factors that relate to the parent-child relationship may also relate to situations where adolescents place pressure on their parents. With regard to parent-child relationship four broad

factors can be identified, schematically presented in Figure 1. They are individual factors, family factors, developmental factors and wider contextual factors, such as peer relationships:

Figure 1



Gender, age and personality are some of the individual factors that have been studied with regard to their effect on the parent-adolescent relationship. The focus in most of these studies has been on the effect of these factors on different frequencies, or levels of conflict between parents and their adolescent children (Allison & Schultz 2001:101-119; Laursen 1995:55-70; Paikoff & Brooks-Gunn 1991:47-66). For example, research indicates that most parent-adolescent conflicts occur with mothers (Yau & Smetana 2003:201-211), and that there is an increase in levels of conflict between adolescents and their parents compared to

the childhood years (Allison & Schultz 2004:101-119; Paikoff & Brooks-Gunn 1991:47-66). Also, Negative Emotionality, or Neuroticism personality traits are associated with conflict in the parent-adolescent relationship (Eisenberg, Hofer, Spinrad, Gershoff, Valiente, Losoya, Zhou, Cumberland, Liew, Reiser & Maxon 2008:1-160; Sallinen, Rönkä, Kinnunen and Kokko 2007:181-190; South, Krueger, Johnson and Iacono 2008:899-912), while Extraversion is inversely related to conflict with parents (South, Krueger, Johnson & Iacono 2008:899-912).

As mentioned, the presence of conflict may create the potential for adolescents to place pressure on their parents, however, few studies indicate whether adolescents resolve conflict with their parents by placing pressure on them. One exception is a recent study which indicates that adolescents are more likely to resolve conflict with their mothers, rather than fathers in a way that meets the adolescent's needs, and not the mother's needs (Ciftci, Demir & Bikos 2008:911-922). This study indicates that adolescents may be more likely to place their mothers, rather than fathers under pressure to meet their goals. The 'forcing' conflict resolution strategy was identified in the study. It was described as the pursuit of one's own needs while excluding the other's concern, and the exertion of power over another. Several limitations are apparent in this study. Variables other than gender, such as the age of the adolescent, personality or family structure were not included in the study. The influence of other factors on the forcing strategy is thus unknown. Further, different situations in which the forcing strategy was used by adolescents were not identified. Another limitation is that the study gives only the adolescent perspective, using adolescent self-report measures. The experience of the parent is unknown. Also, the study was limited to Turkish adolescents, therefore the influence of particular cultural factors characteristic of Turkish adolescents, may have influenced the results, and limited the extent to which the results can be generalised.

Personality factors such as low parental self-efficacy (PSE) and certain personality traits such as Neuroticism and Disagreeableness, have been associated with negative child behaviour such as depression, aggression and juvenile delinquency, as well as conflict between parents and adolescents (Eisenberg, Hofer, Spinrad, Gershoff, Valiente, Losoya, Zhou, Cumberland, Liew, Reiser & Maxon 2008:1-160; Frick & White 2008:359-375; McLaughlin & Harrison 2006:82-88). However, the influence of personality factors in a situation where adolescents pressurise their parents has not been examined. It is unclear which personality traits on the adolescents' side cause them to pressurise their parents. Likewise, there is uncertainty as to which personality traits on the parents' side, make them vulnerable to the placement of pressure from their adolescent children. The possibility will have to be investigated. Do personality factors which are associated with conflict between adolescents and their parents, also have an influence on adolescents pressurising their parents?

Other research on personality has shown that factors such as gender and parenting behaviours can moderate the effects of unfavourable personality traits on adolescent behaviour (De Clerq, van Leeuwen, de Fruyt, van Hiel & Mervielde 2008:357-383). The influence of personality factors on the parent-adolescent relationship appears complex. Thus the role of personality factors in pressurising behaviour by adolescents is also likely to be complex, involving not only personality traits but also gender and a variety of parenting behaviours. Consequently it is important to include not only personality, but also gender and different parenting behaviours in the same study. Their inclusion will enable one to see which combination of factors is most important in contributing to pressurising behaviour by adolescents.

The relationship between parenting styles and adolescent factors has been extensively investigated by researchers. Impulsive, demanding and dependent behaviour, disobedience, rebelliousness, academic achievement, peer group membership, and adolescent mental health have been included in a variety of

studies regarding parenting styles (Aunola, Stattin & Nurmi 2000:205-222; Berk 2009:571; Durbin, Darling & Steinberg 1993:87-100; Dwairy & Menshar 2006:103-117; Hale, Engels & Meeus 2006:407-417). However, the effect of parenting style as a contributing factor to a situation where adolescent children pressurise their parents, has largely been neglected. Some studies have shown that in extremely abusive families, permissive parents may be placed under pressure to alter rules and boundaries (Cottrell and Monk 2004:1072-1095), and parents who follow an uninvolved parenting style and reject their children may become targets of violence by them (Wells 1987:125-133). Parenting style may therefore have an influence on the pressure that parents experience from their children, but current research lacks detailed information in this regard.

The relationship between family structure and child behaviour has been the topic of much research, especially with regard to divorced and blended family types (Amato 2000:1269-1287; Breivik & Olweus 2006:99-124; Hetherington 1997:360; Summers, Forehand, Armistead and Tannenbaum 1998: 327-336; Sweeney and Bracken 2000:39-52). Relevant to the current study, research indicates that changes in family structure lead to conflict between children and parents, and a decrease in parental power and control (Giles-Sims and Crosbie-Burnett 1989:1065-1078; Maccoby 1992:235). Examples of these changes are a decrease in monitoring in divorced families, and the renegotiation of roles in blended families (Giles-Sims and Crosbie-Burnett 1989:1065-1078; Maccoby 1992:235). However, the extent to which adolescents from different family structures exert pressure on their parents is largely unexplored. One exception is a study carried out by Giles-Sims and Crosbie-Burnett (1989:1065-1078). This study established that in stepfather families, adolescents are able to exert pressure and influence the behaviour of the family to a considerable extent during the period immediately after remarriage. However, the sample was small in size (87 families participated), and the scope of the study was limited to stepfather families, which excluded stepmother families and other family structures.

The relationship between peer influence on adolescents and consequent adolescent placement of pressure on parents has not been studied. Hartup and Stevens (1997:355-377) noted that adolescents who spend time with unsuitable friends can become involved in delinquent behaviour. These adolescents may use negative or attention-seeking behaviours with increasing frequency. This can lead to further involvement in antisocial activities. It can be accepted that antisocial behaviour in adolescents will lead to conflict with their parents when parents try to limit their child's undesirable behaviour or discourage a relationship with certain peers. In such situations, the possibility exists that adolescents can pressurise their parents to change their criticism of peers with whom they associate. Unfortunately, there are no empirical research findings to support such a possibility. Friendships with antisocial peers are, however associated with extreme cases of parent abuse. Agnew and Huguley (1989:611-711) found that adolescents who assault parents are more likely to have friends who assault their parents as well.

Work-related variables such as a mother who works away from home, may be a factor that leads to the deterioration of the parent-adolescent relationship, because a lack of monitoring is associated with poor child behaviour. Parental stress as a result of work pressures negatively affects the quality of parent-child relations – parents respond with less sensitivity to their children, limit their autonomy, or there is an increase in conflict between them (Sallinen, Kinnunen & Ronka 2004:221-237; Sallinen, Rönkä, Kinnunen and Kokko 2007:181-190). The working circumstances of parents can affect the relationship with their children in a negative way. The possibility then exists that problematic working circumstances can create a situation where parents become vulnerable to pressure from their children. No empirical information is available to validate such a conclusion.

One area relevant to the current study is the pressurisation of parents by adolescents with regard to purchase decisions. A significant amount of research

has been carried out in this regard. Adolescents place pressure on their parents in order to obtain desirable goods, as well as items which express their identities, for example clothing and food, family activities and movies (Foxman, Tansuhaj & Ekstrom 1989:482-491; Shoham & Dalakas 2003:238-251; Tustin 2009:165-183). A detailed study of the strategies that adolescents use to pressurise their parents is provided by Palan and Wilkes (1997:159-169). These strategies include bargaining, reasoning, persuasion, emotional strategies, request strategies, expert strategies, legitimate strategies and directive strategies. However, the research is limited to purchase decisions, and provides little information about adolescent pressure in other contexts.

Little research on the influence of cultural factors on the parent-adolescent relationship has been carried out in South Africa, with due consideration of the wide variation of cultural factors characteristic of the South African society. Research does indicate that adolescents from collectivistic cultures emphasise family obligation and assistance more than teenagers from individualistic cultures (Wee 1999:365-375). On the other hand, adolescents from an individualistic society are more likely to place pressure on their parents because they are more autonomous. They are likely to put pressure on their parents to make independent decisions and determine many aspects of their own lives (Wee 1999:365-375). In a study of adolescents in the Western Cape, Salo (2005:188) found that due to the changes in the political situation in South Africa, the youth have become increasingly familiar with a wide range of cosmopolitan South African lifestyles, languages and social customs. These influences have changed their ideas, values and attitudes and loosened their ties to previously-held moral norms. Different moral values and alliances with criminal individuals, have made these adolescents powerful. The researcher found that this led to conflict with parents, as adolescents put pressure on their parents to allow them more freedom, and to associate with undesirable people (Salo 2005:185).

The transition from childhood to adolescence changes the parent-child relationship. The influence of social development and the decrease in parental influence on adolescents has been discussed above. Adolescent development in other areas may lead to conflict, and pressurisation of parents in order for adolescents to obtain newly formulated goals in life.

The possibility that the adolescent's bigger physical stature leads to the placement of pressure on parents has been highlighted by research on child to parent abuse (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095; Walsh and Krienert 2007:563-574), but has not been examined with regard to milder forms of parental pressure. Other physical developmental factors such as gender role identity formation have not been studied with regard to pressurisation of parents.

Children's concrete operational thought is linked to their immediate situation and environment (Berk 2009:249). They generally accept their parents' rules and expectations and do not think about possibilities different from those presented to them by their parents. However, adolescents develop formal operational thinking which enables them to imagine a variety of alternative possibilities and scenarios (Kroger 2007:66). Research findings indicate that adolescents are often critical of others, especially their parents (Wadsworth 1996:132) and may be less likely to correctly infer parents' thoughts and emotions (Artar 2007:1211-1220). These studies indicate that there is a possibility that formal operational thinking can lead to conflict and possible pressurising of parents. On the other hand, Palan and Wilkes (1997:159-169) have noted that in the field of purchase decisions, there is an increase in effective negotiating strategies made by adolescents. Cowan, Drinkard and MacGavin (1984:1391-1398) are of the opinion that more effective strategy choice is the probable result of the more advanced cognitive abilities that have developed during the formal operational period. While research findings indicate that formal operational thinking in adolescents may lead to misunderstandings and conflict between parents and adolescents, current research



has not fully explored the relationship between adolescent cognition and the placement of pressure on parents across situations.

A critical aspect of adolescent personality development, is identity formation. During this period, there is increasing differentiation of the adolescents' own values and goals from those of their parents (Kroger 2007:63). Current research indicates that adolescent experimentation with different identities can pose challenges to the parent-adolescent relationship, and result in an increase in conflicts compared with earlier years (Kidwell, Dunham, Bacho, Pastorino & Portes 1995:786-793; Kroger 2007:53). However, whether identity formation during adolescence can be linked to a situation where parents are put under pressure, has not been studied.

The presence of negative emotional factors such as stress, anxiety, depression and aggression can affect healthy adolescent development and the parent-adolescent relationship (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095; Eldeleklioglu 2007:975-986; Ge, Lorenz, Conger, Elder & Simons 1994:467-483; Graber 2004:591, 606; Hankin, Mermelstein & Roesch 2007:279-295; Jose & Ratcliffe 2004:145-154; Laurent & Derry 1999:21-26; Shih, Eberhart, Hammen & Brennan 2006:103-115). For example the study carried out by Sheeber, Johnston, Chen, Leve, Hops and Davis (2009:871-881) indicates that depressed adolescents show behaviours that can be perceived by their parents as impatient, hostile, indifferent, defiant or showing a lack of concern. The researchers found that as a result, parents may react in a negative way and conflict can occur between the parent and the depressed adolescent. However the study does not indicate that pressure was exerted by depressed adolescents on their parents. Other research indicates that the effect of negative emotional factors varies as a function of different variables including gender and parenting behaviours. For example, girls report higher levels of anxiety than boys. They tend to experience events, such as the misplacement of items or the difficulty of schoolwork, as more stressful than boys (Fox, Halpern, Ryan & Lowe 2010:43-54; Jose & Ratcliffe 2004:145-154). Studies in which

various negative emotional factors are included to fully examine the relationship between such emotional factors and pressurisation of parents are lacking.

Moral and religious developmental factors in adolescence can lead to adolescents questioning their parents and possible conflict with parents (Grusec & Lytton 1988:187; Puffer, Pence, Graverson, Wolfe, Pate & Clegg 2008:270-284). Research findings (Grusec & Lytton 1988:187) indicate that adolescent children of parents who use power-assertion, and those who use inappropriate parenting styles, such as the authoritarian and permissive parenting styles, are less likely to internalize moral controls, or adequately develop a conscience. However the research does not explore the lack of moral development with specific reference to pressurising behaviour by adolescents. In other words, it is not clear how a lack of moral development can cause adolescents to place pressure on their parents. Research on adolescent religious development has indicated a positive relationship between religiosity in adolescents and healthy parent-adolescent relationships (Pearce & Axinn 1998:810-828). Ways in which religious adolescents may place pressure on their parents, for example during periods in which they critically examine their faith and perhaps experience religious doubt (Puffer, Pence, Graverson, Wolfe, Pate & Clegg 2008:270-284) have not previously been studied.

In many studies which focus on factors influencing the parent-adolescent relationship, only a single factor has been investigated. The use of single variables makes it difficult to identify the most important variables and determine the underlying relationship between them (Bester 1998:6). For example, in the field of advertising, the focus is on single variables such as financial resources or materialism in adolescents, as pressurising factors on parents (Beatty & Talpade 1994:332-341; Foxman, Tansuhaj & Ekstrom 1989:482-491). Because a single variable is studied, it is unclear to what extent the possession of large amounts of money, or the desire for material goods contribute to the placement of pressure on parents.

Some research projects focus on pressurisation of people in general, and in certain cases pressurisation of family members. However the research is not specifically applied to adolescents and the placement of pressure on parents. For example, research in the field of communication provides insight into how the possession of information about another person can lead others to take advantage of a situation, and how the control of information can be used to apply pressure on family members (Baldwin, Kiviniemi & Snyder 2009:82-104; Golish & Caughlin 2002:78-106). It is unclear, however whether adolescents would use these strategies to apply pressure on their parents.

Importantly, previous research has not been carried out within a theoretical framework that views pressure on parents by adolescents from an educational perspective. In other words, the various factors that are relevant to the education situation and specifically, the conditions under which adolescents place pressure on their parents, have not been brought together and studied in the light of an educational theory. In light of the educational perspective, as well as the breadth of factors being considered, the current investigation will use relational theory as the framework for interpretation. It is only once educational research is firmly grounded in theory that it can become meaningful and provide guidelines for remediation.

## 1.2 Formal statement of the problem

As mentioned in the previous section many factors, including individual, family, developmental and wider situational factors, lead to changes and challenges in the parent-adolescent relationship. These factors often lead to the formation of different priorities and goals on the part of parents and adolescents, and can lead to a situation where adolescents place pressure on their parents. While pressurisation of parents by adolescent children has been studied, the investigations are limited to certain situations, such as advertising, communication or extreme abuse situations. There are other situations such as

curfews, association with unsuitable peers, and participation in undesirable activities where adolescents are likely to place pressure on their parents, but the possibility of such pressure has not been investigated. Different factors which can lead to the pressurisation of parents by adolescents over a variety of situations, have not been identified. There are measuring instruments which investigate factors related to the parent-child relationship, such as personality and family environment. However, there are no measuring instruments suitable for the measurement of pressure experienced by parents from their adolescent children. An appropriate measuring instrument for this purpose will have to be developed.

Therefore the following questions are posed, which can be considered as the formal statement of the problem of this investigation:

- When and under what circumstances do adolescents place pressure on their parents?
- Can a valid and reliable measuring instrument be developed to measure placement of pressure on parents?
- Which factors from the adolescent's side contribute to the placement of pressure on parents?
- Which factors from the parents' side and the family environment contribute to their vulnerability for experiencing pressure from their adolescent children?
- Which combination of factors from both the parent's and adolescent's side can be considered to be the most important factors related to adolescents pressurising their parents?

- Which are the most important factors that should be taken into account in developing an educational guidance programme for parents so that adolescent pressurisation of parents can be minimised?

### 1.3 Aim of the investigation

The aim of this investigation is to identify the circumstances and factors which contribute to adolescent pressurisation, so that they can be included in an educational guidance programme for parents to help minimise such pressurisation. In the light of this aim a literature study will be carried out in order to:

- explore theoretical perspectives relevant to the parent-child relationship to identify possible factors which may relate to parents being pressurised by their adolescent children
- investigate how adolescent development in different domains may influence the placement of pressure on parents
- provide guidelines for the educational guidance of parents to manage pressurization by adolescent children

An empirical investigation will be carried out in order to

- develop a reliable and valid instrument to measure the pressure which parents experience from their adolescent children
- identify factors from the adolescent's side which contribute to the placement of pressure on their parents
- determine factors from the parents' side which contribute to their vulnerability for experiencing pressure from their adolescent children

- identify the most important factors which will predict a situation in which adolescents are likely to put pressure on their parents
- formulate guidelines that can be used in the educational guidance of parents who are experiencing pressure from their adolescent children

#### 1.4 Programme of the research

Different theoretical perspectives relevant to the parent-child relationship are studied in Chapter 2. The parent-child relationship is investigated in order to identify factors that may play a role in the placement of pressure on parents by their adolescent children. In this regard, individual variables, family factors, adolescent developmental aspects, emotional factors as well as wider contextual factors, such as peer relationships, are studied.

Research on adolescent development is undertaken in Chapter 3. The aim of the chapter is to investigate the influence of different developmental aspects on the adolescent placement of pressure on parents. It is likely that physical, cognitive, personality, social, moral and religious development of the adolescent will affect the parent-adolescent relationship and adolescent pressurisation of parents. In addition, adolescents often experience affective problems such as stress, anxiety, depression and aggression. These emotional aspects influence interpersonal relationships, and are therefore investigated because of the possibility that they might relate to pressurisation of parents.

In Chapter 4 the research design will be described and justified. At the beginning of the chapter hypotheses with regard to the formal statement of the problem will be given. One of the problem statements refers to a reliable instrument to measure adolescent pressurisation of parents. The development of this instrument will be explained in chapter 4. Together with this, a description of the sample, the other measuring instruments used, and the research procedure will be provided.

In Chapter 5 the results of the empirical investigation will be discussed. Firstly, the information regarding the provisional standardization of the pressure questionnaire will be set out. That involves an item analysis of the questionnaire, the determination of reliability and validity, as well as the development of norms. Secondly, the way in which the stated hypotheses were tested and the results that were obtained will be explained.

Finally, in Chapter 6, implications of the investigation will be discussed. The implications will focus mainly on guidelines for parents who experience pressure from their adolescent children. Additionally, in this chapter, limitations of the study will be discussed and suggestions for further research will be made.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP**

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part provides a review of theories regarding the parent-child relationship, with particular attention to the placement of pressure on the parent by the adolescent. In the second part, important factors that influence the parent-adolescent relationship are discussed in light of the theories presented in part 1.

In this chapter, psychodynamic theory focuses on attachment as the primary bond between parent and child. It is formed early in life, and affects all later relationships, including the parent-adolescent relationship. In contrast to the psychodynamic perspective, learning theory highlights the role played by environmental factors as parents and adolescents reinforce and shape each other's behaviour. Humanistic theory focuses on subjective aspects, such as the need for autonomy, and explains how adolescents may place pressure on their parents for increased freedom. A theory which explicitly studies the concept of social power has been included in order to provide insight into the concept of power, and to show how power is used by adolescents to place pressure on parents. This chapter is concerned with adolescents who are still in the process of 'becoming.' Relational theory and developmentally related theories such as Piaget's and Kohlberg's moral theories have thus been included. The ecological-transactional approach describes the functioning of the family as a system, using the structural model.

A study of the parent-adolescent relationship necessarily includes many factors. Individual factors relevant to both the parent and adolescent, such as age and personality, as well as variables relevant to the interaction between parent and adolescent such as communication, affect the relationship. The family context



influences the relationship as do wider contexts, for example socio-economic issues and cultural factors.

The research presented in this chapter is studied with the aim of identifying factors which are likely to lead to the placement of pressure by adolescents on parents. While there is little published research on the application of pressure on parents by adolescents, conflict is a common theme in many of the situations discussed below. The presence of conflict is viewed as an indication that there is a potential for pressure to be placed on parents by adolescents.

One area that has focused on the application of pressure by adolescents on parents is the field of marketing and consumer research. In this regard, numerous studies have identified strategies that adolescents use to place pressure on their parents to purchase goods. This research has been included as it provides a starting point for identification of ways in which adolescents may pressurise their parents in other areas of life. Further, research in the field of communication has identified ways in which adolescents pressurise their parents by avoiding certain topics or withholding information. Recently, research has been carried out regarding extreme forms of pressure such as parent abuse. Where relevant, this information has been incorporated into the chapter.

## 2.2 Theories Regarding the Parent-child Relationship

### 2.2.1 Attachment Theory

Freud first suggested that attachment to primary caregivers, especially the mother, in infancy and early childhood, was important for the child's later psychological development (Berk 2006:419). Attachment is the strong, affectionate bond that a person forms with others (Berk 2006:419). According to Freud, the mother is the first object of attachment because the mother satisfies the infant's drives by feeding him frequently (Diamond & Blatt 2007:2). Later, the baby also becomes attached to the father and other caregivers who satisfy his drives (Berk 2006:419).

Bowlby (1991:179) expanded the concept of attachment. He is of the opinion that attachment is a behavioural system separate from the sexual drives of the individual (Bowlby 1991:179). According to Bowlby, attachment is the enduring affectionate bond with others, which has the aim of protecting the individual, and ensuring his survival (Diamond & Blatt 2007:4). The attachment behavioural system is activated by experiences of danger or threat. In response, the individual seeks closeness to the attachment figure (Edelstein & Shaver 2004:399).

Whether attachment is explained in psychoanalytic or behavioural terms, it is evident that individuals have a psychological need for attachment to one or more individuals. There are differences in the way attachment is experienced and expressed, as well as in the individual's comfort with, desire for, and striving for closeness (Edelstein and Shaver 2004:400).

#### 2.2.1.1 Attachment in Adolescence

Attachment behaviour at twelve months predicts later behaviour (Bowlby 1991:362) and certain attachment patterns remain stable into adolescence (Kraemer et al. 2005:446). Children who are securely attached, and those who have been classified as disorganised, are more likely to remain consistent in their attachment patterns over time, than children who are classified as avoidant or resistant. Secure relationships are stable because they are mutually rewarding. Disorganised relationships are stable because they become self-perpetuating, through the responses children and their caregivers elicit and provoke (Kraemer et al. 2005:446)

During infancy and childhood, attachment patterns are organised into a cognitive structure, or working model (Sibley & Overall 2007:238-249). Once a child's internal working model of attachment is developed, it is relatively stable and predicts other close relationships later in life especially if those relationships are similar to an existing attachment relationship (Sibley & Overall 2007:238-249).

Interpersonal problems develop as a result of inadequate attachment styles. Adolescents who have an ambivalent or resistant model of attachment, that is they continually seek support from others but are disappointed in the way others provide that support, report high levels of stress, and continuous conflict and anger with parents (Seiffge-Krenke 2006:25-39).

Other research shows that weak attachment is associated with aggression towards parents (Agnew & Huguley 1989:699-711). That is, adolescents who do not feel close to and accepted by their parents, are more likely to show physical aggression towards their parents, than adolescents who have strong attachments to their parents. Through aggression, these adolescents may place pressure on their parents.

Some children develop threat-oriented schemas due to inadequate attachment during infancy. These schemas can cause the adolescent to perceive that interactions with their parents are threatening. When adolescents perceive such threats they frequently become forceful and abusive, placing extreme pressure on parents (Bugental 1993:288-308). Further, individuals who experience relationships as threatening can show both fear and anger in different situations (Bugental, Brown & Reiss 1996:397-407). Thus, the child who tries to please or avoid the dominating parent at a young age may respond in an increasingly confrontational fashion as he or she gains physical strength (Bugental, Brown & Reiss 1996:397-407).

In adolescence, sexual maturation begins. As adolescents form relationships with romantic partners, their relationships with their parents and other significant people in their life contribute differently to their attachment needs (Markiewicz, Lawford, Doyle & Haggart 2006:127-140). This variability in felt security regarding different people does not detract from well-being. It appears to be an adaptive response to being able to satisfy one's needs within

different relationships (La Guardia, Ryan, Couchman & Deci 2000:367-384). Research has indicated that adolescents with romantic partners turn to these partners for security more than to anyone else. Overall, mothers are used as a source of security more than any others, for example fathers or peers. Adolescents turn to their fathers less than to anyone else for their attachment needs.

Adolescents who have an insecure attachment to their mothers will turn to her less and to romantic partners more, than those who are securely attached. A decreased need for parents may lead to the perception in adolescents that their parents need them more than they need their parents. This leads to an imbalance in power regarding the parent-adolescent relationship (Wolfe 1974:101). An increased sense of power over parents can lead to the adolescent placing pressure on parents to carry out their wishes.

### 2.2.2 Behavioural Theory

Behaviourists believe that people's behaviour is influenced or changed primarily by environmental factors and not by internal factors such as thoughts, needs, motives and feelings (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:263). People behave in certain ways because of the rewards they experience (positive reinforcement) or because of the need to escape or avoid unpleasant consequences (negative reinforcement) (Corey 2005:238). Both parents and their children use reward and punishment to influence or modify each other's behaviour.

Adolescents need to learn appropriate behaviour, as this allows them to grow and develop, whilst at the same time respecting the rights of others. Parents use rewards such as praise or tangible rewards, for example gifts or money, to increase the frequency of desired behaviour in their adolescent children. In turn, adolescents use rewards, such as affectionate behaviour, to try to change the behaviour of their parents (Palan & Wilkes 1997:159-169).

Parents may use shaping, where rewards are given for kinds of behaviour that are increasingly similar to the behaviour the parent desires (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:190). For example, the parent may reward the adolescent for picking up all his clothes off the floor at first, but later only rewards the adolescent when he has picked up all the clothes and made his bed. At a still later stage, the adolescent may also have to also keep his cupboards tidy in order to obtain rewards from his parents. Adolescents can utilise shaping in the same way. For example, initially they may show contentment when a parent allows them to visit a friend for the day. Later they may only be happy when their parent agrees to let them stay overnight. Still later, they may only be satisfied when their parent allows them to remain with a friend for the whole weekend.

Extinction is used to eliminate behaviours through withholding reinforcement (Kazdin 2001:244). Parents may therefore ignore their adolescent's sulking (that is, give no reinforcement) and the adolescent may soon stop such behaviour. The adolescent, in turn may use extinction to reduce the frequency of certain parental behaviours. For example, the adolescent may deliberately remain unresponsive to a parent who requests that chores be carried out.

Removal of rewards is used by parents to reduce the frequency of undesirable behaviour (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:187). For instance, parents may limit the amount of television or computer time a teenager has become accustomed to, if the youngster has neglected to carry out chores. Adolescents, in turn can take away rewards if parents do not comply with their wishes. They will refuse to say anything about school, compared with other occasions, when they have been more open.

Punishment is another way in which behaviour can be changed, but it has undesirable side effects (Corey 2005:239; Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:187). Some of the side effects of punishment are negative emotional reactions to the punishment, attempts to escape and avoid punishment, and modelling of the use of severe, punitive behaviours. Notwithstanding these undesirable effects, both parents and children use

punishment in order to influence the others' behaviour. Parents may verbally or physically punish their adolescent children, and adolescents in turn may verbally abuse or assault their parents (Eckstein 2007:371; Pagani, Tremblay, Nagin, Zoccolillo, Vitaro & McDuff 2009:173-182).

### 2.2.3 Social Learning Theory

While behavioural theory emphasises observable behaviour, social learning theory explains behaviour in terms of unobservable aspects such as thoughts, expectations and convictions (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1993:221). The individual is an active participant who thinks and has expectations regarding his situation. He selects and interprets environmental influences, and subjectively rewards himself for his behaviour (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:329). According to social learning theorists, one way in which learning occurs is through observation of other people, or models (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:339). A model with high status or characteristics similar to those of the observer is usually more readily imitated than a low-status model or one that is dissimilar (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:339). Vicarious outcomes (the results of the behaviour of others) reinforce the behaviour of the observer. If an individual sees that a model is rewarded for his behaviour, the behaviour is more likely to be imitated (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:339).

Within the context of the parent-adolescent relationship, parents display positive and negative social behaviours that their children observe and want to imitate (Dogan, Conger, Kim & Masyn 2007:335-349). Many adolescents see their parents consuming alcohol. This often occurs in social situations where adults are enjoying themselves. In terms of social learning theory, adolescents are likely to associate the consumption of alcohol with enjoyment, and therefore want to imitate such behaviour (Bahr, Hoffmann & Yang 2005:529-551). As a consequence adolescents are likely to apply pressure on their parents to allow them to drink alcohol. Similarly, according to social learning theory, adolescents will probably pressurise parents to give them permission to imitate other adult behaviours that seem pleasurable, such as smoking cigarettes (Kandel & Wu 1995:225-252; Miller, Poole, Armer, Cameron & Cheng 2006:1-24).

Adolescents who perceive their parents as showing antisocial behaviour for which they are rewarded, are more likely to act in an antisocial way (Dogan, Conger, Kim and Masyn 2007:335-349). Abusive behaviour in boys is related to the role modelling of masculine stereotypes that promote the use of power and control in relationships (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095). Pressurising behaviour using abusive behaviour in adolescents may therefore be facilitated by observing others who have used such methods to obtain certain rewards.

#### 2.2.4 Social Power Theory

Corfman and Lehmann (1987:1-13) define power as the ability of one person to change another person's attitudes, beliefs, or behaviour in an intended direction. The focus of social power theory is on the utilisation of power by individuals in order to gain a desired outcome in different situations. The theory has its roots in Lewin's field theory which states that behaviour is a function of needs or tensions that occur within a given space or field of interaction (Cromwell & Olson 1975:16). For an individual to have power over someone, it is necessary for the latter to have needs or goals which can be satisfied or attained with the help of the former's resources. In other words, the person who has needs or goals must perceive that an individual has the resources to provide what he needs (Wolfe 1974:101). Social power, therefore acts as a resource that people may use to exert pressure on, or influence others (Corfman & Lehmann 1987:1-13; Flurry & Burns 2005:593-601; Lewin 1974:40).

The kinds of power considered most important in exercising influence are expert power, legitimate power, referent power, reward power, and coercive power. Every person is thought to possess some combination of these five kinds of power. Examples of how adolescents may use social power follow (Flurry & Burns 2005:593-601):

Expertise represents the extent to which a person is perceived to be knowledgeable about a particular subject (Flurry & Burns 2005:593-601). Research shows that adolescent children have greater knowledge of items that are important to them and which they use often. These are items such as clothing and food (Mangleburg and Bristol 1998:11-21; Tustin 2009:165-183) as well as certain family activities, such as the purchase of take away meals and excursions to the movies (Tustin 2009:165-183). It is likely, therefore that adolescents possess expert power with regard to certain areas of family life.

Reward power is the ability to give something favourable to another, provided that the person who is to receive the reward, performs a desired behaviour. Reward power from an adolescent, might include rewards such as good behaviour, completion of chores, or a display of affection (Flurry & Burns 2005:593-601).

The third kind of power, referent power, is the degree to which one person wants to identify with another person. Also referred to as attraction power, referent power is exercised when a person conforms to the preferences of another person in order to feel closer to him. An adolescent may conform because he respects the referent, such as a teacher or a friend, or because he simply desires to emulate that person (Flurry & Burns 2005:593-601).

Fourth, legitimate power is the degree to which a person is seen to have the right to exert influence or prescribe the behaviour or beliefs of another person. Adolescents have legitimate power when they are perceived to have the right, for example to make decisions regarding purchases which are important to them, or to choose which clothes to wear on the weekend (Flurry & Burns 2005:593-601; Nucci 2001:69).

Lastly, coercive power is based on the other person's perception that punishment will result from non-compliance. Adolescents are able to coerce their parents through the threat of any negative or bothersome behaviour if parents do not carry out their wishes (Flurry & Burns 2005:593-601).



Social power further suggests that the five types of power may be utilised in two ways: actively and passively. Use of power is usually active, or the result of an intentional action; however, it may sometimes be passive, such as when the mere possession of power without overt action, is influential (French and Raven 1974:152). Children exert influence through a combination of active and passive social power (Flurry & Burns 2005:593-601).

Active social power is perceived and directly controlled by the adolescent. To exert active influence, an adolescent makes an assessment of his social power capabilities. He then chooses an influence attempt consistent with his sources of social power, and weighs the possible costs of exerting power. Finally he exerts action toward achieving the desired outcome (Corfman & Lehmann 1987:1-15; Flurry & Burns 2005:593-601). For example, a teenager using active social power to influence an entertainment choice, such as a movie, may consider the cost of threatening the parent as too conflictual, and therefore promise to do an extra household chore if the parent allows him to go (reward power exercised through bargaining) (Flurry & Burns 2005:593-601).

A child's influence may also be passive, where there is no evidence of speech or overt actions on the part of the child. For the adolescent, a power source is passive if the parent infers its presence and acts even if there is no overt action on the part of the adolescent (Flurry & Burns 2005:593-601). As children age, they influence family purchase decisions in a more passive way, as parents learn their children's likes and dislikes and make purchase decisions accordingly (Roedder-John 1999:183-213).

Flurry and Burns (2005:593-601) found that children change the kind of influence they use depending on how much they want to possess something or enjoy a particular privilege. For example, when they intensely desire something, they beg or show anger in their attempts to change their parent's mind. The researchers suggest

that children may be more likely to revert to employing less socially acceptable behaviours when they strongly desire something.

Depending on how much social power adolescents possess, they are able to determine different aspects of their lives to a greater or lesser degree. The importance of self-determination for adolescents is the subject of the following theory.

#### 2.2.5 Self-determination Theory

A humanistic approach, self-determination theory focuses on the subjective world of people who are constantly growing, realising their potential, and who have freedom of choice in their actions (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1993:320; Ryan and Deci 2000:68-78). According to self-determination theory, people experience psychological health and growth, personality integration and intrinsic motivation, if their psychological needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness to others are met. In terms of the parent-child relationship, self-determined functioning is optimised when children feel the unconditional love of their caregivers, are provided with optimal challenges and are relatively free from excessive control (Deci and Ryan 2000:68-78).

Adolescents are faced with new tasks and responsibilities that they are expected to fulfil. In order to feel competent to carry out activities required of them, parents should ensure that their children are shown how to carry out chores, and other tasks expected of them. However, at the same time, adolescents need to feel autonomous and should have some choice, for example as to when chores should be completed. A sense of relatedness to others, especially parents, leads to internalisation of values and behavioural regulations that are held by parents (Ryan & Deci 2000:319-338). The balance between maintaining the adolescent's feelings of relatedness to parents, while at the same time providing support for autonomous behaviour, is the challenge that both parents and adolescents need to negotiate (Allen, Hauser, Bell & O'Connor 1994:179-194).

The opposite of autonomy is heteronomy, which is the experience of being controlled by external factors (Steinberg 2005:71-78). Parents often attempt to control adolescents' behaviour and influence their development because they believe such involvement will ensure favourable outcomes. However, excessive control of adolescents by parents is associated with negative outcomes. One type of control, psychological control, is particularly problematic for adolescents because it interferes with identity development (Steinberg 2005:71-78). Psychological control is parental behaviour aimed at controlling the adolescent's psychological state (Steinberg 2005:71-78). Parents who use psychological control discourage the adolescent from expressing his thoughts and opinions. This type of control is used to invalidate his feelings, make personal attacks on him, induce guilt, withdraw love and behave in an emotionally erratic way (Shek 2006:563-581). Through these methods parents attempt to control who the adolescent is or is becoming, and in so doing interfere with the normal development of the adolescent's identity.

Psychological control is linked to maladjustment in adolescents (Soenens, Vansteenkiste, Luyten, Duriez & Goossens 2005:487-498). It is associated in particular with depression, low self-esteem and maladaptive perfectionism (Plunkett, Williams, Schock and Sands 2007:1-20; Soenens et al. 2005:487-498). Adolescents need to feel connected to significant others and may feel that the only way to obtain this contact is through compliance with parents. Such compliance conveys to adolescents that their ideas and values are not appreciated or respected. They may feel disempowered and have low self-worth (Plunkett, Williams, Schock and Sands 2007:1-20).

Adolescents who feel that their parents are attempting to control them may experience psychological reactance. Brehm (1981:4) is of the opinion that when an individual's perceived freedoms are threatened by prescribed attitudes or behaviours, that person will experience a motivating pressure toward re-establishing the threatened freedoms. One way to restore a threatened freedom is to engage in the forbidden behaviour (Brehm 1981:4).

Reactance is likely to have its greatest peak during late adolescence (Miller, Burgoon, Grandpre & Alvaro 2006:241-252). As children mature, they form their own beliefs and judgements and become more critical when viewing their social world. Most adolescents tend to question the viewpoints of their parents and teachers. Although this tendency is generally a healthy and necessary aspect of their passage into adulthood, decreased openness to adult authority and decreased parental control can be problematic (Miller et al. 2006:241-252). Miller et al. believe that the imitation of adult behaviours, together with a naïve grasp of the associated consequences leads to a natural reaction against authority and adult control, particularly when combined with adolescent feelings of invincibility (Miller et al. 2006:241-252). It appears that as children advance through adolescence they perceive themselves to be more capable of comprehending and making choices, while at the same time they seem to become less aware of their own judgemental limitations (Miller et al. 2006:241-252). Adolescents, therefore may experience reactance to many forms of authoritative control, especially prescriptions and prohibitions associated with adult behaviours that they perceive as enjoyable. For example, psychological reactance is significantly associated with susceptibility to smoking in adolescents (Miller et al. 2006:241-252).

#### 2.2.6 Piaget's Theory of Moral Development

Instead of focusing on the needs of the individual, Piaget's theory describes a cognitive-developmental perspective. This theory identifies cognitive maturity and social experience as the two main aspects that lead to changes in the child's moral reasoning (Berk 2006:485; Feldman 2007:582-597; Witenberg 2007:433-451). As children grow older they are confronted with limitations to their current way of thinking, and are receptive to finding better ways of perceiving and interpreting their world (Feldman 2004:265-274). Piaget identified two qualitatively different, broad stages of moral development (Berk 2009:492; Feldman 2004:265-274).

In the first stage, young children behave according to heteronomous morality. That is, they see rules as handed down by authorities (such as God, parents, and teachers), as

being permanent, unchangeable and requiring strict obedience (Berk 2009:492). From the age of approximately 10 years, they make the transition to the second stage of moral development, which is autonomous morality. In this stage they no longer view rules as fixed, but see them as flexible, socially agreed upon principles that can be revised. Piaget saw peer interactions as being particularly important in the facilitation of this stage of morality. It is through discussions and disagreements with peers that adolescents realise that people have different perspectives on moral action. Intentions, not concrete consequences, should serve as the basis for judging behaviour (Berk 2006:485). For example, an adolescent may say in his defence, that he intended to let his parents know about a change in plans for the evening, but did not have enough airtime to call the parents. As far as the adolescent is concerned his intention to inform his parents is a more important consideration in the judgement of his behaviour than failing to inform his parents.

Further, recent research supports the role that adults play in the transition to the second stage of moral judgement. For example, parental encouragement of critical thinking can help adolescents to develop autonomous moral judgement (Weinstock, Assor & Broide 2009:137-151).

### 2.2.7 Kohlberg's Extension of Piaget's Theory

Kohlberg (Colby & Kohlberg 1987: 18-19) further refined Piaget's theory of moral development, and identified six different stages, within three broad levels of moral understanding.

In Stage 1 of the Preconventional Level, children focus on the superior power of authority, the probability of reward and avoidance of punishment as reasons for behaving morally (Colby & Kohlberg 1987: 18). As children develop they become aware that people can have different perspectives in a moral dilemma. However their focus remains on the probability of being rewarded for moral actions. Such awareness is characteristic of Stage 2 of the Preconventional Level (Berk 2009:496). In stage 3 of the Conventional Level, there is an awareness of shared feelings, agreements and

expectations, which are more important than individual interests (Colby & Kohlberg 1987: 18). Individuals in Stage 3 want to maintain the affection and approval of friends and relatives by being a 'good person'. Stage 4 is the social-order-maintaining orientation, during which the individual is able to take the point of view of the system, as distinct from interpersonal agreement or motives (Colby & Kohlberg 1987: 18). Individuals who reason at the Postconventional or Principled Level, move beyond unquestioning support for the rules and laws of their own society (Colby and Kohlberg 1987:19). They define morality in terms of abstract principles and values that apply to all situations and societies. At Stage 5, people emphasize fair procedures for interpreting and changing the law (Berk 2009:497). Stage 6 is the universal ethical principle orientation stage. At this highest stage, right action is defined by self-chosen ethical principles of conscience that are valid for all humanity, for example respect for the worth, and dignity of each person (Colby & Kohlberg 1987:19). Few people, however move beyond Stage 4 to Stage 5, and the highest stage appears so rare that it is a matter of speculation (Berk 2006:491).

According to Kohlberg children move in a hierarchical progression through the different stages of moral reasoning. This is indicated not only by increased use of responses representing the higher stages of moral reasoning but also, by rejection of lower stage statements of moral judgement (Carroll & Rest 1981:538-544). There is, however considerable variation in moral reasoning during adolescence (Nunner-Winkler 2007:399-414). Stages 1 and 2 decrease in early adolescence, while Stage 3 increases through mid-adolescence, and then declines. Stage 4 rises over the teenage years until, by early adulthood, it is the typical response (Berk 2006:492). This fluidity may be ascribed to the ability of adolescents to engage in hypothetical thinking. It allows them to critically consider moral stances made during childhood. In addition, adolescent identity formation may lead to changes in previous moral attitudes (Nunner-Winkler 2007:399-414). Walker and Moran (Berk 2006:492) found that everyday reasoning falls at a lower stage of reasoning than that found in response to hypothetical dilemmas. This is due to the fact that everyday reasoning involves

motivational, emotional and practical issues which influence the extent to which the person's reasoning capacity can be used (Walker 2004:546-557).

According to Berk (2006:492), adolescents reason at stages 3 and 4. Adolescents are called on to make moral decisions between acting in a right or wrong way. They have internalised standards of behaviour from their parents (Biddle, Bank & Marlin 1980:1057-1079) and others, such as teachers, which characterise what it means to be a 'good person'. They experience conflict between trying to be the good person that they know they should be, and other factors such as the desire to fit in with their peers (Berk 2000:613; Daddis 2008:1019-1038; Buehler 2006:109-124). As a result, adolescents may place their parents under pressure, for example to allow them the freedom of movement that they perceive their friends as having.

Adolescents may try to influence parents' behaviour in other ways, for example by lying to them about their whereabouts and their friendships, particularly romantic relationships (Perkins and Turiel 2007:609-621). It is suggested that for adolescents, honesty is a concept that has to be considered relative to other aspects of situations, such as fairness, perceptions of legitimate control, a sense of autonomy, and beliefs about the nature of relationships. The researchers are of the opinion that, in unequal power relationships, such as that between the adolescent and parent, adolescents lie to parents in order to assert their autonomy. The findings support the idea that motivational and emotional aspects influence everyday moral considerations. In other words, moral judgements are not applied in fixed, unreflective ways, but with reflection about social relationships and the kinds of issues involved (Perkins and Turiel 2007:609-621).

#### 2.2.8. Vygotsky's Socio-cultural Theory

While Piaget believed that the most important source of cognition was the child himself who formed ideas and tested them against the world, Vygotsky maintained that the child constructs knowledge through interaction with others (Berk 2006:259). For example a parent and child begin a task with different understandings, and arrive

at a shared understanding. This experience is later actively reconstructed internally by the child (Fernyhough 2008:225-262). Therefore, children's knowledge develops through a process of gradual and progressive internalisation of interpersonal exchanges.

Language plays an important part in the child's internalisation of knowledge. Vygotsky maintains that language is used as a psychological tool to increase pre-existing cognitive capacities (Fernyhough 2008:225-262). Young children talk aloud to themselves in order to guide and direct their behaviour (Berk 2006:259). This is called private speech. Using language in this way helps children think about their behaviour and select courses of action. As children get older and find tasks easier, their self-directed speech declines and is internalized as silent, inner speech. (Berk 2006:259). Children use private speech more when tasks are challenging, after they make errors or when they are confused about how to proceed (Berk 1994:78-83).

Internalised verbal interactions that occur between parents and their children, provide important guidance to adolescents (Fernyhough 2008:225-262). Adolescents are becoming increasingly independent, and the parent is no longer a constant presence, therefore adolescents will recall the verbal interchanges with a parent to help decide on a course of action (Fernyhough 2008:225-262). The adolescent's reasoning abilities are facilitated by the level of language development that he has attained. His ability to recall information and integrate new information, his level of abstract thinking and anticipation of consequences, are some of the cognitive functions which have new importance to the increasingly independent young person (Berk 2006:259). Research shows that better parent-adolescent communication leads to improved relationships between teenagers and their parents (Xia, Xiaolin, Zhi, DeFrain, Meredith, & Combs 2004:119-145). Improved communication may occur because adolescents are able to identify unclear messages (Berk 2000:391) and express abstract ideas (Berk 2000:377). They are able to see the logic in an argument (Berk 2009:251) and take into account the viewpoint of their parents (Berk 2006:485).



Conflict between parents and adolescents is therefore reduced (Xia, Xiaolin, Zhi, DeFrain, Meredith, & Combs 2004:119-145).

The above research implies that poor language development in adolescents, as well as little time spent with parents, can lead to deficits in the social construction of knowledge. Such adolescents may not have internalised meaningful messages from their parents. They may be unable to recall verbal interchanges with a parent to help decide on a course of action (Fernyhough 2008:225-262). The consequent lack of shared understanding between parents and adolescents can lead to conflict and associated placement of pressure on parents.

#### 2.2.9 Social Domain Theory

The focus, in social domain theory, is on the different types of social interactions that occur, and the meaning that is attached to those interactions for children and parents. It is widely accepted by social domain theorists that in social interactions, distinctions can be drawn between moral issues, conventional issues, and personal issues (Nucci 2001:69; Nucci, Hasebe, Lins-Dyer 2005:17; Smetana, Metzger, Gettman & Campione-Barr 2006:201-217). Moral issues are acts that relate to others' rights or welfare. Conventional issues refer to the social norms (such as etiquette and manners) that govern social interactions. Personal issues refer to privacy, control over the body, preferences and choices regarding such aspects as appearance (clothes and hairstyle), friends, and activities (Nucci 2001:69).

Adolescents are likely to accept parental decisions regarding moral and conventional issues (Smetana, Crean & Campione-Barr 2005:33). However personal issues are seen as not having consequences for others, and are therefore considered to be beyond the boundaries of legitimate moral, and conventional concern by parents (Smetana, Metzger, Gettman & Campione-Barr 2006:201-217).

Not all issues can be clearly separated into moral, conventional, or personal categories. Individuals sometimes see issues as overlapping among the domains

(Smetana, Crean & Campione-Barr 2005:33). These are called multifaceted issues. It is often when confronted with multifaceted issues that conflict between parents and adolescents arises (Smetana 1995:176; Smetana, Daddis & Chuang 2003:631-650). For example, keeping the adolescent's room clean, a frequent source of conflict between adolescents and parents (Allison & Schultz 2004:101-119), entails overlaps between conventional, moral and personal issues. Parents may view the room as part of their house and cleanliness as prudent, or tidiness as conventionally necessary, while adolescents may view their room as part of their territory, and thus as a personal issue of individuality, identity, expression, or choice (Smetana, Crean & Campione-Barr 2005:33).

Adolescents are most likely to try to place pressure on parents with regard to conventional issues, such as the completion of household chores (Allison & Schultz 2004:101-119). According to Allison and Schultz (2004:101-119) the most intense conflicts involve conventional and moral issues such as irritating/disruptive behaviour at home, negative personal/moral characteristics (such as lying and cursing) and poor homework/school performance. Further personal issues lead to intense conflict. These include punctuality/curfews and personal autonomy (for example, earning own money, going places alone, choosing friends, and being bothered when wanting to be alone) (Allison & Schultz 2004:101-119).

Researchers are of the opinion that parent-adolescent conflict is important because it leads to the rapid realignment of roles and relationships during the teenage years which is necessary for adolescent development (Laursen 1995:55-70; Nucci 2001:68; Smetana, Crean & Campione-Barr 2005:42; Steinberg 1990:270). It is therefore through conflict and associated parent-adolescent negotiation, that agreement is reached and the personal domain is socially constructed (Smetana 1995:176). Negotiation continues through adolescence because the boundaries of adolescents' personal domains expand with age (Darling, Cumsille & Pena-Alampay 2005:52). Although parents believe that having personal choice is important for children's

developing independence and competence, adolescents generally claim more personal jurisdiction than parents are willing to grant.

The influence of peers seems important in deciding what constitutes the personal domain (Daddis 2008:1019-1038). Adolescents and their friends act similarly in how they view legitimate authority over multifaceted issues, such as when to start dating, and going to parties at a friend's home. This similarity may indicate peer influence which stimulates adolescents to push for greater autonomy from parents (Daddis 2008:1019-1038).

#### 2.2.10 Ecological Transactional Approach

Rather than focusing on different kinds of social interactions, ecological-transactional theories describe families in a more holistic way, as interconnected systems. According to the ecological-transactional approach, understanding the parent-adolescent relationship requires a consideration of not only transactional effects (the reciprocal nature of the relationship between parent and adolescent), but also the social and physical contexts in which the behaviour occurs (Lollis & Kuczynski 1997:441-461; Henrich, Brookmeyer, Shrier & Shahar 2006:286-297). The child is not only influenced by the environment, but the environment is affected by and responds to the characteristics of the child (Cicchetti and Toth 1997:319). Cicchetti (Henrich, Brookmeyer, Shrier & Shahar 2006:286-297) is of the opinion that the most proximal influences, such as family and friends, have the greatest effects on children.

One perspective of family functioning is the structural model (Becvar & Becvar 1996:35; Faber, Edwards, Bauer & Wetchler 2003:243-255). The structural model defines three subsystems in the family: the spouse subsystem, the parental subsystem, and the sibling subsystem. According to structural theory, there must be appropriate boundaries between the generations. The parental subsystem is formed when the first child is born. A hierarchical structure develops according to which parents have greater authority than children (Becvar & Becvar 1996:188-189). Each spouse

mutually supports and accommodates the other, in order to provide an appropriate balance of firmness and nurturance for the children.

A closer look at the interactions, or transactions between parents and their adolescent children, show that the parent-adolescent relationship has some of the characteristics of a friendship, and some of the characteristics of an authority relationship (Kuczynski, Marshall & Schell 1997:26, Russell, Pettit & Mize 1998:313-352). Optimal interactions between parents and their adolescent children are frequent, harmonious and include turn-taking, mutual problem solving and decision making (Chu and Powers 1995:453-461). Such warm, supportive relationships established during early adolescence lead parents and adolescents to become closer to each other at later stages of adolescence (Rueter & Conger 1995:435-449).

Problematic family systems develop rigid boundaries which lead to isolation of parents and their children. On the other hand, diffuse boundaries may develop, where children rely too much on their parents and not enough on their own abilities (Becvar & Becvar 1996:191). Diffuse boundaries may result in children being afraid to experiment and explore, which can delay the development of a clear identity in adolescence (Faber, Edwards, Bauer & Wetchler 2003:243-255).

The adolescent needs increasing independence and responsibility and parents need to negotiate and accommodate changes to develop new boundaries (Becvar & Becvar 1996:188-189). While Becvar and Becvar (1996:191) state that although children must get the message from the parental subsystem that the parents are in charge, the influence of children, especially in adolescence on parents is recognised. Adolescent children actively resist, select and negotiate parental ideas and construct ideas of their own (Kuczynski, Marshall & Schell 1997:26). Further, adolescents sometimes attempt to gain more influence in the relationship than is appropriate, and try to pressure parents to carry out their wishes (Rueter & Conger 1995:435-449). Different kinds of coercion, or pressure, as used by adolescents to gain compliance from parents, are verbal threats, nonverbal threats and bullying. Guilty coercion is also

used by adolescents in the form of whining and complaining about parental actions. Research indicates that hostile and coercive family interactions result in progressively more disagreements between adolescents and their parents (Rueter & Conger 1995:435-449). Families characterised by hostility and coerciveness are likely to be impatient, blaming, and disruptive in their problem solving. Further, they report a large number of intense parent-adolescent disagreements (Rueter & Conger 1995:435-449).

### 2.2.11 Relational Theory

A theory with a broad perspective on the child-parent relationship is relational theory. Relational theory puts the child at the midpoint of his experiential world. It views him as being related to the other people and things around him (Roets 2002:14). The adolescent, therefore has a relationship with himself, with his peer group, his parents, with ideas, and with moral and religious values. These relationships are essential to the child's development and adaptation to his environment. Adequate adaptation leads to self-actualisation (Roets 2002:14). Specifically, the adolescent is attaining the following goals in order to become self-actualised:

- Meaning, as the will to understand
- An adequate self, as the will to be someone
- Belonging, as the will to belong to people who are important to him

The family in which the adolescent grows up, provides the first experiences of belonging and it is here that the young person learns that:

- he can trust his parents, and have an open relationship with them (Gouws & Kruger 1994:13; Verster, Theron & van Zyl 1990:93)
- his parents understand him with all his shortcomings and 'incompleteness' (Verster, Theron & van Zyl 1990:92)
- he is required to be obedient to his parents and to show them respect (Verster, Theron & van Zyl 1990:93)

It is within the family therefore, that the relationships of trust, understanding and authority are established between the parent and the child. The three educative relationships remain in place through adolescence, but the emphasis within each relationship changes as the adolescent grows older. For example, the relationship of authority needs to be adapted.

Within the parent-child relationship, children are usually dependent on their parents for guidance and help (Laursen & Bukowski 1997:747-770). In such relationships parents dominate interactions with children by virtue of greater power and wisdom, and children depend on the control and guidance of parents (Laursen & Bukowski 1997:747-770). However, as children develop during adolescence the relationship changes to a more egalitarian relationship, where interactions reflect equality and respect for each others' needs (Laursen & Bukowski 1997:747-770; Scanzoni & Szinovacz 1980:211).

Van Zyl (Gouws & Kruger 1994:13) points out that parents accompany the adolescent towards accepting authority. Therefore authority is an essential component of the responsibility that parents have towards their children (Gouws & Kruger 1994:13). During adolescence, however youngsters are less willing to accept authority, and place their parents under pressure to allow them to make certain decisions for themselves (Miller, Burgoon, Grandpre & Alvaro 2006:241-252). The authority relationship, therefore changes from one where the parent determines many of the activities of the child, to one where the adolescent turns to the parent for advice and guidance, in order to make appropriate decisions himself (Gouws & Kruger 1994:13). If the relationship of authority is not adapted appropriately, conflict can result. An imbalance in one educative relationship often affects the other relationships between the parent and child. For example, harsh punishment to ensure obedience, results in an overemphasis of the relationship of authority, at the expense of the relationship of trust (Verster, Theron & van Zyl 1990:93).

### 2.2.12 Theoretical framework selected for the study

Seeing as little research has been carried out with regard to the pressurisation of parents by their adolescent children, the selection of a specific theory within which to view the findings has been problematic. A general theory which takes into account a broad range of factors and allows for an open interpretation of the results is required. The selected theory cannot be narrow in focus, such as that on attachment, as in Freudian theory, or the determination of behaviour through behavioural reinforcement as described in learning theory. Even though social power theory emphasises the importance of the parental resources that the adolescents desire, there is no scope in the theory to take account of other factors, such as the education relationships in the pressurisation of parents. Self-determination theory focuses on the parent-child relationship and the necessity for the adolescent to feel that s/he has the freedom to make choices, however it does not take into account the influence of other factors on the parent-adolescent relationship such as the relation with the self, that is the self-concept. Piaget's moral theory provides important insight into the moral development of the adolescent, but it is limited to moral factors whereas an investigation into the phenomenon of pressurisation requires a consideration of other potentially important individual factors such as relationships with parents and self-concept. The importance of language and communication between parent and child for learning is central to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, but the theory does not allow for a consideration of other factors such as religious or moral factors. Social domain theory focuses on the conflict between parent and adolescent that can occur when there is disagreement about which domain a certain issue falls into, however does not include factors such as a detailed examination of the education relationships between the parent and the adolescent. The ecological-transactional approach is a promising approach with its view of families as interconnected systems, as well as highlighting the authority issues that can arise when there are unclear boundaries between the parents and the children in a family. However, it was decided to use relational theory because it was developed as an educational theory, and central concepts are the relationships of authority, trust and knowing between parents and children. Bester and Fourie

(2006:157-169) have indicated that in other theories (such as the ecological-transactional approach), 'onderskeid word nie getref tussen 'n verhouding wat emosioneel te kort skiet of een wat ten opsigte van gesag problematies is nie. Die toepassing van Landman se verhoudingstruktuur (Landman, Roos & Liebenberg, 1982:104) waarin 'n ken-, gesag- en vertrouensverhouding geïdentifiseer word, kan in die opsig groter duidelikheid teweeg bring'. Also, the mutual influence that the educational relationships have on each other is recognised in relational theory. Further, the theory allows for the influence of other factors, because the child is seen as constructing meaning through the relationships he has with himself (self-concept), his parents, peers, with ideas, and with moral and religious values.

2.3 Important Factors which Influence the Parent-child Relationship during Adolescence  
Interaction between the parent and child is complex. Many factors influence the behaviour of both the parent and the child. There are factors which are relatively stable, such as personality and parenting style, as well as continuously changing variables, for example age, and situation-specific factors, such as parenting practices (Darling & Steinberg 1993:487-496, Holden & Miller 1999:223-254). These factors influence the way in which adolescents interact with their parents (Wissink, Dekovic & Meijer 2006:133-159) and how they may place pressure on their parents.

#### 2.3.1 Gender of Parent and Adolescent

Adolescents interact differently with the parent of the same gender, than with the parent of the opposite gender (Hawkins, Amato & King 2006:125-136). Research has shown that most parent-adolescent conflicts occur with mothers (Yau & Smetana 2003:201-211). Conflicts that occur with mothers average one disagreement every hour, compared with an average of one conflict every six hours of social interaction with friends, and an even lower frequency with fathers (Laursen 1995:55-70). Further, research indicates that mothers are more frequently the target of adolescent pressure than fathers (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095; Edenborough, Jackson, Mannix & Wilkes 2008:464-473; Pagani, Tremblay, Nagin, Zoccolillo, Vitaro & McDuff 2004:528-537; Walsh & Krienert 2007:563-574).



Several reasons are given for the frequent occurrence of conflict with mothers. Adolescents have a strong need to individuate from mothers, and one avenue is through conflict. Alternatively, whilst peer relationships may break up over a disagreement, the relative permanence of family ties allows the freedom to provoke negative affect and discontinued interactions, safe in the knowledge that most disagreements have few long-term effects on the relationship (Laursen 1993:535-550). In addition, within families, mothers are the primary agent of socialising children, placing their goals most frequently in direct opposition to those of adolescents (Laursen 1995:55-70). Furthermore, research shows that some female adolescents view their mothers as weak and powerless. They use abusive behaviour against them as a way to distance themselves from this image of female vulnerability (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095). Fathers are typically seen by youth as being strong and intimidating, which decreases the possibility of abuse against them (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095). Many families where abuse takes place, are single-parent families, where the mother is the only care-giver present. Abuse of mothers may therefore occur more often simply because they are more readily accessible to these youth (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095).

There is a higher incidence of mother-daughter conflict than mother-son conflict (Laursen 1995:55-70). Additionally, it has been found that conflicts between parents and daughters are more emotionally intense than those between parents and sons (Allison & Schultz 2004:101-119; Lundell, Grusec, McShane & Davidov 2008:555-571). Daughters report experiencing more anger during conflicts than sons experience. According to Laursen (1995:55-70) the difference in the rate of conflicts between boys and girls in close relationships, lends support to claims that boys are socialised to deny and avoid conflict in close relationships, whereas girls are more willing to explore interpersonal differences in the hope of resolving them.

In a study of conflict in mother-daughter relationships, Branje (2008:1627-1651) found that the more critical daughters were, the more compliant mothers tended to be.

In addition, dominant daughters had mothers who often responded in a passive way, for example, agreeing with their daughters. However, dominance in daughters sometimes led to conflict because their mothers occasionally became angry with them. The researcher concludes that daughters use dominating and critical behaviours towards their mothers in order to gain an equal amount of power in the relationship (Branje 2008:1627-1651).

Research has shown that adolescents are likely to use forcing strategies more frequently with their mothers than with their fathers, in order to resolve conflict (Ciftci, Demir & Bikos 2008:911-922). Forcing is described as pursuing one's own needs and excluding the other's concerns. In other words, adolescents attempt to resolve conflicts by exerting power over their mothers. On the other hand, adolescents are more likely to use collaborative or accommodating strategies with their fathers. Adolescents who use collaborative strategies reach mutually satisfying solutions to problems between them and their fathers. However, adolescents who use accommodating strategies give up their own needs and conform to their fathers (Ciftci, Demir & Bikos 2008:911-922).

Six different goals that adolescents have in mind when they engage in disagreements with their mothers have been identified (Lundell, Grusec, McShane & Davidov 2008:555-571). They are instrumental (simply gaining their immediate desire), dyadic concern (desire to maintain a positive relationship, consideration of the mother's feelings), acquiring emotional support (having mothers understand them), achieving autonomy (gaining independence in their decisions and actions), dominance (wanting to change the mother's actions or thoughts, getting the mother to admit she is wrong), and nonengagement (desire to withdraw or avoid the conflict). Adolescent children of mothers who could see their point of view, were more likely to show concern for the mother-child relationship, and had fewer dominance goals (Lundell, Grusec, McShane & Davidov 2008:555-571). It is probable therefore that adolescents whose mothers show understanding of them, are less likely to place their mothers under pressure.

While girls experience more anger in disagreements with their parents than boys, most studies reveal that it is more likely that boys, rather than girls will use extreme forms of pressure, such as intimidation, with their parents (Mesch 2006:473-495; Stewart, Burns & Leonard 2007:183-191; Walsh & Krienert 2007:563-574). Male adolescents are more aggressive than female adolescents (Eldeleklioglu 2007:975-986) and direct their aggression towards their parents more often than girls do (Honjo & Wakabayashi 1988).

### 2.3.2 Age of Parent and Adolescent

Compared to the childhood years, there is a decrease in warmth, and an increase in conflict, between early adolescents and their parents (Allison & Schultz 2004:101-119; Paikoff & Brooks-Gunn 1991:47-66). In contrast to younger adolescents, older adolescents feel less close to their parents, and are less likely to share intimate information with them (Falci 2006:123-146; Sallinen, Rönkä, Kinnunen and Kokko (2007:181-190); Scabini, Marta and Lanz 2006:51). Further, research shows that older adolescents have less need for emotional support from parents, than younger adolescents (Lundell, Grusec, McShane & Davidov 2008:555-571; Scabini, Marta & Lanz 2006:54). An increase in conflict, together with a decrease in closeness and need for emotional support from parents, can lead adolescents to neglect the positive aspects of the relationship. Instead they may place pressure on their parents to carry out their wishes. Adolescent girls who intimidate their parents tend to be younger than adolescent boys who use this extreme form of pressure (Walsh & Krienert 2007:563-574). Researchers suggest that the older age at which boys begin to intimidate their parents is a result of their later physical and emotional maturity, compared with girls.

The goal of conflict differs between older and younger adolescents. Younger adolescents engage in conflict with parents in order to attain a specific goal, such as obtaining permission to visit a friend. Older adolescents are more concerned with having parents acknowledge, accept and agree with their point of view (Lundell,

Grusec, McShane & Davidov 2008:555-571). In order to attain their goals, younger adolescents are more likely to exert pressure. They use emotional and bargaining strategies, as well as persistence and manipulation, if they anticipate resistance from their parents (Cowan, Drinkard & MacGavin 1984:1391-1398). Examples of these strategies are showing anger, crying, creating guilt feelings in the parent, looking innocent, lying, bribing and asking one parent if the other may say no. Getting someone else to intercede on their behalf, and doing what they want without asking for parental permission are further strategies used by younger adolescents (Cowan, Drinkard & MacGavin 1984:1391-1398). As the adolescent matures, there is an increase in strategies such as reasoning, and there are decreases in strategies such as persistence and asking. The researchers suggest that the increase in reasoning strategies together with the increase in age of the adolescent reflect developmental advances in cognitive thinking. It also suggests greater anticipation of co-operation with parents (Cowan, Drinkard & MacGavin 1984:1391-1398).

The different age of parents when their children enter adolescence may affect the extent to which they are placed under pressure. Very young parents are more likely to be single, and possess fewer economic and interpersonal resources to assist them in raising their children, than older parents (Carlson 2006:137-154; Cooney, Pederson, Indelicato & Palkovitz 1993:205-215). It is likely, therefore that very young parents may be susceptible to pressure from their adolescent children.

Delayed childbearing is associated with aspects which have a positive influence on parent-child relationships. It is associated with parental educational achievement which usually means that older parents have more economic resources than younger parents. Delayed childbearers have more stable marriages, and experience longer delays between marriage and parenthood. The researchers suggest that delayed childbearers may possess greater maturity and resources for adjusting to the transition to parenthood (Cooney, Pederson, Indelicato & Palkovitz 1993:205-215). These advantages may indicate that older parents are less likely to experience pressure from their adolescent children. However, by the time their children reach adolescence,

older parents are losing physical strength, and the lower levels of energy associated with ageing may make it difficult to maintain necessary discipline with their teenage children. Further, research shows that most victims of intimidation by their adolescent children (usually mothers) are over the age of 40 (Walsh & Krienert 2007:563-574).

### 2.3.3 Personality

Personality characteristics influence social relationships because they lead to typical patterns of behaviour in individuals which elicit certain responses from others (van Tuijl, Branje, Dubas, Vermust & van Aken 2005:51-68). Therefore the personalities of both parent and child will influence the interaction between them and ultimately, the quality of the parent-child relationship (Clark, Kochanska and Ready 2000:274-285).

#### 2.3.3.1 Parent and Adolescent Personality

Personality researchers have identified five basic personality traits which are commonly accepted to capture the full dimension of both adult and adolescent personality (McCrae, Costa, Terraciano, Parker, Mills, De Fruyt & Mervielde 2002:1456-1468; Henriks, Kuyper, Offringa & van der Werf 2008:304-316; Shiner & Caspi 2003:2-32). The five factor model describes the following overarching traits, or superfactors: Extraversion, Neuroticism (or Negative Emotionality), Conscientiousness or Constraint, Agreeableness, and Openness to Experience.

Extraversion describes the extent to which a person actively engages the world, or avoids intense social experiences. Extravert parents are therefore likely to be enthusiastic, energetic, involved in their children's lives, and actively direct their children's behaviour (Shiner & Caspi 2003:2-32). Children who are high in Extraversion are outgoing, expressive, energetic and dominant (Goldberg 2001:709-743; Shiner & Caspi 2003:2-32).

While Extraversion is inversely related to conflict with parents (South, Krueger, Johnson and Iacono 2008:899-912), some characteristics of Extraversion may lead to problems in the parent-adolescent relationship. For example, it is likely that dominant children want to dictate parent-child proceedings and prefer that parents follow their direction. This can lead to the placement of pressure on their parents in an effort to have parents comply with their wishes.

Shiner and Caspi (2003:2-32) describe extravert children as showing pleasure in high intensity situations, quick responsiveness, high activity level, and lack of distress in novel social situations. Youngsters who enjoy high intensity social interaction may seek out negative attention rather than be ignored and have no interaction at all. As a result they may tend to place parents under pressure in order to create emotionally intense situations which are experienced as stimulating and pleasurable. Also, extravert children who are not afraid of novel social situations, may place pressure on their parents to allow them to go out with mere acquaintances to strange places.

Children who are low on Extraversion are quieter, inhibited, lethargic and content to follow other children's lead, than extravert children (Neyer & Asendorpf 2001:1190-1204; Shiner and Caspi 2003:2-32). Children who prefer to follow the lead of others may be susceptible to peer influence. Such children may therefore place parents under pressure because they do not want to be isolated from their peers.

Neuroticism, or negative emotionality, is contrasted with Emotional stability (which includes traits such as adaptability in novel situations, self-reliance and self-confidence) (Shiner & Caspi 2003:2-32). Neuroticism includes emotions such as anxiety, sadness, irritability, and nervous tension (John, Caspi, Robins, Moffitt, Stouthamer-Loeber 1994:160-178). Research has revealed that anxious parents are less nurturing and more restrictive, than parents who

are not prone to anxiety (Lindhout, Markus, Hoogendijk, Borst, Maingay, Spinhoven, van Dyck & Boer 2006:89-102). The negative effect of depressed parents on their children is evident from the literature. Adolescent children (especially girls) of depressed parents are more likely to become depressed following negative life events, than children of non-depressed parents (Bouma, Ormel, Verhulst & Oldehinkel 2008:185-193). Parents who have high levels of Neuroticism and a tendency to be depressed, may lack the necessary energy to discipline their teenage children (Berk 2009:571), and may easily be placed under pressure to comply with their children's requests.

Adolescents vary in their susceptibility to negative emotions, including sadness, anxiety, anger, frustration, insecurity and fear (Shiner & Caspi 2003:2-32). Children who are high in Neuroticism, are described as easily frightened, highly-strung, 'falling apart' under stress, prone to feeling guilty, low in self-esteem, angry and insecure about relationships with others.

Researchers have found that adolescents who are abusive towards their parents have problems with affect regulation (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095). They may show psychopathological behaviour such as obsessive-compulsive disorders or psychoses (Laurent & Derry 1999:21-26). They also show symptoms of depression, together with low self-esteem, suicide attempts and emotional demands. They have difficulty in finding support and overcoming frustrations (Laurent & Derry 1999:21-26).

Negative Emotionality, or Neuroticism is inversely related to regard for parents and involvement with parents, and is associated with conflict in the parent-adolescent relationship (Eisenberg, Hofer, Spinrad, Gershoff, Valiente, Losoya, Zhou, Cumberland, Liew, Reiser & Maxon 2008:1-160; Sallinen, Rönkä, Kinnunen and Kokko 2007:181-190; South, Krueger, Johnson and Iacono 2008:899-912). Longitudinal research reveals that conflict between mothers and their adolescent children is predicted by levels of negative

emotionality in the children measured 4 years earlier. This suggests that individual differences in negative emotionality in childhood serve as one of the factors that set up a relatively stable pattern of parent-child interaction (Eisenberg, Hofer, Spinrad, Gershoff, Valiente, Losoya, Zhou, Cumberland, Liew, Reiser & Maxon 2008:1-160) Adolescents who score low on Agreeableness and high on Neuroticism are more likely to be harshly punished by their parents, and their parents are more likely to ignore unwanted behaviour shown by the adolescents (De Clerq, van Leeuwen, de Fruyt, van Hiel and Mervielde 2008:357-383). Parents of such adolescents may ignore unwanted behaviour because they prefer to avoid a confrontation with the high levels of negative emotion which their children show. As a result, these adolescents may be allowed too much freedom to behave as they please.

Conscientiousness or Constraint describes the extent and strength of impulse control – whether the person is able to delay gratification in order to achieve more distant goals, or is unable to regulate impulsive behaviour. The low end of the dimension includes traits such as irresponsibility, unreliability, carelessness, lack of persistence and distractibility (Shiner & Caspi 2003:2-32). The conscientious parent is likely to be responsible, careful and prefer order in his environment (Hogan & Ones 1997:859). The parent who has low levels of conscientiousness, may fail to lay down firm rules regarding, for example homework. In addition, he may respond impulsively to his child's behaviour, without thought for the consequences. Parents who have low Conscientiousness are likely to be placed under pressure to agree to their adolescents' requests, because these parents do not enforce high standards for themselves or their children (Hogan & Ones 1997:859).

Adolescents who have high levels of Conscientiousness/Constraint are described as responsible, attentive, persistent, orderly, neat, and able to plan and anticipate consequences of their actions (Shiner & Caspi 2003:2-32).



Constraint, or Conscientiousness is positively related to regard for the parent, involvement with parents, parental support, acceptance of the child's emotions and is negatively related to conflict with parents (Asendorpf & van Aken 2003:629-666; South, Krueger, Johnson and Iacono 2008:899-912; Yap, Allen, Leve and Katz 2008:688-700). In addition, Conscientiousness predicts high contact frequency of older adolescents with family members (Asendorpf and Wilpers 1998:1531-1544). Adolescents who are low in Conscientiousness are not necessarily lacking in moral principles, but they do not often apply them (Ehrler, Evans & McGhee 1999:451-458). The tendency to be impulsive is associated with higher sensitivity to environmental adversity, and a lack of family closeness and support (Paaver, Kurrikoff, Nordquist, Oreland & Harro 2008: 1263-1268). This tendency is often present in youth who abuse their parents (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095).

While high Conscientiousness is associated with positive parent-adolescent relationships, it can have a negative side. For example, high Conscientiousness may lead to fastidiousness, compulsive neatness, or workaholic behaviour (Ehrler, Evans & McGhee 1999:451-458). In such instances, adolescents may place their parents under pressure with high standards of neatness for their surroundings, or insist that parents allow them to study until late at night.

Agreeableness describes a person's interpersonal nature on a continuum from warmth and compassion, to antagonism. Agreeable parents tend to be empathic, altruistic, helpful, and trusting, whereas antagonistic parents are likely to be abrasive, manipulative, and cynical (Shiner & Caspi 2003:2-32). The antagonistic traits that parents with low levels of Agreeableness have may evoke resistance from their adolescent children. For example, if an adolescent requests permission to carry out an activity, and the parent responds in an abrasive manner, the adolescent may become angry with the parent and place pressure on the parent to agree.

Children who are agreeable have a tendency towards prosocial behaviour. They are likely to be considerate, empathic, close to others, generous, polite, kind and get along well with others (Shiner & Caspi 2003:2-32). Individuals high in Agreeableness are sympathetic to others, and eager to help them, believing that others will be equally helpful in return (Ehrler, Evans, McGhee 1999:451-458). At the low end, this trait includes antagonistic and disagreeable traits such as selfishness, aggressiveness, rudeness, spitefulness, teasing others, stubbornness and manipulateness (Shiner & Caspi 2003:2-32). Children low in Agreeableness are egocentric, sceptical of others' intentions and competitive, rather than cooperative (Ehrler, Evans & McGhee 1999:451-458). Adolescents who are low in Agreeableness and possess antagonistic traits, are therefore likely to place their parents under pressure. Research has revealed that adolescents who abuse their parents show traits such as aggressiveness. They intimidate their parents with their forceful attitude (Eckstein 2007:371; Laurent & Derry 1999:21-26). Palan & Wilkes (1997:159-169) indicated that manipulative adolescents try to influence their parents in order to exploit a situation to their advantage.

People who score highly on the Openness to Experience trait are curious about their environment. They like to learn new things and are likely to be unconventional, willing to question authority, and ready to entertain new ethical and social ideas (Ehrler, Evans & McGhee 1999:451-458;; John, Caspi, Robins, Moffitt & Stouthamer-Loeber 1994:160-178; McCrae & Costa 1997:828; Shiner & Caspi 2003:2-32). Therefore, parents who score high on this trait are likely to be open to their adolescent's novel ideas. However, adolescents who score higher than their parents on this trait are likely to place their parents under pressure. Adolescents who are open to new ideas and are willing to question their parents' norms and authority, may entertain radical views, which can result in their placing parents under pressure.

The above research indicates that adolescents who are happy, emotionally stable, agreeable and those who have good self-regulation abilities, enjoy positive relationships with their parents. However, adolescents who are anxious, depressed or angry, and those who tend to be selfish, manipulative, impulsive and irresponsible, have relationships with parents that are characterised by conflict. These negative personality traits may place adolescents' behaviour and priorities in opposition to those of their parents leading them to place their parents under pressure.

There are gender differences in the effects of adolescent personality on the mother-child relationship (Eisenberg, Hofer, Spinrad, Gershoff, Valiente, Losoya, Zhou, Cumberland, Liew, Reiser & Maxon 2008:1-160). When adolescent girls, not boys, were rated as high in negative emotionality by mothers and teachers, mothers tended to express more anger and more negative verbalisations. In addition, low levels of daughters', but not sons' control and regulation, were related to negative maternal reactions during conflict situations. These findings indicate that mother-daughter relationships are more sensitive to the presence of negative adolescent personality traits, compared with mother-son relationships, and poor mother-daughter relationships can create conflict. Daughters experiencing anxiety, unhappiness and impulsivity can place pressure on their mothers.

Not only do adolescent personality traits affect parenting, but parenting behaviours act as mediating factors between adolescent personality and subsequent behaviour (De Clerq, van Leeuwen, de Fruyt, van Hiel & Mervielde 2008:357-383; Edens, Skopp and Cahill 2008:472-476). High restrictive parenting control enhances the negative effect of the child's Disagreeableness or Negative Emotionality on externalising behaviour (De Clerq, van Leeuwen, de Fruyt, van Hiel and Mervielde 2008:357-383). In addition, parents who use harsh and inconsistent parental discipline are likely to have children who show externalising problems. This is especially so if the

adolescent has low levels of Conscientiousness, specifically impulsivity, irresponsibility and a lack of empathy (Edens, Skopp and Cahill 2008:472-476).

On the other hand, a high amount of positive parental behaviour, weakens the effect of Disagreeableness on internalising problems. In other words, Disagreeable and emotionally unstable children are at risk for externalising problem behaviour, especially when growing up with highly controlling parents. However positive parental behaviour with an adolescent who has high levels of Disagreeableness, lowers the likelihood that the adolescent will experience internalising problems (De Clerq, van Leeuwen, de Fruyt, van Hiel and Mervielde 2008:357-383).

The above research indicates that negative personality traits can lead to poor parent-adolescent relationships, especially those between mothers and daughters. Furthermore, poor parenting practices can worsen the effects of negative personality traits in their children. However, parents who use positive parenting behaviours can improve parent-adolescent relationships, even if adolescents have unfavourable personality traits.

#### 2.3.3.1.1 Parental Self-concept (Self-efficacy)

Parents' perceptions of their ability to parent successfully is called parental self-efficacy (PSE) (Jones & Prinz 2005:341-363). Specifically, PSE refers to the cognitions or beliefs that parents have about their ability to influence their child and his environment in order to foster the child's development.

Many factors influence PSE. Socioeconomic disadvantage and neighbourhood characteristics such as a high crime area, may undermine or limit the development of PSE. In addition, child problems, for example oppositional-defiant disorder, delinquent behaviour, autism or ADHD may have negative effects on PSE (McLaughlin & Harrison 2006:82-88). Children with mental or

behavioural problems are difficult to manage, because parents do not have the required specialised knowledge and experience. As a result parents may interact inappropriately with their child. They may neglect their child, be overprotective, set their expectations too high, reject their child, or act inconsistently towards him (Kapp 1991:454). The lack of successful outcomes in parenting these children makes parents feel ineffective and lowers their PSE.

PSE may operate as a mediating variable. For example, parents who experience success in parenting, with positive child outcomes experience increases in PSE. The increase in PSE in turn leads to further parenting success. Similarly parents who experience frustration and non-optimal outcomes with their children, experience decreases in PSE, which leads to further parenting difficulties (Jones & Prinz 2005:341-363). Parents with lower levels of PSE may be more susceptible to pressure from their adolescent children because they lack confidence in their ability to make correct choices regarding parenting.

#### 2.3.4 Family Cohesion

Scabini, Marta and Lanz (2006:57) define family cohesion as shared affection, helpfulness, support, and caring among family members. Family cohesion can be seen as having two polar extremes, enmeshed and disengaged, as described in the ecological-transactional approach (section 2.2.10). A middle point represents a balance between the poles, which is seen as the ideal amount of cohesion. Families that are either enmeshed, or disengaged are considered to be problematic.

Adolescents who grow up in a family which has an appropriate amount of cohesion, have favourable outcomes. Research has shown that family cohesion is more important to adolescent adjustment than the relationships between parents and their children (Richmond & Stocker 2006:663-669). This implies that whole family functioning influences adolescents' adjustment beyond that accounted for by the

relationships between individuals in the family. Family cohesion facilitates the transmission of normative values, such as the importance of work, from parents to adolescents (Roest, Dubas & Gerris 2009:146-155) and is negatively related to adolescents' externalising problems (Richmond & Stocker 2006:663-669). Too much cohesion, or enmeshment of family relationships leads children to become overly dependent on their parents (Becvar & Becvar 1996:191). Often these overprotected and anxious children have a great amount of control over their parents, and may refuse to comply with normal expectations for their behaviour, for example attending school. Further, school refusal is associated with parental abuse. In order for these children to exercise control over their environment, the full-time presence of one or both parents is often required. They therefore do not want to go to school but prefer to remain at home where they are in control of their parents and through their parents, their environment (Lindhout, Markus, Hoogendijk, Borst, Maingay, Spinhoven, van Dyck & Boer 2006:89-102).

On the other hand, a lack of family cohesion may result in few family values being transmitted to adolescent children. Adolescents may therefore be susceptible to adopting the value systems and associated behaviour patterns of peers (Brook, Pahl & Ning 2006:639-651; Buehler 2006:109-124; Daddis 2008:1019-1038; Eitle 2005:963-980; Reitz, Dekovic, Meijer & Engels 2006:272-295). Adolescents may then place pressure on their parents to try to get parents to agree with their values, and to permit behaviour based on those values.

## 2.3.5 Parenting practices

### 2.3.5.1 Communication

Research has indicated that high levels of open communication with parents are associated with parental understanding of the child's self-concept (Sillars, Koerner & Fitzpatrick 2005:102-128). This leads to lower levels of depression, less substance use and less sexual risk taking, compared with adolescents who experience poor communication with parents (Ackard,

Neumark-Sztainer, Story & Perry 2006:59-66; Henrich, Brookmeyer, Shrier & Shahar 2006:286-297; Smetana, Crean and Daddis 2002:275-304).

A communication pattern that negatively affects the parent-adolescent relationship is one of demand/withdrawal of communication (Caughlin & Malis 2004:125-148). When the topic is of importance to the parent, for example a discussion of adolescent alcohol and drug use, parents demand and adolescents withdraw. Conversely, parents withdraw when adolescents make demands regarding a topic of importance to the adolescents. Such a dysfunctional communication pattern illustrates how adolescents exert pressure on their parents in a passive way by withdrawing and resisting parental demands. It can also be seen that adolescents attempt to influence their parents by making demands on them (even if they are not successful due to parental withdrawal from the communication process).

Adolescents primarily avoid discussion of five topics: relationship issues (relationship rules, behaviours that strain the relationship), negative life experiences, friendships, dating experiences and sexual experiences (Golish & Caughlin 2002:78-106; Guerrero & Afifi 1995:276-296). Adolescents also have a general aversion to 'deep conversations' with parents. Avoidance of a topic, or even the perception that the other party wishes to avoid the topic, leads to dissatisfaction with the parent-adolescent relationship (Caughlin, Golish, Olson, Sargent, Cook & Petronio 2000:116-134). Avoidance and related forms of information regulation, for example secrets, have consistently been associated with dissatisfaction in family relationships (Caughlin & Golish 2002:275-295; Caughlin, Golish, Olson, Sargent, Cook & Petronio 2000:116-134).

Reasons why adolescents may engage in topic avoidance have been suggested by researchers who have carried out research with stepfamilies (Golish & Caughlin 2002:78-106). Adolescents may want to regulate their personal

boundaries by constructing relatively impermeable boundaries with some adults while maintaining looser boundaries with others (Golish & Caughlin 2002:78-106). By constructing impermeable boundaries, adolescents are applying pressure on those adults through explicit denial of access.

An individual who possesses information about a partner with whom they interact, perceives that he or she is better able to control and take advantage of the interaction (Baldwin, Kiviniemi & Snyder 2009:82-104). This is true whether the information is seen to provide an explicit advantage in the interaction or not (Baldwin, Kiviniemi & Snyder 2009:82-104). In other words, adolescents who know their parents well, may feel that they are able to control and manipulate parents and their interaction with them to their advantage.

The age of the adolescent affects the extent of communication with parents. Older adolescents report moderate to high levels of communication with their parents, on topics such as achievement at school or at work, and future plans, compared with younger adolescents (Scabini, Marta and Lanz 2006:49-50). However, older adolescents experience significantly lower levels of intimate communication with parents, than younger adolescents (Sallinen, Rönkä, Kinnunen and Kokko 2007:181-190; Scabini, Marta and Lanz 2006:50). A likely explanation is that older adolescents are involved in the later stages of the construction of their own identity. They are in the process of differentiating themselves from their parents by setting clear limits around their life space, in order to distinguish themselves from the significant others in their lives (Scabini, Marta and Lanz 2006:50). Older adolescents, therefore control the amount and kind of information that parents know about them. In this way, they are able to influence their parents' perception of them and their activities.



### 2.3.5.2 Time Parents and Adolescents Spend Together

One of the key resources that parents give to their children is time (Thomson, Hanson & McLanahan 1994:221-242). However, time is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for the development of close parent-child ties (Carlson 2006:137-154). High-quality interaction between parents and children, characterised by closeness and emotional support, is more important than simply the quantity of time spent together.

Mothers spend more time with their children than fathers (Hawkins, Amato and King 2006:125-136). The extent to which fathers spend time with their adolescent children may depend in part, on the views that fathers hold of appropriate gender roles (Bulanda 2004:40-45). Fathers who believe that men and women should be equally involved in the running of the home, spend more time with their children, than fathers who believe that women should remain in the home, and are primarily responsible for raising the children (Bulanda 2004:40-45). However, the amount of time fathers spend with their adolescent children, is viewed as important by the children, especially girls (Beckert, Strom, Strom & Yang 2006:493-509). Fathers consider the time they spend with their children as less important than do their children. Fathers' attitudes can be explained as a result of conventional views of the father's role as primarily that of financial provider for the family (Beckert, Strom, Strom & Yang 2006:493-509).

The importance of the father spending time with his adolescent children is supported by research. When fathers spend less time with their older male children, adolescents experience conflict in the relationship, and view their fathers as less able to handle frustration (Beckert, Strom, Strom & Yang 2006:493-509). This may be as a result of there being less time available to discuss problems, and develop closeness between father and child. Adolescents who are not close to their fathers may be likely to seek closeness elsewhere, for example with peers (Sallinen, Rönkä, Kinnunen and Kokko

2007:181-190). This can lead to differences in parents' and adolescents' perceptions of accepted forms of behaviour, with adolescents placing pressure on their parents to permit undesirable behaviour.

#### 2.3.5.3 Monitoring

Parental monitoring, or behavioural control is associated with positive outcomes in adolescents (Herman, Dornbusch, Herron and Herting 1997:34-67; Kerr & Stattin 2000:366-380; Smetana, Crean and Daddis 2002:275-304; Waizenhofer, Buchanan & Jackson-Newsom 2004:348-360).

Mothers know more about their adolescents' whereabouts, while fathers tend to find out about their children's activities through their spouses (Waizenhofer, Buchanan & Jackson-Newsom 2004:348-360). Parental monitoring of the adolescent's activities alone, is not as important to good adjustment compared with adolescent self-disclosure (Kerr & Stattin 2000:366-380). In other words, parents' efforts to control their adolescents are related to good adjustment, but only after children's feelings of being controlled (linked to poor adjustment), are accounted for (Kerr & Stattin 2000:366-380). Adolescents who feel they are being controlled by their parents may experience resistance to such supervision (Brehm 1981:4). They may through various means, such as withholding information, exert influence so that parents are less able to effectively monitor their whereabouts. Specifically adolescents who are impulsive, and who use alcohol are more likely to resist parental supervision. They may pressure their parents to allow them a considerable amount of freedom (Clark, Kirisci, Mezzich & Chung 2008: 285-292).

#### 2.3.6 Parenting Styles

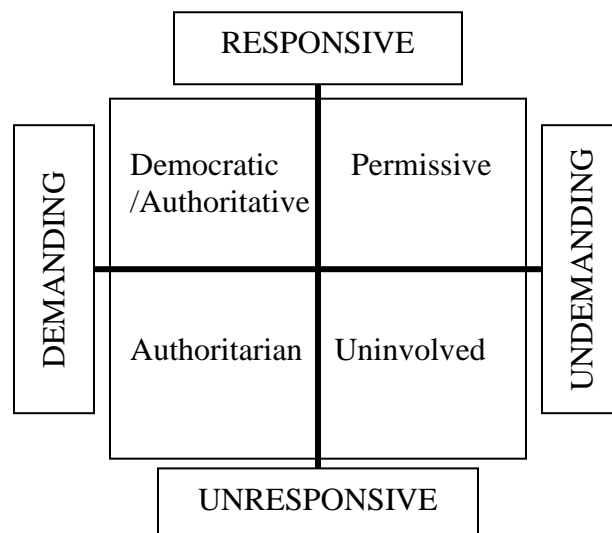
It has been shown that parents have a tendency to interact consistently with all their children over time (Eisenberg, Hofer, Spinrad, Gershoff, Valiente, Losoya, Zhou,

Cumberland, Liew, Reiser and Maxon (2008:1-160). The observed stability in parenting has led to the identification of different parenting styles used by parents.

Three parenting styles were originally identified by Diana Baumrind (1971:1-103): the authoritative (democratic) style, the authoritarian style and the permissive style. A fourth type, the uninvolved or neglecting style, has been identified by other researchers (Lee, Daniels and Kissinger 2006:253-259). A closer examination of parenting revealed two dimensions of parenting behaviours, demandingness and responsiveness (Diana Baumrind 1971:1-103).

The extent to which parents demand that their child complies with certain standards is referred to as the level of demandingness in the relationship. The second dimension is responsiveness. Some parents are accepting of and responsive to their children. Parents who are very responsive, demand very little and rarely try to influence their child's behaviour (Berk 2000:563).

Parenting styles can be classified according to the extent that the style is demanding or responsive. The following diagram, based on Berk's (2000:563) illustration, which is derived from the work of Maccoby and Martin (1983. In Mussen & Hetherington:1-101) shows the four different parenting styles as they differ on these dimensions.



It is generally accepted that the democratic style is the preferred style for raising children because it leads to favourable outcomes, not only for adolescents' development, but also for the parent-adolescent relationship (Berk 2009:569; Garg, Levin, Urajnik and Kauppi 2005:653-661; Steinberg 2001:1-19). The democratic parent is demanding, but warm and responsive towards his child (Baumrind 1971:1-103). According to Baumrind (1971:1-103), democratic parents direct the child's activities and explain the reasons for their actions.

Adolescents from democratic families are self-reliant, self-controlled, explorative and content (Baumrind 1971:1-103). They are unlikely to show externalising behaviours, or psychopathology such as anxiety disorders, depression and identity disorders (Castrucci & Gerlach 2006:217-224; Herman, Dornbusch, Herron and Herting 1997:34-67; Dwairy and Menshar 2006:103-117). In addition, the democratic approach decreases the likelihood that adolescents will experience negative social experiences, such as witnessing crime or experiencing peer provocation, for example teasing (Mazefsky and Farrell 2005:71-85). Protection from exposure to aggression in turn leads to lower levels of aggression in adolescents (Mazefsky and Farrell 2005:71-85).

The benefits of the democratic approach for the parent-child relationship, are evident in adolescents' reports of positive parent involvement, for example higher levels of parent concern, family discussion and family cohesiveness, compared to adolescent reports of other parenting styles (Garg, Levin, Urajnik and Kauppi 2005:653-661). Further, the democratic approach is associated with adolescents' responsiveness to advice from their parents about decisions (Fallon & Bowles 1998:599-608; Mackey, Arnold and Pratt 2001:243-268).

Many researchers have put forward reasons for the substantial and far-reaching benefits of the democratic approach. Some authors suggest that control that appears

fair and reasonable to the child, not arbitrary, is far more likely to be complied with and internalised (Berk 2009:572). In addition, nurturant parents who are secure in the standards they hold for their children provide models of caring concern as well as confident, self-controlled behaviour (Berk 2009:572). Furthermore, observation of self-confident, rational parental role models, as well as parental expectations that are consistent with children's abilities, may be reasons why democratic parenting is associated with adolescent emotional self-regulation, high self-esteem, intrinsic motivation, a sense of self-efficacy, independent problem solving, and high levels of cognitive and social development (Aunola, Stattin and Nurmi 2000:205-222; Berk 2000:563-564; Berk 2009:573).

Parents who use an authoritarian parenting style are also demanding, but they try to shape, control and judge the behaviour and attitudes of the child in accordance with a set standard of conduct (Baumrind 1971:1-103). They value obedience as a virtue and use punishment when the child's actions or beliefs conflict with what they think is correct conduct (Berk 2000:564).

Authoritarian parents, that is parents who are detached and controlling, and less warm than other parents, have children who are more discontent, withdrawn, and distrustful than children from democratic families (Baumrind 1971:1-103). Authoritarian parenting is associated with a poor self-concept, external locus of control, low levels of self-efficacy and passive behaviour in adolescents (Aunola, Stattin and Nurmi (2000:205-222; Ingoldsby, Schvaneveldt, Supple & Bush 2003:139-159; Lee, Daniels and Kissinger 2006:253-259). Adolescents who are passive, have an external locus of control and low levels of self-efficacy, may allow others, for example peers, to influence them (Bester & Fourie 2006:157-169; Isaksen & Roper 2008:1063-1087). In turn, peer influence can lead adolescents to place pressure on parents to sanction decisions and behaviour that are inconsistent with parental goals.

The authoritarian parenting style is associated with aggression in adolescents (Eldeleklioglu 2007:975-986) and abusive behaviour against parents (Cottrell &

Monk 2004:1072-1095). The adolescent need for autonomy causes a reaction from parents aimed at maintaining the same level of rigid control they exercised when the child was younger. As this struggle intensifies, these adolescents use abusive behaviour in an effort to obtain a sense of power in their lives (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095).

The authoritarian parenting style is associated with psychopathology in both the parent and the child. Anxious parents are likely to use the authoritarian parenting style (Lindhout, Markus, Hoogendijk, Borst, Maingay, Spinhoven, van Dyck & Boer 2006:89-102). They have a less nurturing and more restrictive rearing style, than parents who have lower levels of anxiety. Mental health problems in parents often result in adolescents assuming a caretaker role. Taking on the responsibility for parents' wellbeing can lead to resentment towards parents and increased conflict with them over a need for autonomy (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095; Laurent & Derry 1999:21-26). Parents of children with attention control disorders use the authoritarian style, probably because they are more likely to be directive, and to demand more compliance. They use this style in order to encourage socially acceptable behaviour in their highly active, impulsive children (Finzi-Dottan, Manor & Tyano 2006:103-114).

The uninvolved parenting style combines undemanding with unresponsive, rejecting behaviour (Baumrind 1971:1-103). Uninvolved parents show little commitment to caregiving, beyond the minimum effort required to feed and clothe the child. Often they are emotionally detached and depressed, and so overwhelmed by the many stresses in their lives that they have little time and energy to spare for children. As a result, they may respond to the child's demands for easily accessible items, but do not establish rules and routines aimed at long-term goals for the child's development (Berk 2009:571). At its extreme, uninvolved parenting is a form of child maltreatment called neglect (Berk 2009:571).

The uninvolved parenting style can disrupt virtually all aspects of development, including attachment and cognition, as well as emotional and social development

(Berk 2009:571; Steinberg, Blatt-Eisengart & Cauffman 2006:47-58). Adolescents whose parents rarely interact with them and do not monitor their whereabouts show poor emotional self-regulation (Berk 2009:571), are prone to develop anxiety disorders (Hale, Engels & Meeus 2006:407-417), and are often involved in drug use and delinquency (Berk 2009:571). Parents who reject their children may become targets of violence by them (Wells 1987:125-133). The hatred which is accumulated during childhood is then later expressed through either threats or reprisals (Laurent & Derry 1999:21-26).

Parents who use a permissive parenting style, are responsive, nurturant and accepting, but avoid making demands or imposing controls of any kind (Baumrind 1971:1-103). Permissive parents allow children to make many of their own decisions at an age when they are not yet capable of doing so. They can eat meals and go to bed when they feel like it, and watch as much television as they wish to. They do not have to learn good manners or do any household chores. Although some permissive parents truly believe that this approach is best, many others lack confidence in their ability to influence their child's behaviour, and are disorganised and ineffective in running their households (Berk 2000:564).

Parents who are noncontrolling, nondemanding and relatively warm, have children who are overly dependent, more anxious, less inclined to explore, and less self-controlled than children from democratic or authoritarian families (Baumrind 1971:1-103; Steinberg, Blatt-Eisengart & Cauffman 2006:47-58). Furthermore, a permissive parenting style is associated with abusive behaviour from adolescents towards their parents because it often leads to a parent-child power reversal (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095, Laurent & Derry 1999:21-26). Adolescents who have too much freedom and choice, learn to disregard their parents' viewpoints and take total control of their own lives.

Eldeleklioglu (2007:975-986) describes a parenting style called an overprotective parenting style. The researcher is of the opinion that the overprotective attitude of

parents is similar to the authoritarian parenting style, in that the parent restricts the adolescent's behaviours and shows his love conditionally. Therefore, like the authoritarian family environment, the protective family environment is controlling and restrictive. An overprotective parenting style predicts aggression in adolescents (Eldeleklioglu 2007:975-986). Overprotective parents fulfil their children's smallest desires and carry out any actions that require effort from their children and every behaviour which could evoke frustration is avoided (Laurent & Derry 1999:21-26). Such parenting can lead to an escalation of the child's demands on parents and the child can develop tyrannical behaviours. In this context, the violence that these children perpetrate can also be considered a search for autonomy (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095; Laurent & Derry 1999:21-26).

Aggressive adolescents perceive that the rewards of their negative behaviours outweigh the consequences. Over time, a pattern forms in which adolescents learn that their intimidating tactics can be used as a successful means of coercing parents into compliance. In other words, parents are permissive in order to avoid conflict with their adolescent children (Eldeleklioglu 2007:975-986).

Another parenting style may be identified which is similar to the permissive style in that it is characterised by high levels of responsiveness, and low levels of demandingness. However, the parenting style is not determined by the parents, but rather develops because adolescent children pressurise their parents to behave in certain ways. Baumrind (1971:1-103) alludes to this type of interaction when she describes some permissive parents as those who are unable to enforce their directives, and who avoid open confrontation with their children. In addition, Berk (2000:564) has noted that some permissive parents lack confidence in their ability to influence their child's behaviour. Further, it has been observed by many high school teachers, that some parents are aware that their adolescent is involved in delinquent acts, such as smoking or drinking alcohol, but are afraid to confront their child. Therefore, it may be that some permissive parents experience fear of their adolescent children, and are afraid to set limits on their behaviour. An additional parenting style may therefore



be identified, one that is determined by the adolescent. In this parenting style the adolescent pressurises his parents in such a way that they avoid open confrontation. Parents are unable to enforce their directives, lack confidence in their ability to influence their child's behaviour, and may be afraid of their adolescent children (Eldeleklioglu 2007:975-986). Such a parenting style may be identified as a *forced* permissive parenting style.

### 2.3.7 The Influence of the Marital Relationship

Healthy marriages are associated with adaptive functioning in children, while marital conflict is associated with problematic behaviour (Gerard, Krishnakumar & Buehler 2006:951-975). Two different kinds of marital conflict can be identified (Bradford, Barber, Olsen, Maughan, Erickson, Ward and Stolz 2003:107-137). Overt conflict refers to open disagreement between partners, with actions such as threatening, yelling, insults, and name-calling. Covert conflict is characterised by passive-aggressive behaviour, such as triangulating children into the conflict (Bradford, Barber, Olsen, Maughan, Erickson, Ward and Stolz 2003:107-137). Alliances between one parent and a child against the other parent interfere with the exercise of authority in the family (Faber, Edwards, Bauer & Wetchler 2003:243-255). Covert conflict can take the form of denigrating the other parent in the presence of the child, as well as global covert behaviours such as resentment, or unverballed tension between parents (Bradford, Barber, Olsen, Maughan, Erickson, Ward and Stolz 2003:107-137).

In families where one parent is stricter than the other parent, adolescents often respond with abusive behaviour (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095). Increased resentment and conflict develop between the adolescent and the firm parent. The conflict is either overtly or covertly supported by the more permissive parent. Alternatively, an adolescent uses abusive behaviour to threaten or intimidate the more permissive parent into altering certain rules or boundaries that had been established by the firm parent. As the abuse from the adolescent continues, it leads to an increased cycle of conflict and alienation between the parents, which further

compromises their ability to respond effectively when abusive behaviour occurs (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095). Sometimes, this behaviour alternates between both parents (Laurent & Derry 1999:21-26). It can also be the case that one of the parents will arouse the child's anger for the other parent, with the child acting as the instrument of violence between the couple (Laurent & Derry 1999:21-26)

Marital conflict has modelling implications. Children whose parents manage conflict through aggressive behaviours, come to view dominance and intimidation as appropriate strategies for resolving social problems (Gerard, Krishnakumar and Buehler 2006:951-975). This can lead the adolescent to consider that exerting pressure on parents is necessary in order to gain what they want.

### 2.3.8 Parental Life Challenges

Parents of adolescents are typically aged around 40 and have entered the period known as middle age (Stewart & Ostrove 1998:1185-1194). One of the challenges experienced by some parents at this age is the midlife crisis. This stage of life is described as a period of personal turmoil, with sudden changes in personal goals and lifestyle. These changes are brought about by the realisation of ageing, physical decline, or being trapped in restrictive social roles (Wethington 2000:85-103). For some parents the midlife crisis can lead to drastic changes such as divorce and break up of the family unit. As mentioned in section 2.3.4 decreases in family cohesion can lead to fewer family values being transmitted to adolescent children. Adolescents may then be susceptible to adopting the value systems and associated behaviour patterns of peers (Brook, Pahl & Ning 2006:639-651; Buehler 2006:109-124; Eitle 2005:963-980; Reitz, Dekovic, Meijer & Engels 2006:272-295).

### 2.3.9 Family Structure

The family is a primary social institution (Griessel, Louw, & Swart 1993:8), where children receive the support and teaching they need over their long childhood and adolescent years (Berk 2009:563). The first family structure to be considered is the

intact family, which consists of the adolescent living with his or her biological father and mother, in the same household.

#### 2.3.9.1 Intact Families

Adolescents in intact families have a higher degree of closeness to their mothers and fathers and the lowest level of psychological distress, when compared to adolescents in divorced, blended or never-married families (Falci 2006:123-146; Spruijt, DeGoede and Vandervalk 2001:285-294).

However, growing up in an intact family does not automatically ensure that adolescents enjoy increased well-being. Adolescents from discordant nuclear families reported less wellbeing than adolescents from divorced families (Spruijt, DeGoede and Vandervalk 2001:285-294).

#### 2.3.9.2 Divorced Families

A substantial body of research demonstrates that adolescents from divorced families experience a greater risk of problems in adjustment, less well-being, poorer self-concept, lower academic achievement, and problems with the formation of intimate relationships, compared with youngsters from married two-parent families (Amato 2000:1269-1287; Breivik & Olweus 2006:99-124; Hetherington 1997:360; Summers, Forehand, Armistead and Tannenbaum 1998; Sweeney and Bracken 2000:39-52). In addition, teenagers from divorced families are usually more sexually experienced at an earlier age, and they report more interpersonal problems than children from other family types (Spruijt, DeGoede and Vandervalk 2001:285-294).

Especially in the first year following the separation, divorce leads to less frequent interaction with the children, decreased monitoring of the children's activities, and less emotional support to the children, than is the case in intact families (Amato 2000:1269-1287; Hetherington 1997:362-363; Hetherington, Bridges and Insabella 1998:167-184).

Maccoby (1992:235) has noted that there is a decline in parental power and control in divorced families. Menning (2008:586-618) is of the opinion that the decline in parental control is an indication of a tendency for early individuation in adolescents. In other words, adolescents from divorced families become psychologically independent from their parents sooner than adolescents from non-divorced families. Premature independence can lead to the placement of pressure on parents by adolescents to participate in activities that are perceived as signifying maturity and adulthood, such as smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol and engaging in sexual intercourse.

Divorce results in a break up of the family unit which means that there is reduced family cohesion. Lessened family cohesion minimises the likelihood of normative value systems being passed on to adolescents (Roest, Dubas & Gerris 2009:146-155). Adolescents therefore do not experience the security of an intact family and do not have necessary guidance available to make decisions.

In the event of divorce, the children usually remain with the mother, while the father leaves the family unit (Falci 2006:123-146). While the quality of the mother-child relationship has stronger effects on child well-being than the father-child relationship (King and Sobolewski 2006:537-557), the relationship with the father remains important (Carlson 2006:137-154), especially for boys who are close to their fathers (Videon 2002:489-503). Father involvement (Demuth & Brown 2004:58-81, in the form of a close relationship and participation in parenting responsibilities, rather than mere visitation frequency, financial support, or adolescent perceptions of paternal warmth, decreases the likelihood of externalising and internalising adolescent behaviours in adolescents (Amato and Gilbreth 1999:557-573; Carlson 2006:137-154; Coley & Medeiros 2007:132-147; King and Sobolewski 2006:537-557; Thomas & Forehand 1993:126-135). Conversely, the absence

of the father in the home is associated with higher levels of anxiety, delinquency, drug and alcohol use, violence, illegal activities, school truancy and other problem behaviours in adolescent from divorced families compared with those from married families (Demuth & Brown 2004:58-81; Thomas & Forehand 1993:126-135).

Less frequent interaction with parents and decreased monitoring are associated with negative outcomes in adolescents (Waizenhofer, Buchanan & Jackson-Newsom 2004:348-360). In such circumstances, adolescents are allowed to make decisions that they are not yet ready for, for example where they go and how late they can stay out with friends. Patterson and Stouthamer-Loeber (Kerr & Stattin 2000:366-380) are of the opinion that a lack of parental monitoring creates many opportunities for experimentation with delinquent activities which go unpunished. Such experimentation is likely to increase if negative parental reinforcement is not given.

### 2.3.9.3 Blended Families

Families in which two parents with children from previous relationships live in the same household, are referred to as blended families. Adolescents in blended families show increased levels of adjustment problems, and poorer family self-concepts compared with adolescents from non-divorced two-parent families (Breivik & Olweus 2006:99-124; Sweeney & Bracken 2000:39-52).

In blended families, mothers have greater power in decision making regarding the adolescent on both major and everyday decisions, than do stepfathers and adolescents (Giles-Sims & Crosbie-Burnett 1989:1065-1078). But a significant number of stepfamilies report that adolescents have equal or greater power than parents. Adolescents are able to exert pressure and influence the behaviour of the family to a considerable extent during the period immediately after remarriage (Giles-Sims & Crosbie-Burnett

1989:1065-1078). However, the research indicates that adolescents in families that have been remarried for a longer time tend to have less power. It is likely, therefore that adolescents lose the power associated with the single-parent stage over time as the family reorganises (Giles-Sims & Crosbie-Burnett 1989:1065-1078).

The relationships with biological, and especially step-fathers have a significant effect on many areas of adolescent well-being (Falci 2006:123-146; King 2006:910-928). Having a close tie to one's stepfather only, is nearly as beneficial as having close ties to both fathers (King 2006:910-928). A reason for this may be that living in separate households makes it difficult for biological fathers to maintain affective bonds, and to monitor their children's everyday activities. Even if visitation is frequent, which often it is not, many non-resident fathers spend time in leisure activities such as taking children to restaurants and movies, but fail to engage in democratic parenting practices, such as talking about problems or setting limits, which are more likely to promote child well-being (Amato & Gilbreth 1999:557-573).

The presence of stepsiblings in the family has detrimental effects on children. It is associated with negative aspects such as low academic performance, delinquency, school detachment, depression, as well as a decrease in the child's sense of family belonging (Halpern-Meehin and Tach 2008:435-451; Leake 2007:135-155). These negative outcomes are possibly a result of the dilution of parental resources, resulting in parents having less time and energy to spend on each child in the family. A reduction in time and energy spent with each child may weaken the parental and step-parental relationships central to family belonging (Leake 2007:135-155). Lowered levels of family belonging are positively associated with adolescent's externalising problems (Richmond & Stocker 2006:663-669) and less likelihood of the transmission of normative value systems to adolescents (Roest, Dubas & Gerris 2009:146-155). Weakened parental bonds in the blended family can therefore lead to the

application of pressure on parents by adolescent children, to comply with their decisions and demands.

Furthermore, weakened parental and step-parental bonds in blended families may be the reason why parenting behaviours within a blended family, do not have as much influence on adolescents' emotional well-being, as they do in intact families. Plunkett, Williams, Schock and Sands (2007:1-20) found that both negative and positive parental behaviours, such as psychological control and support, explained less variance in adolescent self-esteem in blended families, compared with intact families. This implies that parents in blended families have less influence on their adolescents' self-esteem than parents in intact families. Therefore, adolescents from blended families may be more susceptible to other influences, such as peers, during the development of their value systems and identities (Daddis 2008:1019-1038). This can lead to the application of pressure on parents by adolescents to accept decisions and behaviour that are not consistent with parental goals.

#### 2.3.9.4 Single-parent Families

Adolescents in single-parent families do not experience the addition of a new parental figure, or the loss of a residential parent from their household. This may be the reason that the degree of closeness of adolescent girls in single-parent families to mothers (usually the resident parent), does not differ from adolescent girls in intact families (Falci 2006:123-146). In addition, adolescents in single-parent families experience closer relationships with their mothers, than adolescents in blended or divorced families (Falci 2006:123-146).

The degree of closeness to the residential mother in a single-parent family is negatively associated with adolescent psychological distress (Falci 2006:123-146). In other words, adolescents in single-parent families who are not close to their residential mother, experience psychological problems. These

unhappy adolescents may place their mothers under pressure to comply with their demands in order to improve their mood, or to permit behaviours that may not be consistent with their mothers' parenting goals.

The relationship of adolescents from a single-parent family with their non-residential father, is less close than those in other family structures (Aquilino 2006:929-946; Falci 2006:123-146), and does not influence the levels of psychological distress experienced by adolescents (Falci 2006:123-146). There is evidence, nevertheless that non-custodial fathers can have close relationships with their older adolescent children, if they establish close ties with them when they are younger, and maintain regular contact and involvement over time (Aquilino 2006:929-946).

Children in single-parent families are at greater risk for behaviour problems when compared with those from intact families (Carlson 2006:137-154; Carlson & Corcoran 2001:779-792). However when the degree of closeness to parents and the background characteristics of the adolescent are taken into account, the differences in psychological distress for adolescents in single-parent, compared to intact families are reduced to zero (Falci 2006:123-146).

#### 2.3.9.5 Adoptive Families

Adopted children have lower levels of self-esteem than biological children. This may be associated with perceptions of being rejected by their biological parents (Lanz, Iafrate, Rosnati & Scabini 1999:785-794). Research has revealed that contact with their own birth family and even contact with a non-related sibling's birth family, is beneficial for adopted adolescents (Von Korff, Grotevant & McRoy 2006:531-534). In other words, children in adoptive families without contact with birth family members have higher levels of externalising behaviour than those who have contact with family. A feeling of rejection and a lack of family cohesion regarding their birth family, may lead adolescents to develop alternative norm systems which could bring them into



conflict with their adoptive family. These adolescents may then place their parents under pressure to comply with their decisions and allow behaviour which is not consistent with their adoptive parents' norms.

The quality of communication between adoptive parents and their children has been studied as an important variable in the adjustment of the adopted children. Adopted children experience the quality of communication with their parents more positively than do children in biological families (Rosnati, Iafrate & Scabini 2007:36-45). However, this positive interaction has no effect, much less the expected beneficial effect, on adopted children's self-esteem (Lanz, Iafrate, Rosnati & Scabini 1999:785-794). This finding supports the idea that the lowered self-esteem of the adopted child is a consequence of perceptions of rejection related to the biological parents.

The quality of communication between parents and adopted children is, however related to externalising behaviour in adopted adolescents (Rueter & Koerner 2008:715-727). Frequent, spontaneous, unconstrained interactions between parents and their adopted children are negatively related to adolescent delinquency, behavioural disorders, parent-child conflict and trouble at school (Rueter & Koerner 2008:715-727). In other words, inadequate communication between parents and their adoptive children can lead to problems in the parent-adolescent relationship. Lack of communication can lead to feelings of alienation from both their birth family and adoptive family. These adolescents can then develop alternative norm systems and place pressure on their parents to condone certain attitudes and behaviours.

#### 2.3.9.6 One-child Families

The stereotype commonly held about only children, is that they are emotionally unstable, cold, hostile, uncaring, obstinate, and arrogant (Mottus, Indus & Allik 2008:1047-1052). In contrast to the above perception, research

carried out with older adolescents found that only children differ little in terms of personality traits from children who have siblings (Mottus, Indus & Allik 2008:1047-1052). In many respects, being an only child is associated with positive outcomes. Only children tend to relate well to adults, and accept their parents' guidance readily, which decreases the likelihood that they will become involved in externalising behaviour, such as delinquency (Bynum & Thompson 2007:247). On the negative side, however, Kitzmann, Cohen, & Lockwood (Berk 2009:583) found that only children tend to be less accepted in the peer group, perhaps because they have not had opportunities to learn effective conflict-resolution strategies through sibling interactions. A Chinese study found that single adolescent children experience lower levels of love awareness from their parents. Items such as 'do you have family members who support your behaviour, and 'do you have family members who when meeting them you feel secure', were used to measure love awareness. The low levels of love awareness experienced by these single adolescent children were associated with stress, and neurotic and depressive symptoms (Liu, Munakata & Onuoha 2005:831-845). Research has shown that such negative emotions are associated with conflict in the family and parent abuse (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095; Laurent & Derry 1999:21-26). Feelings of being unloved, as well as stress, anxiety and depression experienced by these children may lead them to place pressure on their parents. Such children may become resentful and aggressive towards their parents because they feel that they do not receive the love and support that they need.

#### 2.3.9.7 The Family with Siblings

Sibling relationships tend to be the longest lasting relationship among family members (Noller 2005:1-22). Although siblings show stability in the quality of their relationships with each other over time (Dunn 1996:37), they become less close to one another during adolescence (Berk 2009:583). However, those who establish a positive bond in early childhood, maintain the relationship during the teenage years (Berk 2009:583). Older siblings frequently offer

useful advice to their younger teenage brothers and sisters regarding romantic relationships, schoolwork, and decisions about the future (Berk 2009:583).

Siblings become closer to one another, with an increase in friendly affectionate behaviour following negative life events (Dunn 1996:37). In this way, siblings provide emotional support for each other. Dunn (Brody 1993:184) found that siblings in a family with high levels of marital discord compensate for the lack of closeness with parents, by forming close and supportive sibling relationships.

The presence of siblings may lead to jealousy of each other. Rossouw (2003:28) explains that jealousy occurs because 'die kind kompeteer met sy broers en susters om erkenning by die ouers to kry.' Parrott (Rossouw 2003:32) is of the opinion that jealousy occurs because children perceive that there is a loss of important formative attention from the parent, which sustains part of the child's self-concept. A child's relationship with his parents is for him a constant source of self definition, and is therefore an integral part of his self-concept (Parrott 1991:17). Therefore, the experience of jealousy includes not only a fear of the loss of a relationship, but is experienced also as a threat to the self-concept (Rossouw 2003:32). Adolescents, even though they are in the process of individuating from their parents, may feel that their place in the family is being taken by younger siblings who receive more attention from parents. Adolescents may then place pressure on their parents to be stricter with their siblings. In some cases, parents facilitate the experience of jealousy in their children by comparing siblings with each other, and having 'favourites' (Rossouw 2003:50).

#### 2.3.9.8 Extended Families

Large, extended families consist of members of different ages, often including youngsters who are both older and younger than the adolescent (Berk 2009:580). The older individuals provide adolescents with important role

models for appropriate behaviour, as well as being a source of advice as adolescents make their decisions with increasing autonomy.

Extended families provide emotional and financial support and also share other resources with family members (Berk 2009:580). Extended family members are often involved with childrearing (Berk 2009:580), and provide children with emotional security because they are surrounded by several loving, attentive adults. Yi, Pan, Chang and Chan (2006:1042-1067) found that adolescents who were raised in a household where there were grandparents present, were likely to be closer to their grandparents, than to grandparents who did not live with them. However, if grandparents take on a parenting role in the family, giving permission for certain activities, adolescents may attempt to place pressure on parents to allow them to participate, even if the parents do not agree with those activities.

#### 2.3.10 Urban and Rural Environments

Urban environments pose dangers to the developing adolescent, for example exposure to drugs, alcohol (Crockett, Shanahan & Jackson-Newsom 2000:61) and juvenile delinquency (Bynum & Thompson 2007:247). Frequent exposure to delinquent behaviours may lead adolescents to consider them the norm, and think 'everyone's doing it'. Adolescents may then be persuaded to participate in these delinquent behaviours. Such adolescents may initially experience conflict, or dissonance between their existing value system and their behaviour. As a result, instead of declining to participate in the activities, they may change their value system so that it is consistent with their actions (Baron & Byrne 1994:158). A delinquent value system will further reinforce their behaviour.

In addition, adolescents who grow up in the city may live life according to superficial values, such as materialism (Crockett, Shanahan & Jackson-Newsom 2000:47). Materialism is associated with pressure being placed on parents to spend money on desirable items (Goldberg, Gorn, Peracchio & Bamosy 2003:278-288).

Research has indicated that notwithstanding these negative influences, children and adolescents in cities develop well, provided that their families use democratic parenting practices, are involved in their children's schooling, provide emotional support and encourage involvement in collective family tasks (Yoshikawa & Seidman 2000:20-21). Parents adapt their parenting style to protect their children from potentially harmful influences. For example parents use the more controlling authoritarian style in parenting female adolescents in cities, where there are fewer community controls (Dwairy & Menshar 2006:103-117). On the other hand, they tend to use the democratic parenting style with their adolescent girls in rural areas, where youngsters conform to stable community traditions, which allow for higher levels of monitoring of the adolescent's whereabouts and activities (Dwairy & Menshar 2006:103-117).

Rural adolescents come from families who describe themselves as having more intimate bonds, domesticity, and tradition than city dwellers (Crockett, Shanahan & Jackson-Newsom 2000:47). The close ties between parents and adolescents and emphasis on family life and tradition found in rural life, make it likely that adolescents will adopt the norm systems of their parents and community (Roest, Dubas & Gerris 2009:146-155). It is probable, therefore that rural adolescents will seldom place their parents under pressure in order to comply with decisions and behaviour that contradict parental values.

### 2.3.11 Socio-economic Issues

Low socioeconomic status (SES) is associated with a variety of negative parent-child interactions, compared to those in families with a high SES. The negative interactions include harsher discipline practices, less positive parent-child communication, less parental verbal and physical affection, and greater child externalising behaviour (Bradley & Corwyn 2002:371-399; Elder, Van Nguyen & Caspi 1985:361-375; McLoyd, 1998:185-204; Smetana, Crean & Daddis 2002:275-304). Families in which parent intimidation occurs are often living under high levels of financial stress.

Within such a stressful environment, youth often feel alienated and act out aggressively as a means of expressing their frustration and anger (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095).

A good parent-child relationship can moderate the effects of low SES on adolescent adaptation (Bradley & Corwyn 2002:371-399 ; Sampson & Laub 1994:523-540). Involved parenting, where there is a high level of monitoring of the adolescent's whereabouts and activities, lowers the likelihood that adolescents will become involved in delinquent behaviour (Sampson & Laub 1994:523-540). In this way, the effects of low SES may be alleviated.

### 2.3.12 Work-related Factors

#### 2.3.12.1 Parental Education

Not only do parents who are more educated, marry and have fewer children, later in life (Berk 2009:576), they also differ in how they interact with their children, compared to those in less skilled occupations (Maier 2005:414). Educated parents, such as those in professional and technical occupations, stimulate their children more, set higher goals, including expectations that their children will attain higher educational qualifications (Maier 2005:414). They use more warmth, explanations and verbal praise when disciplining their children (Berk 2009:577). In addition, they devote more time, energy and material resources to nurturing their children's cognitive and social development, as well as encouraging their children to be curious, and to follow their interests more than other parents (Berk 2009:577).

The above research suggests that adolescent children of educated parents are unlikely to exert pressure on their parents, because these parents are very involved in their children's lives, stimulate their children appropriately, and monitor their children's activities closely. A lack of parental education, on the other hand, may result in a situation where adolescents know more about certain topics, for example, technological items such as cell phones, compared

with their parents. Thus opportunities are created for adolescents to exert pressure on their parents due to their expert knowledge (Flurry & Burns 2005:593-601).

#### 2.3.12.2 Maternal Employment

Children whose mothers enjoy their work but remain committed to involved parenting show favourable adjustment, for example higher self-esteem, more positive family and peer relations, less gender-stereotyped beliefs, and better grades in school (Berk 2009:591). Girls especially derive benefits from observing their working mothers. Hoffman (Berk 2009:591) found that daughters of working mothers value achievement and are more career-oriented.

The beneficial effects of maternal employment extend to the relationship with fathers, perhaps because fathers take on more responsibility for day to day routines and interact with their children more. In middle-income families where mothers are employed, both parents report high levels of closeness with their young adolescents (Lerner & Noh 2000:129). Berk (2009:591) is of the opinion that as long as parents maintain the quality of care, maternal employment does not adversely affect the adolescent.

#### 2.3.12.3 Work Stress

While work demands are manageable, there are few negative effects on family functioning. However, the experience of excessive work stress leads to problems in the parent-adolescent relationship (Sallinen, Kinnunen & Ronka 2004:221-237).

Parental work-related stress does not have direct effects on adolescent children, but if work stress affects overall stress levels in the parent, the consequences for the parent-adolescent relationship are negative (Lerner & Noh 2000:130). Hoffman (Galambos, Sears, Almeida & Kolaric 1995:201-

223) describes a three-stage, spillover process in which strains encountered by parents at work indirectly influence children's behaviour and development. Support for the process was obtained by Crouter, Bumpus, Maguire and McHale (1999:1453-1461).

In the first stage, work strains have a negative impact on parents, resulting in fatigue and bad moods (Sallinen, Kinnunen & Ronka 2004:221-237). In the second stage, parents' stress negatively affects the quality of parent-child relations, for example the parent responds with less sensitivity to the child, limits their autonomy or there are increases in conflict between them (Sallinen, Kinnunen & Ronka 2004:221-237; Sallinen, Rönkä, Kinnunen and Kokko 2007:181-190). In the third stage, negative parenting behaviour is associated with problematic behaviour in the child, for example depressive tendencies, and negative attitudes towards school (Sallinen, Kinnunen & Ronka 2004:221-237; Sallinen, Rönkä, Kinnunen and Kokko 2007:181-190).

The pressures of work and consequent parental tiredness, make it more likely that adolescents do not receive enough support for their own growth, which leads them to experience symptoms of depression (Sallinen, Rönkä, Kinnunen and Kokko 2007:181-190). Such adolescents may experience anger towards their parents and become aggressive towards them (Laurent & Derry 1999:21-26).

Work stress spillover negatively influences fathers', but not mothers', monitoring of their adolescents' daily activities (Bumpus, Crouter and McHale 2006:36-59). In other words, fathers who experience high negative spillover from work, know less about their children's activities than work-stressed mothers. Fathers who are not close to their adolescents and are not informed about their whereabouts, allow opportunities for their children to influence father's perceptions of them and the activities that occupy their time.



Neblett and Cortina (2006:795-811) found that adolescents' perceptions of mothers' work stress were associated with less optimism and hope for the future, than perceptions that mothers were satisfied with their jobs. A lack of hope for the future is one of the signs of depression which has been shown to be associated with adolescent abuse of parents (Laurent & Derry 1999:21-26).

#### 2.3.12.4 Shift Work

Shift-working mothers experience higher levels of intimacy with their children than do daytime-working fathers (Davis, Crouter & McHale 2006:450-460). The researchers suggest that shift worker mothers make more effort than daytime-working fathers, to compensate for their absence, spending time listening to and encouraging their adolescents when they are home. It is also possible that when mothers work nonstandard shifts, fathers handle more of the day-to-day disciplinary issues, leaving mothers free to develop a more intimate relationship with their children.

There is evidence of negative effects of shift work on the parent-adolescent relationship, compared to daytime work. Shift-working parents have a weaker relationship of understanding with their children compared to non shift-working parents (Lötter 2003:107). Further, shift-working fathers are the least knowledgeable about their adolescent children, compared to daytime working parents and shift working mothers (Davis, Crouter & McHale 2006:450-460). Fathers may not feel the same pressures as mothers to make up for their absence at home by asking more frequently about their children's experiences. In addition, adolescents may be more willing to self-disclose about their daily activities with their mothers, whether their mothers are working standard schedules or not. In contrast, shift-working fathers may play a more remote role in the family, with the result that children confide in them less than they confide in fathers working a day shift. Children may take advantage of their shift-working fathers' lack of knowledge about them. For example adolescents may claim that they have a lot of homework, and no time to do chores.

Because the shift working father is unaware of how the adolescent spends his time, he cannot refute it. In this way adolescents can exert pressure on their fathers to be exempt from chores.

### 2.3.13 Peers

#### 2.3.13.1 Friendships during Adolescence

Friends are especially important to children during adolescence (Knoester, Haynie & Stephens 2006:1247-1260), when they spend more time with peers than with other people (Berk 2009:607). They rely on them for advice and support in many day to day situations (Daddis 2008:1019-1038). In addition to increased time spent together and increased supportiveness from peers experienced by adolescents, it has been found that peer relationships compared with parent relationships, may have a greater influence on adolescent personality development, especially in boys (Bester 2007:177-190).

Research has shown that problematic friendships negatively relate to psychological well-being (Hartup & Stevens 1997:355-370). In other words, it is more important for the adolescent's adaptation and happiness to avoid unsupportive friendships than to have positive friendships. This finding is supported by research which shows that the formation of friendships with suitable friends has a positive influence on adolescents, while association with delinquent peers has a negative influence (Buehler 2006:109-124). Spending time with delinquent peers increases the likelihood of adolescent externalising behaviour, for example cigarette smoking (Brook, Pahl & Ning 2006:639-651; Buehler 2006:109-124; Reitz, Dekovic, Meijer & Engels 2006:272-295) and to a lesser extent, internalising problems (Buehler 2006:109-124). The more adolescents associate with delinquent peers, the more likely it is that they will exhibit delinquent behaviour, such as substance abuse (Eitle 2005:963-980). Adolescents who spend time with unsuitable friends and become involved in delinquent behaviour experience conflict with parents. Such adolescents often

experience problems early in life and internalise the labels that were given to them. The adolescents use negative or attention-seeking behaviours with increasing frequency. This leads to further involvement in antisocial activities, which in turn, raises levels of family conflict and creates the potential for parent intimidation to occur (Hartup & Stevens 1997:355-370).

#### 2.3.13.2 Peer Pressure

Sim and Koh (Schad, Szvedo, Antonishak, Hare & Allen 2008:346-358) define peer pressure as any attempt by one or more peers to force an individual to follow in the decisions or behaviours favoured by the pressuring individual or group. Such pressure may be accomplished in many ways, including forcefully stating one's own choice, ignoring the target's choice or reason for it, using sarcasm, inducing guilt in the target or exaggerating the target's behaviour (Schad, Szvedo, Antonishak, Hare and Allen 2008:346-358).

Conformity to peer pressure is greater during adolescence than in childhood or young adulthood (Berk 2000:613). It is a complex process that varies with the situation as well as with the adolescent's age and need for social approval.. Younger adolescents are more likely to experience peer pressure (Bester & Fourie 2006:157-169).

Democratic parenting is consistently related to resistance to unfavourable peer pressure (Berk 2009:614). Healthy relationships with parents, specifically the relationships of authority, understanding and trust are associated with positive peer interactions (Bester & Fourie 2006:157-169). Supportive ties to parents protect adolescents from peer antisocial involvements even under conditions of high life stress (Berk 2009:614).

In contrast, adolescents who experience extremes of parental behaviour – either too much restrictiveness or too little monitoring – tend to be highly peer

oriented. They more often rely on friends for advice about their personal lives and future and are more willing to break their parents' rules, ignore their schoolwork and hide their talents to be popular with agemates. This finding is supported by other research which indicates that adolescents who do not feel competent and valued by their parents are more likely to comply with pressure to engage in early sex, delinquency and drug use (Berk 2000:613).

A negative self-concept or lack of self-concept clarity in adolescents is associated with susceptibility to interpersonal influence (Bester & Fourie 2006:157-169; Isaksen & Roper 2008:1063-1087). In addition, a poor self-concept is associated with poor parent relationships (Bester & Fourie 2006:157-169). According to self-determination theory, dysfunctional relationships with parents result in little internalisation of values and behavioural regulations that are held by parents (Ryan & Deci 2000:319-338). Differences in values held by parents and their adolescent children may lead to the placement of pressure on parents to agree with the adolescent's values and condone behaviour consistent with those values.

Peers tend to be more influential in day to day matters such as type of dress, taste in music, and choice of friends (Berk 2000:613). However, peer pressure can be more serious. Research indicates that peer pressure positively predicts aggression in adolescents (Eldeleklioglu 2007:975-986). In addition, adolescents who assault parents are more likely to have friends who assault their parents as well (Agnew & Huguley 1989:611-711). Cottrell and Monk (2004:1072-1095) are of the opinion that peers influence their friends to intimidate parents, and do so for a variety of reasons. Adolescents who are victimised by their peers may use abusive behaviour against their parents as a means to compensate for feelings of powerlessness, and to express their anger. In addition, peers model that intimidation can be used as an effective strategy to gain power and control, which leads to the use of this behaviour in relationships with parents. Also, participation in prohibited activities with

peers, such as substance use, stealing and truancy leads to power struggles in the home as parents attempt to establish firmer limits (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095).

#### 2.3.13.3 Parental Peer Management Strategies

Parents influence the choice of their adolescents' friends (Mounts 2007:169-178). Knoester, Haynie and Stephens (2006:1247-1260) found that parent-child relationship quality, selection of a neighbourhood because of its schools, and parents' supervision, are negatively associated with having a delinquent friendship network, but positively associated with having a prosocial peer network. These results suggest that parents have the capacity to shape the characteristics of their child's friendship networks, even after taking into account the likelihood that adolescents have friends who are similar to themselves, and have already been influenced by their friends (Knoester, Haynie and Stephens 2006:1247-1260).

Parents use controlling parenting strategies with their adolescents when they perceive negative peer influence (Padilla-Walker 2006:56-82). In particular, in the face of a threat to their values, they use prearming strategies (provision of guidelines regarding appropriate decision-making), and are less likely to use deference (allowing adolescents to make their own choices). Parents who wish their adolescents to comply with parental goals, such as no longer socialising with a certain (undesirable) friend, use cocooning (unilateral demands for compliance), and compromise strategies. When parents sense that their adolescent is especially susceptible to peer influence, they tend to use the cocooning parenting strategy (the most controlling parenting strategy). Research has revealed that parental peer management strategies are successful, and are associated with lower deviant and more positive peer affiliations, as long as they are not perceived as psychologically controlling or intrusive, by the adolescents (Soenens, Vansteenkiste, Smits, Lowet and Goossens 2007:239-249). Adolescents who feel that parental peer

management strategies are controlling, may experience psychological reactance and deliberately carry out forbidden behaviours in order to re-establish their freedom of choice (Brehm 1981:4).

#### 2.3.14 The Media

Media influence has significant effects on teenagers' behaviour (Miller, Poole, Armer, Cameron & Cheng 2006:1-24). Cigarette advertising and exposure to sexual content in the media increase the likelihood of smoking and early sexual activity in adolescents (Aloise-Young, Slater & Cruickshank 2006:281-300; Brown & L'Engle 2009:129-151; Chia 2006:585-606; Fisher, Hill, Grube, Bersamin, Walker & Gruber 2009:121-147). In addition, early exposure to sexual content in the media predicts less progressive gender role attitudes (Brown & L'Engle 2009:129-151). Stereotypical gender role attitudes may lead adolescents to pressurise their mothers because they are seen to be weaker and less assertive than males (Brown & L'Engle 2009:129-151).

Further, the media has indirect influences on adolescents' materialistic values or the importance of material goods, such as branded items, or limited edition goods (Stella 2008:1-33). These indirect effects are mediated by adolescents' perception of the extent of the influence of advertising on their friends (Nelson & McLeod 2005:515-528; Stella 2008:1-33). In other words, if teenagers think that their friends are being influenced by the advertising of material goods, they will be more receptive to similar kinds of advertising messages. This can lead to adolescents placing their parents under pressure to buy certain material possessions for them, because they perceive that their friends are influenced by the advertising.

There are various reasons suggested by researchers to explain why adolescents are significantly influenced by the media. Adolescents are in the stage of personality development where they are actively exploring and forming their identities (Berk 2009:463). Adolescents associate brand images with social status, group affiliations, and personality traits. They use them in order to feel more confident, to express their

identities and to gain a sense of belonging to certain groups (Arnett 1995:519-533; Beaudoin & Lachance 2006:312-331; Lachance, Beaudoin & Robitaille 2003:47-57; Chang & Arkin 2002:389-406; Piacentini & Mailer 2004:251-262; Wee 1999:365-375).

According to Tustin (2009:165-183), changes in modern South African society, such as more working women, older (wealthier) parents, high divorce rates and fewer children per family, have contributed to an increase in young people's status as active decision makers. In the modern family, children encounter decision making at a far earlier age and are taking on greater roles and responsibilities in family purchases (Tustin 2009:165-183). Beatty and Talpade (1994:332-341) are of the opinion that a teenager possessing greater financial resources has more influence in purchasing decisions. Teenagers who have part-time jobs and those who have large allowances will therefore have more influence over their parents in purchase decisions. Research indicates that materialistic youth have more purchase influence on their parents than adolescents who do not value material goods as much (Goldberg, Gorn, Peracchio & Bamosy 2003:278-288).

Adolescents place pressure on their parents in order to influence purchase decisions so that they are able to obtain desirable goods, as well as items which express their identities. Research carried out in South Africa, in correspondence with international studies, shows that adolescents have greater say than parents regarding products that are important to them, such as clothing and food, family activities and movies (Foxman, Tansuhaj & Ekstrom 1989:482-491; Shoham & Dalakas 2003:238-251; Tustin 2009:165-183).

#### 2.3.14.1 Parent and Adolescent Influence Strategies

Palan and Wilkes (1997:159-169) identified several parent and adolescent influence strategies used in decision-making regarding consumer issues. The most frequently used influence strategies are bargaining, reasoning,

persuasion, emotional strategies, request strategies, expert strategies, legitimate strategies and directive strategies.

Bargaining strategies usually involve money and in situations where an item is expensive, adolescents will, for example offer to pay for half of the item if the parent pays for the other half. (Palan & Wilkes 1997:159-169). Adolescents also use reasoning strategies in order to reach a mutually satisfying outcome in purchase decisions (Palan & Wilkes 1997:159-169). Reasoning involves using logical arguments intended to reach a purchase agreement, for example adolescents will refer to the quality of the item they desire (Palan & Wilkes 1997:159-169). Persuasion strategies focus on unilateral gain by the adolescent (Palan & Wilkes 1997:159-169). For example, when shopping for clothes, adolescents will persuade parents that they must have a particular clothing item because they will look good in it. Other persuasion strategies, such as manipulation are often used, for example adolescents may ask other family members to suggest to the parent that the adolescent needs to go shopping (Palan & Wilkes 1997:159-169). Emotional strategies involve the use of emotion when trying to influence the purchase decision-making process (Palan & Wilkes 1997:159-169). Anger and withdrawal are typically used by adolescents after a purchase request has been refused. The use of positive affect or 'sweet talking' is also used by adolescents. (Palan & Wilkes 1997:159-169). For example an adolescent may put on an especially childlike facial expression, or use endearments, such as 'Mumsie' to convey affection, in an endeavour to change the parent's mind. In other instances, adolescents attempt to create guilt in their parents in order to influence decisions. Typically this guilt focuses on the argument that since the adolescent's parents have been spending money on other siblings, the parents should feel guilty about not spending an equal amount of money on him (Palan & Wilkes 1997:159-169). One of the request strategies used by adolescents is the direct request (Palan & Wilkes 1997:159-169). Adolescents ask for something in a pleasant way, simply and unemotionally (Palan & Wilkes 1997:159-169).



Expert strategies are used by parents when they teach children how to be effective consumers (Palan & Wilkes 1997:159-169). For example, parents provide explanations regarding the value of an item and its corresponding price. Legitimate strategies are also used by parents, consisting of authoritative declarations by the parent to the adolescent. One way in which parents resist influence attempts is to use the 'can't afford' tactic. Parents refuse influence attempts on the basis that the item is too expensive to be considered for purchase either at the present time or in the future. Another legitimate strategy is a simple answer, either 'no' or 'yes'. In either case, parents rely on the authority of their position to make purchase decisions without further input from the adolescent or explanations for their decisions. (Palan & Wilkes 1997:159-169). Parents use directive strategies in order to use their parental authority. They go beyond simple decisions by guiding the purchase decision-making by saying, for example that a pair of shoes may be chosen, but the cost may not exceed R100 (Palan & Wilkes 1997:159-169).

Adolescents choose a specific strategy because they think that it will be most effective. For example, in families where parents use 'can't afford', adolescents know that it is effective to use strategies that decrease cost, such as money deals and reasonable requests to place pressure on parents to make a favourable purchase decision (Palan & Wilkes 1997:159-169).

### 2.3.15 Cultural Factors

Parents and children live within a culture which influences their family beliefs, values, goals and interactions with one another (Harkness & Super 1995:230). Culture, therefore will affect the extent to which adolescents in the family will exert pressure on their parents in order to influence them.

One of the ways in which culture is defined, is according to the Individualism – Collectivism dimension identified by Hofstede (2001:209). In a collectivistic society people live together in close groups of both immediate and extended family (Hofstede

2001:209). In an individualistic society, people live with close family members, and primarily take care of themselves and their close relatives (Hofstede 2001:209).

There are closer ties in families within collectivistic cultures compared to individualistic cultures (Hardway and Fuligni 2006:1246-1258; Huiberts, oosterwegeel, van der Valk, Vollebergh and Meeus 2006:315-330; Yi, Pan, Chang and Chan 2006:1042-1067). Collectivistic cultures emphasise obedience to parents and see people as interdependent and guided by roles and relationships (Wee 1999:365-375). Adolescents from collectivistic cultures emphasise family obligation and assistance more than teenagers from individualistic cultures (Wee 1999:365-375). The closer ties and traditional ideas and attitudes of parents and adolescents in a collectivistic society, reduce the likelihood that adolescents will put pressure on their parents to behave in ways that are not sanctioned by them.

However, adolescents from an individualistic society are more likely to place pressure on their parents, compared to adolescents from a collectivistic society (Wee 1999:365-375). For example, American teenagers are relatively autonomous compared to Asian teenagers, and are likely to put pressure on their parents to make independent decisions and determine many aspects of their lives (Wee 1999:365-375).

Acculturation disparity, or the difference in the extent to which parents and their adolescent children adopt the language and customs of a certain culture, and identify with that culture, disrupts the quality of parent-adolescent relationships (Tardif & Geva 2006:191-211). In a study of adolescents in the Western Cape, Salo (2005:188) found that due to the changes in the political situation in South Africa, the youth have become increasingly familiar with a wide range of cosmopolitan South African lifestyles, languages and social customs. These influences have changed their ideas, values and attitudes. Consequently they view life differently from the people in the local context in which they live. Furthermore, the study revealed that some of these young people formed alliances with powerful male gangsters in order to obtain

material resources which would allow them to escape the poverty and isolation of their local communities. The loosening of ties to previously-held moral norms, and their alliances with criminals made these adolescents powerful. The researcher found that this led to conflict with parents as adolescents put pressure on their parents to allow them to associate with undesirable people, and allow them more freedom to visit the city (Salo 2005:185).

#### 2.3.16 Religious Factors

Religion has both direct and indirect influences on the parent-adolescent relationship (Regnerus 2003:394-413). For example, religion exerts a direct effect on parents and children by forbidding or discouraging certain behaviours such as disobedience to parents. Indirect effects refer to, for example increased parental monitoring of adolescent children's activities (Regnerus 2003:394-413).

A further indirect effect of religion is its effect on the parenting style used by parents. Research suggests that belief in religion is associated with positive childrearing attitudes and practices (Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar & Swank 2001:559-596; Pearce & Axinn 1998:810-828; Wilcox 1998:796-809). Some researchers are of the opinion that the association is due to structured social integration such as increased attendance in church, and opportunities for positive parent-child interaction, through shared worship and recreational activities such as retreats (Regnerus & Burdette 2006:175-194). Other researchers believe that it is rather the tradition-specific norms and beliefs about good family functioning that lead to positive parent-child relationships. Examples of traditional religious beliefs are commitment to children and spouse, honouring and obeying parents, and the importance of close interpersonal relationships (Pearce & Axinn 1998:810-828; Regnerus & Burdette 2006:175-194). The transmission of a normative value system to adolescents in religious families ensures that adolescents have similar values to their parents. This similarity reduces the likelihood that adolescents' goals will differ from those of their parents. As a result such adolescents will be unlikely to place pressure on their parents.

However, some religious groups, such as conservative Baptists, utilise the authoritarian parenting style (Gunnoe, Hetherington & Reiss 2006:589-596) which has been associated with negative adolescent outcomes (Aunola, Stattin and Nurmi 2000:205-222; Eldeleklioglu 2007:975-986; Ingoldsby, Schvaneveldt, Supple & Bush 2003:139-159; Lee, Daniels and Kissinger 2006:253-259). Conservative Protestants use corporal punishment as part of their parenting style (Gershoff, Miller & Holden 1999:307-320). They do so because they believe that corporal punishment has benefits for children (Gershoff, Miller & Holden 1999:307-320). Conservative Protestants use corporal punishment for children's moral and social misbehaviours, and expect it to prevent future transgressions (Gershoff, Miller & Holden 1999:307-320). The utilisation of the authoritarian parenting style requires unquestioning obedience in adolescents (Steinberg 1990:273) and may lead to rebellion and rejection of parents' religious views and practices (Steinberg 1993:295).

Self-determination theory emphasises that adolescents who experience high levels of parental control are at risk for psychological problems (Deci and Ryan 2000:68-78). Further, adolescents who perceive that their freedoms are threatened may experience resistance, and rebel in order to re-establish those freedoms (Brehm 1981:4). In other words, adolescents from religious families who experience restrictive control, may place pressure on their parents to obtain more freedom, and become involved in delinquent behaviour in order to re-assert their autonomy.

## 2.4 Conclusion

It was shown that conditions which can lead to the application of pressure by adolescents on parents, may arise in early development. Problematic attachment to parents in infancy and childhood has long term effects, often resulting in aggressive behaviour in adolescents, and is likely to lead to the placement of pressure on parents. Further, both parents and adolescents use positive and negative reinforcement as well as shaping and extinction to influence and change each other's behaviour. The greater need for independence in adolescence can lead adolescents to place their parents under

pressure. They perceive that they have greater social power than their parents. In addition, insufficient adaptation of the relationship of authority in adolescence, and excessive control of the adolescent often results in pressure being placed on parents with the aim of obtaining greater autonomy.

Developments in moral reasoning lead to conflict in adolescents as they try to comply with both parental and peer demands. Poorly developed language abilities as well as insufficient time spent with parents, hamper the shared understanding that ordinarily takes place during conversations between parents and adolescents, and which provides guidance to adolescents in social situations. Dealing with multifaceted social issues leads adolescents to pressure their parents as they attempt to expand their personal domain. A significant role is played by conflict in the parent-adolescent relationship. Problematic boundaries between parents and the adolescent can lead to pressuring of parents.

The study of different factors that affect the parent-adolescent relationship revealed that mother-daughter relationships are more susceptible to conflict and associated pressure from adolescents, although boys are more likely to use intense forms of pressure such as intimidation. Age factors play a role in the different goals that adolescents pursue in their interactions with parents. The tendency to experience negative emotions as well as the presence of undesirable personality traits result in interpersonal conflict and are likely to lead to pressuring of parents. Further, poor parenting behaviours worsen the effects of negative personality traits on parent-adolescent relationships. Families marked by a lack of cohesion, poor communication, and little time spent with children, lowers the likelihood that the family's norm system will be transmitted to adolescents. Adherence to alternative norm systems increases the possibility that conflict will occur, with associated pressuring of parents. Monitoring alone can be experienced as controlling by adolescents, and self-disclosure by adolescents is more beneficial to the parent-adolescent relationship.

Authoritarian, permissive and uninvolved parenting styles that do not have an optimal balance of demandingness and responsiveness increase the likelihood of conflict and pressure being placed on parents by the adolescent. Unfavourable parental factors such as marital conflict and negative parental life challenges can lead to changes in the parent-adolescent relationship, and the application of pressure by adolescents due to parental preoccupation with their troubles. Different family structures have an influence on the parent-adolescent relationship, and the weakening of family bonds in divorced and blended families can lead adolescents to place pressure on their parents. The danger of being exposed to delinquent behaviours in urban environments, as well as the prevalence of materialism in the city can result in pressure being placed on parents. Adolescents who experience low socio-economic circumstances may feel alienated and frustrated. Their feelings of anger can be taken out on parents and lead to the placement of pressure on parents. Adolescents may place pressure on parents who are not well educated by misleading them regarding different subjects. Work stress that affects overall parental stress levels leads to problems in the parent-child relationship, which can result in adolescent pressuring of parents. Shift workers know less about their adolescent children than daytime workers, which can provide opportunities for adolescents to apply pressure on their parents. Unsuitable friendships are particularly disadvantageous for adolescents, and younger adolescents and those whose self-concepts are not well developed may be susceptible to peer pressure. Compliance with peer pressure often leads to conflict with parents. Adolescents use the media to influence their parents, with various strategies being used by adolescents to persuade their parents to purchase items. With the emphasis on independence, adolescents from individualistic cultures are more likely than those from collectivistic societies to place pressure on parents to comply with their wishes. While religious observance is associated with positive parenting behaviours, the excessive control associated with some conservative religions can cause adolescents to rebel and place pressure on parents.

In Chapter 3, the focus will be on the different facets of adolescent development, and how they may affect the placement of pressure on parents.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

An important factor that was not addressed in Chapter 2, is the effect of adolescent development on the pressure placed by adolescents on their parents. Adolescent development may be defined as a period of biological, cognitive, emotional and social reorganization with the aim of adapting to cultural expectations of becoming an adult (Susman & Rogol 2004:16). The focus in this chapter is on how adolescent physical, cognitive, personality, social, moral and religious development influence the parent-adolescent relationship.

Physical growth and development in adolescents are briefly discussed. The influence of early and late maturation, as well as gender role development are explored together with its effects on parent-adolescent interaction. Cognitive development in adolescents is discussed with the focus on formal operational thought, and the pressure exerted on parents by the critical thinking of their adolescent children. Various theories of personality development in adolescents are presented with reference to the parent-adolescent relationship and the pressure experienced by parents. In addition, stress, anxiety, depression and aggression are investigated as problematic affective factors in adolescence. Social development is highlighted with the focus on the formation of relationships outside the family, social understanding, perspective-taking and empathy in adolescents and parents. Moral development in adolescents is discussed with reference to the adoption of social norms by adolescents and the development of conscience. Lastly, the role of religious development in the placement of pressure on parents by adolescents is examined.

#### **3.2 Physical Development**

##### **3.2.1 Growth and Development in Adolescent Boys and Girls**

During adolescence there is an acceleration of physical growth (Berk 2009:174; Gouws & Kruger 1994:17; Susman & Rogol 2004:19). Boys, particularly, gain muscle at

puberty and develop broad shoulders and muscular bodies (Rice & Dolgin 2008:90-91). Many adolescents, therefore approach, and even exceed the size of their parents.

The increased physical size and strength of adolescents means that parents may no longer feel that they have authority over their children and they may not be able to exercise physical discipline as they have in the past (Berk 2009:205). Research indicates that the bigger physical stature of adolescents is associated with placement of pressure on parents. Such pressure can be both verbal, for example intimidation and controlling behaviour, as well as physical, where injury to parents is caused (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095, Walsh and Krienert 2007:563-574).

### 3.2.2 The Influence of Early and Late Physical Development in Adolescent Boys and Girls on the Parent-child Relationship

The average age at which puberty begins is age 10 in both girls and boys (Beck 2009:201). Children who enter puberty either earlier or later than their on-time peers are at risk for maladjustment (Susman & Rogol 2004:30). The reason for this is that they are part of a minority, and thus are different from most of their peers (Susman & Rogol 2004:30).

Much research has indicated that early pubertal maturation is associated with problematic adolescent behaviour (Caspi, Lynam, Moffitt & Silva 1993:19-30; Ge, Brody, Conger, Simons & Murry 2002:42-54; Susman & Rogol 2004:30). Girls and boys who mature earlier than the norm are more likely to engage in delinquent behaviour, substance abuse and associate with deviant peers (Caspi, Lynam, Moffitt & Silva 1993:19-30; Ge, Brody, Conger, Simons & Murry 2002:42-54; Susman & Rogol 2004:30). In addition, early-maturing girls are at risk for teenage pregnancy (Macleod 1999:8-17). Early-maturing adolescents, therefore may put their parents under pressure to allow them to stay out late, drink alcohol and associate with undesirable friends. In turn negative parenting practices can intensify the undesirable effects of early maturation on behaviour in adolescents. Ge, Brody, Conger, Simons and Murry



(2002:42-54) found that the negative effects of early pubertal maturation on behaviour are intensified when harsh or inconsistent discipline parenting practices are used.

Further, boys and girls who mature early experience more negative emotions than adolescents who mature later (Ge, Conger & Elder 2001:49-70; Graber, Brooks-Gunn & Warren 2006:413-423). The finding that early-maturing boys are more likely to experience negative emotions compared to late-maturing boys, contradicts earlier findings which indicated that early maturation in boys is associated with positive outcomes (Gouws & Kruger 1994:20). More recent research indicates that early-maturing boys experience higher levels of externalized hostile feelings and internalised distress symptoms than on-time and late-maturing boys (Ge, Conger & Elder 2001:49-70). As mentioned in Chapter 2 (section 2.3.3.1) adolescents who experience increased depressive affect, high levels of anxiety and aggression, and problems with emotion regulation, are likely to place pressure on their parents (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095; Laurent & Derry 1999:21-26).

Research indicates that both early and late maturing girls are at risk for disordered eating and other health risk behaviours (McCabe & Ricciardelli 2004:145-166). Further, early maturing girls are more likely than late maturers, to have a poor body image which in turn is associated with low self-esteem (Kroger 2007:48; Williams & Currie 2000:129-149). Studies indicate that individuals with low self-esteem are inclined to place blame on others when they experience stress (Kuppens & Van Mechelen 2007:56-77). In the same way, early-maturing adolescent girls may place pressure on their parents by blaming them when they experience challenging situations.

Family conflict has been associated with earlier menarche in girls (Moffitt, Caspi, Belsky & Silva 1992:47-58; Wierson, Long & Forehand 1993:913-925). More recent research reveals that in addition to family stress, maternal depression and the presence of a stepfather are linked to the early onset of puberty in adolescent girls (Ellis &

Garber 2000:485-501). In such families, adolescent girls may place their parents under pressure in order to become independent sooner than other youngsters.

### 3.2.3 Gender Role Development and Parent-adolescent Interaction

As physical maturation takes place, masculine and feminine gender roles develop. Spence and Helmreich (Galambos 2004:234) define gender roles as cultural expectations held by adolescents, their parents and others, about appropriate behaviours for the sexes. Psychoanalytic theory suggests that gender development occurs as a result of the process of identification. Children adopt the characteristics and qualities of the same-sex parent as a result of anxiety regarding their erotic attachment to the opposite-sex parent (Bussey & Bandura 1999:676-713). According to cognitive-developmental theory, children develop their conceptions of gender from what they see and hear around them. Once they achieve gender constancy – the belief that their own gender is fixed and irreversible – they positively value their gender identity and seek to behave only in ways that are congruent with that conception (Bussey & Bandura 1999:676-713).

There is evidence that with the onset of adolescence, gender intensification occurs (Berk 2009:546; Galambos 2004:240). In other words, differences in behaviour, attitudes and some psychological aspects between adolescent boys and girls increase. These differences occur as a result of socialization pressures from parents and others in society. The development of masculine and feminine characteristics may serve as a signal to parents and others in society that the adolescent is beginning the approach to adulthood. Consequently, the adolescent should begin to act accordingly, that is in ways that resemble the stereotypical male or female adult (Galambos 2004:242). Traditionally, masculine behaviours include showing leadership, toughness, adventurousness and independence. Femininity is expressed in consideration for others, sensitivity, passivity, and being home-oriented (Berk 2009:527; Holt & Ellis 1998:929-941). While the acquisition of both masculine and feminine traits is associated with positive adjustment in girls (Lamke 1982:1530-1535), the acquisition of male, rather than female traits, in boys is associated with high self-esteem and peer

acceptance (Markstrom-Adams 1989:325-340). The social value placed on characteristics such as toughness can lead adolescents to exert pressure on their parents to allow them to participate in risky pastimes, for example extreme sports.

As discussed in the previous chapter (section 2.2.4), the amount of freedom or autonomy given to adolescents is of particular importance. The gender of the adolescent influences the amount of freedom given by parents. Research indicates that some mothers believe that boys should be raised with more freedom than girls. Girls are strongly encouraged to participate in activities in the house, but boys are allowed more freedom to explore activities outside the home (Guilamo-Ramos, Dittus, Jaccard, Johansson, Bouris & Acosta 2007:17-30). Such stereotyped restriction of girls' freedom can lead adolescent girls to place parents under pressure to allow them more independence.

### 3.3 Cognitive Development

#### 3.3.1 Piaget's Cognitive-Developmental Theory

According to Piaget, adolescents enter the formal operational stage of cognitive development (Inhelder & Piaget 1958:335). Cognitive development occurs when children experience situations where expectations made by the child are not confirmed by experience, and lead to a state of disequilibrium (Wadsworth 1996:19). Children are then motivated to either assimilate information or change their schemata through the process of accommodation (Wadsworth 1996:19). Assimilation is the cognitive process by which the child integrates new information into existing schemata. When a child is confronted with new information which cannot be assimilated because there are no schemata into which it readily fits, accommodation takes place. In order for accommodation to take place the child either creates a new schema in which to place the stimulus, or modifies an existing schema so that the information fits into it (Wadsworth 1996:17).

By the time adolescents reach the formal operational stage, their cognitive structures, or schemata have developed in such a way that they are able to think

abstractly, systematically and scientifically. They are not concrete-bound as younger children are (Wadsworth 1996:112). Such thinking transcends perception and memory and deals with things that are not directly observable (Mwamwenda 1996:97; Wadsworth 1996:113). As a result, adolescents may arrive at a conclusion that has hardly any bearing on concrete experience, yet is scientifically sound.

Specifically, adolescents develop the capacity for hypothetico-deductive reasoning and propositional thought (Berk 2009:251-252; Kroger 2007:66). When faced with a problem, they start with a hypothesis, or prediction about variables that might affect an outcome (Kroger 2007:66). For example if a parent says that an adolescent cannot go to a specific venue because there is no responsible supervision, the adolescent may challenge that viewpoint. He does so because he is able to imagine alternative scenarios where he perceives that no danger is posed. In this example he may claim that a friend's older sibling will be present to supervise the proceedings. Hypothetical thinking therefore can lead adolescents to place their parents under pressure to agree to their alternative suggestions.

A second characteristic of the formal operational stage is propositional thought. Propositional thinking is the adolescent's ability to evaluate the logic of propositions without referring to real-world circumstances (Berk 2009:252; Kroger 2007:66). For example, adolescents are able to imagine alternative futures for themselves, and to formulate possible future scenarios if various pathways are taken. They also consider what the necessary steps are to be able to actualize such futures, and what kind of future is most appropriate for them (Kroger 2007:66). In this regard, adolescents may place their parents under pressure to drop certain subjects, such as Mathematics at school. They reason that they do not want to follow a career that requires Mathematics, and will not need the subject to gain entry into their chosen field of study. Therefore it is evident to them that they do not need to take Mathematics as a subject at school.

### 3.3.1.1 Implications of Formal Operational Thinking for Social Development

#### 3.3.1.1.1 Critical Thinking

Some researchers are of the opinion that formal operational thought is not the same as critical thinking (Pienaar 1998:41). In support of this view, it is pointed out that critical thinking requires a questioning attitude towards the accuracy and validity of information. On the other hand, Wadsworth (1996:159) asserts that from a Piagetian point of view, critical thinking is not fundamentally different from regular thinking. Instead critical thinking is maximized by providing adolescents with opportunities to develop intellectually. As a result of adolescents' ability to think abstractly they are able to place pressure on parents by being critical and by questioning the logic behind their parents' reasoning.

#### 3.3.1.1.2 Idealism and Criticism

Wadsworth (1996:132) is of the opinion that both adolescent idealism and criticism are based on the egocentric use of formal thought. The adolescent's logic and reasoning often do not take into account the realities of human behaviour that have nothing to do with logic. For example, society upholds the law that you may not kill, but at the same time sanctions wars. The adolescent who is critical of society thinks that society should renounce war.

Adolescents are often critical of others, especially their parents (Wadsworth 1996:132). For example, their parents may smoke or drink alcohol, yet commonly accepted health advice warns against these activities. To the adolescent, this seems illogical. They may either be critical of their parents' behaviour, or they may argue that if their parents (and peers) smoke and drink, then so can they (Wadsworth 1996:132).

#### 3.3.1.1.3 Egocentric Thinking

Egocentrism in adolescence is the inability to differentiate between the adolescent's world and the 'real' world (Wadsworth 1996:131). Because the adolescent can think logically about the future and about hypothetical people and events, he thinks that the world should submit itself to logical schemes rather than to systems of reality. He does not understand that the world is not always logically or rationally ordered, as s/he thinks it should be (Wadsworth 1996:131). Inhelder and Piaget (1958:343) state that the adolescent not only tries to adapt his ego to the social environment, but also tries to adjust the environment to his ego. The result is a relative failure to distinguish between his/her point of view and the point of view of society (Rogers-McMillan 2009:48).

Two features associated with egocentric thinking in the formal operational period are heightened self-consciousness, and a belief in personal uniqueness and invulnerability (Elkind 1975:110; Rogers-McMillan 2009:48). These two characteristics are commonly referred to as the 'imaginary audience' and the 'personal fable'. Heightened self-consciousness and a sensitivity to social evaluation can result in adolescents placing pressure on their parents, for example to refrain from showing them affection in front of their friends. Further, the belief that one is unique and invulnerable (Rogers-McMillan 2009:57) can lead to the placement of pressure on parents, because adolescents wish to be allowed to participate in dangerous or risky activities.

Research indicates that adolescents who have high levels of egocentrism are less likely to be able to infer parents' thoughts and emotions (Artar 2007:1211-1220). The inability to correctly interpret parental thoughts and emotions can lead to misunderstandings between parents and adolescents. For example adolescents can assume that parents feel positive about their proposed plans, only to find that their

parents are not in favour. Adolescents may then place pressure on their parents to comply with their wishes.

#### 3.3.1.1.4 Social Intelligence

Social intelligence comprises three aspects: social cognition, social skills and social awareness (Meijs, Cillessen, Scholte, Segers & Spijkerman 2010:62-72). In other words, socially intelligent adolescents have a positive social self-concept (Baron & Byrne 1994:323), are aware of and make accurate interpretations of others' social behaviour (Berk 2009:443) and possess the practical skills to interact effectively with other people (Baron & Byrne 1994:323).

The advanced cognitive abilities of the adolescent are fundamental to their social intelligence. They are able to solve problems more effectively, using their improved reasoning abilities and increased awareness of themselves (Berk 2009:250-251). Research supports the idea that there is an improvement in social interaction as children grow older. During adolescence there are increases in effective negotiation strategies such as reasoning with parents, and decreases in less effective strategies such as persistence (see section 2.3.2). According to Cowan, Drinkard and MacGavin (1984:1391-1398), one of the reasons for the increase in effective strategies is the more advanced cognitive abilities that have developed during the formal operational period. More effective negotiation strategies can enable adolescents to persuade parents to see their point of view and accede to their wishes.

### 3.3.2 The Influence of Formal-operational Thought on the Parent-adolescent Relationship

Abstract and complex thought results in adolescents being able to consider different options, and supply the reasoning to support their preferred choice. As a result they are more likely than younger children to assume equal power in

their interactions with parents (Collins & Laursen 2004:332). In addition, as discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.2.9), they begin to consider many personal issues as matters of personal choice, even though they were previously under the jurisdiction of parents (Smetana, Metzger, Gettman & Campione-Barr 2006:201-217). As a result, parents need to transform the hierarchical relationship established in childhood, into a more egalitarian one (Laursen & Bukowski 1997:747-770; Scanzoni & Szinovacz 1980:211). If this is not done, or progresses too slowly, adolescents may place pressure on their parents to obtain the freedom to make more independent choices.

Understanding between parents and adolescents is complicated by developmental and relationship changes during adolescence. In this period, children begin to acquire the abstract and hypothetical reasoning abilities that underlie empathy (Sillars, Koerner & Fitzpatrick 2005:102-128). The newly acquired cognitive structures begin to appear in early adolescence, but it is often not before mid-adolescence that such skills begin to consolidate (Kroger 2007:66). Thus, adolescents can fluctuate widely in their ability to comprehend parental perspectives, whilst parents may have difficulty anticipating and comprehending momentary changes in adolescent perspectives (Sillars, Koerner & Fitzpatrick 2005:102-128). In addition, dysfunctional relationship beliefs in adolescents, such as the belief that ‘other people should know what I am thinking, even if I do not reveal my thoughts’ can lead to misunderstandings with parents (Hamamci 2007:122-137). Adolescents who feel misunderstood are likely to experience negative affect, which can result in pressure being placed on parents (Laurent & Derry 1999:21-26).

### 3.4 Personality Development

In the previous chapter, personality factors and their influence on the parent-child relationship were discussed (sections 2.3.3.1, 2.3.3.2 and 2.3.3.3). In order to provide greater focus on the developmental aspects of personality, a discussion of three different personality theories is carried out in this chapter. Maddi (1996:18) classifies personality



theories either as conflict models, fulfillment models or consistency models. A theory from each model will be discussed with particular reference to adolescent personality development and how pressure is placed on parents.

### 3.4.1 Conflict Model

Personality theories which describe people as caught between two opposing forces, either within themselves, or between themselves and society, fall into the category of conflict models (Maddi 1996:27). An example of a conflict model is Erikson's Psychosocial Theory.

#### 3.4.1.1 Erikson's Psychosocial Theory

The theory of personality development described by Erikson, suggests that there is conflict between the individual's urge to adapt to and control the environment on the one hand, and the demands of the social and cultural environment, on the other (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1989:148).

Erikson identified different stages of development from birth into adulthood (Berk 2009:17). The first five stages deal with conflicts experienced in childhood and adolescence.

Psychosocial Stage	Period of Development
Basic Trust versus Mistrust	Birth – 1 year
Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt	1 – 3 years
Initiative versus Guilt	3 – 6 years
Industry versus Inferiority	6 – 11 years
Identity versus Identity Confusion	Adolescence

(Berk 2009:18)

Through interaction with the environment, the individual at each stage in the lifespan, finds an optimal balance between two different characteristics (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1989:154). Successful resolution of each stage results in personality growth, or the development of ego strengths.

Unsuccessful resolution of a crisis at any stage complicates further personality development, while successful resolution makes it easier to deal with later crises (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1989:157). However, an individual who has not satisfactorily resolved the crisis of one stage, has the opportunity to do so at a later stage. For example, the adolescent who did not attain a healthy sense of trust in others during the first year of life, may be able to develop it during adolescence, through, for example an improved parent-child relationship, or by experiencing close, supportive relationships with other adults.

#### 3.4.1.1.1 The Role of Parents in the Different stages of Their Children's Psychosocial Development

Development in the first year of life depends on the quality of the mother-child relationship (Maddi 1996:61; Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1989:158). She creates a sense of trust in her infant by combining sensitive care of the baby's individual needs, with her constant, reassuring presence. Successful resolution of the crisis at this stage is the development of a healthy trust, tempered with some caution, in the baby.

During the second year of life, the child wants to exercise control. According to Erikson, children should be allowed some autonomy by parents, but not too much should be expected of them, because too many failures will result in shame and doubt about their abilities. A healthy solution to this crisis is the development of will-power (Berk 2009:18; Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1989:158).

Between the ages of 3 and 6, children's increasing independence means that they act with initiative and as a result can feel guilty about their behaviour (Berk 2009:18; Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1989:159). This stage is therefore important in the development of conscience. The child begins to identify with the same-sex parent and adopts many of the moral rules which are encouraged by that parent. The ideal resolution of this stage lies in finding a balance between the enthusiasm for doing and making things, and the tendency to be too strict in self-judgement. The parent needs to encourage the development of moral behaviour, of self-restraint when interacting with others, while satisfying the need to act independently.

During the school years, from ages 6 to 12, the child develops a sense of industry, learning to master the basic skills such as reading, writing and calculating at school (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1989:159). The opposite pole at this stage is the failure to acquire the skills to work effectively and this can lead to feelings of inferiority. A healthy balance is reached when the child feels that he is competent to meet the demands made of him. Parents need to choose tasks and chores that are appropriate for the age of the child. Activities should provide a challenge, neither too difficult nor too easy.

#### 3.4.1.1.2 Identity Development and the Parent-adolescent Relationship

Having attained a feeling of competence, the child enters adolescence, where he explores and develops his sense of self, or identity. Identity development is characterised by exploration and commitment (Berk 2009:464). Adolescents experiment with alternatives, sift through characteristics that defined the self in childhood, and combine them with emerging traits and capacities. The alternatives that adolescents consider include aspects such as sexual orientation, vocation, as well as religious,

political and other world views (Berk 2009:464; Puffer, Pence, Graverson, Wolfe, Pate & Clegg 2008:270-284).

There is increasing differentiation of the adolescents' own values and goals from those of their parents (Kroger 2007:63). Adolescents cease to idealise parents and no longer take their parents as unconditional models and guides for action (Collins 1995:130). Adolescents identify with significant others and adopt certain characteristics or features that they admire.

The period of identity exploration can pose challenges to the parent-adolescent relationship (Kidwell, Dunham, Bacho, Pastorino & Portes 1995:786-793; Kroger 2007:53). Adolescents may exert pressure on their parents when they experiment, or try out different options, for example they may take up a cause such as eco-preservation and put pressure on their parents to purchase only certain items that are 'eco-friendly'.

Marcia (Berk 2009:465) identified four different identity statuses, depending on how far the adolescent has progressed in his identity development: identity achieved, identity moratorium, identity foreclosure and identity diffusion.

Identity-achieved adolescents have already explored alternatives and are committed to a clearly formulated set of self-chosen values and goals (Moshman 2005:83). They feel a sense of psychological well-being (Berk 2009:465), of sameness through time (Berk 2009:465; Kroger 2007:96), and of knowing where they are going (Berk 2009:465).

Adolescents who are in a state of moratorium have not yet made definite commitments (Moshman 2005:83). They are in the process of exploring – gathering information and trying out activities in an effort to find values

and goals to guide their lives (Berk 2009:465). Adolescents in identity moratorium have the lowest levels of emotional adjustment compared to adolescents with other identity statuses (Meeus, Iedema, Maassen & Engels 2005:89-106). The researchers suggest that emotional problems may develop as a result of aspects associated with high levels of exploration in adolescents. Insecurity about their life situation and ambiguity about their identity may develop. In addition, high levels of adolescent identity exploration are associated with self-doubt, confusion, reduced ego strength and impulsivity (Kidwell, Dunham, Bacho, Pastorino & Portes 1995:786-793). Adolescents who experience insecurity and are unsure about their identity are likely to place their parents under pressure because they may blame their parents for mistakes that they themselves have made. Further, they may be erratic in their behaviour.

Identity-foreclosed individuals have committed themselves to values and goals without exploring alternatives (Moshman 2005:83). They accept a ready-made identity chosen for them by authority figures – usually parents, but sometimes teachers, religious leaders, or romantic partners (Berk 2009:46).

Identity-diffused individuals lack clear direction. They are neither committed to values and goals, nor actively trying to reach them (Moshman 2005:83). They may never have explored alternatives, or may have found the task too threatening and overwhelming (Berk 2009:465). Identity diffused adolescents live day by day and see where life takes them (Moshman 2005:83). It is likely that these adolescents place their parents under pressure because they do not set appropriate goals and work to achieve them, for example in their studies at school.

### 3.4.2 Fulfillment Model

Personality theories that focus on the fulfillment of the capabilities, potentialities, or talents an individual possesses, are classified as fulfillment models (Maddi 1996:100). One such theory is Maslow's self-actualisation theory.

#### 3.4.2.1 Maslow's Self-actualisation Theory

Maslow has an optimistic view of human nature (Ewen 1988:404). He regards our innate tendencies as predominantly healthy, and is of the opinion that human beings have an inherent capacity for constructive growth, honesty, kindness, generosity, and love. Maslow is of the opinion that healthy children actively seek to gain new skills and satisfy their growth motives (Ewen 1988:404). In other words, adolescents will develop normally if they are given the opportunity to heed their inner guidelines and potentials, rather than have their judgement and self-trust undermined by excessive external pressures and controls (Gouws & Kruger 1994:154).

According to Maslow, an individual's positive nature can easily be overwhelmed by more powerful forces of learning and culture (Ewen 1988:398). In other words, the adolescent who exists in an inadequate environment can easily have his positive potential overwhelmed and hatred, destructiveness, and self-defeating behaviour can result (Ewen 1988:398; Gouws & Kruger 1994:154). Maslow cautions that permissiveness has undesirable consequences. Too much freedom for the young person can amount to neglect and lack of love. For example, rules and routines are necessary to ensure that the child's physiological needs are satisfied appropriately, and to provide a sense of safety and structure (Ewen 1988:406).

#### 3.4.2.1.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in Adolescence

Maslow identified different human needs and arranged them in a hierarchical structure. The needs on each level must be met before needs higher up in the hierarchy can be satisfied (Gouws & Kruger 1994:153).

At the bottom of the hierarchy are physiological needs, such as hunger, thirst and sleep. Once the adolescent's physiological needs are satisfied, the next level in the hierarchy, safety needs, emerges as a motivator. Safety needs include the need for an environment that is stable, predictable and free from anxiety and chaos. For example an adolescent who experiences ongoing conflict with his parents or peers, will not have his safety needs met. Once the safety needs of the adolescent have been satisfied, the belongingness and love needs come to the forefront as motivators. The adolescent therefore experiences a need to feel loved, and to belong to a group such as his family, social or religious community (Harper, Harper & Stills 2003:11-25). The next level in the hierarchy describes esteem needs. Self-esteem is based on competence and significant achievement, and deserved esteem from others, based on accomplishments, status or appearance. The adolescent who feels competent and earns the admiration and respect of the people around him, has his esteem needs met. The highest need according to Maslow, is self-actualisation, which is the need to develop one's potential and unique talent to the highest possible level of growth and achievement (Harper, Harper & Stills 2003:11-25). The adolescent who is studying the required subjects to study further as an artist or an engineer is fulfilling his unique potential. According to Maslow's theory of self-actualisation, the adolescent is becoming aware of his psychological characteristics and seeks to develop himself with regard to these traits (Maddi 1996:114).

#### 3.4.2.1.2 The Influence of the Adolescent's Push for Self-actualisation on the Parent-child Relationship

As mentioned above, children who are in an appropriately nurturing environment will proceed through the different levels with little conflict with parents. However, if parents are restrictive or prescriptive and limit opportunities for their children to develop their innate potential, adolescents may rebel (Brehm 1981:4; Frick 1971:5).

For example, a parent who does not wish his child to become an artist, but rather a doctor, and forces his child to study subjects with a view to entering medical school, will prevent his child from self-actualising his unique potential. In these circumstances, the adolescent can place his parent under pressure to allow opportunities for his true self to develop.

#### 3.4.3 Consistency Model

According to Maddi (1996:175), theories which emphasise the compatibility between the individual and his experience of the environment, are classed as consistency models. Specifically, the individual has certain expectations of a situation and will behave in accordance with these expectations. Certain personality tendencies develop depending on whether the feedback from the interaction is experienced as pleasant or unpleasant.

##### 3.4.3.1 McClelland's Cognitive Dissonance Theory

The experience of dissonance, or inconsistency between two cognitions, for example thoughts, attitudes or perceptions, produces an emotional state that provides the energy and direction for behaviour (Maddi 1996:175). According to McClelland, large discrepancies between different cognitions are experienced as unpleasant. As a result, an



individual attempts to reduce the amount of inconsistency by either changing the cognition, or by changing, or avoiding the situation. According to McClelland, however, small discrepancies give rise to positive affect. They increase the likelihood that the individual will seek out experiences which provide just enough unpredictability to avoid boredom (Maddi 1996:189).

#### 3.4.3.1.1 Cognitive Dissonance and Adolescent Behaviour

Small discrepancies between a person's thoughts, attitudes or perceptions, are perceived as pleasurable by individuals (section 3.4.3.1). It is therefore likely that adolescents will seek out experiences which provide an optimal balance between security and unpredictability, so that they can feel safe, yet avoid boredom. For example, adolescents who have participated to some extent in delinquent activities, may become more involved in them. This is because they experience a small amount of cognitive dissonance between, for example the thought that they will steal some sweets, and the thought that they will steal some money. As a result they may become progressively more involved in illegal behaviours. Adolescents can then place pressure on their parents to allow them enough freedom to participate in such activities. When they think about their activities, they experience positive feelings rather than insecurity or fear which would accompany widely divergent perceptions of their behaviour.

#### 3.4.3.1.2 The Development of Motives in the Adolescent

Activities that occur early in life, such as being cuddled by a parent, will give rise to specific affective states, such as happiness. These activities become linked over time, via classical and operant conditioning, to more complex social stimuli and are the basis for the

development of individual differences in motives (Zurbriggen & Sturman 2002:521-535).

McClelland (Zurbriggen and Sturman 2002:521-535) focuses on three primary motives – power, affiliation-intimacy and achievement motivation. The power motivation refers to a concern with having impact on other people, or on the world at large. Therefore it is likely that adolescents' power motivation drives them to make their own decisions and to influence the decisions and behaviour of others around them, including their parents. The power motive therefore can lead adolescents to exert pressure on their parents to enable them to make their own decisions regarding choices, for example whether or not they can go out with friends. Further, the emotion of anger is linked to the power motivation in individuals (Zurbriggen and Sturman 2002:521-535). Therefore, power motivation can lead adolescents to intimidate their parents and place them under extreme pressure (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095).

Affiliation-intimacy motivation refers to the drive to develop friendly and loving connections with others (Zurbriggen & Sturman 2002:521-535). Adolescents are motivated to form friendships outside the family (Collins & Laursen 2004:352). The motive for affiliation may lead adolescents to place pressure on parents because they desire to form friendships with peers that their parents consider to be unsuitable.

Achievement motivation refers to a concern for excellence and doing one's best (Zurbriggen and Sturman 2002:521-535). If adolescents are unable to achieve in the normal way, for example at school, they may seek to achieve in other, delinquent ways. Adolescents can

therefore place pressure on their parents to allow them the freedom to participate in, and become proficient at, delinquent activities.

### 3.5 Affective Problems in Adolescence

Stress, anxiety, depression and aggression, together with the pain and impairment associated with them, are among the most frequently discussed affective problems that are experienced in adolescence (Hinshaw 2008:3; Kagan 2008:159; Kidwell, Dunham, Bacho, Pastorino & Portes 1995:785-793).

#### 3.5.1 Stress

The state that exists in an individual, when environmental circumstances threaten, challenge, exceed or harm the psychological or biological capacities of the individual, is commonly defined as stress (Compas 2004:271). Adolescents experience stress in different areas of their life. They experience stress within their families (Landis, Gaylord-harden, Malinoski, Grant, Carleton & Ford 2007:1051-1070), in school (Bester & Swanepoel 2000:255-258; Landis, Gaylord-harden, Malinoski, Grant, Carleton & Ford 2007:1051-1070), with regard to peers, and in a personal context, such as being diagnosed with a chronic illness (Landis, Gaylord-harden, Malinoski, Grant, Carleton & Ford 2007:1051-1070).

It was mentioned in Chapter 2 that certain factors can lead to stress in adolescence, for example ineffective parenting styles (section 2.3.8), marital conflict (section 2.3.9), divorce (section 2.3.11.2) and poverty (section 2.3.13). The following section focuses on the experience of stress in parents and adolescents with regard to the parent-adolescent relationship.

### 3.5.1.1 Factors in the Parent-adolescent Relationship which Lead to Parent and Adolescent Stress

#### 3.5.1.1.1 Demands of Parents and Adolescents on Each Other

It was mentioned in Chapter 2 (section 2.3.8), that the extent to which parents demand that their child complies with certain standards is referred to as the Level of Demandingness in the relationship. Parent-adolescent relationships characterised by excessive parental demands (the authoritarian parenting style) can lead to stress in both adolescents and parents. Parents have to frequently place limits on their children's behaviour, while their children often rebel against those restrictions.

On the other hand, adolescents who have many of their demands met by parents are given too much freedom in their everyday lives with the permissive parenting style (section 2.3.8). Too much freedom can lead parents to experience stress as their children exert pressure on them to comply with their wishes (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095, Laurent & Derry 1999:21-26). Further, too much satisfaction of adolescent demands can cause adolescents to experience stress because their parents do not attend to their socioemotional needs (Small & Eastman 1991:455-462, Stewart & Zaenglein-Senger 1982:457-464). Adolescents of permissive parents are exposed to experiences that they are not yet ready for (Small & Eastman 1991:455-462). Moreover they do not experience appropriate boundaries for their behaviour, and they have the educative relationships of trust (Stewart & Zaenglein-Senger 1982:457-464), understanding and authority undermined (section 2.2.8).

Longitudinal research with adolescents has shown that adolescent demands for autonomy vary greatly across issues (Daddis & Smetana 2005:371-381). Adolescents expect autonomy for personal issues earlier than autonomy in other domains of life. As mentioned in Chapter 2 (section 2.2.9), individuals sometimes see issues as overlapping among the domains (Smetana, Crean & Campione-Barr 2005:33). These multifaceted issues can be problematic because adolescents may view certain issues as being in the personal domain. They might demand the right to make decisions regarding these issues earlier than parents may be willing to allow. For example, adolescents may place pressure on their parents to allow them to make their own decisions regarding choice of friends (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095) while parents may see that some friends are unsuitable and may be unwilling to allow those friendships to continue. The placement of pressure on parents for more autonomy can result in stress being experienced by both parents and adolescents.

#### 3.5.1.1.2 Parental Concerns

Parents are concerned about many aspects of their adolescent children's life, for example their choice of friends (Padilla-Walker 2006:56-82), school-related matters, as well as behaviours such as smoking, language used and sexual behaviour (Rice & Dolgin 2008:236). Parents are further concerned about family relationships, for example their adolescents' attitude and level of respect shown to parents (Rice & Dolgin 2008:236). Parental concerns can lead to stress in parents because parents worry about their adolescents' physical, psychological and social safety and development. Worried parents in turn, place their children under pressure by restricting their movements, or insisting that their

children inform them about certain issues, for example their whereabouts whilst out with friends.

#### 3.5.1.1.3 Adolescent Irresponsibility

Research indicates that adolescents who do not take responsibility, for example by helping with chores, or providing emotional support to family members, have less intimate relationships with their parents than more responsible adolescents (Taylor, Field, Yando, Gonzalez, Harding, Lasko, Mueller & Bendell 1997:969-977). Other research shows that parents become critical of adolescents who do not show enough responsibility in the performance of family chores, spending money, using the telephone and caring for personal belongings (Rice & Dolgin 2008:235).

Adolescents with low levels of Conscientiousness/Constraint are likely to be irresponsible. Such adolescents may be impulsive and have difficulty planning and anticipating the consequences of their actions (Shiner & Caspi 2003:2-32). Impulsive personality traits predict risky behaviours such as heavy drinking and unsafe sexual behaviours (Cooper, Agocha & Sheldon 2000:1059-1088). Irresponsible behaviour in adolescents can lead parents to experience stress because they worry about their children's safety and wellbeing (Rice & Dolgin 2008:236)

### 3.5.2 Anxiety

As discussed in Chapter 2, various factors contribute to the experience of anxiety in adolescence. These factors are for example, parents and adolescents who have a personality tendency to Neuroticism (sections 2.3.3.1, section 2.3.3.2 and 2.3.11.1), marital conflict (section 2.3.9), absence of the father in the house (section 2.3.11.2),

inadequate attachment patterns (section 2.2.1) and inappropriate parenting styles (section 2.3.8).

It is evident therefore that anxiety can develop in adolescence not only as a result of individual factors in the adolescent or parent, but also as a result of the parent-adolescent relationship. Further, environmental changes, such as the move to high school, may create anxiety in adolescents (Scocco, Barbieri & Frank 2007:8-13).

Frequent experiences of stress lead to high levels of anxiety in adolescents (Jose & Ratcliffe 2004:145-154). Adolescence is a time of many transitions and there may be an accumulation of stressful events such as puberty, school change, and changes in peer relationships (Graber 2004:605). These situations can be perceived as threatening, especially to those with a personality tendency to be anxious, with the result that their anxiety levels rise (Austin, Jamieson, Richards & Winkelman 2006:31-42; Muris & Field 2008:395-421; Scocco, Barbieri & Frank 2007:8-13). Anxious adolescents can place their parents under pressure because they may require considerable help from their parents in order to cope with everyday activities.

Jose & Ratcliffe (2004:145-154) found that girls report higher anxiety than boys, and it has been found that anxiety disorders are more likely to develop in girls (Graber 2004:591). One of the reasons for the higher incidence of anxiety in girls, is that they tend to experience events as more stressful than boys (Fox, Halpern, Ryan & Lowe 2010:43-54; Jose & Ratcliffe 2004:145-154). It is likely therefore that adolescent girls, rather than boys, place pressure on their parents to provide more help and support in stressful situations.

#### 3.5.2.1 The Experience of Anxiety in Parents and Adolescents

Anxiety is an emotion which can be adaptive under threatening circumstances, however it can persist and become so intense that it starts to interfere with individuals' daily functioning (Muris & Field 2008:395-421).

Most commonly, anxious individuals experience worry and fear about a variety of different events or activities. The experience of anxiety is often accompanied by physical symptoms such as restlessness, feeling tense, being easily tired, difficulty concentrating, irritability, muscle tension, or trouble sleeping (DSM-IV 1994:433). As mentioned in Chapter 2 (section 2.3.3.1 and 2.3.8) parents who are anxious worry excessively about their children and can become overcontrolling and overinvolved in their adolescents' lives. As a consequence these children may exert pressure on their parents to obtain more freedom (Brehm 1981:4).

Adolescents experience anxiety about the quality of their academic performance at school, performance in sporting events as well as global issues such as nuclear war (DSM-IV 1994:434). Age affects the kinds of issues that concern adolescents (Jose & Ratcliffe 2004:145-154). As they grow older, teenagers become increasingly worried about factors such as parental stress, but experience less anxiety with regard to being punished for something (Jose & Ratcliffe 2004:145-154).

Further, adolescents can experience separation anxiety. Separation anxiety is excessive anxiety concerning separation from the home, or from those to whom the individual is attached (DSM-IV:110). Anxious adolescents who worry about being separated from home may refuse to leave the home to attend school (Gosch & Flannery-Schroeder 2006:67). School refusal places parents under pressure because they bear the legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school.

### 3.5.3 Depression

In adolescents, depression most commonly develops as a result of the interaction between internal factors, such as physical maturation, and external factors, such as environmental stress (including stress in the parent-adolescent relationship)



(Andersen & Teicher 2008:183-191; Hazel, Hammen, Brennan & Najman 2008:581-589).

At puberty there is secretion of the sex hormones in both boys and girls. Research has linked the presence of the sex hormones to changes in adolescent emotions, especially increases in depression (Susman & Rogol 2004:25-29). As mentioned in section 3.2.2 early maturing boys and girls experience more depressive symptoms than on-time maturing adolescents. This may be due to the experience of rapid pubertal change occurring just before, or at the same time as other life changes, such as the transition to high school (Graber 2004:599). The experience of many stresses in a short space of time may have a cumulative effect, resulting in depression (Ge, Lorenz, Conger, Elder & Simons 1994:467-483; Graber 2004:603; Hazel, Hammen, Brennan & Najman 2008:581-589). Further, early maturing adolescents may enter into adult-like behaviors in accordance with their appearance, but before they have the skills to negotiate these situations, leading to distress and depressive symptoms (Graber 2004:604).

Gender plays a role in the development of depression. Girls experience more depression during adolescence than boys, especially with regard to changes in relationships (Ge, Lorenz, Conger, Elder & Simons 1994:467-483; Graber 2004:606; Hankin, Mermelstein & Roesch 2007:279-295; Shih, Eberhart, Hammen & Brennan 2006:103-115). Important predictors of depression in girls are depression in parents, low parental support, as well as poor family and school functioning (Bouma, Ormel, Verhulst & Oldehinkel 2008:185-193; Seeley, Stice & Rohde 2009:161-170).

Cognitive factors can lead to depressive symptoms (Graber 2004:606). For example negative views of the self (Bearman & Stice 2008:1251-1263), faulty information processing (Kagan 2008:235; Rusting 1998:165-196), and negative expectancies can result in depression (Joiner & Wagner 1995:777-798; Kagan 2008:235). Further, adolescents who experience depression are more likely to view the causes of

negative events as internal rather than external, stable rather than unstable, and global rather than specific (Joiner & Wagner 1995:777-798; Swendsen 1998:1398-1408; Swendsen 1997:97-114). For example, a youngster may make the following statement, 'I failed the test because I am stupid'. The concept 'stupid' is an internal, stable factor, which is global and likely to affect many situations. Such attributions are likely to lead to depression in adolescents (Joiner & Wagner 1995:777-798). Alternatively the view 'I failed the test because the class distracted me' attributes the causes of the event to an external, unstable (or temporary), and specific factor. This attributional style is unlikely to be associated with depression (Joiner & Wagner 1995:777-798).

#### 3.5.3.1 Depression and the Parent-adolescent Relationship

Inadequate attachment patterns between the young child and his parents, can lead to the development of depression in adolescence (Liu 2006:705-721). In other words, as explained in Chapter 2 (section 2.2.1.1), the young child develops dysfunctional working models of attachment which affect his relationships with parents, friends and romantic partners later in adolescence (Sibley & Overall 2007:238-249). Difficulty with the formation of intimate relationships, where adolescents feel unable to communicate personal feelings, is significantly related to suicide attempts in depressed adolescents (Horesh & Apter 2006:66-71).

Depressed adolescents show behaviours that can be perceived by their parents as impatient, hostile, indifferent, defiant or showing a lack of concern (Sheeber, Johnston, Chen, Leve, Hops & Davis 2009:871-881). As a result parents may react in a negative way and conflict can occur between the parent and depressed adolescent (Sheeber, Johnston, Chen, Leve, Hops & Davis 2009:871-881). It is likely therefore that depressive behaviour in adolescents can lead to placement of pressure on parents. For example, the parent who experiences his depressed adolescent child as impatient is likely

to feel pressured, because he may view the behaviour as making unreasonable demands on him for the immediate resolution of the situation.

#### 3.5.4 Aggression

Freud conceptualized aggression as internal destructive forces (Grusec & Lytton 1988:307). Aggression appears during the first year of life (Berk 2009:514; Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1989:50) and is usually directed towards sources of frustration and anger (Berk 2009:514).

As mentioned in Chapter 2 (section 2.2.1.1) the experience of the parent-child relationship in the early years of life influences the formation of later relationships (Sibley & Overall 2007:238-249). Individuals who did not form close emotional bonds with their parents in the first years of life are often unable to form meaningful attachments to others (Davis 2004:21). Research indicates that weak attachment is associated with aggression towards parents (section 2.2.1.1).

Learning approaches, on the other hand see aggression as the result of modeling processes, and the reinforcement of aggressive behaviour (Grusec & Lytton 1988:307). As mentioned in Chapter 2 (section 2.2.3) adolescents who perceive their parents as showing antisocial behaviour for which they are rewarded, are more likely to act in an antisocial way (Dogan, Conger, Kim and Masyn 2007:335-349). It has been found, for example that aggressive behaviour in boys is related to the role modelling of masculine stereotypes that promote the use of power and control in relationships (section 2.2.3).

Some children, especially those who are irritable, fearless, impulsive and overactive are at risk for aggression (Berk 2009:516). Whether they become aggressive depends on child rearing conditions. Families with high levels of conflict, poor parenting practices, aggressive peers and exposure to violence on television strongly predict both antisocial activity and reduced sensitivity to others' suffering (Berk 2009:516).

Children who show high levels of aggression in early childhood usually remain aggressive through adolescence into adulthood (Davis 2004:53).

#### 3.5.4.1 Social Cognition and Aggression

Social cognitive deficits and distortions are associated with aggressive behaviour (Berk 2009:517). Aggressive adolescents are likely to attempt to solve a problem by defining it in a hostile way and adopting a hostile goal. They do not investigate the problem thoroughly and do not consider a variety of alternative solutions. Further, they do not anticipate negative consequences for their aggression. In addition, aggressive adolescents are likely to hold beliefs supporting the use of aggression. They believe that aggression is a legitimate response, that it increases self-esteem, helps avoid a negative image, and does not lead to suffering by the victim (Allison 2000:1622-1900; Slaby & Guerra 1988:580-588).

#### 3.5.4.2 Aggression and the Parent-adolescent Relationship

As mentioned in Chapter 2 (section 2.3.8) both the authoritarian parenting style and the overprotective parenting style are associated with aggression in adolescents (Eldeleklioglu 2007:975-986). Parents who are authoritarian or overprotective excessively restrict their adolescent children's behaviour. As a result their adolescent children become aggressive in order to gain autonomy in their lives (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095; Laurent & Derry 1999:21-26).

Recent research suggests a link between social aggression in adolescent girls and maternal psychological control (Loukas, Paulos & Robinson 2005:335-345). That is, adolescent girls whose mothers are overcontrolling and manipulative, and who discourage the expression of their children's independent ideas and opinions, are likely to use aggression in their social interactions with peers (Loukas, Paulos & Robinson 2005:335-345). The

relationship between mothers' overcontrolling parenting style and aggression in the above study was mediated by social anxiety in the adolescent. The researchers suggest that elevated levels of fear of negative evaluation may result from maternal manipulation and disparagement of the adolescent's ideas and opinions. Based on such repeated interchanges with their mothers, girls may become anxious that peers too are negatively evaluating their self-expressions, which in turn may contribute to elevated levels of socially aggressive behaviour (Loukas, Paulos & Robinson 2005:335-345).

### 3.6 Social Development

The family is the first context for social development. As was discussed in Chapter 2, even during adolescence the family retains importance. There is a continued relationship with parents during adolescence, but there are changes in how interaction occurs. For example adolescents more frequently perceive themselves as leading the interactions between them and their parents (Larson, Richards, Moneta, Holmbeck & Duckett 1996:744-754).

As a result of increases in time spent with friends and other people, adolescents begin to have new experiences that are often different from (and sometimes in conflict with) their experiences with family members. As a consequence, the importance of parents in adolescents' lives depends less on their authoritative presence, and the experiences they have shared with their children, than in earlier years. Both the adolescent's need for increased autonomy (Chapter 2, section 2.2.4, 2.2.8) and the expansion of the adolescents' personal domain (section 2.2.9) lead to greater independence from parental supervision. Adolescents take over responsibility for many of their daily activities, and share more personal information with their friends than with their parents (Afifi, Caughlin & Afifi 2007:81). In this way opportunities arise for the development of individuality, autonomy, and identity (Nucci 2001:68; Smetana, Crean & Campione-Barr 2005:42). Parents who attempt to unnecessarily restrict the autonomy of their adolescent children are likely to be placed under pressure by their children (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095; Laurent & Derry 1999:21-26).

### 3.6.1 The Formation of Relationships Outside the Family

Researchers have identified three different levels at which adolescents interact socially with peers: individual friendships, cliques and crowds (Berk 2009:620; Brown 2004:363). Children form friendships in stages. In the first stage, it is important to exchange information on common interests, and to determine the clarity of communication between the partners. Later they explore similarities and differences between them, disclose information about themselves, and resolve conflicts (Grusec & Lytton 1988:218).

As mentioned in Chapter 2 (section 2.3.15.2) peers who influence an individual to follow their decisions or behaviours, are exerting peer pressure (Schad, Szvedo, Antonishak, Hare and Allen 2008:346-358). Peer pressure is a risk factor for adolescent maladjustment, for example substance use with cigarettes, alcohol and cannabis (Rumpold, Klingseis, Dornauer, Kopp, Doering, Hofer, Mumelter & Schusler 2006:1155-1169). Adolescents who experience peer pressure are in turn likely to exert pressure on their parents to allow them freedom to participate in these activities.

### 3.6.2 Social Understanding and Perspective-taking

During adolescence, abstract thought (section 3.3.1) leads to increased understanding of complex social situations (Berk 2009:470). Social understanding refers to an individual's knowledge of others, himself, and of the interaction between them (Grusec & Lytton 1988:255). An adolescent therefore will consider other people's thoughts, feelings, intentions, motivations and personalities (Berk 2009:470; Grusec & Lytton 1988:255). Further, he will think about how he is different from other people around him, and that might have an effect on the development of his self-concept. In addition he will consider aspects such as friendship, fairness and authority that may influence his relationships with others (Grusec & Lytton 1988:255).

As the adolescent's knowledge of other people's inner psychological processes grows, he becomes able to imagine what other people may be thinking and feeling in different situations (Berk 2009:473). This is called perspective-taking. According to Selman's stages of perspective-taking, (Berk 2009:474) adolescents are able to evaluate two people's perspectives simultaneously, and at the same time are able to refer to societal values.

The ability to understand the perspective of others can lead adolescents to manipulate and place pressure on their parents. For example, by mid adolescence, a teenager is able to understand that if he tells his mother that there will be adult supervision at a party, she will think that it is safe enough to let him attend. He understands that his mother thinks that the supervising adult will be concerned about the children's welfare, and keep a watchful eye on the proceedings. At the same time he understands that it is necessary to mislead his mother because parents, generally are not in favour of unsupervised parties. Improvements in social understanding and perspective-taking abilities in adolescents can lead them to manipulate their parents.

Other ways in which adolescents manipulate parents' behaviour have been mentioned in Chapter 2 (section 2.2.4). For example, adolescents put pressure on parents to buy desirable items and agree to certain family activities (Mangleburg and Bristol 1998:11-21; Tustin 2009:165-183). Adolescents manipulate parents by promising rewards such as good behaviour and the completion of chores if parents comply. In addition, adolescents coerce their parents through the threat of negative behaviour if parents do not carry out their wishes (Flurry & Burns 2005:593-601).

The ability to take another individual's emotional perspective and to respond emotionally in a similar way refers to a person's empathy (Berk 2009:414). A lack of empathy by either adolescent or parent is likely to lead adolescents to place pressure on their parents. Adolescents who lack empathy with their parents are unlikely to agree with their parents or comply with their demands for behaviour.

However, on the other hand, if parents do not empathise with their children, they will feel misunderstood and may place pressure on parents to see their viewpoint.

#### 3.6.2.1 Social Problem-solving

Social problem solving is the ability to generate and apply strategies that prevent or resolve disagreements, resulting in outcomes that are both acceptable to others and beneficial to the self (Berk 2009:476). The ability to imagine others' thoughts and intentions is not always accurate and misattribution can lead to difficulties coping with problem situations. Research has indicated that some adolescents do not manage social problem situations well. Adolescents who are aggressive are more likely to interpret peers' behaviour as negative in intent (van Oostrum & Horvath 1997:48-59). If someone bumps into them, they are more likely to perceive this as a deliberate act than are nonaggressive youth, and they are more likely to retaliate in turn (Brown 2004:374).

Poor social problem-solving can lead to conflict in the parent-adolescent relationship. Parents who fail to anticipate problems, and do not respond proactively to manage adolescent behaviour are likely to encounter conflict with their children. Further, both parents and adolescents who are unable to use strategies such as negotiation and compromise are likely to experience conflict. A lack of problem-solving abilities by either parent or adolescent can lead the adolescent to use pressure to force a parent to comply when there is a disagreement.

### 3.7 Moral Development

As the adolescent's social world widens he develops his moral aspects in order to conduct himself in morally acceptable ways with regard to others. Moral development can be viewed as the progressive internalisation of societal standards for right action (Berk 2009:484). Different factors influence the way in which moral development occurs with regard to the parent-child relationship.



### 3.7.1 Moral Reasoning and its Influence on Social Interaction

The cognitive basis of moral reasoning was discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.2.6). According to Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development, adolescents' progress from concrete operational thought to formal operational thought, results in their ability to reason mainly at stages 3 and 4 (Berk 2006:546-557). In other words, adolescents make moral decisions because they want to be a 'good person' in the eyes of others, and in addition, they understand that it is important to maintain social order by adhering to commonly accepted rules for behaviour.

However, moral reasoning is not always representative of moral behaviour. As mentioned in section 2.2.6, even though adolescents know that it is wrong to lie, and are aware of the consequences, they lie to their parents about certain issues, for example dating. Adolescents mislead parents in order to assert their autonomy in the unequal power relationship with parents (Perkins & Turiel 2007:609-621). Adolescents therefore can create conflict with their parents by hiding the truth from them.

Further, family interaction influences moral reasoning. For example, it was discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.3.11.2) that adolescents from divorced families are at risk for poor normative adjustment. Moreover, research has shown that perceptions of interparental conflict are inversely related to moral reasoning in older adolescents (Miller 1997:4492-4578). In other words, adolescents from families where parents argue and experience conflict are less likely to make morally sound decisions.

### 3.7.2 The Role of Parents in the Adoption of Social Norms by their Adolescent Children

As discussed in section Chapter 2 (section 2.2.2), behaviourists believe that people's behaviour is influenced primarily by environmental factors (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:263). Parents use rewards and punishment to influence, or modify their adolescents' behaviour (Corey 2005:238). The use of encouragement

and praise are preferred ways to reinforce positive adolescent behaviour (Corey 2005:239), such as moral reasoning and the adoption of social norms by adolescents.

While behavioural theory emphasises observable behaviour, social learning theory explains behaviour in terms of unobservable aspects such as thoughts, expectations and convictions (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1993:221). According to social learning theory (section 2.2.3), parents play a role in the development of appropriate behaviour through modeling those behaviours. Adolescents therefore, observe their parents and abstract various rules to guide their moral judgement and behaviours (Brody 1978:20-26). In section 2.2.3, the conditions were described under which it is likely that adolescents would imitate a model of behaviour. These are briefly summarized here with reference to the parent-adolescent relationship and interaction. The adolescent is likely to imitate the moral behaviour of his parents when he admires his parents, when he perceives himself as having characteristics similar to his parents, when he expects to be rewarded for his moral behaviour, and if he sees his parents being rewarded for their moral behaviour (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:343).

When the above conditions are not in place, it is unlikely that adolescents will adopt appropriate social norms as modelled by their parents. Adolescents may then place pressure on their parents because they behave in accordance with different social norms, for example delinquent norms for behaviour.

As mentioned in Chapter 2 (section 2.2.4) a sense of relatedness to others, especially parents, leads to internalisation of values and behavioural regulations that are held by parents (Ryan & Deci 2000:319-338). Research shows that positive parent-child interactions are associated with moral development in adolescence (Eisenberg & Morris 2004:164; Feldman 2007:582-597).

Conscience develops when children internalize moral principles of right and wrong (Mussen, Conger, Kagan & Huston 1984:364). Morals are not inherited, but have to be acquired through learning (Gouws & Kruger 1994:174). In other words, adolescents develop their conscience through interaction with others. Research indicates that adolescents frequently take the viewpoint of their parents in moral issues (Leenders & Brugman 2005:65-79).

Authoritative parenting (discussed in section 2.3.8) and interaction that stimulates adolescents to question and expand on their reasoning, is associated with high level moral reasoning in adolescence (Eisenberg & Morris 2004:164). The more parents use power assertion, the less likely it is that their children will internalize moral controls, or conscience (Grusec & Lytton 1988:187). This means that inappropriate parenting styles, such as the authoritarian parenting style can be problematic for the development of conscience. Further, parents who use the permissive parenting style do not encourage the development of a conscience because they do not punish their children when rules are broken, and they seldom teach their children the difference between right and wrong (Gouws & Kruger 1994:181). Adolescents who do not develop a conscience can place their parents under pressure because they do not comply with normative standards of behaviour, and get into trouble at school and elsewhere.

### 3.8 Religious Development

The learning of moral and normative aspects form part of the religious development of adolescents within the family. However, religious exploration can be challenging for parents.

#### 3.8.1 Religious Exploration and Religious Identity

Adolescents may question the religious views that they have acquired from their parents, and explore different options regarding religious belief. Questioning and exploration result in religious doubt, which is an essential component of adolescent ideological development (Puffer, Pence, Graverson, Wolfe, Pate & Clegg

2008:270-284). Religious doubt can lead to a more mature, certain faith (Puffer, Pence, Graverson, Wolfe, Pate & Clegg 2008:270-284). Adolescents who experience religious doubt can create conflict with their religious parents who view doubt (which is a state of uncertainty or indecision regarding religious belief), as unbelief (which is the denial of the existence of God) (Dean 1979:14; Puffer, Pence, Graverson, Wolfe, Pate & Clegg 2008:270-284).

Through exploration adolescents make commitments and religion becomes a part of him as a person (Puffer, Pence, Graverson, Wolfe, Pate & Clegg 2008:270-284).

### 3.8.2 The Effect of Religious Development on the Parent-adolescent Relationship

Religious development implies a broader and more differentiated understanding of one's religion. Such understanding may be associated with growth in the importance of religion for adolescents. Research indicates that increases in the importance of religion in adolescents' lives are associated with positive parent-adolescent relationships (Regnerus & Burdette 2006:175-194). The opposite is also evident. As mentioned in Chapter 2 (section 2.3.19) high levels of parental religious belief are associated with positive parent-adolescent relationships (Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar & Swank 2001:559-596; Pearce & Axinn 1998:810-828; Wilcox 1998:796-809). Pearce and Axinn (1998:810-828) found that the more mothers value religion, the more positive their relationships are with their children. It is likely that parents and adolescents who share common religious views will have similar values and goals. This similarity reduces the likelihood that adolescents will place pressure on their parents.

Further, religious belief encourages children to respect, honour and obey their parents (Pearce & Axinn 1998:810-828; Regnerus & Burdette 2006:175-194). Adolescents raised in a democratic religious family are unlikely to place their parents under pressure because they have been raised in a loving environment with the firm expectation to respect fair authority such as that of their parents. As noted in Chapter 2 (section 2.3.19) religiosity is associated with positive childrearing

attitudes and practices (Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar & Swank 2001:559-596; Pearce & Axinn 1998:810-828). For example high levels of religious involvement are associated with increased monitoring of adolescents' activities (Regnerus 2003:394-413) and plentiful opportunities for positive parent-child interaction, through shared worship and recreational activities (Regnerus & Burdette 2006:175-194). Therefore, adolescents who are raised in a democratic religious family are unlikely to place their parents under pressure, because parents provide an appropriate balance of warmth and demands for high standards of behaviour.

Research discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.3.19), indicates that some conservative religious families use the authoritarian parenting style. This parenting style is not only associated with various negative adolescent outcomes (Aunola, Stattin and Nurmi 2000:205-222; Eldeleklioglu 2007:975-986; Ingoldsby, Schvaneveldt, Supple & Bush 2003:139-159; Lee, Daniels and Kissinger 2006:253-259) but the unquestioning obedience required by the authoritarian parenting style interferes with the adolescents' development of autonomy. As a result adolescents may rebel and reject their parents' religious views and practices (Steinberg 1993:295).

### 3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter the influence of adolescent development on the parent-adolescent relationship was discussed, together with the implications of developmental factors for the placement of pressure on parents. Physical development is an important factor because the bigger physical stature of adolescents is associated with the application of pressure on parents. Other physical developmental factors such as timing of puberty, gender role development and gender stereotyping have emotional and behavioural consequences that make it likely that adolescents will place their parents under pressure.

Adolescents' formal operational cognitive abilities result in improved awareness of themselves and others which can lead to a variety of ways in which adolescents can

influence parents' decisions and behaviour. For example, adolescents may compare their parents' moral and religious viewpoints with those of other people, and place pressure on their parents to defend their beliefs. A problematic aspect of adolescent cognitive development for the parent-adolescent relationship is high levels of egocentrism which can make it difficult for adolescents to understand and anticipate parents' thoughts and emotions.

Personality development was discussed from the viewpoint of three different theories. Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development highlighted identity formation and how identity exploration can pose challenges to the parent-adolescent relationship. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, adolescents whose parents are restrictive and limit opportunities for their children to develop their innate potential, may rebel. McClelland's Cognitive Dissonance Theory explains how adolescents who have placed their parents under some pressure in the past, may experience positive affect and little cognitive dissonance, if they consider placing their parents under a greater amount of pressure to comply with their demands. Further, stress, anxiety, depression and aggression were discussed with regard to the parent-adolescent relationship, and how these affective problems lead to the placement of pressure on parents by the adolescent.

Adolescents' social development results in the formation of relationships outside the family which can lead to pressure being placed on parents as new affiliations are formed. Moreover, improved perspective-taking and social understanding in adolescence can lead to manipulation of parents. Moral development and the influence of inappropriate parenting styles on the adoption and internalization of moral norms in adolescents were explored. Lastly, the role played by religious development and religious exploration by adolescents was discussed, with reference to pressure placed on parents and their religious convictions.

Aspects of adolescent development were chosen according to their applicability to the current study and the practicality of their measurement. Cognitive development

as viewed by Piagetian theory was selected, Erikson's psychosocial theory was selected to frame the adolescent's personality development, including emotional and identity development. Physical development was not selected as a variable for the current investigation because

## CHAPTER 4

### EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the course of the empirical investigation will be described. As was stated in Chapter 1 (section 1.3) the purpose of the empirical investigation is to determine the relationships of various factors in the adolescent, parent and the parent-adolescent relationship, with the placement of pressure on parents, so that guidance can be provided to parents.

In order to achieve the aim of this study, a number of hypotheses were stated with reference to the variables and their relationship to the parent's experience of being pressured. These hypotheses and the rationales for their inclusion in the study are provided in this chapter.

A central aspect in this investigation was the development of an instrument to measure the experience of pressure on parents. The way in which the measurement instrument was developed will be explained in this chapter.

It is evident that there are a large number of factors that may influence pressurisation of parents by their adolescent children. Seeing as little research has been carried out with regard to the pressurisation of parents by their adolescent children, a cautious approach has been taken as to the selection of a specific theoretical point of view. A general theory which takes into account a broad range of factors and allows for an open interpretation of the results is necessary. Therefore relational theory, discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.2.9), which has a broad perspective, and views the child as having a relationship with himself (self-concept), his peers, parents, with ideas, and with moral and religious values, has been used as a theoretical framework for this study. Selection of the factors was done by considering which are likely to be the most important ones in each of the



above relationships, with regard to the pressurisation of parents by their adolescent children. The current study will therefore focus on the following:

- parent factors
  - relationships with adolescent (trust, knowledge and authority) from the parent's point of view
  - parent personality
  - parent self-concept
  
- adolescent factors
  - relationships with adolescent (trust, knowledge and authority) from the adolescent's point of view
  - adolescent personality
  - adolescent identity development
  - friendships
  - peer pressure
  
- family factors
  - family environment

Appropriate questionnaires and tests were chosen to measure the variables that are likely to affect the pressure placed on parents by their adolescent children. A discussion of these instruments will be undertaken in this chapter as well as an explanation of the reasons for choosing them.

A representative sample of adolescent children was selected. Information about the final sample, as well as the way in which the sample was selected, will be discussed in this chapter. Finally, the procedure followed in the investigation will be explained.

## 4.2 Hypotheses

The purpose of this investigation is to formulate educational guidelines for parents in order for them to manage the pressure their adolescents place on them. In order to provide accurate and useful guidance to parents, it is necessary to identify which factors in adolescents make it likely that they will place pressure on their parents. Equally important to identify are those factors in parents which make them vulnerable to being placed under pressure by their adolescent children. Furthermore, it is likely that in situations where a combination of predisposing factors is present, the probability that parents will be placed under pressure by their adolescent children will increase. In situations where several factors are present the relative importance of these factors in the pressure placed on parents by adolescents needs to be established.

The research questions posed in Chapter 1 (section 1.2) led to the formulation of the Hypotheses. In light of the research question regarding factors from the parents' side which may contribute to a vulnerability to pressurisation by the adolescent child, Hypotheses 1 to 5, 7 and 8 were formulated. The research question regarding factors from the adolescents' side which may contribute to pressurisation of parents led to the formulation of Hypotheses 9 to 17. Hypothesis 18 was formulated so that the influence of a combination of factors on the pressurisation of parents could be taken into account.

### **Hypothesis 1**

*There is a significant difference between fathers and mothers with regard to the pressure they experience from their adolescent children.*

### **Rationale**

In Chapter 1 (section 1.1) it was mentioned that many investigations into the parent-adolescent relationship focus on only single aspects. This was identified as a gap in the current research. For example, studies indicate that parent-

adolescent conflicts occur more with mothers compared with fathers (Yau & Smetana 2003:201-211). The higher incidence of conflict with mothers raises the possibility that adolescents are more likely to place pressure on the mother rather than the father. One recent study has explored this possibility. Ciftci, Demir & Bikos (2008:911-922) found that in order to resolve conflict, adolescents are more likely to use forcing strategies (the pursuit of their own needs to the exclusion of the parent's concerns), with their mothers than with their fathers.

The researchers found that, in contrast, adolescents are more likely to use collaborative or accommodating strategies with their fathers (Ciftci, Demir & Bikos 2008). These findings point to the presence of more pressurising behaviours with mothers than with fathers. The limitation of isolating single factors in research is further illustrated by the study carried out by Branje (2008:1627-1651). In research on mother-daughter relationships the researcher found that daughters use dominating and critical behaviours towards their mothers in order to gain an equal amount of power in the relationship. Whether daughters carry out the same behaviours with their fathers with the same purpose in mind was not studied.

Research on extreme parental pressure indicates that mothers are more frequently the target than fathers (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095; Edenborough, Jackson, Mannix & Wilkes 2008:464-473; Pagani, Tremblay, Nagin, Zoccolillo, Vitaro & McDuff 2004:528-537; Walsh & Krienert 2007:563-574). However convincing evidence of the greater incidence of pressurising behaviour by adolescents on mothers compared to fathers across different situations is lacking.

## **Hypothesis 2**

*Parents from different age groups differ significantly with regard to the pressure they experience from their adolescent children.*

## **Rationale**

Current research has not investigated the influence of parental age on the experience of pressure from adolescent children. The possibility exists that very young parents may be more prone to experiencing pressure from their adolescent children, because they are more likely to be single, and possess fewer economic and interpersonal resources to assist them in raising their children, than older parents (Carlson 2006:137-154; Cooney, Pederson, Indelicato & Palkovitz 1993:205-215). On the other hand, there are research findings indicating that most victims of extreme intimidation by their adolescent children are over the age of 40 (Walsh & Krienert 2007:563-574). However it cannot be accepted that older parents are more frequently the target of pressure in a variety of different situations, than younger parents. For example, delayed childbearing is associated with aspects which have a positive influence on parent-child relationships, for example they often have greater educational achievement and more economic resources than younger parents (Cooney, Pederson, Indelicato & Palkovitz 1993:205-215). These advantages may indicate that older parents are less likely to experience pressure from their adolescent children, but this has not been explored in previous research.

### **Hypothesis 3**

*Parents with different working circumstances differ significantly with regard to the pressure they experience from their adolescent children.*

### **Rationale**

The effect of different working circumstances on the experience of pressure by parents from their adolescent children has not properly been explored. Some studies indicate that parents who are well educated and occupy high-level jobs, differ in how they interact with their children, compared with those in less skilled occupations (Maier 2005:414). Educated parents, such as those in professional and technical occupations, stimulate their children more and set higher goals, such as the attainment of higher educational qualifications (Maier 2005:414). They use

more warmth, better communication and verbal praise when disciplining their children (Berk 2009:577). They have a more positive parent-child relationship. It is therefore possible that parents who have high-level occupations experience less pressure from their adolescent children.

The level of stress that parents experience as a result of their work affects the parent-adolescent relationship and may consequently influence the pressure adolescents place on their parents. Current research indicates that if work stress affects overall stress levels in the parent, the consequences for the parent-adolescent relationship are negative (Lerner & Noh 2000:130). Work stress frequently results in parental tiredness and depression in their adolescent children (Sallinen, Rönkä, Kinnunen and Kokko 2007:181-190). However it is not clear whether such adolescents would take advantage of their fatigued parents in order to place them under pressure.

#### **Hypothesis 4**

*There is a significant difference between biological parents and step parents/foster parents with regard to the pressure they experience from their adolescent children.*

#### **Rationale**

The relationship between adolescents and their biological or stepparents/foster parents has not been studied with regard to the placement of pressure on parents. Some studies indicate that it is possible for stepparents to have close ties with their stepchildren. Amato and Gilbreth (1999: 557-573) found that a close relationship with a stepfather is nearly as beneficial as having a close bond with both a biological father and stepfather. The researchers identify the quality of the relationship as the important aspect when investigating the relationship between adolescents and parents or step-parents. For example, they identify parents who engage in democratic parenting practices, such as talking about problems or

setting limits, as likely to promote child well-being and thereby develop a positive parent-adolescent relationship (Amato & Gilbreth 1999: 557-573). Furthermore, research findings indicate that adolescents in single-parent families experience closer relationships with their mothers, than adolescents in blended or divorced families (Falci 2006:123-146). It seems that positive parenting behaviour is more important in determining the quality of the parent-adolescent relationship than whether the parent is a biological or foster parent. Whether this is also true within a context where adolescents put pressure on their parents, has to be determined.

### **Hypothesis 5**

*There is a significant correlation between parent-child relationships (seen from the parent's side) and the pressure parents experience from their adolescent children.*

### **Rationale**

Positive parent-child relationships are unlikely to be associated with pressure placed on parents by their adolescent children. Three important relationships that parents have with their adolescent children are the relationships of trust, knowledge (or understanding), and authority (Fourie 2001:156-159). A parent who trusts and understands his or her adolescent child, and has appropriate authority over him/her is unlikely to experience pressure from that child. However this has not been properly investigated. In particular, disagreements regarding authority can lead to pressurising behaviours from adolescents. The relationship of authority changes significantly during adolescence and youngsters are less willing to accept authority (Miller, Burgoon, Grandpre & Alvaro 2006:241-252). The authority relationship, therefore changes from one where the parent determines many of the activities of the child, to one where the adolescent turns to the parent for advice and guidance, in order to make appropriate decisions himself (Gouws & Kruger 1994:13). If the relationship of authority is not adapted

appropriately, conflict between parents and adolescents can result. One of the ways in which parents exercise their authority is through monitoring of their children's activities. A lack of parental monitoring is associated with negative behaviour in adolescents (Herman, Dornbusch, Herron and Herting 1997:34-67; Kerr & Stattin 2000:366-380; Smetana, Crean & Daddis 2002:275-304; Waizenhofer, Buchanan & Jackson-Newsom 2004:348-360), implies a poor relationship of authority, and a high likelihood of being associated with pressurising behaviour of parents by adolescent children. Furthermore, an imbalance in one educative relationship, for example the relationship of authority, often affects the other relationships between the parent and child. For example, harsh punishment to ensure obedience, results in an overemphasis of the relationship of authority, at the expense of the relationship of trust (Verster, Theron & van Zyl 1990:93).

Parents who experience their children positively in all three relationships are likely to use a democratic parenting style. The democratic parenting style has been identified by many studies as the most effective approach for a healthy parent-child relationship (Fallon & Bowles 1998:599-608; Mackey, Arnold and Pratt 2001:243-268). It is therefore unlikely that parents who use the democratic approach will experience severe pressure from their adolescent children. However, parents who use other parenting styles, such as the authoritarian, permissive or the uninvolved parenting style may experience a great deal of pressure from their children. These less effective parenting styles lead to negative adolescent behaviour, such as aggression (Eldeleklioglu 2007:975-986), distrustfulness (Baumrind 1971:1-103), poor emotional self-regulation (Berk 2009:571), anxiousness (Blatt-Eisengart & Cauffman 2006:47-58; Hale, Engels & Meeus 2006:407-417), and drug use and delinquency (Berk 2009:571).). These behaviours and the negative consequences arising from them, increase the likelihood that pressure will be placed by adolescents on their parents.

## **Hypothesis 6**

*There is a significant correlation between the family environment and the pressure which parents experience from their adolescent children.*

### **Rationale**

Adolescents in positive family environments where there are, for example, appropriate levels of cohesion (or closeness), open communication, and low levels of conflict, are unlikely to place pressure on their parents. The research findings of Richmond and Stocker (2006:663-669) indicated that family cohesion is more important to adolescent adjustment than the relationships between parents and their children. This implies that whole family functioning influences adolescents' adjustment beyond that accounted for by the relationships between individuals in the family. In family environments characterised by appropriate levels of family cohesion, the possibility is smaller for adolescents to place pressure on their parents.

Family environments characterised by high levels of open communication encourage parental understanding of the child's self-concept (Sillars, Koerner & Fitzpatrick 2005:102-128) and lead to low levels of depression, less substance use and less sexual risk taking, compared to adolescents who experience poor communication with parents (Ackard, Neumark-Sztainer, Story & Perry 2006:59-66; Henrich, Brookmeyer, Shrier & Shahar 2006:286-297; Smetana, Crean and Daddis 2002:275-304). The absence of negative adolescent behaviours suggest that it is unlikely that parents in families with high levels of open communication will experience pressure from their adolescent children.

Researchers are of the opinion that parent-adolescent conflict is important because it leads to the rapid realignment of roles and relationships during the teenage years which is necessary for adolescent development (Laursen 1995:55-70; Nucci 2001:68; Smetana, Crean & Campione-Barr 2005:42; Steinberg 1990:270). It is



through conflict and associated parent-adolescent negotiation, that agreement is reached and the personal domain is socially constructed (Smetana 1995:176). Negotiation continues through adolescence because the boundaries of adolescents' personal domains expand with age (Darling, Cumsille & Pena-Alampay 2005:52). While some conflict between parents and adolescents may be adaptive, high levels of conflict are likely to be correlated with high levels of pressure being placed on parents by adolescents.

### **Hypothesis 7**

*There is a significant correlation between the self-concept of parents and the pressure they experience from their adolescent children.*

#### Rationale

Parents who feel confident about their parenting abilities, or have high parenting self-efficacy (PSE) are unlikely to experience pressure from their adolescent children. Research indicates that PSE may operate as a mediating variable in the parent-child relationship. For example, parents who experience success in parenting, with positive child outcomes experience increases in PSE. The increase in PSE in turn leads to further parenting success. Similarly parents who experience frustration and non-optimal outcomes with their children, experience decreases in PSE, which leads to further parenting difficulties (Jones & Prinz 2005:341-363). Parents with lower levels of PSE may be more susceptible to pressure from their adolescent children because they lack confidence in their ability to make correct choices regarding parenting.

### **Hypothesis 8**

*There is a significant correlation between the personality characteristics of parents and the pressure they experience from their adolescent children.*

## **Rationale**

Current research indicates that personality traits such as high levels of Neuroticism, and low levels of Conscientiousness and Agreeableness in parents may place them in situations where they will be pressurised by their adolescent children. For example, anxious parents are less nurturing and more restrictive, than parents who are not prone to anxiety (Lindhout, Markus, Hoogendijk, Borst, Maingay, Spinhoven, van Dyck & Boer 2006:89-102). Parents who have high levels of Neuroticism and a tendency to be depressed, may lack the necessary energy to discipline their teenage children (Berk 2009:571), and may therefore easily be placed under pressure to comply with their children's requests. Parents who have low levels of Conscientiousness, may fail to lay down firm rules regarding, for example homework. In addition, they may respond impulsively to their child's behaviour, without thinking of the consequences. Parents who have low Conscientiousness may be placed under pressure to agree to their adolescents' requests, because these parents do not enforce high standards for themselves or their children (Hogan & Ones 1997:859). Parents low in Agreeableness are likely to be abrasive, manipulative, and cynical (Shiner & Caspi 2003:2-32). The antagonistic traits of parents with low levels of Agreeableness, may evoke resistance from their adolescent children.

Parents who score high in Extraversion, Conscientiousness and Agreeableness, and low in Neuroticism are likely to experience positive relationships with their adolescent children, making it unlikely that they will be placed under pressure by them. Extravert parents are likely to be enthusiastic, energetic and involved in their children's lives (Shiner & Caspi 2003:2-32). Conscientious parents are responsible, careful and prefer order in their environment (Hogan & Ones 1997:859) and agreeable parents tend to be empathic, altruistic, helpful, and trusting (Shiner & Caspi 2003:2-32). Emotionally balanced, involved, responsible and helpful parents are unlikely to be placed under pressure by their adolescent children.

## **Hypothesis 9**

*The pressure that parents experience depends on the gender of the adolescent child.*

### **Rationale**

It has been found that conflicts between parents and daughters are more emotionally intense than those between parents and sons (Allison & Schultz 2004:101-119; Lundell, Grusec, McShane & Davidov 2008:555-571). Further, research indicates that mothers experience more conflict with daughters than with sons (Laursen 1995:55-70). However, as mentioned in Chapter 1 (section 1.1), few studies have found a correlation between conflict and pressurising behaviours by adolescents on their parents. While girls experience higher levels of anger in disagreements with their parents than boys, most studies reveal that it is more likely that boys, rather than girls will use extreme forms of pressure, such as intimidation, with their parents (Mesch 2006:473-495; Stewart, Burns & Leonard 2007:183-191; Walsh & Krienert 2007:563-574). Male adolescents are more aggressive than female adolescents (Eldeleklioglu 2007:975-986) and direct their aggression towards their parents more often than girls do (Honjo & Wakabayashi 1988). It remains to be established whether boys or girls are more likely to place pressure on their parents over a variety of issues.

## **Hypothesis 10**

*The pressure that parents experience depends on the age of the adolescent child.*

### **Rationale**

In contrast to younger adolescents, older adolescents feel less close to their parents, and are less likely to share intimate information with them (Falci 2006:123-146; Sallinen, Rönkä, Kinnunen and Kokko (2007:181-190); Scabini,

Marta and Lanz 2006:51). Other research shows that older adolescents have less need for emotional support from parents, than younger adolescents (Lundell, Grusec, McShane & Davidov 2008:555-571; Scabini, Marta & Lanz 2006:54). It is possible that a decrease in closeness and a lesser need for emotional support from parents, can lead older adolescents to place pressure on their parents.

It has been established that there are differences between younger and older adolescents with regard to pressurising strategies in purchase situations. In order to attain their goals, younger adolescents are more likely to exert pressure using emotional and bargaining strategies, as well as persistence and manipulation, if they anticipate resistance from their parents (Cowan, Drinkard & MacGavin 1984:1391-1398). As the adolescent matures, there is an increase in strategies such as reasoning, and there are decreases in strategies such as persistence and asking. However, it is unclear from the research, how adolescents of different ages apply pressure on their parents in circumstances other than purchase situations.

### **Hypothesis 11**

*The pressure that parents experience depends on the birth position of their adolescent child.*

### **Rationale**

Many studies indicate that parents favour, and invest more resources in firstborns and lastborns, compared to middle children (Sulloway 2003:168). These preferences may make parents more vulnerable to pressurising behaviour from their firstborn and lastborn children, compared to middle children. Other factors related to birth order position, such as differing personality traits and social skills may also play a role in determining the probability that adolescents in different order positions will place pressure on their parents. For example, younger siblings tend to be more extraverted than older ones (Dixon, Reyes, Leppert & Pappas

2008:119-128; Pollet, Dijkstra, Barelds & Buunk 2010:742-745) and it may be that extraversion is correlated with pressurising behaviours. Also, compared with first-borns, those with older siblings are better able to master social situations (Baron & Byrne 1994:277-278) which can include the younger sibling's relationship with their parents. On the other hand, youngest siblings tend to be more impulsive because they are not saddled with caretaking responsibilities from which they might develop nurturing qualities (Dixon, Reyes, Leppert & Pappas 2008:119-128; Pollet, Dijkstra, Barelds & Buunk 2010:742-745). As a result of being looked after by both parents and older siblings, youngest siblings have different experiences and expectations centred on being taken care of. In other words, they may develop a tendency to be selfish. This quality can lead to pressurising behaviours on the part of youngest children to have their needs satisfied, perhaps at the expense of their parents' needs.

### **Hypothesis 12**

*There is a significant difference between the parent-child relationships (seen from the adolescent's side) of those adolescents whose parents experience high pressure and those who experience low pressure.*

### **Rationale**

Adolescents who have positive perceptions of their relationships with their parents are unlikely to place pressure on their parents. Healthy parent-adolescent relationships are reflected in adolescents' reports of positive parent involvement, for example higher levels of parent concern, family discussion and family cohesiveness, compared with adolescent reports of other parenting behaviours (Garg, Levin, Urajnik and Kauppi 2005:653-661). These positive aspects of the relationships between parents and their adolescent children as seen by adolescents, make it likely that adolescents have their needs fulfilled by their parents, and they are therefore unlikely to place pressure on their parents to achieve their goals.

It is possible that another type of interaction between parents and adolescents develops, which is not determined by the parents, but rather develops because adolescent children pressurise their parents to behave in certain ways. Baumrind (1971:1-103) alludes to this type of interaction when she describes some permissive parents as those who are unable to enforce their directives, and who avoid open confrontation with their children. In addition, Berk (2000:564) has noted that some permissive parents lack confidence in their ability to influence their child's behaviour. Further, it has been observed by many high school teachers, that some parents are aware that their adolescent is involved in delinquent acts, such as smoking or drinking alcohol, but are reluctant to confront their child. It appears that such parents are unable to enforce their directives, lack confidence in their ability to influence their child's behaviour, and may be afraid of their adolescent children (Eldeleklioglu 2007:975-986). An additional parenting style may therefore be identified, one that is determined by the adolescent. Such a parenting style may be labelled as a *forced* permissive parenting style.

### **Hypothesis 13**

*There is a significant difference between the adolescent-peer relationships of those adolescents whose parents experience high pressure and those who experience low pressure.*

### **Rationale**

Adolescents spend more time with peers than with other people (Berk 2009:607). As a consequence they are exposed to the living circumstances of their friends, which may differ greatly from those they experience at home. For example, adolescents may perceive that their peers have privileges that they do not have, and therefore place their parents under pressure to grant them those privileges. Research indicates that association with delinquent peers has a negative influence

on adolescents and increases the likelihood of problematic adolescent behaviour, for example cigarette smoking (Brook, Pahl & Ning 2006:639-651; Buehler 2006:109-124; Reitz, Dekovic, Meijer & Engels 2006:272-295). Adolescents who spend time with unsuitable friends and become involved in delinquent behaviour experience conflict with parents. Conflict creates the potential for them to place pressure on their parents.

#### **Hypothesis 14**

*There is a significant difference between the peer pressure of those adolescents whose parents experience high pressure and those who experience low pressure.*

#### **Rationale**

Some adolescents may experience pressure from their peers that can, in turn lead to the placement of pressure by adolescents on their parents. Peers can place pressure on their friends with negative consequences, for example adolescents can be placed under pressure to participate in undesirable activities (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095). Adolescents under such peer pressure may in turn pressurise parents to allow these behaviours. It is likely, therefore that there is a correlation between peer pressure and pressurising behaviour on parents by their adolescent children.

Research that has been carried out indicates that peer pressure positively predicts aggression in adolescents (Eldeleklioglu 2007:975-986), and adolescents who assault parents tend to have friends who assault their parents as well (Agnew & Huguley 1989:611-711). Peer pressure is therefore likely to correlate with pressurising behaviour by adolescents on their parents.

### **Hypothesis 15**

*There is a significant difference between the identity formation of adolescents whose parents experience high pressure and those who experience low pressure.*

#### **Rationale**

Adolescents who are experiencing an identity crisis experiment with alternatives (Berk 2009:464) and 'try on' different identities. The period of identity exploration can pose challenges to the parent-adolescent relationship (Kidwell, Dunham, Bacho, Pastorino & Portes 1995:786-793; Kroger 2007:53). Adolescents may exert pressure on their parents when they try out different options, and express viewpoints and behave in ways that are not necessarily accepted by their parents.

### **Hypothesis 16**

*There is a significant difference between the self-concept of adolescents whose parents experience high pressure and those who experience low pressure.*

#### **Rationale**

A negative self-concept in adolescents is likely to be associated with the placement of pressure on parents. A negative self-concept or lack of self-concept clarity in adolescents is associated with susceptibility to interpersonal influence (Bester & Fourie 2006:157-169; Isaksen & Roper 2008:1063-1087). Excessive openness to interpersonal influence may indicate that adolescents who have negative self-concepts are more likely to experience peer pressure and in turn pressurise their parents to allow them to participate in certain behaviours. Bester and Fourie (2006:157-169) further found that a lack of self-concept development in adolescents is associated with poor parent relationships. It is likely that adolescents who do not have satisfactory relationships with their parents place pressure on their parents to obtain their goals over a variety of issues.



### **Hypothesis 17**

*There is a significant difference between the personality characteristics of adolescents whose parents experience high pressure and those who experience low pressure.*

#### **Rationale**

It is likely that adolescents who have high levels of Extraversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, and low levels of Neuroticism enjoy positive relationships with their parents. Such adolescents are happy, emotionally stable, agreeable and have good self-regulation abilities, therefore making it unlikely that they will place pressure on their parents. However, adolescents who have high levels of Neuroticism and score low on measures of Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness may be more likely to place pressure on their parents to give in to their wishes. Such adolescents may be anxious, depressed or angry, selfish, manipulative, impulsive and irresponsible. These negative personality traits may place adolescents' behaviour and priorities in opposition to those of their parents, leading them to place their parents under pressure.

### **Hypothesis 18**

*The proportion of the variance of the pressure that adolescents put on their parents which is explained by several variables, is greater than the proportion which is explained by any of the variables on its own.*

#### **Rationale**

Other studies with complex dependent variables have established that a combination of different factors explains more of the variance in a dependent variable than any factor on its own (Marais 1992:184-191). It appears from the current literature study that the exertion of pressure on parents by adolescent

children is influenced by a variety of factors that are related to parent-child interaction. Not only individual factors in both the parent and adolescent but also adolescent developmental factors can influence the pressure placed on parents by adolescents. Furthermore, family factors and wider contextual factors cannot be excluded in a study of pressurisation of parents by adolescent children.

#### 4.3 Questionnaires and Measuring instruments

A range of tests were used in this study as several different variables were measured. A list of the tests appears in Table 4.1.

TABLE 4.1 TESTS AND QUESTIONNAIRES COMPLETED BY PARENTS AND ADOLESCENTS

Parents	Parent Pressure Questionnaire
	Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire (from the parent's viewpoint)
	Parent Self-concept Questionnaire
	Family Environment Scales
	Five Factor personality Inventory (NEO-FFI-3)
Adolescents	Adolescent Identity Development
	Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire (from the adolescent's viewpoint)
	Adolescent Self-concept Questionnaire
	Adolescent Relationship with Friends Questionnaire
	Adolescent Peer Pressure Questionnaire
	Five Factor Personality Inventory (NEO-FFI-3)

\* Please note: Copyright regulations prevent the publication of certain tests. Therefore they have not been included in an appendix to this work.

The relationship and self-concept questionnaires for the parents and adolescents, as well as the identity development questionnaire and peer pressure questionnaire

for the adolescents, were selected because relational theory is used to frame the current study. The questionnaires were developed using a South African sample, and are therefore appropriate for use in the South African context of this investigation. The NEO-FFI 3 was used in the current study. It is not standardised for a South African population, but because it is a questionnaire which reflects current theory on personality traits, and the language used in both the parent and adolescent versions is not above Grade 5 level, it was reasoned that the test would not disadvantage participants who do not have a high literacy level. The Family Environment Scales was not developed for the South African population, but contained subscales which were relevant to the current study, for example Cohesion, Communication and Conflict.

In addition to the above questionnaires, both parents and adolescents completed items which yielded biographical information, such as gender, age and family size.

#### **4.3.1 Parent Questionnaire**

The questionnaire for parent completion consists of Sections A, B, C and D. Section A contains questions regarding biographical data of the parent.

Section B contains the Parent Pressure Questionnaire, the Parental Self-Concept Questionnaire, as well as the questionnaire measuring the relationships of trust, knowledge and authority (as seen from the parent's perspective). Section C of the parent questionnaire consists of the Family Environment Scale, and Section D contains the NEO Five-Factor Inventory to measure parent personality.

#### ***Measuring Instruments for Parents***

A list of the tests and questionnaires completed by parents appears in Table 4.2, and full details of each test follow.

TABLE 4.2 SUMMARY OF TESTS AND QUESTIONNAIRES COMPLETED BY PARENTS

Parents	Parent Pressure Questionnaire
	Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire (from the parent's viewpoint)
	Parent Self-concept Questionnaire
	Family Environment Scales
	Five Factor Personality Inventory (NEO-FFI-3)

➤ Parent Pressure Questionnaire

For the purposes of the current study, a questionnaire had to be developed to measure pressure placed on parents by their adolescent children. As mentioned in Chapter 1 (section 1) little research has been carried out regarding the placement of pressure on parents by adolescents. Most research has examined extreme abuse of parents by adolescents, or adolescent pressurising behaviours within certain defined areas, for example purchase decisions. However, adolescents exert pressure on their parents frequently, and in everyday situations. This kind of pressure has not been studied and consequently not measured either.

Many of the items in the parent pressure questionnaire were developed as a result of informal conversations with parents, where they mentioned that their adolescent children pressurise them in different ways and in different situations. Some items developed from these conversations are:

- My child keeps complaining until I give in
- My child pressurises me to change rules we previously agreed upon
- If I say my child cannot do something, s/he argues that his/her friends are allowed to do it and then I give in
- My child puts me under pressure to give permission to do what his/her friends are doing, even if I feel their activities are wrong

As mentioned in Chapter 2 (section 2.1) the presence of conflict is an indication that there is potential for adolescents to place pressure on parents. As a result, items such as the following were included in the questionnaire:

- During disagreements my child makes me feel that I am wrong
- I give in to my child's demands in order to avoid conflict with him/her

An area that has focused on the application of pressure by adolescents on parents is decision-making regarding purchase behaviours, discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.2.4). This research led to the development of items such as:

- My child asks me to buy items that s/he sees advertised in magazines and on television even if I cannot afford them
- My child places pressure on me to buy unnecessary items
- I give in when my child keeps asking for something

Recently, research has been carried out regarding extreme forms of pressure such as parent abuse (section 2.1). This research led to the development of items such as:

- My child threatens me until I give in to him/her
- I feel bullied by my child

➤ Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire

It can be assumed that where pressure on parents exists there will be relationship problems. As stated in Chapter 1 (section 1), there is a lack of research on parent pressure by adolescents. Therefore we will have to fall back to factors that relate to the parent-child relationship in general, to identify possible factors which relate to the placement of pressure on parents.



Since it is a new test, reliability and validity had to be determined and will be discussed in Chapter 5 (section 5.3) in the current study.

➤ Parental Self-concept Questionnaire

As mentioned in Chapter 1 (section 1) and Chapter 2 (section 2.3.3.1.1) parents who experience success in practical parenting, with positive child outcomes, experience increases in their parental self-concept, or parenting self-efficacy (PSE). An increase in PSE in turn leads to further parenting success. Similarly parents who experience frustration and non-optimal outcomes with their children, experience decreases in PSE, which leads to further parenting difficulties (Jones & Prinz 2005:341-363). Parents with lower levels of PSE may be more susceptible to pressure from their adolescent children because they lack confidence in their ability to make correct choices regarding parenting.

Fourie's (2001: Appendix B) self-concept questionnaire, initially developed for adolescents, was adapted for use with parents to measure parenting self-concept in the current study. For example:

- 'I often feel unsure of myself'  
was changed to
- 'I often feel unsure of myself as a parent'.
  
- 'I feel I am achieving something with my life'  
was changed to
- 'I feel I am achieving something in my role as a parent'.

There is a total of 20 items in the questionnaire. The parents answered the items according to a 6-point scale as described in section 4.3.2. Since the original statements were changed to apply to the parental role, reliability for

measurement of the parent's self-concept will be established with the current study.

➤ Family Environment Scales

In Chapter 2 factors such as cohesion (section 2.3.4), communication (section 2.3.5), time parents spend with their adolescent children (section 2.3.6), monitoring of adolescents (2.3.7) and various parenting styles (section 2.3.8), moral and religious orientation (2.3.18), were identified as important in the parent-child relationship with possible implications for the placement of pressure on parents by their adolescent children. A questionnaire which covers these family factors was difficult to find. However, the Family Environment Scales measures many family factors relevant to the current study.

The Family Environment Scales were therefore used to measure parents' perceptions of their family environments (Moos & Moos 1986:1). There are ten subscales:

- The Cohesion subscale measures the degree of commitment, help, and support family members provide for one another. An item from this subscale is 'Family members really help and support one another'
- The Expressiveness subscale assesses the extent to which family members are encouraged to act openly and to express their feelings directly using items such as 'Family members often keep their feelings to themselves' (reversed item). This subscale was used to give an indication of the amount of communication in the family
- The Conflict subscale measures the amount of openly expressed anger, aggression, and conflict among family



members, for example 'We fight a lot in our family'. The Conflict subscale was used to measure the level of conflict in the family which is likely to be related to pressurising behaviour by adolescents

- The Independence subscale gives an indication of the extent to which family members are assertive, are self-sufficient, and make their own decisions. A sample item is 'We don't do things on our own very often in our family' (reversed item). Time spent with parents and monitoring of adolescents was measured using this subscale
- The Achievement Orientation subscale measures the extent to which activities (such as school and work) are cast into an achievement-oriented or competitive framework. An example from this subscale is 'We feel it is important to be the best at whatever you do'
- The Intellectual-Cultural Orientation assesses the degree of interest in political, social, intellectual and cultural activities in the family with items such as 'We often talk about political and social problems'. The ICO subscale was seen to be related to the level of education of the parent
- The Active-Recreational Orientation measures the extent of participation in social and recreational activities using items such as 'We spend most weekends and evenings at home' (reversed item)

- The Moral-Religious subscale assesses the degree of emphasis on ethical and religious issues and values. An example of an item from this subscale is ‘Family members attend church, synagogue, or Sunday School fairly often’. This subscale was used in the study to indicate whether there was a strong moral and religious orientation in the family
- The Organization subscale gives an indication of the degree of importance of clear organisation and structure in planning family activities and responsibilities. A sample item from the subscale is ‘Activities in our family are pretty carefully planned’. The Organisation subscale was used in the current study to give an indication of the presence of a democratic parenting style
- The Control subscale measures the extent to which set rules and procedures are used to run family life with items such as ‘There are very few rules to follow in our family’ (reversed item). This subscale was used to give an indication of the parenting style of the parent.

The items were answered on a 2-point scale where 1 indicated that the statement in the item was true, or mostly true, and 2 indicated that the statement was false, or mostly false for the family.

According to the information in the manual (Moos & Moos 1986:8), the following internal-consistency coefficients were established using 1067 families:

TABLE 4.3 : RELIABILITY OF FAMILY ENVIRONMENT SUB-SCALES

Subscale	Number of Items	Reliability Coefficient (internal consistency)
Cohesion	9	0.78
Expressiveness	9	0.69
Conflict	9	0.75
Independence	9	0.61
Achievement Orientation	9	0.64
Intellectual- Cultural Orientation	9	0.78
Active- Recreational Orientation	9	0.67
Moral-Religious Emphasis	9	0.78
Organisation	9	0.76
Control	9	0.67

The reliability coefficients that vary between 0.61 and 0.78 indicate that the sub-scales of the Family Environment can be accepted as reliable.

➤ Five Factor Personality Inventory – NEO-FFI-3

Research indicates, as mentioned in Chapter 1 (section 1) that Negative Emotionality, or Neuroticism personality traits are associated with conflict in

the parent-adolescent relationship, while Extraversion is inversely related to conflict with parents. It is possible that the presence of conflict may be associated with the pressure adolescents place their parents under. Further, research indicates that personality factors such as low parental self-efficacy (PSE) and certain personality traits such as Neuroticism and Disagreeableness, can be associated with negative child behaviour, such as depression, aggression and juvenile delinquency, which may lead to pressurisation of parents. However it is unclear which personality traits on the adolescents' side cause them to place pressure on their parents. Similarly, there is uncertainty as to which personality traits on the parents' side, make them vulnerable to the placement of pressure from their adolescent children. It was therefore decided to test the personality of both the parent and the adolescent.

The NEO Five-Factor Inventory (McCrae & Costa 2010:19) was used to measure parent personality. The Self-report Questionnaire measures five domains of personality: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness.

- A high score in the Neuroticism domain indicates maladjustment, while a low score is a sign of emotional stability. An example of an item measuring Neuroticism is 'I often feel tense and jittery'.
- A high score in the Extraversion domain is an indication of sociability, assertiveness, high levels of activity and talkativeness while a low score points to an introvert parent with traits of being reserved and independent. The Extraversion domain is measured by items such as 'I don't get much pleasure from chatting with people' (reversed item).

- High scores on the Openness to Experience dimension indicate an active imagination, aesthetic sensitivity, attentiveness to inner feelings, preference for variety, intellectual curiosity, and independence of judgement. Low scores indicate a conservative nature. An example of an item measuring Openness to Experience is ‘I think it’s interesting to learn and develop new hobbies’.
- The Agreeableness dimension measures interpersonal tendencies. High scores indicate altruism, sympathy to others and the belief that others will be equally helpful in return. Low scores on Agreeableness are an indication of disagreeableness, antagonism, egocentrism, scepticism of others’ intentions and competitiveness rather than cooperation. Agreeableness is measured with items such as ‘I tend to assume the best about people’.
- The Conscientiousness dimension concerns the control of impulses. High scores indicate that an individual is purposeful, strong-willed and determined. Individuals who obtain low scores are not necessarily lacking in moral principles, but they are less exacting in applying them, and more lacksadaisical in working toward their goals. An example of an item measuring Conscientiousness is ‘Sometimes I’m not as dependable or reliable as I should be’ (reversed item).

The NEO-FFI-3 scale was standardised with 635 American adults aged 21-91 years. While the test was developed to be answered on a 5-point scale, it was decided to use a 6 point scale, as described in paragraph 4.3.2, in the current

study in order to avoid respondents choosing the middle, or neutral option too often.

The test consists of a total of 60 items. The amount of items for each domain and the relevant reliability coefficients appear in the following table:

TABLE 4.4: RELIABILITY OF THE PARENT PERSONALITY QUESTIONNAIRE (McCrae & Costa 2010:84)

Domain	Number of Items	Reliability (coefficient alpha)
Neuroticism	12	0.86
Extraversion	12	0.79
Openness to Experience	12	0.78
Agreeableness	12	0.79
Conscientiousness	12	0.82

The above reliability coefficients indicate that the NEO-FFI-3 is a reliable instrument with which to measure personality factors.

#### 4.3.2 Adolescent Questionnaire

The questionnaire for completion by adolescents consists of Sections A, B, C and D. Section A contains questions regarding biographical data of the adolescent. Section B of the adolescent questionnaire consists of the identity development questionnaire. Section C contains mixed items that measure the relationships of trust, knowledge and authority with the parent (as seen from the adolescent's perspective) as well as items measuring the relationship of the adolescent with friends, the experience of peer pressure and the self-concept of the adolescent. Section D consists of the NEO Five-Factor Inventory to measure adolescent personality.

### *Measuring Instruments for Adolescents*

A list of the tests and questionnaires completed by adolescents appears in Table 4.1, and full details of each test follow.

TABLE 4.5 TESTS AND QUESTIONNAIRES COMPLETED BY ADOLESCENTS

Adolescents	Adolescent Identity Development Questionnaire
	Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire (from the adolescent's viewpoint)
	Adolescent Self-concept Questionnaire
	Adolescent Relationship with Friends Questionnaire
	Adolescent Peer Pressure Questionnaire
	Five Factor Personality Inventory (NEO-FFI-3)

➤ Adolescent Identity Development Questionnaire

As mentioned in Chapter 1 (section 1) current research indicates that adolescent experimentation with different identities can pose challenges to the parent-adolescent relationship. However, whether identity formation during adolescence can be linked to a situation where parents are put under pressure, has not been studied. It was therefore necessary to test identity formation during adolescence.

The questionnaire developed by Bester (1990:90-96) was used to measure adolescent identity development. The questionnaire consists of 75 items. There are 15 items which measure the development of each of Erikson's five phases of identity formation, namely:

- Trust vs mistrust
- Autonomy vs doubt
- Initiative vs guilt

- Industry vs inferiority
- Identity formation vs identity confusion

Each item consists of two statements. The respondent chooses one of the two statements, either option 1 or option 2, which best describes how s/he feels. The first stage of Erikson's identity development is that of trust-mistrust and is measured by an item such as:

- I am continually unsure about myself (1)  
I feel fairly sure about myself (2)

An example of an item that tests the second phase of autonomy-doubt is:

- I doubt myself when I make mistakes (1)  
I do not doubt myself even if I make mistakes (2)

The third stage of initiative-guilt is measured by an item such as:

- I have let numerous opportunities of achieving success pass me by (1)  
I make the most of every opportunity to achieve success (2)

A typical item that measures the fourth stage of industry-inferiority is:

- If I neglect my duty, it worries me (1)  
If I neglect my duty, it does not worry me (2)

The fifth stage of identity-confusion is measured by an item such as:

- When I have to do something, I usually say to myself:  
I know I can do it (1)



I don't think I can do it (2)

The questionnaire was standardised with a sample of 334 high school learners. The reliability coefficients were obtained using the Kuder-Richardson formula.

TABLE 4.6 RELIABILITY OF IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONNAIRE (Bester 1990:94)

Identity Questionnaire	Reliability
Subsections:	
Trust-mistrust	0.74
Autonomy-doubt	0.64
Initiative-guilt	0.74
Industry-inferiority	0.75
Identity-confusion	0.72
Total Identity Development	0.91

The reliability coefficients provided in Table 4.6 indicate that the Identity Development questionnaire is reliable for the measurement of adolescent identity development.

➤ Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire

The English version of the Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire, seen from the adolescent's side (Fourie 2001: Appendix B) was administered to the adolescents to obtain information regarding their relationships of trust, knowledge and authority with regard to their parents. The adolescents answered the items on a 6-point scale as described above. Information regarding the reliability of the test appears in Table 4.7.



The reliability of the self-concept questionnaire is 0.86 (Fourie 2001:178).

➤ Adolescent Relationship with Friends Questionnaire

As mentioned in Chapter 2 (section 2.3.15.1) friendships become increasingly important during the adolescent years. Problematic friendships negatively relate to psychological well-being in adolescence (Hartup & Stevens 1997:355-370) and are likely to lead to conflict and pressurisation of parents. It was therefore important to measure the quality of the adolescents' peer relationships in the current study.

The adolescents' relationship with friends was measured using the English version of the questionnaire developed by Fourie (2001: Appendix B). Examples of items are:

- I feel at ease with people
- I don't need friends in my life (reversed)
- I do my share to keep friendships alive

The items were answered according to a 6-point scale as described in 4.3.2 and 4.3.3.4.

TABLE 4.8 : RELIABILITY OF THE RELATIONSHIP WITH FRIENDS QUESTIONNAIRE (Fourie 2001:178).

Questionnaire	N	Number of Items	Reliability Coefficient
Relationship with Friends	453	19	0.78

The reliability coefficient indicated in Table 4.8 shows that Fourie's questionnaire measuring adolescents' relationship with friends is a reliable one.

➤ Adolescent Peer Pressure Questionnaire

It was mentioned in Chapter 1 (section 1) that it can be accepted that antisocial behaviour in adolescents will lead to conflict with their parents when parents try to limit their child's undesirable behaviour, for example by discouraging the continuation of a relationship with certain peers. In such situations, the possibility exists that adolescents can pressurise their parents to change their attitudes or behaviour. It was therefore necessary to test the amount of peer pressure adolescents experience.

The English version of Fourie's questionnaire measuring peer pressure (2001: Appendix B) was used. The questionnaire consists of items such as:

- I am often afraid that my friends won't accept me
- It seems to me I need my friends more than they need me
- I'm not strong enough to make my own choices

The reliability of the questionnaire is indicated in the table below.

TABLE 4.9 : PEER PRESSURE

Questionnaire	N	Number of items	Reliability coefficient
Peer pressure	452	22	0.86

The reliability coefficient of 0.86 shown in Table 4.9 indicates that Fourie's questionnaire measuring adolescents' experience of peer pressure is a reliable one.

➤ Five Factor Personality Inventory – NEO-FFI-3

It was stated in section 4.3.3 that in the light of research findings it is possible that personality has a relationship with pressure being placed on parents by adolescents. However it is unclear which personality traits on the adolescents' side cause them to place pressure on their parents. It was therefore necessary to test adolescent personality as well as parent personality.

The NEO Five-Factor Inventory (McCrae & Costa 2010:19) was used to measure adolescent personality. The self-report questionnaire measures five domains of personality, as explained in section 4.3.3.2.1: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. While the test was developed to be answered on a 5-point scale, it was decided to use a 6 point scale, as described in paragraph 4.3.2, in the current study in order to avoid respondents choosing the middle, or neutral option too often.

The NEO-FFI-3 adolescent scale was standardised with an American sample of 500 adolescents aged 12-20 years(McCrae & Costa 2010:84).

The NEO-FFI-3 has the following reliability coefficients:

TABLE 4.10 RELIABILITY OF THE ADOLESCENT PERSONALITY QUESTIONNAIRE (McCrae & Costa 2010:84)

Domain	Number of Items	Reliability Coefficient Alpha
Neuroticism	12	0.82
Extraversion	12	0.80
Openness to Experience	12	0.78
Agreeableness	12	0.72
Conscientiousness	12	0.83

The reliability coefficients provided in Table 4.10 indicate that the NEO-FFI-3 is a reliable instrument for the measurement of adolescent personality.

#### 4.3.3 Summary of tests used

A summary in table format of the tests used in the current study appears in table 4.11.

TABLE 4.11 SUMMARY OF TESTS

Respondent	Questionnaire	Number Items	Reliability
Parents	Parent Pressure Questionnaire	44	To be established
	Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire (from the parent's viewpoint)	43	To be established
	Parent Self-concept Questionnaire	20	To be established
	Family Environment Scales	90	0.68 – 0.86
	Five Factor Personality Inventory (NEO-FFI-3)	60	0.78 – 0.86
Adolescents	Adolescent Identity Development	75	0.91
	Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire (from the adolescent's viewpoint)	43	0.95
	Adolescent Self-concept	20	0.86
	Adolescent Relationship with Friends	19	0.78
	Adolescent peer pressure	22	0.86
	Five factor personality Inventory (NEO-FFI-3)	60	0.72 – 0.83

#### 4.4 Selection of the sample

The sample was drawn from primary and secondary schools in Middelburg and eMalahleni in Mpumalanga. Since the translation of all the questionnaires into another language was not feasible, all questionnaires were in English. Therefore schools where learners were receiving their education in English were targeted. A list of suitable schools was drawn up and schools were randomly chosen to participate in the research. A letter was written to the principals of the schools, explaining the nature and purpose of the research and requesting their participation. If the school did not want to participate it was not contacted again. Once the principal had given permission for the research to take place at the school, letters describing the research and requesting written permission from parents, were given to the schools to distribute to their adolescent learners. After a few weeks, the reply slips were collected. Arrangements were made with the school to administer the questionnaires to the learners in the hall or a classroom, at a time that suited the school. Some schools received very few reply slips from the learners and were omitted from the list. The final sample consisted of learners from three high schools, one primary school and one combined school.

Most of the adolescent respondents attend state-assisted schools and a small proportion was drawn from a private school. Suitable learners were selected first and then their parents were requested to give permission to complete their questionnaire. Since the study focuses on adolescents and their parents, children from age 13 to 18 and their parents or guardians were included in the sample. The composition of the sample by gender of the parent is as follows:

TABLE 4.12 GENDER OF PARENTS

	Parents	Percentage of sample
Male	36	20%
Female	141	80%
Total	177	100%

It can be seen that there are more mothers/female guardians than fathers/male guardians in the sample. The larger amount of mothers/female guardians can be explained when we consider that mothers/female guardians commonly spend more time with their children than fathers, and are most likely to have been asked to complete the questionnaire. Furthermore, in single parent families or foster families, it is most often a mother, grandmother or another woman who takes on the parenting role.

The composition of the sample by age of parents appears in Table 4.13.

TABLE 4.13 AGE OF PARENTS

Age range	Frequency	Percentage of sample
30 – 39	42	32%
40 – 49	73	56%
50 - 59	16	12%
Total	131	100%

As can be seen from Table 4.11 most parents in the sample are aged between 40 and 49. The mean age of parents is 41 years of age with a standard deviation of 9.13. The parents in the sample are therefore middle-aged which is usual for parents of adolescent children.

The composition of the sample according to the education level of parents appears in Table 4.14 .



TABLE 4.14 EDUCATION LEVEL OF PARENTS

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage of Sample
< Grade 12	12	7%
Grade 12	36	21%
Grade 12 + 1	19	11%
Grade 12 + 2	16	10%
Grade 12 + 3	26	15%
Grade 12 + 4	39	23%
>Grade 12 + 4	22	13%
Total	170	100%

The majority of parents in the sample have 4 years of study in addition to a Grade 12 qualification, with 93% of the respondents who indicated their level of education having a Grade 12 or higher. The implication is that the majority of parents in the current study are educated.

The composition of the sample according to the work circumstances of the parent can be seen in Table 4.15 .

TABLE 4.15 WORK CIRCUMSTANCES OF PARENTS

Work	Frequency	Percentage of Sample
Full-time	126	71%
Housewife	18	10%
Part-time	16	9%
Unemployed	9	5%

It can be seen from Table 4.15 that the majority of parents work full-time, with relatively small numbers of parents working in the home, part-time or

unemployed. This finding is consistent with the increasing acceptance in the current society that both parents in the household usually work.

In order to obtain an indication of the multicultural nature of the sample the home language of parent and adolescent was obtained. The information appears in Table 4.16.

TABLE 4.16 HOME LANGUAGE OF PARENTS AND ADOLESCENTS

Language	Parents and Adolescents	Percentage of Sample
African language	89	50%
English	67	38%
Afrikaans	14	8%
Other	7	4%
Total	177	100%

It is clear from Table 4.16 that most parents and adolescents who took part in the current study speak an African language, with English and Afrikaans being spoken by smaller percentages of the respondents. The sample can therefore be seen as being multicultural.

The composition of the sample by gender of adolescent is as follows:

TABLE 4.17 GENDER OF ADOLESCENTS

	Adolescents	Percentage of sample
Male	61	34%
Female	116	66%
Total	177	100%

A sufficient number of boys is present in the sample, although it is less than the number of girls.

The composition of the sample by grade of the adolescent is as follows:

TABLE 4.18 GRADE OF ADOLESCENT

Grade	Frequency	Percentage of the Sample
7	51	29%
8	73	41%
9	36	20%
10 - 12	17	10%
Total	177	100%

It can be seen from Table 4.18 that most of the adolescents in the sample are in Grade 8. The mean age of the adolescents is 14 years old with a standard deviation of 1.36 years.

The composition of the sample according to the birth position of the adolescent follows.

TABLE 4.19 BIRTH POSITION OF ADOLESCENT

Birth Position	Frequency	Percentage of Sample
Youngest	62	36%
Middle	30	18%
Oldest	63	37%
Only	16	9%
Total	171	100%

Almost equal amounts of adolescents in the sample are the oldest and the youngest child in their family, comprising 73% of the sample.

Several conclusions about the sample can be made. The sample can be seen as representative and balanced. The presence of 96 parents and adolescents (more than 50% of the sample) who do not speak English or Afrikaans as a home language, reflects the multicultural nature of the sample and can be seen as representative of the South African milieu.

There are more mothers/female guardians than fathers/male guardians as well as more girls than boys in the sample. In this regard, it is likely that mothers spend more time with their children, and therefore were more likely to be approached to complete the questionnaire by their adolescent children. Furthermore, in single parent families or foster families, it is most often a mother, grandmother or another woman who takes on the parenting role. The number of fathers and male adolescents who took part in the study is not so small as to be negligible. The total sample comprises 80% mothers/female guardians with 20% fathers/male guardians, and adolescents comprised 66% girls and 34% boys.

The adolescents in the sample are primarily in Grade 7, Grade 8 and Grade 9. The amount of respondents in Grades 10 to 12, is not insubstantial, comprising 10% of the sample.

The majority of parents in the sample consist of middle-aged adults who have completed 12 years of study or more and participate full-time in the work force. This is representative of most middle-class families.

The biographical information indicates that the typical parent who participated in the current study was an African mother/female guardian, aged 40 – 49, possessing a Grade 12 or higher qualification, and working full-time. The typical adolescent was an African girl, aged 14 and in Grade 8.

#### 4.5 Procedure Followed During the Testing

Most of the adolescents completed their questionnaires during school in class. They completed the questionnaires at their individual pace and unfamiliar words were explained as needed. They then took the parent questionnaires home for their parent to complete, and were requested to return the parent questionnaires as soon as possible to their class teacher. A few adolescents and their parents completed the questionnaires at home.

Both adolescents and parents were given detailed written instructions with examples on how to complete the answer sheet. The instructions were read aloud to the adolescents who completed the questionnaires at school. Parents were instructed to complete the questionnaire with the adolescent child in mind who brought the questionnaire to the parent.

The adolescents took approximately 60-75 minutes to complete the questionnaire in class.

All the answer sheets were checked carefully and the information was read into the computer for analysis.

Necessary ethical requirements were adhered to during the research. Informed consent was obtained from parents by means of a letter that was sent home. Informed consent was obtained from adolescents in the test locale, orally before they completed the questionnaires. In both cases the nature and purpose of the research was described. It was explained that the research is being carried out to improve the understanding of the parent-adolescent relationship, and would be used to develop guidelines for parents to better help and support their adolescent children. It was stated that all responses would be confidential and only seen by the researcher and university personnel in the course of processing the data. The parental permission letter contained a tear-off reply slip for parents to fill in and sign as an indication that they had given permission for their child to participate

as well as giving an undertaking to complete the parent questionnaire. If adolescents did not return a reply slip it was accepted as an indication that either the adolescent and/or their parent did not want to participate in the research and the researcher made no further contact with those learners. Participation in the research was entirely voluntary.

Confidentiality of information and responses was ensured by the safe storage of completed questionnaires, until their delivery by the researcher to the university for data processing. The questionnaires were then again safely stored while data were being double-checked. Identifying information, such as names and surnames, were used only to ensure that the parent questionnaire and adolescent questionnaire were correctly paired. The questionnaires will be destroyed once they are no longer required by the research process.

Feedback regarding the results of the research will be provided to the principals of the schools that participated in the research. An invitation with contact details will be included for parents and their adolescent children to contact the researcher for further information if they wish to learn more from the investigation.

Chapter five contains a detailed analysis of the results of the empirical investigation.

## CHAPTER 5

### RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

#### 5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4, the method of the empirical investigation was described. Various hypotheses relating to factors that may have an influence on parents who experience pressure from their adolescent children were formulated. Appropriate measuring instruments were selected to obtain data in order to test the stated hypotheses. Where appropriate measuring instruments were not available, existing ones were adapted or developed. A Parent Pressure Questionnaire was newly developed. A Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire and Parent Self-concept Questionnaire were adapted based on the questionnaires for adolescents developed by Fourie (2001:163, Appendix A).

This chapter consists of two sections. In the first section the psychometric information regarding the adapted and newly developed questionnaires will be provided and discussed. The information includes the following:

- Item analyses to identify any weak items which can then be omitted from the questionnaire
- Reliability coefficients of the various measuring instruments
- Information regarding the validity of the measuring instruments
- Norms for the Parent Pressure Questionnaire

In the second half of the chapter, the hypotheses stated in Chapter 4 will be tested. These hypotheses deal with factors that are likely to relate to the pressure that parents experience from their adolescent children. In this chapter they are stated as null hypotheses in order to comply with the correct empirical method for scientific investigation.

In the testing of the hypotheses, appropriate statistical tests will be used to determine whether or not there are significant differences between various parent groups, for example parents of different ages, and the pressure they experience from their adolescent children. Further tests on the data will be carried out to establish whether there are significant differences between the pressure experienced by parents whose adolescent children vary in

different ways, for example parents of adolescents whose identity formation is incomplete. Correlational techniques will be used to discover which factors, for example parent personality characteristics, significantly relate to the pressure parents experience.

Once a variety of factors which relate to the pressure parents experience are distinguished, a forward regression analysis will be carried out to identify the *most important* variables which lead to the pressure parents experience from their adolescent children. In addition, a stepwise discriminant analysis will be used to find the adolescent factor that best discriminates between parents who experience low pressure and those who experience high pressure.

5.2 Item analysis of the Parent Pressure Questionnaire, Parent Self-concept Questionnaire and Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire (Parent)

During the item analysis two aspects are taken into account:

- For each item, the item-total correlation is calculated. The more appropriate the item is, the stronger the correlation of the item with the total in that section will be. If the item-total correlation is low or negative omission of the item can be considered.
- The reliability of each questionnaire is obtained by calculating an Alpha Coefficient. If the omission of an item notably improves the Alpha Coefficient, the item can be omitted. If not, the item is retained. The items which correlate positively with the total and at the same time, provide high reliability, are included in the final measuring instrument.

**Reliability of the Parent Pressure Questionnaire**

TABLE 5.1 RELIABILITY OF THE PARENT PRESSURE QUESTIONNAIRE

N	177
Number of Items	44
Alpha Reliability Coefficient	0.94



To evaluate the suitability of each item the item-total correlation as well as the Alpha Reliability Coefficient were taken into account as explained earlier. The results can be seen from Table 5.2.

TABLE 5.2 ITEM ANALYSIS OF THE PARENT PRESSURE QUESTIONNAIRE

Item	Item Correlation with Total	Alpha if Item is Omitted
17	0.5146	0.93
19	0.2765	0.94
21	0.5756	0.93
23	0.5567	0.93
24	0.5804	0.93
27	0.6309	0.93
29	0.5507	0.93
32	0.5092	0.93
36	0.4453	0.93
39	0.4872	0.93
41	0.3577	0.93
42	0.5754	0.93
45	0.5414	0.93
49	0.4405	0.93
53	0.5069	0.93
56	0.4001	0.93
58	0.3442	0.94
62	0.5649	0.93
66	0.3631	0.93
68	0.4492	0.93
70	0.4263	0.93
71	0.4781	0.93
74	0.3857	0.93
77	0.1159	0.94
79	0.6389	0.93

80	0.3613	0.93
82	0.3780	0.93
84	0.6582	0.93
87	0.1780	0.94
89	0.6141	0.93
92	0.3108	0.94
94	0.6638	0.93
95	0.5354	0.93
99	0.7389	0.93
101	0.6919	0.93
103	0.5835	0.93
107	0.4912	0.93
109	0.4511	0.93
110	0.6179	0.93
112	0.6993	0.93
114	0.6478	0.93
116	0.5277	0.93
119	0.6746	0.93
120	0.5019	0.93

It can be seen from Table 5.2 that no items contributed negatively to the total of the Parent Pressure Questionnaire, and should any item be omitted, the total reliability of the test would not substantially increase. Therefore all 44 items were retained.

#### **Reliability of the Parent Self-concept Questionnaire**

As discussed in Chapter 4 (section 4.2) the Parent Self-concept Questionnaire was developed by adapting the items used by Fourie in his Adolescent Self-concept Questionnaire. Therefore an item analysis had to be performed, and reliability of the questionnaire had to be calculated.

TABLE 5.3 RELIABILITY OF THE PARENT SELF-CONCEPT QUESTIONNAIRE

N	177
Number of Items	20
Alpha Reliability Coefficient	0.88

The reliability of the Parent Self-concept Questionnaire is high and is similar to the Alpha Coefficient obtained by Fourie (2001:169) with adolescents (0.90). An item analysis was carried out to establish whether any of the individual items correlated negatively with the total questionnaire.

TABLE 5.4 ITEM ANALYSIS OF THE PARENT SELF-CONCEPT QUESTIONNAIRE

Item	Item Correlation with Total	Alpha if Item is Omitted
16	0.4880	0.87
20	0.4722	0.87
25	0.5284	0.87
28	0.5346	0.87
31	0.5906	0.87
35	0.5912	0.87
38	0.4577	0.87
43	0.5023	0.87
46	0.4776	0.87
51	0.5610	0.87
57	0.3696	0.88
63	0.3674	0.87
65	0.4914	0.87
75	0.5093	0.87
86	0.4177	0.87
90	0.5270	0.87
97	0.5452	0.87
102	0.5290	0.87
106	0.4086	0.87
117	0.3361	0.87

No items correlated negatively with the total of the Parent Self-concept Questionnaire. Therefore all the items were retained. If any item were omitted, it would not result in a higher Alpha Reliability Coefficient. On the contrary, the reliability would be lowered if any of the items were left out of the questionnaire.

**Reliability of the Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire (Trust)**

The Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire measures the relationships of trust, knowledge and authority between the adolescent and parent as seen from the parent’s side. Since this is a new measuring instrument, it was necessary to apply an item analysis and

calculate the reliability. The results of the item analysis of the relationship of trust are shown in Table 5.5.

TABLE 5.5 RELIABILITY OF THE PARENT-ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE (from the parent's viewpoint): TRUST

N	177
Number of Items	14
Alpha Reliability Coefficient	0.85

The reliability of the Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire (trust) is high. It compares favourably with Fourie's (2001:173) findings with adolescents, where a reliability coefficient of 0.92 was obtained. An item analysis was carried out to identify any items which correlated negatively with the total questionnaire.

TABLE 5.6 ITEM ANALYSIS OF THE PARENT-ADOLSCENT RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE (from the parent's viewpoint): TRUST

Item	Item Correlation with Total	Alpha if Item is Omitted
22	0.4848	0.84
34	0.3850	0.84
44	0.5858	0.83
50	0.5396	0.83
55	0.5010	0.84
60	0.4990	0.84
67	0.6348	0.83
73	0.6360	0.83
81	0.2660	0.85
83	0.3236	0.85
93	0.4788	0.84
100	0.5187	0.84
115	0.4605	0.84
118	0.6400	0.83

It can be seen from Table 5.6 that no items correlated negatively with the total. Omission of any item would not notably increase the reliability. Therefore all items were retained in the questionnaire.

**Reliability of the Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire (Knowledge)**

TABLE 5.7 RELIABILITY OF THE PARENT-ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE (from the parent’s viewpoint): KNOWLEDGE

N	177
Number of Items	15
Alpha Reliability Coefficient	0.74

Although the reliability of the Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire (knowledge) is lower than the reliability of 0.88 obtained by Fourie (2001:172) it is still acceptable. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:245) the reliability of educational tests should be 0.70 or higher. An item analysis was carried out to identify any of the items which correlated negatively with the total questionnaire.

TABLE 5.8 ITEM ANALYSIS OF THE PARENT-ADOLSCENT RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE (from the parent’s viewpoint): KNOWLEDGE

Item	Item Correlation with Total	Alpha if Item is Omitted
18	0.3122	0.73
26	0.1626	0.74
33	0.4154	0.72
40	0.4918	0.71
48	0.454	0.72
54	0.4490	0.71
64	0.1461	0.75
72	0.4796	0.72
78	0.3099	0.73
85	0.1929	0.74
91	0.4067	0.72
98	0.3340	0.73
105	0.3212	0.73
108	0.4333	0.72
113	0.3978	0.72

Table 5.8 indicates that no items correlated negatively with the total. Each item correlated positively with the total, and omission of any item would not substantially improve the reliability. Therefore all items measuring the Relationship of Knowledge were retained.

### Reliability of the Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire (Authority)

TABLE 5.9 RELIABILITY OF THE PARENT-ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE (from the parent's viewpoint): AUTHORITY

N	177
Number of Items	12
Alpha Reliability Coefficient	0.58

The reliability coefficient of the Parent-adolescent (Authority) Questionnaire is lower than what is usually accepted. An item analysis was carried out to establish whether any of the individual items correlated negatively with the total questionnaire.

TABLE 5.10 ITEM ANALYSIS OF THE PARENT-ADOLSCENT RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE (from the parent's viewpoint): AUTHORITY

Item	Item Correlation with Total	Alpha if Item is Omitted
15	0.3350	0.54
37	0.2580	0.55
61	0.0091	0.61
96	0.1142	0.59
47	0.3078	0.54
52	0.4410	0.52
59	0.1667	0.57
69	0.2077	0.57
76	0.2011	0.57
88	0.3143	0.54
104	0.2712	0.55
111	0.3951	0.53



It can be seen from Table 5.10 that although no items correlate negatively, items 61 and 96 correlated low with the test total, and if they are removed, the reliability of the test could increase. These items were removed and a second analysis was done. The reliability coefficient showed an increase from 0.58 to 0.62.

The Authority Questionnaire has a reliability which is below the accepted minimum value of 0.70. The low reliability of the Relationship of Authority was unexpected since an acceptable reliability coefficient was obtained in Fourie's (2001:178) study, namely 0.76. The low reliability obtained on the authority section of the questionnaire is a shortcoming in the current study. However it will be taken into account in the interpretation of the research findings.

**Reliability of the Parent-adolescent Questionnaire (Total)**

TABLE 5.11 RELIABILITY OF THE PARENT-ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE (from the parent's viewpoint): TOTAL

N	177
Number of Items	39
Alpha Reliability Coefficient	0.90

The reliability of the total questionnaire measuring the Parent-adolescent Relationship is high. An item analysis was carried out to identify any of the items which correlated negatively or weakly with the total questionnaire.

TABLE 5.12 ITEM ANALYSIS OF THE PARENT-ADOLSCENT RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE (from the parent's viewpoint): TOTAL

Item	Item Correlation with Total	Alpha if Item is Omitted
15	0.3294	0.90
37	0.2513	0.90

47	0.3558	0.90
52	0.5065	0.90
59	0.2352	0.90
69	0.2720	0.90
76	0.3360	0.90
88	0.4142	0.90
104	0.3229	0.90
111	0.5006	0.90
18	0.3691	0.90
26	0.3045	0.90
33	0.4952	0.90
40	0.5237	0.90
48	0.4516	0.90
54	0.4793	0.90
64	0.1169	0.90
72	0.5936	0.89
78	0.3659	0.90
85	0.1933	0.90
91	0.4818	0.90
98	0.3685	0.90
105	0.2857	0.90
108	0.5622	0.89
113	0.3879	0.90
22	0.4836	0.90
34	0.4407	0.90
44	0.5312	0.89
50	0.5129	0.90
55	0.4693	0.90
60	0.4963	0.90
67	0.5905	0.89
73	0.6499	0.89
81	0.3192	0.90

83	0.3900	0.90
93	0.5034	0.90
100	0.5564	0.90
115	0.4605	0.90
118	0.6303	0.89

No items are negatively related to the total of the Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire (P). Therefore all items were retained.

### 5.3 Final Reliability of the Parent Pressure Questionnaire, Parent Self-concept Questionnaire and Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire

Reliability refers to the consistency or accuracy with which a measuring instrument measures (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:244). It can be accepted that there is an element of error present when constructs such as parent pressure are measured, as is the case when measuring all psychological constructs (Fourie 2001:177). The following equation describes the relationship between the obtained score on a test, the true score and the element of error:

$$\text{Obtained score} = \text{true score} + \text{error}$$

(McMillan & Schumacher 2001:244)

If an instrument has little error, the obtained score is close to the true score and the instrument is seen as reliable. If the instrument has a large amount of error, the obtained score is not indicative of the true score and the test is unreliable (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:244). Mulder (Fourie 2001:177) states that measurement error contributes to the fluctuation of scores in a test. The greater the amount of measurement error, the greater the fluctuation and the lower the reliability of the questionnaire is.

As the questionnaires in the current study could only be administered once for practical reasons, the test-retest method of determining reliability could not be used. In order to determine the reliability, the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was calculated as explained earlier. As stated above (section 5.1) the reliability of the Parent Pressure Questionnaire, the Parent self-concept Questionnaire and the Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire (P) is high.

The final reliabilities of the questionnaires are shown in Table 5.13.

TABLE 5.13 FINAL RELIABILITY OF THE PARENT PRESSURE QUESTIONNAIRE, PARENT SELF-CONCEPT QUESTIONNAIRE AND THE PARENT-ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE (from the parent's viewpoint)

Questionnaire		N	Number of Items for Final Questionnaire	Reliability Coefficient
Parent Pressure Questionnaire		177	44	0.94
Parent Self-concept Questionnaire		177	20	0.88
Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire (from the parent's viewpoint)	Trust Relationship	177	14	0.85
	Knowledge Relationship	177	15	0.74
	Authority Relationship	177	10	0.62
Total: Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire (from the parent's viewpoint)		177	39	0.90

As mentioned above, a test is considered reliable if the Reliability Coefficient is 0.70 or higher (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:245). The Parent Pressure Questionnaire, the focal point of the research, shows a reliability of 0.94 which is high, and indicates that there is little measurement error in this test. All the other questionnaires show reliabilities of above 0.70, with the exception of the Relationship of Authority which has a reliability of 0.62.

## 5.4 Validity

The validity of a test refers to the extent to which it measures that which it is supposed to measure (Cohen & Swerdlik 2002:154). In the current investigation, the validity of the questionnaires was evaluated using content and construct validity.

### 5.4.1 Content Validity

Content validity refers to the extent to which items sample behaviour which is representative of the field being measured (Cohen & Swerdlik 2002:156). For the questionnaire measuring pressure experienced by parents, clinical as well as informal interviews carried out with parents, provided information regarding a variety of situations in which adolescents place their parents under pressure, for example curfews when socialising with friends in the evenings. Further, the literature study was used as a source of likely situations where pressurising behaviour on the part of adolescents would take place, for example purchasing decisions.

Validity for the Parent Self-concept Questionnaire and Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire was obtained from the questionnaires developed by Fourie (2001: Appendix A), measuring the same constructs, from the adolescent's side.

### 5.4.2 Construct Validity

The construct validity of a test indicates the extent to which the test measures the theoretical construct it is supposed to measure (Bester 2003:55). In order to establish construct validity in the current empirical investigation, item analyses were carried out (Cohen & Swerdlik 202:174). The extent to which each item correlated with the total of the test was calculated statistically. The higher the correlation between the items and the total, the more homogenous the test is which assures us that all the items in the test tend to be measuring the same aspect (Cohen & Swerdlik 2002:175). In cases where an item correlated negatively or weakly with the total of a particular aspect, it was omitted, thereby improving the construct validity of the test.

## 5.5 Norms

Stanines are standard scores divided into nine categories (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:612). The developed stanines were used to determine the norms of the Parent Pressure Questionnaire. In order to calculate the relevant stanines, the cumulative percentages of the raw scores for each item of the Parent Pressure Questionnaire were obtained. The stanines obtained are reflected in Table 5.15:

TABLE 5.14 LIMITS AND AREAS OF STANINES

Stanines	Limits	% of Area
9	$+\infty$ to $+1.75z$	4
8	$+1.75$ to $+1.25z$	7
7	$+1.25z$ to $+0.75z$	12
6	$+0.75z$ to $+0.25z$	17
5	$+0.25z$ to $-0.25z$	20
4	$-0.25z$ to $-0.75z$	17
3	$-0.75z$ to $-1.25z$	12
2	$-1.25z$ to $-1.75z$	7
1	$-1.75z$ to $-\infty$	4

(Bester 2003:19)

TABLE 5.15 TRANSFORMATION OF RAW SCORES INTO STANINES: PARENT PRESSURE QUESTIONNAIRE

Raw score	Frequency	Cumulative %	Stanine
44	1	0.56	1
47	2	1.69	1
48	2	2.82	1
49	2	3.95	1
51	6	7.34	2
52	2	8.47	2
54	2	9.60	2

55	3	11.30	2
56	3	12.99	3
57	6	16.38	3
60	8	20.90	3
61	3	22.60	3
63	3	24.29	4
64	2	25.42	4
65	2	26.55	4
66	3	28.25	4
67	3	29.94	4
68	9	35.03	4
69	3	36.72	4
70	2	37.85	4
71	3	39.55	4
72	2	40.68	5
73	3	42.37	5
74	4	44.63	5
76	2	45.76	5
77	4	48.02	5
78	4	50.28	5
79	1	50.85	5
80	4	53.11	5
81	3	54.80	5
82	5	57.63	5
83	1	58.19	5
84	1	58.76	5
85	3	60.45	5
86	5	63.28	6
88	3	64.97	6
89	2	66.10	6
91	2	67.23	6
92	4	69.49	6

93	2	70.62	6
94	2	71.75	6
95	1	72.32	6
96	2	73.45	6
97	2	74.58	6
100	3	76.27	6
101	2	77.40	6
102	5	80.23	7
103	3	81.92	7
104	1	82.49	7
105	1	83.05	7
109	2	84.18	7
110	3	85.88	7
111	1	86.44	7
112	2	87.57	7
113	1	88.14	7
114	1	88.70	7
116	1	89.27	7
118	2	90.40	8
120	1	90.96	8
121	1	91.53	8
123	1	92.09	8
128	1	92.66	8
135	1	93.22	8
144	1	93.79	8
149	1	94.35	8
152	1	94.92	8
160	1	95.48	8
161	1	96.05	8
165	1	96.61	9
167	1	97.18	9
175	1	97.74	9



182	1	98.31	9
183	1	98.87	9
184	1	99.44	9
213	1	100.00	9

Using stanine scores, it is possible to establish whether a parent’s score on the Parent Pressure Questionnaire is below average, average or above average. As a general rule, it is understood that the bottom three stanines (1, 2 and 3) are regarded as below average, the next three stanines (4, 5 and 6) as average, and the top three stanines (7, 8 and 9) as above average. The classification of scores on the Parent Pressure Questionnaire is provided in Table 5.16.

TABLE 5.16 CLASSIFICATION OF SCORES ON THE PARENT PRESSURE QUESTIONNAIRE

Classification	Score
Below Average	1 - 61
Average	62 – 101
Above Average	102 - 264

## 5.6 Testing of the Hypotheses

The hypotheses as stated in Chapter 4 (section 4.2) will be tested. These hypotheses deal with factors that may relate to parents experiencing pressure from their adolescent children.

### 5.6.1 Hypothesis 1

With regard to Hypothesis 1 (section 4.2) the following null hypothesis was tested:

*There is no significant difference between fathers and mothers with regard to the pressure they experience from their adolescent children*

The average scores for male parents/guardians and female parents/guardians on the Parent Pressure Questionnaire were calculated separately. The t-test was then used to determine whether the means of the two groups differ significantly. The results appear in Table 5.17.

TABLE 5.17 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE AVERAGE PARENT PRESSURE QUESTIONNAIRE SCORES FOR MALE PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND FEMALE PARENTS/GUARDIANS

	Group	N	Mean	S	t	df	p
Fathers/male Guardians	1	36	77.69	21.42	2.04	175	p<0.05
Mothers/female Guardians	2	141	86.84	32.14			

According to Table 5.17, a t-value of 2.04 with  $p < 0.05$  was obtained. The null hypothesis can therefore be rejected at the 5% level of significance. The results imply that the average degree of adolescent pressure experienced by mothers and fathers differs significantly. According to the means, mothers experience more pressure than fathers. These results are consistent with research findings that mothers are more frequently targets of intimidation by adolescent children than fathers (Ciftci, Demir & Bikos 2008:911-922; Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095).

### 5.6.2 Hypothesis 2

With regard to Hypothesis 2 (section 4.2) the following null hypothesis was tested:

*Parents from different age groups do not differ significantly with regard to the pressure they experience from their adolescent children*

Parents of different ages were divided into three groups:

- Group 1: Parents aged 30-39
- Group 2: Parents aged 40-49
- Group 3: Parents aged 50-59

Parents in the age group 20-29 were omitted because there were too few of them to take into consideration. It was decided to form three groups which were representative of the majority of the parents.

The means and standard deviations of the different groups appear in Table 5.18.

TABLE 5.18 MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PARENTS IN DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

Group	N	Mean	S
1	42	83.50	28.44
2	73	82.21	26.48
3	16	90.19	38.23

$F(2,128) = 0.51; p > 0.05$

The F test was used to determine whether significant differences between the average scores of the three groups on the Parent Pressure Questionnaire exist. The F value was found to be 0.51 with  $p > 0.05$ , indicating that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. There is no significant difference between parents of different age groups in the pressure they experience from their adolescent children.

Parent ages in the sample ranged from 30 to 59. To have an adolescent child, a parent in his 30's would be a young parent, a parent in his 50's would be an older parent, and a parent in his 40's would be between the two. Although the literature indicates that parents over the age of 40 are most often victims of extreme intimidation by their adolescent children (Walsh & Krienert 2007:563-574) the results of this study do not support this finding. On the other hand, the possibility that older parents are less likely to be pressured, finds no support. Therefore it can be accepted that the age of the parent is not a significant factor with relation to the pressure they experience from their adolescent children.

### 5.6.3 Hypothesis 3

The null hypothesis with regard to hypothesis 3 states:

*Parents with different working circumstances do not differ significantly with regard to the pressure they experience from their adolescent children.*

The parents were divided into four groups of different work circumstances:

- Group 1: Full time work
- Group 2: Part-time work
- Group 3: Housewife
- Group 4: Unemployed

The means and standard deviations appear in Table 5.19.

TABLE 5.19 MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF DIFFERENT PARENT GROUPS ACCORDING TO THEIR WORK AND THE EXPERIENCE OF PRESSURE

Group	N	Mean	S
1	126	83.24	28.56
2	16	86.69	36.55
3	18	83.89	27.73
4	9	106.00	46.36

$F(3,165) = 1.60; p > 0.05$

In order to determine whether significant differences between the average scores of the four groups on the Parent Pressure Questionnaire exists, the F test was carried out. The F value was found to be 1.60 with  $p > 0.05$ , indicating that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. In other words there is no significant difference between the pressure that parents experience if they find themselves in different work circumstances.

#### 5.6.4 Hypothesis 4

The null hypothesis with regard to hypothesis 4 states:

*There is no significant difference between biological parents and step parents/foster parents with regard to the pressure they experience from their adolescent children.*

Four groups of parents or guardians with whom the adolescent lives were formed:

- Group 1: Biological father and biological mother
- Group 2: A biological parent and a stepparent
- Group 3: A single biological parent
- Group 4: Other family members/adoptive parents

The means and standard deviations appear in Table 5.20.

TABLE 5.20 MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF DIFFERENT PARENTS WITH WHOM THE ADOLESCENT LIVES AND THE EXPERIENCE OF PRESSURE

Group	N	Mean	S
1	108	84.37	29.49
2	13	93.92	35.56
3	41	83.66	32.91
4	11	78.27	21.94

$F(3,169) = 0.58; p > 0.05$

In order to determine whether significant differences between the average scores of the four groups on the Parent Pressure Questionnaire exists, the F test was carried out. The F value was found to be 0.58 with  $p > 0.05$ , indicating that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. In other words there is no significant difference between the pressure that parents experience whether they are a biological or stepparent.

The above results are consistent with the opinion that the quality of the relationship is more important than the person with whom adolescents have the relationship. The quality of the

relationship with a parent, whether a biological parent or stepparent, contributes to the psychological well-being of children. For example, parents who talk about problems or set limits for their children promote child well-being and develop a positive parent-adolescent relationship (Amato & Gilbreth 1999:557-573) irrespective of whether they are biological or stepparents.

### 5.6.5 Hypothesis 5

The following null hypothesis with regard to Hypothesis 5 is tested:

*There is no significant correlation between parent-child relationships (seen from the parent's viewpoint) and the pressure parents experience from their adolescent children.*

The null hypothesis was stated for the Trust, Knowledge and the Authority Relationship as well as the total Parent-child Relationship. To test this hypothesis, a Pearson Product-moment Correlation was calculated between the Parent Pressure Questionnaire scores and the parent scores on each section of the Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire, the Relationship of Trust, Knowledge and Authority as well as the total score. The results can be seen in Table 5.21.

TABLE 5.21 CORRELATION BETWEEN THE PARENT PRESSURE QUESTIONNAIRE AND THE PARENT-ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIP (AS SEEN BY THE PARENT)

N = 177	Trust	Knowledge	Authority	Total
Pressure	-0.46*	-0.62*	-0.65*	-0.63*

\* p<0,0001

A high negative correlation of -0.63 was obtained between the total of the Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire and the pressure parents experience. The null hypothesis can therefore be rejected. The results indicate that the parent-adolescent relationship, as seen from the parent's perspective, is significantly related to parents' experience of pressure from their adolescent child. The results imply that the poorer the educational Relationships of Trust, Knowledge and Authority are between parents and their

adolescent children (as seen from the parent's side) the more pressure parents experience. As can be seen from Table 5.21 high negative correlations were obtained between the Relationships of Knowledge and Authority with parents' experience of pressure. A moderate negative correlation between the Relationship of Trust and parent pressure was obtained. In other words, parents who perceive that they do not know a lot about their adolescent children, who do not feel they are able to guide their child with authority, and do not think there is adequate trust between them and their children, experience significantly more pressure than parents who have strong educational relationships with their children.

The results are consistent with the suggestion made in Chapter 4 (section 4.2) that strong parent-child relationships are unlikely to be associated with pressure placed on parents by their adolescent children. A parent who trusts and understands his or her adolescent child, and has appropriate authority over him/her is unlikely to experience pressure from that child. Furthermore, parents who experience their children positively in all three relationships are likely to use a democratic parenting style which has been identified by many studies as the most effective approach for a healthy parent-child relationship (Fallon & Bowles 1998:599-608; Mackey, Arnold and Pratt 2001:243-268). Therefore the above results indicate that it is likely that parents who experience little pressure from their adolescent children use the democratic approach. Conversely, as stated in Chapter 4 (section 4.2) it is possible that a poor parent-adolescent relationship indicates the presence of other parenting styles, such as the authoritarian, permissive or the uninvolved parenting style. Parents who use these parenting styles may experience a great deal of pressure from their children as a result of negative parenting practices.

#### 5.6.6 Hypothesis 6

The null hypothesis with regard to Hypothesis 6 states:

*There is no significant correlation between the family environment and the pressure which parents experience from their adolescent children.*

The null hypothesis was stated for the Cohesion, Expressiveness, Conflict, Independence, Achievement Orientation, Intellectual-Cultural Orientation, Active-Recreational Orientation, Moral-Religious Orientation, Organisation and Control subscales of the

Family Environment Scale. To test this hypothesis, a Pearson Product-moment Correlation was calculated between the parent scores on each section of the Family Environment Scales (Moos & Moos 1986:1) and the Parent Pressure Questionnaire Scores. The results can be seen in Table 5.22.

TABLE 5.22 CORRELATION BETWEEN THE FAMILY ENVIRONMENT SUBSCALES AND PARENT PRESSURE QUESTIONNAIRE

N = 177	Pressure
Cohesion	-0.18*
Expressiveness	-0.11
Conflict	0.10
Independence	-0.10
Achievement Orientation	-0.10
Intellectual-Cultural Orientation	-0.23**
Active-Recreational Orientation	-0.10
Moral-Religious	-0.34**
Organisation	-0.30**
Control	0.01

\*\*p<0.01 \*p<0.05

For the other six correlation coefficients  $p > 0.05$

Four of the subscales of the Family Environment Scales show a significant correlation with the pressure parents experience. They are the Moral-Religious Orientation of the family ( $r = -0.34$ ), Organisation ( $r = -0.30$ ), Intellectual-Cultural Orientation ( $r = -0.23$ ) and Cohesion in the family ( $r = -0.18$ ). All four have a negative relationship with the pressure parents experience, indicating that parents whose adolescent children place them under pressure have families that experience low levels of cohesion and organisation, and engage in few activities of an intellectual-cultural or moral-religious nature. The Cohesion subscale and parent pressure have a negative correlation on the 5% level of significance, while the other three subscales, Intellectual-Cultural Orientation, Moral-Religious Orientation and Organisation have negative correlations with parents' experience of pressure on the 1% level of significance.



The null hypothesis can therefore be rejected in four of the ten instances. The results imply that parents experience less pressure in families where ethical and religious aspects are emphasised, where there is clear organisation in family activities and responsibilities, an interest in political, social and cultural activities, or support for family members.

The results further imply that family characteristics such as Expressiveness, Conflict, Independence, Achievement Orientation, Active-Recreational Orientation and Control do not necessarily relate to parents' experience of pressure.

The above results are consistent with the suggestion in Chapter 4 (section 4.2) and the research on parenting styles discussed in Chapter 2 (sections 2.3.8 and 2.3.19), that in cohesive, organised family environments where there are clear expectations for behaviour and responsibility, and an emphasis on ethical and religious life, adolescents are less likely to place pressure on their parents. In Intellectual-Cultural Orientated Families, parents are less likely to experience pressure. In families that are intellectually orientated, adolescents are more likely to see their parents' point of view, have understanding of their parent's priorities, and therefore place less pressure on them.

The results show that communication, or Expressiveness is not correlated with the amount of pressure parents experience which is an unexpected finding. As discussed in Chapter 4 (section 4.2) research indicates that family environments characterised by high levels of open communication encourage parental understanding of the child (Sillars, Koerner & Fitzpatrick 2005:102-128) and lead to low levels of negative adolescent behaviours (Ackard, Neumark-Sztainer, Story & Perry 2006:59-66; Henrich, Brookmeyer, Shrier & Shahar 2006:286-297; Smetana, Crean and Daddis 2002:275-304). It was suggested that in families with high levels of open communication, adolescents do not show negative behaviours and their parents will therefore experience little pressure from their adolescent children. However, the results of the current study do not support this inference. One explanation for this finding is that even though parents experience that there is an open exchange of feelings between them and their children, they may still experience pressure from them.

More surprising is the lack of a relationship between family conflict and parents' experience of pressure. It was suggested in Chapter 4 (section 4.2) that high levels of conflict are likely to be correlated with large amounts of pressure being placed on parents by adolescents. However the current results suggest that irrespective of the level of conflict in a family, parents may still experience pressure from their adolescent children. An explanation for this finding can be found using social power theory discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.2.4). Social Power Theory states that a child's influence may be passive, where there is no evidence of speech or overt actions on the part of the adolescent. The parent infers its presence and acts even if there is no overt action on the part of the adolescent (Flurry & Burns 2005:593-601). As children age, they influence family decisions in a more passive way, as parents learn their children's likes and dislikes (Roedder-John 1999:183-213). Adolescents do not engage in conflict to pressurise their parents because their parents either anticipate their desires beforehand, or quickly give in to their demands without resistance.

#### 5.6.7 Hypothesis 7

The null hypothesis with regard to Hypothesis 7 states:

*There is no significant correlation between the self-concept of parents and the pressure they experience from their adolescent children.*

To test this hypothesis, a Pearson Product-moment Correlation was calculated between the scores on the Parent Self-concept Questionnaire and the Parent Pressure Questionnaire scores. The results can be seen in Table 5.23:

TABLE 5.23: CORRELATION BETWEEN PARENT SELF-CONCEPT AND PARENT PRESSURE

N = 177	Parent Self-concept
Pressure	-0.72

p<0.01

A high negative correlation was obtained between Parent Self-concept and the pressure which parents experience at the 1% level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis can be rejected. The results imply that as discussed in Chapter 4 (section 4.2), parents who feel confident about their parenting abilities, or have high parenting self-efficacy (PSE) are unlikely to experience pressure from their adolescent children. The findings are consistent with the suggestion that parents with lower levels of PSE may be more susceptible to pressure from their adolescent children because they lack confidence in their ability to make correct choices regarding parenting. As mentioned in Chapter 4 (section 4.2) Parenting Self-concept or Parenting Self-efficacy may act as a mediating variable between Parenting Self-concept and success in the everyday activities of parenting their adolescent children. The less parenting success parents experience the lower their Parenting Self-concept, and the lower their self-concept, the less successful they are in parenting.

With  $r^2 = 0.5184$  it implies that almost 52% of the variance in the pressure that parents experience from their adolescent children can be explained by the self-concept of the parent. The self-concept of the parent is therefore an important variable which should be taken into account when trying to establish guidelines for parents who are suffering from the pressure phenomenon under discussion.

#### 5.6.8 Hypothesis 8

The following null hypothesis with regard to hypothesis 8 is tested:

*There is no significant correlation between the personality characteristics of parents and the pressure they experience from their adolescent children.*

The null hypothesis was stated for the personality traits of Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. This hypothesis was tested using a Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The results can be seen in Table 5.24.

TABLE 5.24 CORRELATION BETWEEN PARENT PERSONALITY AND PARENT PRESSURE

N = 177	Pressure
Neuroticism	0.36
Extraversion	-0.38
Openness	-0.26
Agreeableness	-0.29
Conscientiousness	-0.59

p<0.01

It can be seen that there are significant relationships with all five personality factors and the experience of parent pressure, therefore the null hypothesis can be rejected at the 1% level. There is a low positive correlation between parent Neuroticism and parents' experience of pressure. In other words, parents who experience high levels of negative emotions such as anxiety and depression are more likely to experience pressure from their adolescent children. There are low negative correlations between parents' Extraversion, Openness and Agreeableness and their experience of pressure. This indicates that parents who are outgoing, open to new experiences and who are agreeable are not likely to experience pressure from their adolescent children.

The above results are consistent with the suggestion in Chapter 4 (section 4.2) that personality traits such as high levels of Neuroticism, and low levels of Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness and Openness to Experience in parents may place them in situations where they will be pressurised by their adolescent children.

In order to test Hypothesis 9, biographical data was used.

#### 5.6.9 Hypothesis 9

The null hypothesis with regard to hypothesis 9 states that:

*The pressure that parents experience does not depend on the gender of their adolescent child.*

In order to test the null hypothesis, adolescents were divided into two groups according to the stanine scores which their parents obtained on the Parent Pressure Questionnaire:

- Group 1: Adolescents of parents who obtained low scores on the Parent Pressure Questionnaire (stanines 1 to 3)
- Group 3: Adolescents of parents who obtained high scores on the Parent Pressure Questionnaire (stanines 7 to 9)

A chi-square analysis was used to determine whether the number of adolescents whose parents experience high or low pressure differs in the case of boys and girls. The results of the analysis appear in Table 5.25

TABLE 5.25 COMPARISON OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE AMOUNT OF BOYS AND GIRLS OF PARENTS WHO EXPERIENCE EITHER LOW OR HIGH LEVELS OF PRESSURE

Variable	Group 1: Adolescents whose Parents Experience Low Pressure	Group 3: Adolescents whose Parents Experience High Pressure	Total
Boys	18	15	33
Girls	22	25	47
Total	40	40	80

$$\chi^2 (1) = 0.46; p > 0.05$$

In the light of the information in Table 5.25 the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. The results imply that there is no significant difference between boys and girls and their being the child of a parent who experiences either low or high pressure. While it was suggested in Chapter 4 (section 4.2) that there may be more pressure from girls than boys because

conflicts between parents and daughters are more emotionally intense than those between parents and sons (Allison & Schultz 2004:101-119; Lundell, Grusec, McShane & Davidov 2008:555-571) the current results do not support such an inference.

The findings of Mesch (2006:473-495), Stewart, Burns and Leonard (2007:183-191) and Walsh and Krienert (2007:563-574) which indicate that boys, rather than girls will use extreme forms of pressure such as intimidation with their parents, have not been supported by these results. However, it may be that boys rather than girls are more likely to exert extreme pressure on their parents. In the current study, however milder kinds of pressure that adolescents place on their parents in the course of everyday activities have been measured.

#### **5.6.10 Hypothesis 10**

The null hypothesis with regard to Hypothesis 10 states that:

*The pressure that parents experience from their adolescent children does not depend on the age group of the child.*

Adolescents were divided into grades to determine whether the number of adolescents whose parents experience high or low pressure differs between various grades. The grades were grouped in the following way:

- Group 7: Grade 7 Adolescents
- Group 8: Grade 8 Adolescents
- Group 9: Grade 9 Adolescents
- Group 13: Grade 10,11 and 12 Adolescents

A chi-square value was calculated to determine whether the amount of pressure which adolescents place on their parents differs significantly between adolescents of different grades or not. The results can be seen in Table 5.26.

TABLE 5.26 COMPARISON OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ADOLESCENTS IN DIFFERENT GRADES AND THE PRESSURE THEY PLACE ON PARENTS

Variable	Group 1: Adolescents whose Parents Experience Low Pressure	Group 3: Adolescents whose Parents Experience High Pressure	Total
Group 7: Grade 7	12	18	30
Group 8: Grade 8	11	15	26
Group 9: Grade 9	14	5	19
Group 13: Grades 10 – 12	3	2	5
Total	40	40	80

$$\chi^2 (3) = 6.27; p > 0.05$$

The results in Table 5.26 show that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. The results imply that the number of adolescents whose parents experience high or low pressure not depend on the grade of the child.

The findings of the current study indicate that while older adolescents feel less close to their parents, have less need for emotional support from parents and are less likely to share intimate information with them than younger adolescents (Falci 2006:123-146; Lundell, Grusec, McShane & Davidov 2008:555-571; Sallinen, Rönkä, Kinnunen and Kokko 2007:181-190; Scabini, Marta and Lanz 2006:51) this does not mean that they place more pressure on their parents.

#### 5.6.11 Hypothesis 11

The null hypothesis with regard to Hypothesis 11 states that:

*The pressure that parents experience from their adolescent children does not depend on the different birth order positions of the children.*

Four groups of adolescent children were formed:

- Group 1: Youngest child
- Group 2: Middle child
- Group 3: Oldest child
- Group 4: Only child

In order to test the above hypothesis a chi-square analysis was carried out. The results appear in Table 5.27

TABLE 5.27 COMPARISON BETWEEN THE BIRTH POSITIONS OF ADOLESCENTS WHOSE PARENTS EXPERIENCE LOW PRESSURE AND THOSE WHOSE PARENTS EXPERIENCE HIGH PRESSURE

Variable	Group 1: Adolescents whose Parents Experience Low Pressure	Group 3: Adolescents whose Parents Experience High Pressure	Total
Group 1: Youngest	14	12	26
Group 2: Middle	11	6	17
Group 3: Oldest	13	16	29
Group 4: Only	2	4	6
Total	40	38	78

$$\chi^2 (3) = 2.55; p > 0.05$$

In the light of the information in Table 5.27 the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. The results imply that the occurrence of adolescents placing pressure on their parents does not depend on the birth position of the child. It was suggested in Chapter 4 (section 4.2) that there may be more pressure experienced by parents from their oldest and youngest children, because parents favour and invest more resources in their firstborns and lastborns (Sulloway 2003:168). However, the current study does not support this view.



### 5.6.12 Hypothesis 12

The null hypothesis with regard to Hypothesis 12 states that:

*There is no significant difference between the parent-child relationship (seen from the adolescent's side) of those adolescents whose parents experience low pressure and those whose parents experience high pressure.*

The null hypothesis was stated for the Relationship of Trust, Knowledge and Authority as well as the Total Relationship. Two groups were formed comprising the below average and the above average scores on the Parent Pressure Questionnaire as shown in the stanine norms in paragraph 5.5:

- Group 1: adolescents whose parents experienced low pressure
- Group 3: adolescents whose parents experienced high pressure

A t-test was used to determine if the averages differ significantly. The results appear in Table 5.28.

TABLE 5.28 COMPARISON OF THE PARENT-ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIP OF TRUST (AS SEEN FROM THE ADOLESCENTS' SIDE) BETWEEN THOSE ADOLESCENTS WHOSE PARENTS EXPERIENCE LOW PRESSURE AND THOSE WHO EXPERIENCE HIGH PRESSURE

	Group	N	Mean	S	t	df	p
Adolescents whose Parents Experience Low Pressure	1	40	68.38	16.80	2.03	78	p<0.05
Adolescents whose Parents Experience High Pressure	3	40	60.75	16.72			

According to Table 5.28, a t-value of 2.03 with  $p < 0.05$  was obtained. The null hypothesis can therefore be rejected at the 5% level of significance. This implies that the average level of trust that adolescents have in their parents differs significantly between parents who are in the low pressure group and those who are in the high pressure group. The mean of adolescents whose parents are in Group 1 is higher than the mean of the adolescents whose parents are in Group 3. The results therefore imply that the adolescents of parents in the low pressure group have significantly more trust in their parents than children of parents in the high pressure group.

TABLE 5.29 COMPARISON OF THE PARENT-ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIP OF AUTHORITY (AS SEEN FROM THE ADOLESCENTS' SIDE) BETWEEN THOSE ADOLESCENTS WHOSE PARENTS EXPERIENCE LOW PRESSURE AND THOSE WHO EXPERIENCE HIGH PRESSURE

	Group	N	Mean	S	t	df	p
Adolescents whose Parents Experience Low Pressure	1	40	55.28	10.46	2.34	78	$p < 0.05$
Adolescents whose Parents Experience High Pressure	3	40	49.65	11.00			

According to Table 5.29 a t-value of 2.34 with  $p < 0.05$  was obtained. The null hypothesis can therefore be rejected at the 5% level of significance. The results indicate that the average scores of adolescents on the relationship of authority with their parents differ significantly according to whether their parent is in the low or high pressure group. The mean of adolescents whose parents are in Group 1 is higher than the mean of adolescents whose parents are in Group 3. The results therefore imply that the adolescent children of parents in the low pressure group have significantly better relationships of authority with their parents, than children of parents in the high pressure group.

TABLE 5.30 COMPARISON OF THE PARENT-ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIP OF KNOWLEDGE (AS SEEN FROM THE ADOLESCENTS' SIDE) BETWEEN ADOLESCENTS WHOSE PARENTS ARE IN THE LOW PRESSURE GROUP AND THOSE WHO ARE IN THE HIGH PRESSURE GROUP

	Group	N	Mean	S	t	df	p
Adolescents whose Parents Experience Low Pressure	1	40	66.80	14.52	1.72	78	p>0.05
Adolescents whose Parents Experience High Pressure	3	40	61.03	15.42			

According to Table 5.30, a t-value of 1.72 with  $p>0.05$  was obtained. The null hypothesis can therefore not be rejected. The results indicate that the average scores of adolescents regarding the Relationship of Knowledge with their parents do not differ significantly according to whether their parent is in the low or high pressure group. The results imply that adolescent children feel that their parents know them equally well whether their parents are in the low or high pressure group.

TABLE 5.31 COMPARISON OF THE TOTAL PARENT-ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIP (AS SEEN FROM THE ADOLESCENTS' SIDE) OF ADOLESCENTS WHOSE PARENTS ARE IN THE LOW PRESSURE GROUP COMPARED TO THOSE IN THE HIGH PRESSURE GROUP.

	Group	N	Mean	S	t	df	p
Parents who Experience Low Pressure	1	40	190.5	39.32	2.12	78	p<0.05
Parents who Experience High Pressure	3	40	171.4	41.06			

According to Table 5.31, a t-value of 2.12 with  $p < 0.05$  was obtained. The null hypothesis can therefore be rejected at the 5% level of significance. The results indicate that the average scores of adolescents with regard to the education relationship with their parents differ significantly between those whose parents are in the low pressure group compared to those whose parents are in the high pressure group. The mean of adolescents whose parents are in Group 1 is higher than the mean of adolescents whose parents are in Group 3. The results imply that the adolescent children of parents in the low pressure group have significantly better relationships with their parents than adolescents of parents in the high pressure group.

The above results are in accordance with the suggestion made in Chapter 4 (section 4.2) that adolescents who have positive perceptions of their relationship with their parents are unlikely to place pressure on their parents.

In addition, the significantly lower average scores on the Relationship of Authority in the adolescents whose parents experience high amounts of pressure are consistent with the idea put forward in Chapter 4 (section 4.2) that some parents are pressured to give in to their adolescents' wishes. As mentioned, these parents appear to be permissive, unable to enforce their directives, and avoid open confrontation with their children (Baumrind 1971:1-103). These parents may lack confidence in their ability to influence their child's behaviour (Berk 2000:564), may be reluctant to confront their child when he misbehaves, and may even be afraid of their adolescent children (Eldeleklioglu 2007:975-986). It was suggested that an additional parenting style may therefore be identified, one that is determined by the adolescent. Such a parenting style may be labelled as a *forced permissive* parenting style.

#### 5.6.13 Hypothesis 13

The null hypothesis with regard to hypothesis 13 states that

*There is no significant difference between the peer relationships of those adolescents whose parents experience low amounts of pressure and those whose parents experience high amounts of pressure.*

The data from the Adolescent Relationship with Friends Questionnaire were used to test the above hypothesis. The results are shown in Table 5.32.

TABLE 5.32 COMPARISON BETWEEN PEER FRIENDSHIPS OF THOSE ADOLESCENTS WHOSE PARENTS EXPERIENCE LOW AMOUNTS OF PRESSURE AND THOSE WHOSE PARENTS EXPERIENCE HIGH AMOUNTS OF PRESSURE

	Group	N	Mean	S	t	df	p
Adolescents whose Parents Experience Low Pressure	1	40	82.45	12.70	1.16	78	p>0.05
Adolescents whose Parents Experience High Pressure	3	40	79.40	10.77			

According to Table 5.32, a t-value of 1.16 with  $p>0.05$  was obtained. The null hypothesis can therefore not be rejected. The results indicate that the average scores of adolescents with regard to the quality of their friendships does not differ significantly between those adolescents whose parents experience low pressure and those whose parents experience high pressure.

The results are not consistent with the suggestion made in Chapter 4 (section 4.2) that adolescents who have close ties with their friends are likely to place their parents under pressure, for example to grant privileges that they perceive their friends to enjoy. The results correspond however with the other findings of this study which indicate that parental experiences of pressure from their adolescent children are related to other parent variables, rather than associated with adolescent factors.

#### 5.6.14 Hypothesis 14

The null hypothesis with regard to Hypothesis 14 states

*There is no significant difference between the peer pressure of those adolescents whose parents experience low pressure and those whose parents experience high pressure.*

Data obtained from the Adolescent Peer Pressure Questionnaire was used to test this hypothesis. The results appear in Table 5.33.

TABLE 5.33 COMPARISON OF PEER PRESSURE OF THOSE ADOLESCENTS WHOSE PARENTS EXPERIENCE LOW PRESSURE AND THOSE WHOSE PARENTS EXPERIENCE HIGH PRESSURE

	Group	N	Mean	S	t	df	p
Adolescents whose Parents Experience Low Pressure	1	40	61.10	15.88	1.24	78	p>0.05
Adolescents whose Parents Experience High Pressure	3	40	65.60	16.61			

In the light of the results in Table 5.33, a t-value of 1.24 with  $p>0.05$  was obtained. The null hypothesis can therefore not be rejected. The results indicate that the average scores of adolescents with regard to the amount of peer pressure they experience do not differ significantly between adolescents whose parents experience low pressure and those whose parents experience high pressure.

The results are inconsistent with the suggestion in Chapter 4 (section 4.2) that adolescents who experience pressure from their peers, for example to participate in certain activities (Cottrell & Monk 2004:1072-1095) are more likely to place pressure on their parents to give them permission to do so. Research which indicates that peer pressure positively predicts aggression in adolescents (Eldeleklioglu 2007:975-986) may indicate that the aggression is not aimed at parents.

#### 5.6.15 Hypothesis 15

The null hypothesis with regard to Hypothesis 15 states

*There is no significant difference between the identity formation of adolescents whose parents experience low pressure and those whose parents experience high pressure.*

In the light of the nature of child personality development as seen by Erikson and explained in Chapter 3 (sections 3.4.1.1, 3.4.1.1.1 and 3.4.1.1.2) each stage of development is dependent on successful resolution of the previous stage. It may be that adolescents of parents who experience pressure have not fully resolved earlier stages of identity formation, leading to identity diffusion or negative identity formation which is associated with disruptive behaviour. Therefore a comparison of earlier stages of personality development between adolescents whose parents experience low levels of pressure and those whose parents experience high levels of pressure was carried out. Data from the Adolescent Identity Development Questionnaire (Bester 1990:90-96) was used to test the above hypothesis. The results are shown in Table 5.34.

TABLE 5.34 COMPARISON OF IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN ADOLESCENTS WHOSE PARENTS EXPERIENCE LOW PRESSURE AND THOSE WHOSE PARENTS EXPERIENCE HIGH PRESSURE

N = 80 df = 78	Adolescents whose Parents Experience Low Pressure (Group 1)	Adolescents whose Parents Experience High Pressure (Group 3)
<i>Trust</i>		
Mean	25.38	24.33
S	3.66	3.31
t	1.35	
	p>0.05	
<i>Autonomy</i>		
Mean	25.20	24.78
S	2.65	2.66
t	0.71	
	p>0.05	
<i>Initiative</i>		
Mean	26.03	25.03
S	2.81	2.61
t	1.65	
	p>0.05	
<i>Industry</i>		
Mean	26.78	26.35
S	3.44	2.43
t	0.64	
	p>0.05	
<i>Identity Formation</i>		
Mean	25.63	25.48
S	3.69	3.27
t	0.19	



	p>0.05	
<i>Total Identity Development</i>		
Mean	112.10	109.00
S	11.88	10.63
t	1.22	
	p>0.05	

According to Table 5.34, t-values of 1.35 for Trust, 0.71 for Autonomy, 1.65 for Initiative, 0.64 for Industry, 0.19 for Identity Formation, and 1.22 for the Total Attainment of Identity were obtained. In all cases  $p>0.05$ . The null hypothesis can therefore not be rejected. The results indicate that the average scores of adolescents with regard to the resolution of the Stage of Trust, Autonomy, Initiative, Industry, Identity Formation and Total Identity Development do not differ significantly between adolescents whose parents experience low pressure and those whose parents experience high pressure.

The results do not correspond with the inference made in Chapter 4 (section 4.2) that adolescents exert pressure on their parents when experiencing an identity crisis because they express different viewpoints and behave in ways that are not necessarily accepted by their parents.

#### 5.6.16 Hypothesis 16

The null hypothesis with regard to Hypothesis 16 states that

*There is no significant difference between the self-concept of adolescents whose parents experience low pressure and those whose parents experience high pressure.*

Data was obtained from the Adolescent Self-concept Questionnaire (Fourie 2001:156-159) and a t-test was used to test the hypothesis.

TABLE 5.35 COMPARISON OF THE SELF-CONCEPT BETWEEN ADOLESCENTS WHOSE PARENTS EXPERIENCE LOW PRESSURE AND THOSE WHOSE PARENTS EXPERIENCE HIGH PRESSURE

	Group	N	Mean	S	t	df	p
Adolescents whose Parents Experience Low Pressure	1	40	84.73	20.11	0.79	78	p>0.05
Adolescents whose Parents Experience High Pressure	3	40	81.43	17.27			

According to Table 5.35 , a t-value of 0.79 with  $p>0.05$  was obtained. The null hypothesis can thus not be rejected. The results indicate that the average scores of adolescents with regard to their self-concept do not differ significantly between those adolescents whose parents experience low pressure and those whose parents experience high pressure.

The results are inconsistent with the suggestion made in Chapter 4 (section 4.2) that a negative self-concept in adolescents is likely to be associated with the placement of pressure on parents. Research findings indicate that a negative self-concept or lack of self-concept clarity in adolescents is associated with susceptibility to interpersonal influence (Bester & Fourie 2006:157-169; Isaksen & Roper 2008:1063-1087). Bester and Fourie (2006:157-169) further found that a lack of self-concept development in adolescents is associated with poor parent relationships. It is likely that adolescents who do not have satisfactory relationships with their parents place pressure on their parents to obtain their goals over a variety of issues. The results of the current study imply however that parents who experience low pressure and those who experience high pressure have adolescent children who do not differ with regard to their self-concepts. This result is consistent with other findings in this study which indicate that parent pressure is associated with other parental variables and the parent-adolescent relationship, rather than individual adolescent factors.

#### 5.6.17 Hypothesis 17

The null hypothesis with regard to Hypothesis 17 states that

*There is no significant difference between the personality characteristics of adolescents whose parents experience low pressure and those whose parents experience high pressure.*

Data from the NEO-FFI-3 Personality Inventory was used to test the above hypothesis. Five personality factors were tested: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. The results appear in Table 5.36

TABLE 5.36 COMPARISON OF PERSONALITY TRAITS BETWEEN ADOLESCENTS WHOSE PARENTS EXPERIENCE LOW PRESSURE AND THOSE WHOSE PARENTS EXPERIENCE HIGH PRESSURE.

N = 80 df = 78	Adolescents whose Parents Experience Low Pressure (Group 1)	Adolescents whose Parents Experience High Pressure (Group 3)
<i>Neuroticism</i>		
Mean	41.33	42.25
S	1.50	1.51
t	0.43	
	p>0.05	
<i>Extraversion</i>		
Mean	47.83	50.15
S	7.57	7.98
t	1.34	
	p>0.05	
<i>Openness to Experience</i>		
Mean	46.15	48.05
S	6.73	7.43
t	1.20	
	p>0.05	
<i>Agreeableness</i>		
Mean	41.20	41.65
S	7.10	7.39
t	0.28	
	p>0.05	
<i>Conscientiousness</i>		
Mean	49.63	51.08
S	5.83	7.07
t	1.00	
	p>0.05	

According to Table 5.36, a t-value of 0.43 was obtained for Neuroticism, 1.34 for Extraversion, 1.20 for Openness to Experience, 0.28 for Agreeableness, and 1.00 for Conscientiousness. In all cases  $p > 0.05$  was obtained. The null hypothesis can therefore not be rejected. The results indicate that the average scores of adolescents with regard to the personality traits of Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness do not differ significantly between adolescents whose parents experience low pressure and those whose parents experience high pressure.

The results are not consistent with the suggestions made in Chapter 4 (section 4.2) that adolescents with unfavourable personality traits are likely to place their parents under pressure. The finding supports other results in the current study which point to the importance of parental factors, rather than adolescent factors in parents experiencing pressure from their adolescent children.

#### 5.6.18 Hypothesis 18

The null hypothesis with regard to Hypothesis 18 states that

*The proportion of the variance of the pressure that adolescents put on their parents which is explained by several variables, is not greater than the proportion which is explained by any of the variables on its own.*

In order to test Hypothesis 18 two stepwise forward regression analyses were carried out to establish which variables explain the greatest proportion of the variance. Parent pressure from their adolescent children was used as the dependent variable and independent variables were those that appeared to show a significant relationship with parents experiencing pressure. The following independent variables were used in the first regression analysis:

- Parent Gender
- Parent Age
- Parent Work Circumstances
- Type of Parent with Whom the Adolescent Lives (biological or stepparent/foster)

- Parent-adolescent Relationships of Trust, Knowledge and Authority (from the parent's perspective)
- Family Cohesion
- Family Organisation
- Intellectual-cultural Orientation in the Family
- Moral-Religious Orientation in the Family
- Parent Self-concept
- Parent Personality Factors (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness)

Some factors did not make a contribution to the variance in parents experiencing pressure and were therefore omitted. The second regression analysis was performed with only those variables that were seen to make a significant contribution to the variance of parents experiencing pressure. The significant variables are, in order of entry into the forward regression analysis:

- Parent Self-concept
- Parent-adolescent Relationship of Authority (from parent's viewpoint)
- Parent Conscientiousness
- Moral-Religious Orientation in the Family
- Parent-adolescent Relationship of Trust
- Parent-adolescent Relationship of Knowledge.

The results of the second regression analysis can be seen in Table 5.37.

TABLE 5.37 PROPORTION OF THE VARIANCE IN PARENTS EXPERIENCING PRESSURE AS THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE BY DIFFERENT INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Step	Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	F	df	p
1	Parent Self-concept	0.517	187.91	(1,175)	<0.0001
2	Relationship of Authority	0.571	21.70	(2,174)	<0.0001
3	Conscientiousness	0.593	9.56	(3,173)	<0.01
4	Moral-religious Orientation in Family	0.609	6.84	(4,172)	<0.01
5	Relationship of Trust	0.618	4.17	(5,171)	<0.05
6	Relationship of Knowledge	0.628	4.42	(6,170)	<0.05

It can be seen from the Table 5.37 that Parent Self-concept explains the largest proportion of the variance in parent pressure, namely 52%. R<sup>2</sup> is significant with F(1,175) = 187.91; p<0.0001.

The second variable to be entered into the regression analysis, was the parental relationship of authority (from the parent's perspective). Together with Parent Self-concept, the Relationship of Authority explains 57% of the variance in the pressure that parents experience. In other words, the relationship of authority explains 5% more of the variance in the experience of pressure by parents, which was not already explained by Parent Self-Concept. The R<sup>2</sup> of 0.571 is significant with F(2,174) = 21.70; p<0.0001.

The inclusion of the personality variable of Parent Conscientiousness resulted in a change in R<sup>2</sup> from 0.571 to 0.593 which implies that approximately 60% of the variance in parent pressure can jointly be explained by Parent Self-concept, the Parent Relationship of Authority and Parent Conscientiousness. The R<sup>2</sup> of 0.593 is significant with F(3,173) = 9.56; p<0.01.

The next variable to be entered was the Moral-Religious Orientation in the family which increased the  $R^2$  to 0.609 explaining a further approximately 1% of the variance in parents experience of pressure. The  $R^2$  of 0.609 is significant with  $F(4,172) = 6.84; p < 0.01$ .

The last two variables to be entered into the regression analysis were the Parent-adolescent Relationship of Trust (from the parent's perspective) and the Parent-adolescent Relationship of Knowledge (from the parent's perspective). The Parent-adolescent Relationship of Trust accounted for a further 1% of the variance in parent pressure. The  $R^2$  of 0.618 is significant with  $F(5,171) = 4.17; p < 0.05$ . Lastly, the addition of the Parent-adolescent Relationship of Knowledge explained a further 1% of the variance in parents experience of pressure. The  $R^2$  of 0.628 is significant with  $F(6,170) = 4.42; p < 0.05$ .

From the regression analysis it can be seen that a total of 63% of the variance in parents experiencing of pressure by their adolescent children can be explained by Parent Self-concept, the Parent-adolescent Authority Relationship, Parent Conscientiousness, a Moral-Religious Orientation in the Family, the Parent-adolescent Relationship of Trust and finally the Parent-adolescent Relationship of Knowledge. The regression analysis indicates therefore that the amount of variance in the experience of parents experiencing of pressure that is explained by several variables is greater than the amount of the variance explained by any single variable. The null hypothesis can therefore be rejected.

The results of the forward regression analysis are consistent with the suggestion in Chapter 4 (section 4.2) that the exertion of pressure on parents by adolescent children is influenced by a variety of factors that are related to parent-child interaction. Results support the suggestion that parent factors and family factors are related to parents experiencing of pressure by their adolescent children. However it was suggested that individual factors in the adolescent, such as age, gender and personality, as well as adolescent developmental factors, such as identity formation contribute to the variance in parent pressure. The results do not support this statement. The only adolescent variables that showed significant relationships with parents experiencing of pressure were the parent-adolescent relationships of authority, trust and the total parent-adolescent relationship.



A stepwise discriminant analysis was performed using adolescent factors as independent variables to determine which factor best discriminates between those adolescents whose parents experience low pressure and those whose parents experience high pressure. The adolescent variable which discriminates best between the two groups is the parent-adolescent relationship of authority and was therefore entered first into the discriminant analysis. The addition of the Parent-adolescent Relationships of Trust and Knowledge did not add to the percentage of discrimination between the two groups of adolescents. Therefore the parent-adolescent relationship of authority was retained as the only discriminating factor. The results of the discriminant analysis can be seen in Table 5.38.

TABLE 5.38 DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS USING THE RELATIONSHIP OF AUTHORITY (FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE ADOLESCENT) AS AN INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

Step	Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	F	df	p
1	Relationship of Authority	0.07	5.49	(1,78)	p<0.05

It can be seen from Table 5.38 that the relationship of authority explains 7% of the difference between the mean of adolescents whose parents experience low pressure and those who experience high pressure. The proportion explained is significant with  $F(1,78) = 5.49; p < 0.05$ .

## 5.7 Conclusion

Item analyses were carried out on the Parent Pressure Questionnaire, the Parent Self-concept Questionnaire and the Parent-adolescent Questionnaire. All items which contributed weakly to the total of the test were removed from the rest of the statistics.

The reliability of the Parent Pressure Questionnaire, the Parent Self-concept Questionnaire and the Parent-adolescent Questionnaire using the Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient was determined. The reliability of the majority of the newly developed tests was found to be high. The reliability of the Parent Pressure Questionnaire was 0.94, the Parent Self-concept Questionnaire was 0.88, and the total Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire

was 0.90. The reliability of the Trust Relationship part of the Parent-adolescent Relationship Questionnaire was 0.85 and the knowledge relationship was 0.74. The reliability of the Authority Section of the Parent-Adolescent Relationship Questionnaire was 0.62. This unexpectedly low reliability will be taken into account in the discussion of the results where relevant.

Validity of the Parent Pressure Questionnaire was determined through clinical as well as informal interviews with parents, and the literature study was used to identify likely situations where pressurising behaviour on the part of adolescents would take place. Construct validity was established by means of item analyses (Cohen & Swerdlik 202:174). To improve the validity of the tests, only those items which correlated positively with the total of the test were retained. Further evidence of the validity of the Parent Pressure Questionnaire was obtained by expected negative correlations between the Parent Pressure Questionnaire and the Parent-adolescent Questionnaire. The Trust Relationship had a correlation of -0.46, the Knowledge Relationship a correlation of -0.62, the Authority Relationship a correlation of -0.65, and the total Parent Pressure Questionnaire had a correlation of -0.63 with the Parent Pressure Questionnaire. These results indicate that pressurisation of parents by adolescent children is associated with poor parent-adolescent relationships (as seen by the parent).

Norms were developed for the Parent Pressure Questionnaire by converting the raw scores into stanines. The below average group and the above average groups were used in further statistical analyses.

Several conclusions can be drawn after testing the hypotheses:

- Mothers experience more pressure from their adolescent children than fathers.
- Parents who experience high levels of pressure do not trust their children, do not know or understand them well, and have little authority in their lives. The Authority questionnaire results should be interpreted with caution because of the relatively low reliability obtained for this test (0.62). However considering that the Authority Questionnaire is consistent with the other Parent-adolescent Relationships and the

Parent Self-concept Questionnaire, the Authority Questionnaire results will be used in the conclusions and recommendations of this research.

- In families where parents are under pressure there is little involvement in moral and religious activities, disorganisation in household routines and responsibilities, a low level of intellectual and cultural involvement, and a lack of cohesion between family members.
- Parents who have poor parenting self-concepts experience pressure from their adolescent children. The results of the empirical investigation indicate that Parent Self-concept is the most important variable which determines whether parents experience pressure from their adolescent children or not.
- Parents who lack conscientiousness and are disorganised, who experience negative affect, are introverted, disagreeable and reluctant to experience new situations are likely to experience pressure from their adolescent children.
- A variety of parental factors are not related to parents' experience of pressure, for example parents' age, working circumstances (full-time, part-time, housewife or unemployed) and the kind of parent the adolescent lives with (biological or stepparent/foster parent).
- Few adolescent factors are related to the pressure they put on their parents. It is parents themselves who create a situation in which they allow themselves to experience pressure from their adolescent children.
- There are two adolescent factors that relate to parents' experience of pressure, and these are pertinent to the relationship adolescents have with their parents. Adolescents of parents who experience pressure have little trust in their parents, and feel that their parents' authority is unfair.
- The following adolescent factors show no relationship with the experience of pressure they put on their parents: Gender, Age, Birth Order Position, Quality of Friendships, Peer Pressure, Identity Development, Self-concept and Personality.

- Parent Self-concept, the Parent-adolescent Relationships (from the parent's perspective), Parent Conscientiousness and the Moral-Religious Orientation in the family collectively explain 63% of the variance in parents experience of pressure.
- The adolescent variable which best discriminates between children of parents who experience low pressure and those who experience high pressure is the Parent-adolescent Relationship of Authority (from the adolescent's perspective). However, this variable explains only 7% of the variability between the two groups.

In Chapter 6, implications of the investigation will be discussed.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Introduction

In Chapter 1 it was stated that the aim of the research was to identify the circumstances and factors which contribute to a situation where adolescents place pressure on their parents. The research consisted of a literature study and an empirical component.

The first part of the literature study focused on the exploration of theoretical perspectives relevant to the parent-child relationship to identify possible factors that may relate to parents being pressurised by their adolescent children. Relational theory was selected as the theory most suitable to provide a framework in which the results of the study can be interpreted. The second part of the literature study investigated how adolescent development in different domains may influence the placement of pressure on parents.

The research results revealed that adolescents do not actively place parents under pressure, but rather that their parents make themselves vulnerable to pressurisation and give in to their children. The most important determinant of pressurisation of parents is poor parenting self-concept. Parents who have poor parenting self-concepts experience a great amount of pressure from their adolescent children. Parents who have positive parenting self-concepts experience little pressure. The empirical findings indicated that mothers experience more pressure from their adolescent children than fathers.

Both parents and adolescents in families where parents are under pressure, experience their relationships as problematic. Parents in these families do not trust their children, do not know or understand them well, and have little authority in their lives. In turn, adolescents of parents who experience pressure

have little trust in their parents and feel that their parents are unfair with regard to authority issues in everyday situations.

Personality factors in parents are related to adolescent pressurisation of parents. Parents who lack conscientiousness and are disorganised, who experience negative affect, are introverted, disagreeable and reluctant to experience new situations are likely to experience pressure from their adolescent children. Further, the orientation of the family plays a role in adolescent placement of pressure on parents. In families where parents are under pressure there is little involvement in moral and religious activities. There is disorganisation in household routines and responsibilities, a low level of intellectual and cultural involvement, and a lack of cohesion between family members.

The most important combination of factors that are associated with pressurisation of parents by adolescents are, in order of strength of correlation: parent self-concept, the relationship of authority (seen from the parent's side), Conscientiousness of the parent, a moral-religious orientation in the family, as well as the relationships of trust and knowledge (seen from the parent's side).

When viewed within the framework of relational theory it can be seen that pressurisation of parents by their adolescent children is associated with the education relationships between the parent and adolescent. However, the results indicate that the emphasis lies on the parents' experiencing of the education relationships. The relationship that the parent has with himself or herself, that is the parent's self-concept, is most closely related to pressurisation by adolescent children. Parents' experience of the relationship of authority with their child is the next most significant factor. Parental conscientiousness and a moral-religious orientation within the family are both inversely related to pressurisation from their adolescent children. The last two factors that show a significant relationship with pressurisation are the parents' experience of the relationship of trust and knowledge. Parents who experience high levels of pressure do not trust their

children, do not know or understand them well, and have little authority in their lives. The adolescent's experience of the relationship of trust and authority are significantly related to pressurisation in their parents. In other words, adolescents of parents who experience pressure have little trust in their parents, and feel that their parents' authority is unfair. The results confirm the statement made in Chapter 2 (section 2.2.11) that an imbalance in one education relationship negatively affects the other education relationships between the parent and adolescent. The current study emphasises the parent's self-concept and the parent's experiencing of the education relationships with regard to parental pressurisation by their children, although the adolescent's experiencing of the relationships is not insignificant

It was suggested in Chapter 1 that individual factors in the adolescent, such as age, gender and personality, as well as adolescent developmental factors, such as identity formation contribute to the variance in parent pressure. The results do not support this statement

The results of the empirical study have implications for parents, educational psychologists, and educators who have contact with parents through schools.

## 6.2 Educational Guidance for Parents

The results suggest that parents may be pressurised by their adolescent children irrespective of the adolescent's age, whether s/he is a girl or a boy, the oldest, middle or youngest child, whether the adolescent has a 'difficult' personality, or a poor self-concept, or not. Mothers need to be more aware of the possibility of pressurisation than fathers, because they are more likely to be placed under pressure by their adolescent children. Parents of any age and with different working circumstances may experience pressure from their adolescent child. The results further suggest that adolescents' friends or their experiences of peer pressure do not affect whether they place pressure on parents or not. It emerged from the study that the most important factor that indicates that parents will

experience pressure from their adolescent child is a poor parenting self-concept. Also, parents who are not orderly in the structure and routines in the home, and who do not educate their children with regard to moral or religious issues, are at risk for experiencing pressure from their adolescent children. Parents who do not trust their children and who feel that their children do not respect their authority may experience pressure from their adolescents. Conversely, parents of adolescents who do not trust or accept their parent's authority are likely to experience pressure from their adolescent children.

#### 6.2.1 Improvement of Parental Self-concept (Parenting Self-efficacy)

As mentioned above, a poor parenting self-concept has the highest correlation with pressurisation of the parent. Therefore improvement of the parent's self-concept should lie at the core of any educational guidance programme.

The most effective way of developing parenting self-efficacy is through active mastery experiences where success is attained through progressively more difficult activities. Therefore parents need to be given parenting tasks, for example having the child pick up the items off the floor, then later clear the whole room. Parents should then consistently uphold the rule. Bandura emphasises that resilient efficacy is necessary. In the context of this study, parents need to be able to overcome parenting obstacles through persistent effort. Parenting tasks should be at a level of difficulty that provides a challenge to the parent but is not too difficult to put in place. If tasks are too difficult parents become easily discouraged by failure. If parents are unsuccessful, they should be helped to learn from their mistakes. In other words, parents should be trained on how to manage failure so that it is informative rather than demoralising.

The second way of developing self-efficacy is by social modelling (Bandura 2009:184; Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 2008:312). Parenting



programmes should have competent models who can convey knowledge, skills and strategies for managing task demands. Also, viewing video clips can provide opportunities to observe parents demonstrating parenting skills. Seeing other parents of teenagers succeed through perseverance and effort will raise parents' beliefs in their own abilities. Parent training through behavioural modelling and social learning provides techniques that are transferable and generalizable to situations relevant to parents and their adolescent children.

Social persuasion is the third mode of influence. If parents are persuaded to believe in themselves they will exert more effort. This increases their chances of success.

People rely partly on their physical and emotional states in judging their efficacy. They read their tension, anxiety and weariness as signs of personal deficiencies (Bandura 2009:185). Positive mood in parents enhances a sense of efficacy, while depressed mood diminishes it. Strategies to lower levels of anxiety and elevate mood need to be taught to parents, for example by means of meditation or relaxation.

Experiences become meaningful by thinking through what happened in a certain situation. Parents' subjective evaluation of their own behaviour, for example when they say 'well done' to themselves, or when they feel proud or ashamed of their own behaviour influences their self-efficacy. If a parent produces a new, appropriate response through logical reasoning he will be able to repeat the behaviour later even if he receives no external reinforcement, simply because he tells himself that it is a good response and feels proud of having discovered it. In this way parents regulate their behaviour themselves (Bandura 2009:185).

### 6.2.2 Parental Personality

Parents who have certain personality traits, such as Neuroticism, Introversion, Disagreeableness as well as a lack of Conscientiousness and Openness, are likely to experience pressure from their adolescent children. Parents need to obtain insight into their personalities and to see how their personality traits may affect their relationship with their adolescent children.

It can be accepted that parents who experience pressure from their adolescent children are experiencing a stressful situation. Research indicates that when confronted with stress, individuals who score high on the Neuroticism trait are more likely to rely on emotion-focused coping strategies, while those who score high on Conscientiousness will probably use problem-focused strategies. Parents who have high levels of Neuroticism and are confronted with stressful situations are therefore more likely to use strategies such as drug therapy or distracting themselves (McLeod 2009). In contrast, parents who score high on Conscientiousness will probably take direct action, such as formulating a plan and carrying it out, exerting more effort towards a known goal, or talking to someone to find out more about the situation (Shewchuk, Elliott, MacNair-Semands & Harkins 1999:685-704). Parents who respond inappropriately to stressful situations need to develop problem-solving strategies. A proactive approach should be taken so that before a situation occurs where the adolescent is likely to pressurise the parent, the parent is calm, and explain the logic behind the behaviour that is not allowed, for example a curfew at 12 o'clock, when the adolescent should return home at 10 o'clock. A compromise can perhaps then be made to make the curfew at 11 o'clock. It is important that an agreement is reached, so that the next time the adolescent places pressure on the parent regarding the curfew, the parent can refer to the agreement that was made, and thus prevent the adolescent from placing pressure on him/her.

Hardiness is defined as a personality-based group of interrelated self-perceptions regarding commitment (enjoyment of a situation), control (a sense that the situation was chosen by the individual) and challenge (a sense that the individual is growing through the situation). According to Maddi, Kahn & Maddi (1998:78-86) hardiness helps people to cope with stress, changing the experience of stressful events into developmental rather than debilitating experiences. Research indicates that hardiness can be increased through training, for example a wider perspective of the stressor needs to be attained. With regard to parents' self-concept, they need to be educated so that they are aware that their adolescent child is at a developmental stage where s/he needs to have increased freedom to make independent decisions. This awareness will strengthen the relationship of knowledge with the adolescent, and make the adolescents' behaviour more understandable, It is therefore less likely that the parent will experience strong negative emotions. Calm parents who understand their adolescents well, will be less likely to be pressurised by their children.

Parents who score high on measures of Neuroticism can benefit from Mindfulness Training which has been found to reduce anxiety and depressive feelings (Lau & Grabovac 2009). Mindfulness encourages the development of a 'distanced' or 'decentred' perspective in which parents can experience their thoughts and feelings as 'mental events' rather than as true, accurate versions of reality. This introduces a 'space' between perception and response that enables patients to have a reflective – rather than a reflexive or reactive – response to situations. Such an approach can help parents to obtain a necessary distance from their situation so that they do not immediately respond by giving in to pressure from their adolescent children.

### 6.2.3 The Relationships of Trust, Knowledge and Authority

It is within the family, that the relationships of trust, knowledge and authority are established between the parent and the child (Gouws & Kruger 1994:13; Verster, Theron & van Zyl 1990:92-93). The three educative relationships remain in place through adolescence, but the emphasis within each relationship changes as the adolescent grows older. For example, the relationship of authority changes so that adolescents assume increasing independence and responsibility (Laursen & Bukowski 1997:747-770; Scanzoni & Szinovacz 1980:211). Therefore parents need to give their adolescent children certain appropriate freedoms, and lessen their control of everyday behaviours and situations. Moreover, if parents allow certain age-appropriate behaviours, their children are likely to feel that their needs or wants are affirmed, and will therefore be less likely to place their parents under pressure.

An understanding of the changes in the adolescent's cognitive and language development will improve the relationship of knowledge that parents have with their children, and minimise pressurisation of the parent. The adolescent's reasoning abilities, his ability to recall information and integrate new information, his level of abstract thinking and anticipation of consequences, are some of the cognitive functions that develop in the adolescent. As a result of these changes adolescents are able to question parents' decisions. Parents therefore need to be prepared for situations where adolescents will question their decisions. For example, parents need to think through the logical reason for setting a limit on their adolescent child's behaviour, so that if the child should question the limit, a reasonable and understandable response can immediately be given by the parent.

During adolescence, clear limits are set by adolescents around their life space in order to distinguish themselves from the significant others in their

lives (Scabini, Marta and Lanz 2006:50). Parents need to respect their adolescent's need for privacy, but at the same time strengthen the relationship of knowledge in other ways, for example spending more time with their children.

The child must be able to trust his parents. Even though the adolescent is more independent than in the childhood years, he is still reliant on his parents to create a sense of safety and security so that he can explore the outside world with confidence (Griessel & Oberholzer 1992:60). Parents need to ensure that they maintain an open and trusting relationship with their adolescent children (Gouws & Kruger 1994:13; Verster, Theron & van Zyl 1990:93) by, for example sensitively listening to their child's thoughts, ideas and concerns.

An imbalance in one educative relationship often affects the other relationships between the parent and child. For example, parents who are inconsistent in their parenting behaviours undermine the relationship of trust with their adolescent children. Adolescents may then pressurise their parent to allow certain behaviours, and the relationship of authority is negatively affected. Parents therefore need to maintain a balance between the relationships of trust, knowledge and authority.

#### 6.2.4 The Relationship of the Adolescent with Moral and Religious values

Consistency between parents' and their adolescent children's ideas of right and wrong is associated with low levels of pressure placed on parents by their children. Moral development can be viewed as the progressive internalisation of societal standards for right action (Berk 2009:484). Parents need to interact frequently with their adolescent children in order for internalization of social norms to take place. Adolescents who spend little time with their parents do not have many opportunities to observe and internalize social norms. The following ways can be considered by

parents to facilitate the adoption of correct social norms: The correct response in the behaviour of other people can be discussed. Issues of right and wrong can then be identified. The use of positive reinforcement such as encouragement and praise by parents (Corey 2005:239) can facilitate the development of moral reasoning and the adoption of social norms by adolescents. Parents need to model correct behaviour so that adolescents can observe their parents and learn various rules to guide their moral judgement and behaviours (Brody 1978:20-26; Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:343).

The closer the relationship between parents and adolescents and the more positive it is, the more likely it is that adolescents will internalize values and behavioural regulations held by parents (Eisenberg & Morris 2004:164; Feldman 2007:582-597; Ryan & Deci 2000:319-338). Therapy to improve the quality of the relationship between parents and adolescents may be necessary for appropriate moral development in the adolescent to take place.

Conscience develops when children internalize moral principles of right and wrong (Mussen, Conger, Kagan & Huston 1984:364). Morals are not inherited, but have to be acquired through learning (Gouws & Kruger 1994:174). In other words, adolescents develop their conscience through interaction with others. Research indicates that adolescents frequently take the viewpoint of their parents in moral issues (Leenders & Brugman 2005:65-79). Education of parents in how to communicate issues of right and wrong to their adolescent children can be carried out.

Use of the democratic parenting style where adolescents are encouraged to question and expand on their reasoning, is associated with high level moral reasoning in adolescence (Eisenberg & Morris 2004:164). Further

parental encouragement of critical thinking in adolescents helps develop moral judgement (Weinstock, Assor & Broide 2009:137-151).

Use of the authoritarian parenting style should be avoided. The more parents use power assertion, the less likely it is that their children will internalise moral controls or conscience (Grusec & Lytton 1988:187). This means that inappropriate parenting styles, such as the authoritarian parenting style can be problematic for the development of the adolescent's own conscience. Furthermore, parents who use a permissive parenting style do not encourage the development of a conscience because they do not punish their children when rules are broken, and they seldom teach their children the difference between right and wrong (Gouws & Kruger 1994:181).

Parental encouragement of positive relationships with peers facilitates the development of moral thinking according to Piaget. It is through discussions and disagreements with peers that adolescents realise that people have different perspectives on moral issues, and that intentions, not concrete consequences, should serve as the basis for judging behaviour (Berk 2006:485).

A religious orientation in the family is associated with low levels of pressure placed on parents by their adolescent children. Parents need to explore their own spirituality. Religious orientation in the family can be encouraged through open and frequent communication and debate about spirituality and religion. Acceptance of the adolescent child even though s/he may hold different opinions about religion, as well as clarification of the parent's own viewpoint and reasons for belief. Regular church attendance and involvement in church activities and maintenance of traditional religious beliefs which include commitment to children and spouse, honouring and obeying parents, and the importance of close interpersonal relationships (Pearce & Axinn 1998:810-828; Regnerus &

Burdette 2006:175-194). The transmission of a normative value system to adolescents in religious families ensures that adolescents have similar values to their parents.

#### 6.2.5 Organisation in the Family

The results of the current study indicate that in families which are well organised with regard to practical issues, adolescents are less inclined to place pressure on their parents. Parents who have organised families order the physical environment of the home so that items are easily found. They have good time management of family routines and activities. Parents in these families are consistent in their behaviour. Chores are clearly identified and completed on time, e.g. dishes are done immediately after eating, and money is carefully handled in the family.

Parents need to establish routines and ensure that all members of the family have responsibilities regarding the household functioning. In this way, the family environment becomes predictable and secure, and the adolescent gains a sense of accomplishment because he is contributing to the positive functioning of the family.

#### 6.2.6 Intellectual-Cultural Orientation in the Family

An intellectual and cultural orientation in families should be encouraged. Political and social problems should be discussed and attendance at lectures, plays or concerts should be encouraged. Both parents and adolescents need to place a priority on learning about new and different things, and develop an interest in cultural activities, such as historical celebrations or festivals. The library, where both books and the internet can be accessed should be a regular place to visit. Reading books rather than watching television should be encouraged, and an aesthetic appreciation of music, art and literature should be facilitated in the family.



### 6.2.7 Cohesion in the Family

The current study indicates that high levels of cohesion in families are negatively associated with pressurisation behaviours. Parents should ensure that in their families they help and support each other and spend meaningful time together at home. It is important to foster a feeling of togetherness, develop family traditions and discuss family history regularly.

## 6.3 Parent Communication and Involvement in School activities

In South Africa there is a lack of parental involvement in schools, and a lack of parental support for teachers and schools (Schulze & Steyn 2007:691-707). Schulze and Steyn (2007:691-707) are of the opinion that the lack of parental involvement can be a result of parents' own poor education during the previous dispensation, and their attitudes negatively influence those of their children. In addition, other social factors such as unemployment, even among those with matriculation qualifications, may contribute to parents' negative attitudes and lack of involvement in their children's schooling.

Communication and involvement in the school activities of the adolescent will increase the parent's knowledge of the adolescent's experiences. In this way the parent's relationship of knowledge can be improved. Berger (2008:176) identifies the parent-teacher conference as one way in which the school can provide guidance for the parent. Through sensitive listening and interaction teachers can create a trusting atmosphere in which parents can be guided to help their adolescent children. The parent-teacher conference can be used not only to address issues directly regarding schoolwork, but can also help parents improve their relationship with their adolescent children. Teachers have detailed knowledge about adolescent development and their needs. They can give practical and appropriate solutions to day-to-day problems, such as disciplinary issues encountered with adolescents. Parents can receive guidance to improve their relationships with their children, through the school and their children's teachers.

However, in many cases, parents of adolescents who are in high school receive little guidance regarding ways in which they can help and support their children. Interventions that change parents' behaviour can be linked to positive changes in the behaviour of adolescents, even though the adolescents, themselves did not receive therapy. Increased parental effectiveness is linked to more positive child or adolescent behaviour (Collins & Roisman 2006:83). Informed parents are less likely to be pressurised by their adolescent children.

Workshops are another way in which issues, such as behavioural problems regarding adolescent children can be addressed (Berger 2008:229). Teachers and parents can meet to discuss a specific topic. Through role play or dramatisation, problems in the parent-adolescent relationship can be demonstrated and through further discussion, solutions can be suggested by the participants. In this way, parents improve their knowledge and understanding of their adolescent children, lessening the risk of pressurisation by their child

Berger (2008:241) identifies ways in which a parent can become involved in the school, for example parents can be active in their children's educational activities at home as well as in school, they can be involved in the management of the school, or in raising funds for school development. Active participation in the concerns of the school enables parents to be informed about their child's education, to be able to support their child's school life effectively, and improve the relationship of knowledge with their adolescent children.

#### 6.4 Supervision and Structured Activities

Participation in structured activities, meaning those with adult leaders, regular meetings, and skill-building activities, are related to satisfactory adjustment in adolescents. These activities may serve to promote a sense of cohesion in the family as children participate in constructive activities that are consistent with parents' values and priorities. (Persson, Kerr & Stattin 2007:197-207).

## 6.5 Evaluation of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research

In Chapter 1 (section 1), it was stated that a considerable amount of research has been carried out regarding the placement of pressure *by parents* on their adolescent children (Lessard, Greenberger & Chen 2010:73-83; Scull, Kupersmidt, Parker, Elmore & Benson 2010:981-998). In contrast, little research has been carried out regarding the placement of pressure in the opposite direction, that is *by adolescents* on their parents. The research that has been carried out regarding the placement of pressure by adolescents on parents is limited to certain situations, such as advertising, and related communication fields (Palan & Wilkes 1997:159-169). Little research has been carried out regarding other situations where adolescents are likely to pressurise their parents, for example curfews or choice of friends.

The current study is making a contribution in the sense that various situations where parents experience pressure from their adolescent children have been identified. Situations where parents try to establish and maintain rules that were previously agreed on by their adolescent children, occasions when adolescents feel that their friends are allowed more leniency, completion of chores in the home, participation in activities which parents consider unsafe or unacceptable, occasions when adolescents wish to have contact with undesirable friends, situations where adolescents demand something or wish a parent to purchase desired material items, conflict situations where the adolescent child accuses parents of loving siblings more, situations where confrontation, disagreement or conflict between the parent and adolescent child occurs or is possible, situations where the adolescent wishes to go out, curfew times, situations where parents are susceptible to feeling guilt.

The current study revealed that many more parental factors than adolescent factors are related to the placement of pressure on parents by their adolescent children. The most important are poor parenting self-concept, negative parent

personality traits, such as a lack of Conscientiousness and unsatisfactory education relationships with their children.

One tends to blame adolescents when they pressurise their parents, but only two adolescent factors relate to parents' experience of pressure, and these are noticeable in the education relationships adolescents have with their parents. Adolescents of parents who experience pressure have little trust in their parents, and feel that their parents' authority is unfair.

Another positive aspect of the study is that not only individual factors, but also the family as a system was found to be related to the pressurisation of parents by their adolescent children, for example disorganised families, families where there is little involvement in moral and religious activities, family environments where there is a low level of intellectual and cultural involvement, and families where there is a lack of cohesion between family members.

Equally important as identifying factors that play a role in the placement of pressure on parents is the identification of factors that are not related to pressurisation by adolescent children, for example parents' age or working circumstances (full-time, part-time, housewife or unemployed), and adolescent factors such as gender, age, or birth order position. The results of the study place psychologists in a better position to use relevant interventions, rather than focus on unimportant aspects, to decrease pressurisation of parents by their adolescent children.

A new questionnaire was developed during the current study. The assumption was made in Chapter 1 (section 1.1) that most, if not all adolescents place pressure on their parents, or at least try to. The parent-adolescent relationship in general was researched and situations where pressure may occur were identified. These situations were used to develop a questionnaire to measure parents' experience of

pressure by their adolescent children. A measuring instrument for this purpose was not previously available.

The Parent Pressure Questionnaire was shown to be a valid and reliable measuring instrument to measure the experience of pressure by parents from their adolescent children. Content validity of the Parent Pressure Questionnaire was established through clinical as well as informal interviews with parents, and the literature study was used to identify likely situations where pressurising behaviour on the part of adolescents would take place. Construct validity was established by means of a correlational approach (Cohen & Swerdlik 202:174).

The reliability of the newly developed Parent Pressure Questionnaire was obtained by calculating the Alpha Coefficient and was found to be high, at 0.94, indicating that it is a useful instrument to measure the experience of pressure by parents from their adolescent children.

Norms were developed for the Parent Pressure Questionnaire by converting the raw scores into stanines. Norm tables were formed by grouping the different scores obtained by the parents into a group who had below average scores on the pressure questionnaire, those who obtained average scores, and the group of parents whose pressurisation scores were above the average for the sample. The norm tables can be used to identify the extent of pressure experienced by parents. Not only can psychologists who treat parents benefit from these norms, but they can also help future researchers who wish to investigate the pressure phenomenon under discussion.

It can be seen that the empirical investigation has brought to light the importance of parent factors and parent perceptions regarding the pressure they experience from their adolescent children. Parents themselves create situations where they are vulnerable to being placed under pressure by their adolescent children. Of the six factors which collectively account for 63% of the variance in adolescent

pressurisation of parents, five are parent-related factors. The most important factor in determining adolescent pressurisation of parents is Parenting Self-concept. The other parent factors are the Parent-adolescent Relationship of Authority, Parent Conscientiousness, and the Parent-adolescent Relationships of Trust and Knowledge (seen from the parent's view). One factor accounting for a significant proportion of the variance, is a family-related variable: the Moral-Religious Orientation in the family.

It was suggested in Chapter 1 that adolescent factors could play a role in the placement of pressure on parents. However, the only adolescent factor that relates to parents who experience high levels of pressure is the Relationship of Authority (seen from the adolescent's side), and that factor accounts for only 7% of the variance in the pressure parents experience.

A limitation of the current study is that due to the exploratory nature of the current study many different factors which were possibly related to parent pressurisation by their adolescent children were included. As a result the questionnaire completed by both parents and adolescents was lengthy, and a large sample of parents and adolescents could not be obtained. With regard to the measuring instruments, although the results of the Parent-adolescent Relationship of Authority Questionnaire (from the parent's side) were consistent with the other parent-adolescent measures used in the study, the reliability was lower than that generally accepted for educational research. When phrasing some items in the Parent Pressure questionnaire, the phrase 'until I give in' was included. Therefore, these items may measure permissiveness, rather than limiting the focus to the pressurizing behaviour of the adolescent. Thus, the measurement of the pressure parents experience may be confounded by the permissiveness of the parent. A unique identity number could have been assigned to each parent-adolescent dyad, so that should the questionnaires be misplaced outside of the research facilities, confidentiality would be maintained. 73 questionnaires were filled out by learners, but the parents of these learners did

not provide a questionnaire, therefore these learner questionnaires were not taken into account in the analyses of the data. The subjective nature of the information obtained in the questionnaires from both parents and learners is a limitation of the study. A lack of culturally valid measuring instruments was a barrier, for example the personality questionnaire was not standardized for a South African population.

Three suggestions are made for further research. Firstly, a larger sample can be used to validate the results obtained in the current study. Secondly, numerous recommendations were made in this chapter to improve the parenting self-concept. In future research, some of these recommendations could be experimentally investigated. Thirdly, the most important variable identified in the current study that was associated with pressurisation by adolescent children, was the relationship of the parent with himself or herself, that is the parent's self-concept. It is therefore suggested that more research into the parents' experience of could be carried out.

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