

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**Young children's constructions of cross-sex relationships in a
combined school setting: A Narrative inquiry**

by

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degree of

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DECLARATION

I, Patience Nonhlanhla Maphanga, declare that this dissertation entitled:

**Young children's construction of cross-sex relationships in a combined
school setting: A Narrative Inquiry**

is my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references and citations. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

Patience Nonhlanhla Maphanga

March 2014

Professor Pholoho Morojele (Supervisor)

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was to explore the experiences of cross-sex relationship among grade four children in one farm co-educational combined school in UMgungundlovu. A social constructionist paradigm, which draws on children's geographies and new sociology of childhood studies, was adopted as conceptual lens in this study to understand if and how constructions of femininities and masculinities bear on young children's social relations at the school. These theoretical approaches were vital to enable the study to unearth how dynamics of gender play out in cross-sex relationships. The aim of the study was to understand how these insights could be used to devise strategies to enhance gender relations within the school.

A qualitative research methodology within the tradition of a narrative inquiry was adopted for the study. Methods of data generation used in this study included individual and focus group interviews with the use of a participatory learning activity, namely, photovoice. Thematic and content analysis were used for data analysis. The study was conducted in a combined school with the focus on intermediate phase grade 4 children. Three girls and three boys between the ages of nine and twelve were selected to participate in the study using convenience and purposive sampling.

The study found that experiences of cross-sex relationships among children were deeply implanted in traditional discourses of masculinity and femininities. These were found to have caused challenges regarding the possibilities that children had in

their navigation of spaces and places of cross-sex relationships within the school. Findings revealed that children valued their cross-sex relationships even within the context where gender inequalities were mainly perpetuated in school practices and discourses. The study recommended that there should be improved collaborative effort between the department of education and teachers. The need for the school to create surroundings that promote sustainable equitable gender relations between boys and girls is also highlighted.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study set out to explore cross-sex relationships among grade four children in one farm co-educational combined school in UMgungundlovu. Cross-sex relationships are relationships that are generally uncared for which makes them unimportant to be addressed. The reason for neglecting it is gender based socializations which begin at home, reinforced in the society and therefore practiced at school, which is a meeting point for children. Children internalize these social expectations into gender-based cognitive schemata which encourage the interpretation of cross-sex relations according to cultural sets of laws. Children find it confusing to be in cross-sex relationships because they view each other as sexual or romantic partners. This mentality interacts with schooling practices in promoting inequality between boys and girls social relationships. *“Yet these dynamics bear on how boys and girls construct their gender identities and this manifests in how they conduct themselves, especially while in school”* (Morojele, 2011b, p.679).

This chapter is organized, initially; to provide the aims and rationale for this study, the research questions, the background to the study and the significance of the study, and then it delivers the structural outline of the dissertation in coherent succession of all chapters.

1.2 AIMS AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

This study aimed to explore young children's experiences and construction of cross-sex relationships in a combined school setting as this is vital in our quest to understand if and how construction of femininities and masculinities bear on young children's social lives at school. Understanding children's experiences and constructions of cross-sex relationships is an important aspect of research that unearths how dynamics of gender play out, in cross-sex relationships.

My inspiration for embarking on this study was to uphold gender performances which promote fair gender relations. There is a minimum literature from the African and South African contexts on children's social relations. I found scarcity of in-depth qualitative studies on cross-sex relationships which look closely at situated contexts, spaces and places that listen to children's marginalized voices. My interest in social theory was ignited by the Masters in Social Justice in Education module called Social Identities done in 2012. It was then obvious that if gender was socially constructed then gender identities are influenced by numerous factors. The theory of the Cycle of socialization was used to critically examine, analyze and report our own live history in terms of how our gender social identities was shaped and experienced (Harro, 2000 & Morojele, 2012).

As an educator who is expected to construct social change in gender relationships and for laying a strong foundation in the lower grades, it was central to understand how

people learn to be who they are, how they relate with other people as well as what these mean for improving children's social relationships at school as related to cross-sex. My professional identity as a teacher places me in a relative position of power which could be used to understand children's construction and experiences of cross-sex relationships. It was that realization that prompted me to conduct a study of this nature, as Morojele (2009a) affirms that in order to understand how children construct cross-sex relationships, research has to observe the manner in which children attach meaning to the world around them in association with gender based relationships. "Unless students and teachers are given space to deconstruct and question the dominant gender and sexual stereotypes and the pernicious effects they can have, both on learning and on social relations more generally, predominantly antagonistic gender relations are likely to persist" (Dunne, 2008, p.99).

1.3 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was guided by the following three research questions:

1. What are the ways in which young children's observations in a schooling context shape their understandings and constructions of cross-sex relationships?
2. What are the geographies of cross-sex relationships?
3. How do children navigate the spaces and places of cross-sex relationships?

To research these questions, the study used narrative inquiry which involved the use of a participatory research method named photovoice. Three boys and three girls aged nine to twelve used cameras to depict dynamics of cross-sex relationships within the school (Please see Chapter 3 for details).

1.4 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The study was conducted in a farm Combined School. Three girls and three boys from grade four were selected. Their ages were between nine and twelve. Secret ballot was used to select final participants because many grade four children showed keen interest in participating in the study. The selection of grade four was based on the fact that they have been to school for five years and have exited early childhood development phase (ECD). They are in the intermediate phase where they usually start attaching meaning to things around them. In this phase they began to show signs of being very conscious about their behaviour and their relationships.

The location of the study was within the social constructionist paradigm and was framed by children's geographies and the new sociology of children as the study wanted to know about children and their social lives in cross-sex relationships. It investigated lived experiences therefore children had to reflect on their agency regarding cross-sex relationships. Qualitative methodology seemed appropriate for this type of study. The study used narrative inquiry, as a research approach, to understand the tensions, dilemmas and the multiplicity of the spaces and places of cross-sex relationships

through the stories narrated and used participatory techniques within the individual and focus group interviews.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of the first research question exposed children's experiences and constructions of cross-sex relationships. Factors shaping children's understanding and factors affecting children's engagements with cross-sex relationships were also revealed. In answering the second research question, the study revealed the spaces and places in which these relationships occurred and the types and forms of cross-sex relationships were identified. In regard to the last research question, the findings showed the navigation styles and contestations of children in cross-sex relationships. The study utilized thematic and content analysis to analyze data transcripts from the collected data in disclosing deep rooted principles.

Face-to-face interaction with children, when narrating and when using participatory techniques which were child centered and child-friendly, has made this study very meaningful and the subject cross-sex relationships to be known (Van Blerk, 2005). In the light of the above, the engagement of this nature presents an opportunity for further research in the creation of school environments that will promote equal gender social relations among boys and girls.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

Chapter 1: This chapter offers a broad overview which prepares the reader for the forthcoming aims and rationale of this study. It also offers background to the study and the significance of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature related to this study is reviewed. This chapter provides a brief discussion of children geographies and the new sociology of children that serves as a conceptual framework for the study, and then it discusses two vital aspects of cross-sex relationships, namely; gender dynamics and relationships at school. It also draws attention to how masculinities and femininities take vital part in cross-sex relationships and how children are positioned in compound and fluid spaces and places within cross-sex relationships.

Chapter 3: This chapter gives an explanation of why qualitative research methodology, narrative inquiry, the social construction paradigm and the researcher's position are used. It then discusses the research design under the following headings: geographies and social economic context, participants, methods of data generation, data analysis, validity and trustworthiness, limitations and anticipated challenges and ethical issues of the study.

Chapter 4: The chapter discusses the findings of the study by using thematic and content analysis. The discussion of findings is correlated and incorporated with the reviewed literature.

Chapter 5: Depicting on chapter 4, this chapter first provides theoretical-methodological reflections, personal and academic reflections and then presents the limitations of the study. Finally, the conclusion and implications of the study are presented and direction for future research is given.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to explore cross-sex relationships amongst children in a farm combined school. The aim is to understand the children's voice, agency and the creative ways in which children construct and navigate the formation of cross-sex relationships (Mayall, 2002). The literature review presented in this chapter discusses the empirical research studies as well as theoretical viewpoints related to the geographies of children in the construction and navigation of cross-sex relationships. The chapter attempts to locate the current research study within debates in the field of children's geographies and schooling. It is important to note at the outset that the research studies in this field were mostly done in countries of the North and relatively small scale studies have been done in Southern Africa.

This chapter is organized to provide a brief discussion of children's geographies and the new sociology of childhood studies as useful conceptual frameworks in this study, and then it discusses two important aspects of cross-sex relationships, namely; gender dynamics and relationships in schools. In this way, the chapter highlights how dynamics of femininities and masculinities play a critical role in cross-sex relationships as well as how these factors position children in complex and fluid geographies within cross-sex relationships.

2.2 UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN'S GEOGRAPHIES AND CROSS-SEX RELATIONSHIPS

2.2.1 Understanding Children's Geographies

Children's geographies refer to a branch of study within human geography which explores the places and spaces of children's lives experientially, ethically and politically (Wyness, 2003). It is essential to know how children form relationships with each other as the geographies in which children are located within these relationships can provoke powerful emotional reactions. Geographers have been criticized for ignoring the impact of the political economy and social policy discourses on children (Ansell, 2009). Ansell (2009) argues that children are taken for granted and they are excluded in debates that will make their desires noticeable. This means that there is an urgent need for research that explores the spaces and places of children in cross-sex relationships.

There are myriad factors that affect children's social-spatial friendship presence. Children are sometimes excluded from the public social and spatial vicinities due to their state of being children. Children are normally regarded as immature and innocent and thus not human enough to determine their own social lives (Renold, 2005). The processes that affect children globally are left unchallenged (Young, 2000) or if they are, it is normally done without including the views, experiences and emotions of children themselves. Hence, the focus of this study is to try to understand children's geographies in cross-sex relationships from the point of view of children. This would enable the study to trace things that make their way into children's spaces (Ansell, 2009), how these

affect children and how children actively navigate these dynamics in order to determine their lives.

It should be noted that childhood is not separated from other social variables such as age, class, gender, ethnicity, race etc. (Barker & Weller, 2003). In that case, it is of utmost importance that the multiple realities of childhood in their social and spatial construction be acknowledged (Van Blerk, 2005; Brown, 2011). The attention of much research on children has been in the historical rather than the spatial diversity of children (Camfield, Streuli & Woodhead, 2008), yet children's geographers make a contribution to the broader interdiscipline of children geographies by discovering the importance of place and space, bearing in mind that children's lives are experienced in dissimilar ways in differing times, places and spaces in differing situations (Weller, 2006). Geographers have identified the necessity of exploring the spatialities of childhood on a daily basis since they belong to an abandoned social grouping experiencing a variety of forms of social-spatial downgrading (Ansell, 2009). This study traces insights into gender debates by focusing on cross-sex relationships, which have the potential to let us understand girls and boys more as human beings as opposed to the existing dominant understanding, which supports sexuality and sexual relationships as an origin for cross-sex interactions (Morojele, 2009 b).

Morojele and Muthukrishna (2011) illustrate that voice and agency are crucial concepts in the new childhood studies. Voice refers to group intentions, hopes, grievances and expectations that children look upon as their own. Agency suggests that children are

talented, independent, and are self-governing actors who can contribute to improving their lives (Morojele & Muthukrishna, 2011). This means that voice and agency serves as fundamental ideas of exploring children experiences in cross-sex relationships.

Researchers remark about the power issue which is noticeable in the engagement of children as researchers. Barker and Weller (2003) observe the difficulty in gaining access to work with children as schools have many gatekeepers including all stakeholders who are responsible for children's welfare and giving the final permission. They point out that researchers should be well prepared when negotiating access to schools in a research that involve children. It is a good way of collecting rich, quality data thus giving them a chance of being meaning producers in their own right. Skelton (2007) explains that participation is a fundamental right of children set in by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Children (UNCRC). This can be done by giving them the opportunity to navigate their spaces and places in cross-sex relationships, therefore, a lot can be learnt about boys and girls interactions beyond the sexual idiom (Hamlall & Morrel, 2009).

2.2.2 New Sociology of Childhood Studies

The New Sociology of Childhood is a branch of sociology focusing on the ways societies conceptualize and organize childhood. This field of New Childhood Studies has a significant impact on how to conduct research on children (Skanfors, 2009) thus supporting the principles set down in the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of

the Child which centers on the notion that children are not empty containers but active participants and social actors who shape their own individualities (Morojele & Muthukrishna, 2011). However, Young, & Barret (2000) note that the practices that influence children in their relationships are left uncontested, or if they are, it is usually done by not including the views, experiences and emotions of children themselves. This study attempts to provide the voice of children so that social procedures that impinge on them in cross-sex relationships are highlighted. Considering that the UNCRC underlines that children are defenseless, therefore, children's rights should be conferred in connection to security, provision, prevention and participation (Camfield, Streuli & Woodhead, 2008). UNCRC suggests that involvement of adults should be guided by action that promotes the best interests of children thus placing children's rights in the context of human rights and the significance of rights of all children is crucial (Moran-Ellis, 2010).

The importance of childhood studies is understood as a change from doing research on children to research with, and by, children (Gallagher & Gallagher, 2008). Such a focus foregrounds the viewpoint that children are meaning producing members of society in their own right (Young & Barret, 2001, p.141). This means that the development of literature on childhood studies reveal the significance of childhood as a social position for the study of a formerly ignored or downgraded group. This study tries to capture the dynamism and continuity of children's experiences as far as the geographies of cross-sex relationships is concerned.

The paradigm move in New Childhood Studies is to a sociological outlook, thus looking at children as meaningful beings who navigate spaces in structures and procedures around them, particularly at their surrounding places and whose social relationships are worth of study in their own right. Kehily (2003) comments in an analysis of children's culture that encouraged for marginalized voices of children to be heard. She proposes that culture should be signified diagrammatically as interconnecting circles in which children establish one portion of a society's values, beliefs and social interaction. Camfield, Streuli & Woodhead (2008) agrees when analyzing the work of Piaget, who attempted to understand children's ideas on their own terms in his child centered approach which promoted great respect for children's thinking and behavior. Mayall (2002) admits that contributions of children to the social order should be recognized. Children become skilled at diverse communication while carrying out their own activities in making and in keeping relationships at school and out of school (Mayall, 2002).

In the light of the above, Moran-Ellis (2010) concur with Barrie Thorne (1993) in a U.S based study of children's gender, where he drew on ethnographic study techniques to know the social worlds of boys and girls aged nine to ten years in a public elementary school. The study encountered boys and girls occupied in different forms of physicality, chat and action. At first, the researcher was puzzled by the children's customs of playing. Both boys and girls play were observed as disorganized and messy but after a number of months children's play made common sense from the point of view of children. Analysis of the findings suggests that children's relationships have their own fashion and internal motive that have a meaning to the children involved. The meaning

was shaped by children themselves, and others, through patterns of relationships, formalities of playing and the way they use their everyday objects such as toys, cars, crayons, pencils and erasers.

Moran-Ellis (2010) suggests that these objects gain representational significance among boys' and girls' relationships. These items turn out to be vital signs of relationships that can be bought and sold or bartered. The findings of the study revealed that children have developed a secretive economy with the items used daily at school such as pencils crayons, erasers and many more. They use the latter as a tool to form relationships or as a practice of acceptance in the group and hurting symbol of elimination (Moran-Ellis, 2010).

2.3 UNDERSTANDING CROSS-SEX RELATIONSHIPS

Cross-sex relationships refer to the interaction that promotes suppleness in ideas as boys and girls become skilled at discussing and communicating successfully with one another (McDougall & Hymel, 2007). Cross-sex relationships can be based on many groupings, for example, closeness, common activities, previous interaction, social behavior, etc. In this study, cross-sex relationships refer to the connection between boys and girls thus embracing common love, compassion and kindness capacity for each other and emotional support (Blazek, 2011). Although cross-sex relationships are an important sphere of everyday activities, it has lost the attention of the social scientists for a long time. Social scientists have marked relationships for boys and girls

in four dissimilar ways. Firstly it highlights the significance of support, belief and how they formed their own social world which revolves around cross-sex relationships. Secondly, it highlights that relationships not only provide as positive instrument but how they copied and put in place accepted social structures of power in peer relations as an area where social inequality is formed. Thirdly, it highlights how relationships are an attainable device for the construction of children's individuality aspects. Finally, it is revealed how everyday spaces are essential for children's practices of relationships and how emergent relationships are strictly connected to children's contestations and negotiations over space (Blazek, 2011).

The study of cross-sex relationships has been based for many years on quantitative studies, which deals with drawing conclusions from observations and putting them in graphs. There are few qualitative studies which involve interaction between boys and girls. Marion, Buhrmester and Underwood (2007) study is of interest in their own right as it plays role in the development of boys' and girls' individual uniqueness. Cross-sex relationships also provide the context for understanding different perspectives or ways of viewing the geographies of children. This means that cross-sex relationships can be initiated and dissolved at any time because they are voluntary relationships which are formed by children out of their own will. Ellis and Zarbatany (2007) points out the combination of distinctive and overlapping factors of friendship making and keeping which depends on the involvement of desires in children behavioral characters and social location (Ellis & Zarbatany, 2007).

It is common that children, when upset or cross they often get rid of the objects of their frustration from social interactions by excluding them in their conversations or social plans (Marion, Buhrmester & Underwood, 2007). The latter is most evident in cross-sex relationships because girls are characterized with harmony and closeness unlike boys' interaction which is directed more on competition and dominance (Marion, Buhrmester & Underwood, 2007).

Rose (2007) contributes to our understanding of girls' and boys' relationships in terms of structure, content and adjustment and correlation. It provides girls' and boys' with pleasurable companionship, reliable alliances in the broader peer group to provide help and support in times of need. Structure refers to the demographic make-up of children's relationships. McDougall and Hymel (2007) indicate that cross-sex relationships are popular in schools. Some children have cross-sex friends in other schools. McDougall and Hymel's (2007) findings report that 90% of children have current cross-sex relations. The content refers to how boys and girls interact. Marion, Buhrmester and Underwood (2007) agree with Rose (2007) that girls and boys thought about their cross-sex relationships differently. Girls tend to understand cross-sex relationships as boy initiators. In contrast boys do not see like that. Girls mostly change their interpersonal styles to make relationships comfortable because they are more skilled than boys at taking the perspective of another-sex peer and understanding what that peer would like in a relation (Rose, 2007). This means that boys and girls have to adjust their interpersonal and coping styles in a manner that enables the development of their cross-sex relationships.

2.3.1 Cross-sex Relationships and Schooling

Healy (2011) states that cross-sex relationship is an interesting phenomenon vital to everyone which requires no guidelines yet it is open minded. She refers to this relationship as a come and go exercise; that can be lost but another one would be made. Healy (2011) maintains that relationships play an essential part in the life of children. Geographies of cross-sex often serve to make relationships a crucial issue for schools and suggest that greater attention should be paid to how schools make spaces for children relationships (Gaskell, 2008). Schools seem to be interested with issues of relationships but not much is done with the issues of social development in the curriculum. There is no integration of the above subject to the content areas in Life Orientation that deals with personal, social, and emotional health and citizenship. Issues of relationship formation can be effected from the lower grades; however, many schools do not recognize the significance of friendships as part of the mutual school life (Healy, 2010).

Philosophical literature understands cross-sex relationships as seeing something precious in the opposite sex which drives one to be with that person. Healy (2010) observes that boys and girls relationships have an emotional affection and shared life which directs children to considering cross-sex relationships as a continuous commitment, as a process and as a life shared together by girls and boys at school. Healy (2010) suggests that schools should include the issue of relationships in the curriculum. It appears that some schools neglect the importance and value of

relationships as part of the school life. It is the responsibility of the school to create the space for boys and girls to practice and develop many forms of relationships which serves as a fundamental aspect among all children (Healy, 2010).

Underwood (2007) offers the latest vision of how sexual categories can manipulate girls and boys relationships at school and how these relationships are modified at some stage. Findings revealed that many children report to have cross-sex relationships and have diverse roles and expectations of their relationships (Underwood, 2007). Rose (2007) agrees with Underwood (2007) about reports of children who have cross-sex relationships at home, at school and in other schools. It is unquestionable that boys and girls hold a great deal of gender specific beliefs in their relationships that might bring disputes into their collective association, for example, boys require friends who can perform boys' activities. This calls for flexibility in girls to be included in boys' company whilst girls are very compliant of boys' interpersonal style (Underwood, 2007).

Blazek (2011) shows interest in how children are shaped as gendered subjects in the course of their practice of cross-sex relationships. He shows significance of practices that go together with relationship construction on children. Blazek (2011) points out that children's relationship are constituted in multifaceted range of societal and cultural realms. Blazek and Windram-Geddes (2013) state that relationships between boys and girls emerged spontaneously at a younger age resulting from spending time together doing their everyday activities in groups of both boys and girls. There were activities that were highly gendered but some children objected and insisted that activities should be

reorganized in mixed groups or divided by age. Schools may create a space in which cross-sex relationships are cultivated through children working together in cooperative learning. In this regard, there might be a small number of practices that divided boys and girls in the school (Blazek, 2011; Blazek & Windram-Geddes, 2013; Healy, 2011).

Healy (2011) maintains that the role of relationships is a portion of stimulation to the moral life and she insists that relationships have value in the successful life of children. Schools can be sites for reinforcing exclusion of children. Research proves that some children are constantly affected by trauma which basically demoralizes their complete faith in other people thus preventing the construction of healthy relationships (Healy, 2010 & 2011). In support of the above, it should be noted that not all relationships can bring out the excellence in the individual concerned. Some relationships can bring out the most horrible effects thus making relationships a crucial issue for schools and suggesting that greater alternatives should be paid to how schools make space for children's relationships.

2.3.2 Cross-sex Relationships and Peer Pressure

Marion, Buhrmester and Underwood (2007) examine the effects of gender and context on relations between children's relationship features (intimacy, exclusivity and aggression) and socially private signals and comments. This is an international study which took place in a school laboratory. The aim was to understand how specific features of children's relationships relate to socially exclusive behaviors with unfamiliar

peers. The specific relationship features examined are those that have been theoretically and empirically linked to social exclusion, both bodily and relationally, within the relationship and towards others. Marion, Buhrmester and Underwood (2007) focus on how the specific features of girls and boys relationships recount to responses directed to an annoying newcomer and scrutinizes gender differences in those relations.

Close friends are observed as they play a board game with an unfamiliar peer who is provoking by bragging and asking immaterial questions. Findings reveal that boys are more verbally social exclusive and verbally aggressive than girls towards the disturbing peer but girls features are more evident during the private phase when the disturber is gone (Marion, Buhrmester & Underwood, 2007). The norms reigning boy's behaviours permit them to stand up for their rights in front of the disruptor whilst girl's interpersonal desires for harmony and the rules that control their behavior may encourage them to contain their true emotion of unhappiness in front of the disruptor. Once the disruptor leaves, they engage in social aggression behind the disruptors back (Marion, Buhrmester & Underwood, 2007). In this case, the nature of boys is assigned to roughness and openness, on the other hand, the nature of girls is assigned to softness, gentleness and respect, which make them to be distinctively different.

Felmlee, Sinclair and Sweet (2012), in research with College of Education students on gender rules on same and cross- gender relationships norms, examine the relationships between gender and attitudes towards the same and cross- gender relationship norms. Data is generated through the use of scenarios. Participants have to assess damages

of relationship norms described in vignettes in which the friends' sexual category is investigated. Feilmlee, Sinclair and Sweet (2012) are concerned about females who differentiated more between types of violations, as the case females tend to have relatively high expectations of their relationships circumstances involving trust and intimacy thus resulting from high value they placed on association and emotional intimacy. Generally, expectations for cross-sex versus same-sex, relationships were more alike (Feilmlee, Sinclair & Sweet, 2012).

Feilmlee, Sweet and Sinclair (2012) report that boys and girls can be friends. Confirmation of the above is exposed in the findings that sex, rather than cross-sex, norms mainly control relationship assessment. Suggestions show that girls hold their friends to harsher rules than boys (Feilmlee, Sinclair & Sweet, 2012). General understandings of group gender differences make it impractical to understand the complex nature of gendered relationships (Underwood, 2007). Ellis and Zarbatany (2007) find no connection between dispute and stability of relationships yet it is discovered that the suspension of a relationship is driven by disagreements.

2.4 GENDER DYNAMICS AND CROSS-SEX RELATIONSHIPS

Gender norms are behaviors or features that society attributes to a particular sex. Gender norms vary from culture to culture and from time to time, children believe in what society considers appropriate for boys and girls. (Epstein, 2005; Renold, 2005; Bhana, 2005a; Morojele, 2011a & b).

Ni' Laoire (2011) focuses on the ways in which the dynamics of cross-sex relationships both reinforce and obscure children's complex social positions. The study explored the gendered nature of children's and young people everyday lives, relationships with peers and negotiations of identity with a specific focus on the role of sports and relationships. Playgrounds are identified as the most important area that promotes children to navigate the spaces and places of cross-sex-relationships. Sports work to foster meaningful connections among children. During sports they learn to communicate with their friends. Ni' Laoire (2011) states that there is a need for research which recognizes the connection of power relations in children's lives and could, thus, begin to unpack to difficulty of dynamics of gender and to reveal deeper understanding of how children in cross-sex relationships experience and negotiate their own social world (Ni' Laoire, 2011).

Martin and Muthukrishna (2011) in their journal article, deconstructing discourses of gender equality in cross-gender relationships, focus on the experiences of gender equality within group relationships. They emphasize that various studies show that boys and girls are controlled by fixed norms related to masculinity. They are convinced that masculinity and femininity are relational, which makes it difficult to understand when separated from one another. The research conducted on this issue dwell much on a single side. They mention the scarcity of studies that look at boys and girls ways of viewing and performing their gendered activities in schools. Twenty eight primary school

children between eleven and fourteen years participated in the study. They generated data by using individual interviews using situated scenarios and focus group interviews. The study found that children understand gender as a notion of difference because of their socialization that locates boys according to traditional discourses of masculinity and girls according to discourses of femininity. Numerous attempts that tried to attend to the dominant perception of masculinity and femininity were unsuccessful. The study failed to expose the continued presence of fundamental worldviews which are deeply rooted in stereotypical gender that promote inequality among boys and girls (Martin & Muthukrishna, 2011; Morojele, 2011a & b).

McDougall and Hymel (2007) compare the same and cross-sex relationship conceptions. The main aim was to explore the cross-sex relationship experiences of children in grades 3, 6, 9 and 12. Individual interviews were used to generate data. Children had to describe their own experiences with cross-sex friends. McDougall and Hymel (2007) comment about the formation and development of relationships between boys and girls at school. Many boys and girls showed keen interest in each other. Some boys and girls used surveillance and also dreaming of passionate relationships with one another (Underwood, 2007). The issue of relationship conceptions exposed potential, principles and beliefs that individuals have about what it means to be in a relationship. Researchers work from the principle that these conceptions are connected to the interpretation of current relationships as well as experiences within peer principles (McDougall & Hymel, 2007). These theoretical viewpoints contribute to the knowledge of how children came to understand relationships with the same and cross-sex peers.

Results move this research on boys and girls relationships one step ahead by commencing to scrutinize the notion of both features of boys and girls connections which are considered as an exclusive context for development (McDougall & Hymel, 2007).

2.4.1 Dynamics of Femininities and Cross-sex Relationships

Femininities refer to a set of attributes, behaviors and roles generally associated with girls and women (Crawford, 2006). Femininity is socially constructed or made up of both socially-defined and biologically created factors. There are behavioral characteristics which are generally constructed for femininities like gentleness, empathy, sensitivity, etc. (Martin & Muthukrishna, 2011).

Morojele (2011a), in his study, titled, what does it mean to be a girl, was conducted in Lesotho. The focus of the study was to explore girls' and boys' experiences of gender. The purpose of the study was to investigate children's constructions and experiences of gender and the implications of these gender inequalities or equality in schools. Three co-educational rural primary schools were used. The period of the study was nine months, each school received three months. It is important to know that people of Lesotho are called Basotho and their language is Sesotho. Some Sesotho is used in the study. The narratives of boys and girls, on what it means to be a girl and the implications this has for boys' and girls' schooling experiences were generated through semi-structured interviews, observations and informal conversations (Morojele, 2011a).

Dominant discourses of gender that give power and social status to masculinities over femininities are practiced in Lesotho. This is evident in the field notes, where a girl won a fight against a boy. Remarks from another boy portrayed the losing boy as weak because boys were not expected to be beaten by girls. Girls are perceived as weak and powerless (Swain, 2006). This injustice was exercised in Lesotho schools. Teachers have a tendency of discouraging girls who mix up with boys because of severe gender-related challenges which still persist. Some girls performed gender in ways that undermined dominant values of femininities thus sabotaging hegemonic, construction of gender which cast girls in deprived and submissive conditions (Morojele, 2011b; 2009a&b; Ouzgane & Morrell, 2007).

Dominant discourses of gender in Lesotho proceeds to augment discourses in masculinities and femininities in a way that uphold unfairness in gender relations. Morojele (2009a) refers to dominant forms of femininities and masculinities as being hegemonic which signify agreed cultural values. Dominant characteristics of femininities in Lesotho include tidiness, pro-school, politeness, respecting males and adults and to show heterosexual feelings towards boys who display hegemonic masculinities (Martin, & Muthukrishna, 2011; Morojele 2011a; 2009a&b; Schuhmann, 2010). The socialization of boys and girls is different in Lesotho. Boys and girls socialization are done through cultural rituals such as circumcision and initiation schools which encourage unequal gender relations (Molapo, 2005). He points out that some communities are still doing the ritual of female circumcision. Practices and ways of life of other communities are also sustaining and endorsing male privilege; hence undermining girls and women's

positions. Girls belong to the subordinate group; beginning at home, by respecting their fathers; in marriage, by submitting to their husbands; and, in the event of death of their husbands, to their brothers-in-law. They are socialized to demonstrate respect in marriage by not calling their fathers-in-law by their names. In this study, heterosexual attractiveness is found to be accepted characteristics of girls (Morojele, 2009b & 2011a).

Some proverbs in Sesotho play a prominent role in establishing and upholding unequal gender relations through idolizing hegemonic masculinities over femininities. These proverbs offer authority to males more than females thus depicting women as helpless and delicate. Morojele (2011a) points out that some proverbs used are highly gendered and stereotyped in support of men. '*Tsoho la Monna ke mokolla*' (a man's hand is the marrow) meaning that women and the society alone are dependent, they need man's assistance for survival because being a boy or a man means to protect and endure pain without retreating. Another proverb is '*Ke mosali ha a nyaloa*' refers to an unmarried woman. It is a disgrace for a woman to remain unmarried in local Basotho communities. The above derogatory expression is also used to describe boys or men who do not possess qualities of a man either by bodily appearance or behavior. It is applied to those who lack sufficient abilities and who therefore seen as a concubine, mistress or a woman who lives with a man who has not paid her family a bride price, or *bohali*. All the disgusting names are used to undermine the status of girls and women (Morojele, 2009a).

Compulsory heterosexuality was another way of constructing young girls and these hegemonic discourses encourage gender violence because girls' bodies are portrayed as a symbol of the society thus allowing girls to have less control over them (Morojele, 2011a; Schuhmann, 2010). Findings revealed a shortage of official and coherent strategy to support and promote equitable gender relations. Recommendations called for more strategies that will dismantle stereotypical constructions of gender by enforcing equality for all. Ngakane (2010) insists that schools should be places that promote social relationships conducive enough for boys and girls to navigate their spaces freely. Schools are seen as an institution where children spend most of their time which should be free of any prejudice and injustice instead they are arenas where different forms of injustice are practiced. This means that promoting healthy communications, equality and respect between boys and girls will decrease the social distance between them thus paving the way to the navigation of places and spaces in cross-sex relationships.

2.4.2 Dynamics of Masculinities and Cross-sex Relationships

Martin and Muthukrishna (2011) explain that masculinity is a set of features generally considered appropriate for boys or men. Construction of masculinity differs according to historical and cultural contexts. (Swain, 2006) labels the traditional male roles and privileges as hegemonic masculinity which can be defined as the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy which perpetuates the dominant position of men and subordination of women (Anderson, 2005; Swain, 2006). Morojele (2011b), in his study, focuses on boys' narratives and experiences of what it meant to

be boys and the implications of this on boys and girls schooling experiences. Twenty seven boys and twenty three girls participated in the study. Ethnographic data was generated through conversations, observations and informal discussions. Morojele (2009b) creates a situation that encourages and supports alternative forms of masculinities as part of strategies in addressing gender inequalities within the schools.

The focus of the study was based on the social conventions of Basotho Communities and schools which are deeply rooted in the cultural systems of beliefs and social relationships thus leaving participants with no choice of constructing their identities on their own (Morojele, 2011b). Accepted characteristics of hegemonic masculinities include; being tough, rough, competitive, uncaring, endurance of pain without retreat, assisting women, proposing love to girls and subordinating boys who possess signs of being weak (Anderson, 2005; Morojele, 2011b; Swain, 2006).

The accomplishment of hegemonic masculinities in Lesotho schools was compulsory and failure to perform these forms of masculinities resulted in negative labelling, for example, *Kemosali ha a nyaloa*, which is a derogatory expression often used to describe boys or men who are regarded as useless and not strong (Morojele, 2011b). Boys experienced a lot of pressure to perform hegemonic masculinities. It was a disgrace for boys to be beaten by girls because they were socialized that girls or women must always be their subordinates (Morojele, 2011b). This means that boys who showed too much care, who were affectionate, gentle, polite, and with good manners

and who always played with girls would be depicted as not strong enough because boys were associated with tough, rough and physical outdoor games.

Ouzgane and Morrell (2007) agree that gender power relations do not only take place between cross-sexes only but also within the same sex. Cameroon (2004) admits that boys' heirs are given status over other types of masculinities. Morojele (2011b) states that more power and social status is given to a first born male-child in Basotho communities. The latter is also practiced in polygamous marriages; more power is given to the first born child of the first wife. Heirs are socialized at their tender age about hegemonic masculinities hence they had to inherit all the property of the family so they are expected to take all the responsibilities upon the death of the father at home. Heirs were pressurized to display signs of hegemonic masculinities at a very young age and they received special treatment different from other siblings.

In some instances boys' heirs were disapproved of receiving education because they were encouraged to value the protection of their family property more than the need for school. On the other hand, heirs' education was perceived as more vital than that of their brothers and sisters when looking at the household tasks which were resting upon their shoulders (Morojele, 2011b). Severe gender-related challenges remained in Lesotho schools. Boys were not allowed to perform work and play games assigned to girls. Spaces and places for cross-sex relationships were created particularly for proposing love and during fighting. Chores of both boys and girls were totally different at home and at school. Even if boys and girls want to play, walk or sit together, they are

not allowed to and they are policed by others (Morojele, 2011b; Ouzgane & Morrel, 2007; Swain, 2006). Navigation of cross-sex relationships was difficult because children were raised in static and closed society. Gatekeepers at schools also inhibit the formation of cross-sex relationships thus ensuring that both sexes adhere strictly to the rules surrounding femininity and masculinity.

Bhana, Nzimakwe & Nzimakwe (2010) argues that levels of prejudice in boys and girls relationships in schools are exacerbated by constructions of masculinity and femininity. This means that the construction of what it means to a boy or a girl hinders cross-sex formation. In this regard, schools are part and parcel of the communities; therefore, they reveal and reproduce the power relations of male dominance in the society. Ngakane (2010) describes that male dominance is a universal phenomenon because hegemonic masculinity takes place at home and at school worldwide. Girls and boys may work collaboratively in an effort to dismantle the existing status quo of gender inequality and its legitimacy (Morojele, 2009b).

2.5 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Social constructionism is a sociological theory of knowledge that considers how social phenomena or objects of awareness develop in social contexts (Lorber, 2010). According to this theory, it can be considered that cross-sex relationships are the end result of immeasurable children's preferences, rather than rules resulting from children's decisions. Social constructionism can be seen as a source of the postmodern

movement and has been influential in the field of cultural studies to social constructionism within the social constructionist reality (Gergen, 2009). In this study, social constructionism is used to explore how cross-sex relationships are gendered and socially constructed by children's social reality and activity and gradually modified by habits into institutions thus supported up by language principles and accepted by customs and religion within the school (Dunne, 2008 & Gergen, 2009).

School, as a social place plays a role in strengthening and challenging inequality in cross-sex relationships. (Bhana, Nzimakwe & Nzimakwe, 2010). Schools are mirrored as both breeding and producing unfair social order and changes in cross-sex relationships (Morojele, 2011a). This is exposed in how cross-sex relationships are connected with school ethics and practices. Morojele (2011b) traces the connection between these practices and continuing authoritarian attitudes which, in turn, maintain the oppressive educational and gender order that has a bearing on cross-sex relationships. Gender social relations intermingle with schooling practices, enabling unequal social relations amongst and between girls and boys. In traditional femininities girls are given less social status whereas masculinities are dominant discourses associated with boys in terms of superiority and social status. (Anderson, 2005 & Swain, 2006). My study drew on these insights to examine how boys and girls perceived and made sense of the world around them regarding gender issues in cross-sex relationships (Gergen, 2009). "Social constructionism does not try to rule on what is or is not fundamentally real regarding cross-sex relationships. Instead, it argues that the moment we begin to articulate dynamics of cross-sex relationships, we enter into a

world of discourse, and thus tradition, a way of life and a set of value preferences” (Morojele, 2011a, p.137).

Social constructionism discovers how gender connotations are constructed in numerous, different ways and how these are related to broader societal associations (Morojele, 2011b). This means that tradition plays a significant role in displaying how children experience and construct gender. Cross-sex relationships, shaped by gender discourses in schools, are the means by which gender connotation and positioning are constituted (Bhana, 2005a; Morojele, 2011a&b). In this study, it was seen that participants’ constructions of cross-sex relationships were dependent on the obtainable option of gender beliefs and discourses of their school culture. “Boys and girls come bathed in the concepts that their community holds about children just as surely as they come bathed in amniotic fluid” (Morojele, 2011a, p.137). The isiZulu language and its discourse play an important role in conveying and sustaining inequitable gender relations among boys and girls. It was evident in how boys communicated with girls, uttering some words which were highly gendered and in favour of boys, namely, *Ngeke siphathwe abafazi*, which literally means that men cannot be controlled by women but some girls executed their status in a manner that disobeyed dominant values of femininities therefore hegemonic construction of gender which positioned girls in minority state is challenged (Morojele, 2011a). It is suggested that boys and girls socially and traditionally established relations of gender, which governed the language usage and the connotation that exposed their specific type of morals, linked with gender. Male dominance is also seen in schools but some girls challenged the status

quo by involving themselves in cross-sex relationships where they dominate in fights and confront boys who display hegemonic masculinities (Epstein, 2005; Morojele, 2011a & Renold, 2007).

Since childhood and gender are socially constructed, social constructionism is used as a process to understand how children construct cross-sex relationships in their social positioning. This means that children are given an opportunity to demonstrate their socialization according to gender expectations of certain roles and behaviors assigned to boys and girls. Gender difference in roles between boys and girls is socially constructed. In most cases, children have internalized the belief that boys and girls are not the same, therefore, their societal expectations have an influence in the navigation of cross-sex relationships.

2.6 CONCLUSION

The chapter has reviewed relevant literature from the studies done in the countries of the North, Africa and South Africa. Evidence of children's experiences and construction of cross-sex relationships was obtained. The reviewed literature presents a balanced view of the area of this study. It also shows where the current study fits into the studies that have already been done. The next chapter will discuss the research methodology and design.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The overall focus of this study was on exploring children's experiences and constructions of cross-sex relationships in a farm primary school. The study sought to provide an understanding of the factors that affect children's positioning as well as the meaning they make of the dynamics of femininities and masculinities in cross-sex relationships. The objective of the study was to learn the agency and creative ways with which children form and navigate the spaces and places of cross-sex relationships.

The chapter discusses the methodological issues, researcher positionality and then discusses the design of the study under the following subheadings: the geographical and social economic context, research participants, methods of data generation, data analysis, validity and trustworthiness, ethical considerations, limitations and anticipated challenges of the study.

3.2 METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

Methodology is the philosophy that shapes the fundamentals of an entire research approach and which has to be backed by evidence (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

In this study, research methodology revealed the constraints, dilemmas, tensions, complexities and multiplicity of the construction and navigation of the places and spaces of cross-sex relationships in the schooling context.

3.2.1 Qualitative Research

McMillan & Schumacher (2006) state that qualitative research is an inquiry which requires the researcher to collect face-to-face data by interacting with participants in their natural settings. It describes and examines people's individual and common societal actions, values, views and perceptions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The researcher interprets occurrence in terms of the meaning that people assign to them. It is essential for theory generation, policy expansion, enrichment of educational practice, explanation of social issues and achievement stimulation (Maree & van der Westhuizen, 2007).

I chose qualitative research methodology because I explored attitudes, behaviors and experiences of participants through individual and focus group interviews unlike quantitative methodology which generates statistics through the use of large scale survey by using questionnaires and structured interviews (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Qualitative methodology attempts to get in-depth opinions from participants whereas quantitative methodology reaches many people but face-to-face contact with people is less (Loader, 2009; Baxter & Jack, 2008). Few participants took part in this study because I wanted thick descriptions of peoples' experiences, feelings and

behaviours. Qualitative methodology is context free and allowed me to understand the deep complexity of the participants. Qualitative methodology allows for deep immersion with the participants unlike quantitative methodology which is context bound hence variables are dealt with and the researcher is detached from the participants (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Interacting with a fewer number of participants helped to discover the various problems, namely, dilemmas, confusions, tensions and complexities that they experienced within spaces and places of cross-sex relationships.

Qualitative research methodology was appropriate for my study, which explored the experiences and construction of cross-sex relationships in a school setting. This methodology was appropriate because the focus was on boys and girls experiences and their natural setting was used to understand all the experiences of cross-sex relationships (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). It enabled me to gain new insights about the dynamics of masculinities and femininities in which the home, school and society have played in the socialization of boys and girls; which upholds gender inequality. In collecting detailed views of participants in the form of stories and images, thick descriptions of participant's experiences, feelings and behaviors were observed (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

3.2.2 Narrative Inquiry

Narratives are verbal acts consisting of someone telling someone else that something happened. Narrative inquiry serves the researcher who wishes to understand a

phenomenon or an experience rather than to formulate a logical or scientific explanation. As a research approach, it provides an effective way to undertake the systematic study of personal experiences and the meaning of how the active participants have constructed events (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Gaskell, 2008).

In this study, narrative inquiry was used intentionally to draw on the voices of the participants thus capturing the subjective complexities of their realities and experiences in order to promote understanding of the meaning-making processes in which the participants were engaged in. This inquiry is shaped by the assumption that I could not directly capture another's lived experience and therefore I allowed the participants to speak for themselves by interpreting the social world of cross-sex relationships and their spaces and places within it (Hole, 2007). This was done by listening to the stories that participants narrated. Stories revealed a great deal about them and the social contextual world they lived in. Stories told of focused attention on diversity and difference and placed emphasis on the specific unique and complex issues of multiplicity for each and every participant. Experiences of cross-sex relationships were the main focus of how boys and girls navigate their spaces to construct a sense of self (Damant, 2013; Hendry, 2010). Establishing and maintaining rapport and a relationship of mutual trust was important for the participants to feel secure that no harm was intended resulting in an open interaction where they were more willing to share their experiences, thoughts and feelings in a more genuine mode (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Through narrative inquiry, I have gained access to the personal experiences of my participants who revealed their experiences of cross-sex relationships in a narrative structure. Children's stories were the basic units of analysis. I used a variety of frameworks to analyze and interpret its meaning and understand the phenomenon I was researching (Weed, 2008). In this study, narrative inquiry anticipated participants' stories to connect and situate particular experiences. In this way they cohere and structure life as experienced. In this process of reflecting, structuring and narrating, different events are made meaningful. My respect for stories and an appreciation of their value has grown as I come to understand more fully how they assist participants' to make their life experiences easy to tell. Stories preserve memories, prompt reflection and connect envisions of the future (Cahill, 2007). In this study, narrative inquiry was the fundamental scheme for linking individual participants' actions and events into interrelated structures that organized events and participants actions into a whole, thereby attributing significance to individual actions and events according to their effects. Any understanding of narratives as a mode of inquiry, which is shaped and informed by narrative as a way of knowing , permits the story teller to systematize the story by connecting events, perceptions and experiences (Loader, 2009).

As a researcher engaged in narrative inquiry, I explored the experiences as being told by the participants. I understood that each story had a point of view that differs from other stories told. It was substantial for me because the purpose of my study was to understand the tensions, dilemmas and the multiplicity in the spaces and places of cross-sex relationships (Brown, 2011). Hole (2007) reinforces the worthiness and

correctness of such a process that captures the positioning of the participants. “Narratives are a primary imagination of our understanding of the world of experiences and, of our personality” (Kerby, 1991, p.31). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) agree that narratives and life are connected and so the major desirability of narrative as an approach rests on its ability to provide life experiences, both personal and social, in an applicable and meaningful mode.

3.3 RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY

My beliefs are framed by social constructionism, children’s geographies and the new sociology of childhood (as discussed in Chapter 2) which claims that truth is relative and dependent on one’s perspective as constructivism is built upon the premise of a social construction of reality (Baxter & Jack, 2008). I, therefore, construct children as active and valuable members of society. I share the same sentiments with Holloway & Valentine (2000) who defend that if childhood is socially constructed then children must be considered as meaning producing beings in their own right. Morojele and Muthukrishna (2011) explain that participation is a fundamental right of children implanted by the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Children.

Children have a right to participate in research that aims to make their lives noticeable. Their narratives served as a learning curve on how they navigated the social construction of gender difference. Dimensions and contradictions of cross-sex relationships are exposed by exploring the places and spaces of children’s lives

experientially, politically and ethically. It was advantageous to build close connection with the participants because they narrated their stories freely and openly, thus allowing me to understand their actions in a better way (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

New Sociology of childhood encouraged the voice and agency of children in order to explore construction and geographies of cross-sex relationships. The UNCRC considers children as somehow vulnerable and therefore suggests that involvement of adults be guided by actions that promote the best interest of the child. Gallagher and Gallagher (2008) describe the importance of childhood studies as a focus which foregrounds the viewpoint that children are not passive objects but competent agents and social actors who shape their own identities (James & Christensen, 2008; Mayall, 2002). This means that there is growth of literature on childhood as a social position for the study of a previously ignored group. Camfield, Streuli and Woodhead (2008) concede in an effort to examine the work of Piaget who shown keen interest in understanding children interpretations of their own terms. Piaget uses a child-centered approach that encourages great respect for children's thinking and behavior (Camfield, Streuli & Woodhead, 2008). Mayall (2002) admits that contributions of children to the social order should be recognized; especially when children engage in cross-sex relations while making and maintaining relationships in and out of school by taking care of their own activities.

In the light of the above qualitative narrative study, which is framed by social constructionism, enhanced my ideas about children. Boys and girls are socialized in

different ways and their attitudes and beliefs encountered shaped their gender constructions. By giving children the platform to exercise their voice enabled the researcher to learn about the agency and the creative ways in which children form and navigate cross-sex relationships but, for the latter to be practiced, collaborative effort is needed because children's social realities are dealt with (O'Shanghnessy & Stadler, 2008; Morojele, 2011a&b; Morojele & Muthukrishna, 2012; Reddy, 2010; Ouzgane & Morrell, 2007).

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Loader (2009) points out that the design of a study has an effect on how the research is organized and implemented in a logical way. It is a pattern or style of how the research project would follow or look like. Baxter and Jack (2008) describe research design as the investigation which touches almost all aspects of the research. Furthermore, McMillan and Schumacher (2006) state that thorough preparation of the research design is important because planning on how to collect organize and analyze evidence make it possible for the investigation to answer the research questions.

3.4.1 Geographical and Social Economic Context

The research was conducted in a combined farm school in the UMgungundlovu district in KwaZulu Natal. The study was based in the primary section of the school; particularly the intermediate phase. The school is a public school built on private property. It is

located in the heart of sugar cane farms. The socio- economic status of the school is poverty stricken and underdeveloped. Parents and learners survive by working in the cane fields. They also benefited from the old age pensions and child support grants. Most households are headed by females, grandparents and children. The school has a program for orphans and vulnerable children which support learners with school uniforms. There was poor infrastructure and no proper sanitation in the community. Most families lived in compounds and in unplanned urbanization which took the form of shacks and squatter camps. Most learners came from poverty stricken family backgrounds. The enrolment of the whole school was 670 learners from grade R to grade twelve. The enrolment was too small for a combined school. The reason was the category of the school. It was difficult for teachers and learners to travel to and from school.

The school has two school busses but they were not enough as many children were not accommodated in those two busses. Still many children had to walk home as the two busses were not enough for those in need of transport. The community did not see much need for education because learners who completed grade twelve were not enrolled in any institutions; instead, they came back and worked on the farms. The beliefs and practices followed were of mixed cultures because the community was made up of diverse cultures, namely, Basotho, Xhosa and amaZulu. Many children came to school in groups, older children walked in separate groups of boys and girls but unlike younger children who walked in mixed groups of boys and girls. The school playground was used as a meeting point with the participants because it was seen as a

relaxed place and comfortable for all participants. It was also a naturally expressive place for children. The study was conducted after school hours because contact time was not to be disturbed in any way.

3.4.2 Research Participants

Purposive and convenience sampling were used to select participants for the study. Cresswell (2007) illustrates that purposive sampling defines the criteria which needs to be met by participants who take part in the study. Many children displayed an enthusiastic interest in the research. Participants availed themselves, were willing to give information, were prepared to stay after school and were able to work effectively with others in a group. I emphasized that participation in the research was voluntary. It was difficult to select the required participants as most learners were keen to participate even after discussing the whole research. The number did not drop and it was difficult to select the required number of participants. To narrow down the number, secret ballot was used and the first six participants were selected. Six learners were purposively selected following the criteria mentioned above and they were stratified by age and gender. Three boys and three girls in grade four from the age of nine to twelve years were selected (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

The whole research was explained to them and I ensured that all were clear about the contents of the research. I have received consents granting me permission from the participants and their parents before the study started. Participants were raised from

diverse family backgrounds so they were seen as information rich and would yield the required data. Pseudonyms were used in the study to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants (Cresswell, 2007). Participants were given an opportunity to choose pseudonyms used in the study. Participants felt very special about choosing pseudonyms on their own. They gained more confidence and prepared to take every task at hand seriously. Voluntary participation was requested and I have emphasized that participants were free to withdraw at any time if they felt like withdrawing (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

3.4.3 Methods of Data Generation

3.4.3.1 Pilot Study

A pilot study was used to familiarize myself with the procedures needed, for example, by choosing probing questions for an interview by following an interview guide which I had developed. The voluntary participants possessed the same qualities as the main or real participants. Two boys and two girls from seven to twelve years participated in the pilot study. Pilot interviews helped me to structure the interview questions to the required level of the participants in order to generate sufficient data. Issues that arose in the individual interviews were brought to the focus group. Those issues informed the basis of discussion in the focus groups interviews (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). It was a fruitful exercise because I gained competence in discovering that participants do not tell all that I wanted to hear. I was cautioned that I should be skilled in order to make

them tell the truth but at the same time avoid the risk of being biased. The importance of the pilot interview was to understand cross-sex relationships from the participants' point of view. I managed to conduct it effectively because I adhered to the interview guide which consisted of simple, short and clear questions. Rapport between the pilot participants and me was exercised in a respectful manner. Participants felt valid and valuable therefore it was easy to be specific when given their personal account (Loader, 2009). The main aim of the pilot study was to explore certain issues such as testing the feasibility of the main study before undertaking it. The pilot study served as try-out of research methods and techniques of the main study. The pilot study acquainted me with skills and tactics on how to conduct the following individual and focus group interviews of the investigative study.

3.4.3.2 Individual Interviews

A semi-structured interview guide was used for the individual interviews to collect data in order to understand the participants' constructions and experiences of cross-sex relationships in their social interactions (Niewenhuis, 2007). I chose semi-structured interviews because they capture the participants' views in their own world. They enabled the clarification of a question if participants did not understand. It is a dynamic process of gathering information (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Semi-structured interviews gave me structure and guidance yet allowed for flexibility. I was able to probe, thus driving the participants to give a specifically personal account. Probing was

used after yes or no answers to extend the question, as well as to give the participants' room for expanding their views (Loader, 2009).

Interviews were conducted after school on the school playground. For a better understanding of the questions by the participants, interviews were conducted in isiZulu because all participants were conversant in isiZulu. This gave them an opportunity to express their views freely. The duration of individual interviews ranged between twenty to thirty five minutes depending on the understanding of the questions and since this was regarded as a standard time for individual interviews (Naidoo, 2012). I explained the structure and the process of the interview to the participants well in advance of the session. Before the interviews started, there was a huge debate about audio taping their interviews, although permission was granted in advance. Learners outside the study were very influential on the participants. They convinced the participants that the whole school would know the contents of all interviews. Participants were afraid that their proper names would be mentioned and all their information would be disclosed to the school. I did not force them; instead, I waited for them to decide as they participated voluntarily. Assuring them anonymity and confidentiality at all times was of great help because they agreed to be audio taped (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Six participants were interviewed individually and they were requested to complete a biographical data capture form to obtain their personal information.

Rapport and mutual trust between me and the participants was displayed when the group of children out of the study failed to convince the participants to refuse to be

audio taped. (Niewenhuis, 2007). I managed to audio tape all interviews as the effectiveness of the interview was based on healthy communication, collaboration and proficiency in handling issues and in asking questions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Respect was applied from the outset, I treated my participants with respect and, in turn, they respected me. Respect was practiced in the entire study through the use of child- friendly and child-centred approach. Participants were given the chance to listen to the recordings before transcription. That was done to verify that interviews were not tampered with and information was not distorted or altered (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

3.4.3.3 Focus Group Interviews

I conducted interviews with the focus group using a semi-structured interview guide. A focus group was purposefully done so that participants could communicate, share ideas of their experiences of cross-sex relationships. The focus group consisted of three boys and three girls. The reason for choosing this technique was to encourage free and open discussion so as to understand the dynamics of masculinities and femininities. Focus group interviews were conducted to complement the individual interviews. Both techniques examined the experiences of cross-sex relationships from participants own perspectives, in terms of the meanings they attached to them and the way they make sense of them (Bhana, Nzimakwe & Nzimakwe, 2010; Denzin & Lincoln, 2001; Morojele, 2011a).

Key issues raised in the individual interviews formed the basis for discussion in the focus groups interviews. The aim was to strengthen and streamline the responses that

had been less attended to in the individual interviews which would be easy for the participants to talk about in the focus group. The study strived to recognize and identify the plurality of participant's experiences and their individual ways of making logic of the world they live in. That was done to increase the quality of data generated (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

The social environment was created for the participants to participate actively and effectively. A focus group is motivated by participants' ideas and their sense of responsibility. Participants were willing to give personal accounts of their interactions with opposite sex friends. IsiZulu was used for the discussion and questions to enable participants to express themselves without restrictions based on language. All interviews were audio taped. Participants were given the opportunity to listen to the audio tape before it was translated to English. Transcripts were also given to participants to validate that all information was not tampered with. Participants were devoted to the discussion as the subject was of interest to them and that nearly caused deviations but I managed to control them by probing more on their answers, hence bringing them back on track. Questions ranged from simple to more broad questions which required critical thinking. A participatory technique, namely photo voice, was used in the focus group interviews.

3.4.3.4 Participatory Techniques

I used a participatory technique with the focus group interview for its appropriateness in drawing information from the participants. The participatory technique used was child

friendly and child-centered. Data generated from the participants was taken seriously because it served as a valid evidence of the study (Morojele & Muthukrishna, 2012). Young & Barret (2001) point out the importance of being creative and flexible when exploring the geographies of children, in that case, participatory techniques proved to be particularly useful for exploring the experiences of cross-sex relationships. Participants were willing to participate because the activities were child-led and it created a relaxed and fun atmosphere. By using participatory techniques participants have best acknowledged and denoted their own realities therefore they entered into a discourse among themselves and with me (Morojele & Muthukrishna, 2012).

The participatory technique used was photo voice. Before I used photo voice, I explained again the purpose of the research project to the participants. I asked for their permission to audio tape focus group interviews. I stressed to them that anonymity and confidentiality will be assured at all times. Three cameras were handed to them. They agreed, on their own, that the first turns for using the cameras would be given to the boys and the girls would take the second turn. It was their first time being exposed to a new form of technology. I asked them to take pictures depicting their cross-sex relationships at school and on their way to and from school. Themes for taking pictures were devised so questions were given for the participants to answer and some guidelines given to guide them while taking pictures. The intention of giving those guidelines was to keep them on track and to avoid diverging. The taking of photographs was done in three days. Participants were given the chance of showing their creativity by not restricting them on how to take photos. Participants were asked to take six

photographs per participant and two photographs could be kept for themselves. The idea of photo diaries was encouraged to participants. When the process of taking photographs was done then cameras were collected and the development of film was done. Participants were asked to choose two photos for group discussions, for example, photos were chosen according to their importance, best liked by participants, etc. Discussion on the photographs was done in the focus groups interviews. Participants gave their voice as to why they took those pictures and what those pictures reflected. Critical reflection in the form of dialogue was done where participants openly gave their own understanding of the social realities represented by their photos. The audio taped individual and focus group interviews were listened to several times; together with the participants for analysis purposes (refer to Appendix 11 &12).

Photo voice allows people to reveal their feelings about social situations. Participants were able to use the camera and it provided a lot of fun as the activities were action-based and non-intimidating (de Lange & Stuart, 2007). Excellent images of the spaces and places of cross-sex relationships were produced. Some of the pictures taken were dull and of poor quality but good information about those pictures were elucidated by the photographers. The pictures served as a tool for discussion (Young & Barrett, 2001). Photo voice boosted the self-esteem and confidence of the participants and they felt honored to be trusted with cameras. Participants were provided with a life skill and they gained access to modern technology. It allowed the participants to move away from stereotyping thus exposing their cross-sex experiences through images (Morojele & Muthukrishna, 2012).

At first the children encountered some difficulty with using cameras but they were fine on the second day of photo voice. The participants were given thorough training on visual literacy; specifically on how to handle and use cameras efficiently. Distance, when taking photos, was problematic and they did not have steady hands when taking photos. Learners outside the study treated the participants in an aggressive manner because of jealousy as a study of this nature was a new thing to them (Young & Barrett, 2001; Pink, 2006).

I believe that learners outside the study treated participants in a hostile manner because participants were exposed to modern technology, an opportunity they missed by choosing not to participate. I had an interesting discussion about the photographs with the participants. Discussion was based on why they took the pictures and what was reflected by the photographs. I did not dwell much on how pictures were taken as most of the participants were using a camera for the first time. In that case, participants had a chance of giving their own interpretation of the social reality indicated (Morojele & Muthukrishna, 2012). All the processes were audio taped and transcribed for analyses' purposes.

3.4.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process that calls for creativity, disciplining of the mind and a systematic approach when handling qualitatively collected data (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003). Qualitative data analysis aims at examining the meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). It tries to ascertain how

participants make sense of a specific phenomenon by analyzing their understanding, facts, values, emotions and experiences. It should be offered in a manner that brings direction and clear understanding of the purpose of the study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns among the categories. "It is an on-going cyclical process that is categorized into all phases of qualitative research" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p.364).

The data gathered was from individual and focus group interviews. Thematic and content analysis were used in the data analysis process in order to produce understandable findings, thus showing their significance to the study. I reviewed the purpose of the analysis, and then I grouped information by identifying patterns and connections within and between the categories. Themes used focused on answering the research questions of the study (King & Horrocks, 2010; Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003).

I listened several times to the audio taped interviews with the participants before they were transcribed. Transcripts were also read and re-read. That was done to check that the transcribed data was of good value, not distorted and not biased (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003). It is important to understand the data at hand for a good analysis. Individual and focus group transcripts were organized into categories and themes were used as subcategories. Several readings helped to ensure that the data was correctly categorized.

Patterns and connections within and between categories were identified (Cohen, Marion & Morrison, 2007). This was done by looking at the similarities and differences in the style of responding. The process of data analysis was done bearing in mind the key research questions and umbrella framework of the study (Gomm, 2008). Thematic and content analysis of narratives and thick descriptions were used to analyze and synthesize portions of data to shape a new whole data (Henning, 2007). It was at the back of my mind that data analysis essentially meant breaking down information into smaller parts (Cresswell, 2007).

3.4.5 Validity and Trustworthiness

Maree and van der Westhuizen (2007) state that validity and trustworthiness are cornerstones of qualitative studies. In this study, validity was maintained by giving participants the chance to validate audio taped interviews and transcripts; reading them several times to ensure that the transcribed data was not altered or amended (refer to Appendix 9). Validity was maintained since verbal, textual and participatory activities were within children's geographies and the new sociology of childhood which framed the whole research. Participatory techniques which were child-friendly and child-led enhanced the validity of the study (Cohen, Marion & Morrison, 2007; Cresswell, 2007).

3.4.6 Limitations and Challenges of the Study

The limitations experienced during the study were exhaustion of participants on the first day as the research was conducted after school. In an attempt to counter this limitation, I managed to improve their attention span with the use of child-friendly and child-centered participatory tools. The technology, namely the audio tape, nearly went off before the end of the second session. Fortunately, I had back-up batteries. There was a huge debate during interviews. Two participants did not want to be audio-taped during the interview while the rest of the participants agreed. Two boys were convinced by learners outside the study that their work would be shown to the whole school. I did not force them but I waited for their own decision as the research was based on voluntary participation. Later on, they confessed that their older friends told them not to be audio-taped (Young & Barrett, 2001). The influence of non-participating learners on the participants particularly boys could be associated to the nature of boys who are mostly defined and affirmed by their same sex group.

3.4.7 Ethical Issues

McMillan and Schumacher (2006, p.14) state that “since educational research deals with human beings, it is necessary to understand the ethical and legal responsibilities of conducting research”. For this study to be conducted, it was compulsory to obtain ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu Natal and for consent from the Department of Education through the University of KwaZulu Natal.

I obtained permission from the school principal, parents of the participants and from the participants themselves. The rights and welfare of the participants and the school were protected. All parties were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality. Pseudonyms were used to protect the participants. Participants were told about the whole research well in advance and they were aware that their participation was voluntary; hence, they were free to withdraw from the study at any stage and for any reason (Cohen, Manion Morrison, 2007).

3.5 CONCLUSION

Methodology and design were the key concepts that were discussed in the chapter which was framed by children geographies and the sociology of children. The chapter was in line with the purpose of the study, which was to explore the experiences of cross-sex relationships in the school setting. I have worked from the premise that participants can be self-determined, self-directing and the source of knowing using the chances provided. By believing in children, it was easy to collaborate with them via individual and focus group interviews. Assuring anonymity, confidentiality and respecting the diverse views of participants was done unconditionally. Participatory learning and an action technique provided participants with an interest for designing their photo diaries thus allowing me to gain insights into the context of a child's lived experience (Young & Barret, 2001). The following chapter deals with the discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the discussion of findings acquired from the transcripts of individual and focus group interviews. In order to make meaning of the data, it is essential to state, once again, the three research questions of this study. Voice and agency of children were employed in this study as it is framed by Children Geographies and New Sociology of Children. In this regard, children's experiences and constructions of cross-sex relationships were explored.

The chapter focuses on three major themes that emerged. Firstly, it discusses children's constructions of cross-sex relationships thus stating children's understandings, experiences, factors shaping their understanding and factors affecting their engagements with cross-sex relationships. Secondly, it discusses the geographies of children in cross-sex relationships by addressing profiles of children, power relationships, spaces and places, forms and types of cross-sex relationships. Lastly, it focuses on children's contestations and navigation of cross-sex relationships in the following aspects: disagreements and agreements, pretenses and deceptions and overcoming challenges in cross-sex relationships.

4.2 CHILDREN'S CONSTRUCTIONS OF CROSS-SEX RELATIONSHIPS

4.2.1 Children's Understanding of Cross-sex Relationships

In the study, the data revealed that cross-sex relationships were constructed and contested at school, in an arena where children put into practice some societal sets of beliefs, values and social interactions (Morojele, 2011a). Findings revealed that children's construction of cross-sex relationships revolved around gender variation (Martin & Muthukrishna, 2011). This could be seen as a way in which boys and girls constructed and navigated the spaces and places of cross-sex relationships. Children were regulated by some specific gender norms related to discourses of masculinity and femininity in their relationships with one another (Anderson, 2005, Ni' Laoire, 2007; Swain, 2006). Difference in socialization of boys and girls influenced their performances in cross-sex relationships. Swain (2006) finds that boys and girls engage in two different cultures in the same school. The latter was displayed in sport which is regarded as a way that smoothies the progress of integration between boys and girls but boys' ways of doing things was more brutal, as evidenced in the excerpt below:

When I play with them they tell me not to be weak and not to cry easily. One day they kicked the ball too hard and I could not catch it. It hit me on the stomach and I fell down. Children who were watching us laughed at me and passing bad remarks saying I won't be able compete with boys (Asanda)

From the above excerpt, it becomes evident that boys are socialized in a different way than girls. The girl attempts to alter her interpersonal style by playing football with boys in a mode that facilitates the expansion of cross-sex relationship (Rose, 2007). Boys do not support all her efforts; instead, they ridiculed her inability to perform according to their expectation. They knew very well that they were playing with their opposite sex friend who needed some coaching in football. They did not take her step by step in a friendly way, instead, they expected the girl to display football skills right from the beginning. When the girl failed to catch the ball they laughed publicly at her. Boys were more verbally aggressive and not accommodative of their unskilled girlfriend (Marion, Buhrmester & Underwood, 2007). When it comes to contact sport like soccer, boys have a tendency of owning soccer as if it belongs to boys only. They seemed to be intensely competitive even though they play with girls (Anderson, 2005 & Morojele, 2011b).

Cross-sex relationships were understood as belonging to the categories of femininities and masculinities (Bhana, Nzimakwe & Nzimakwe, 2010) which lead girls to understand themselves as possessing characteristics of gentleness, tidiness, politeness, quietness, caring, respect and being ladylike-ness; in contrast to the characteristics of being uncaring, rough, tough, and social aggressiveness and competitiveness for boys. These characteristics offered girls an understanding of what it means to be a girl and to distinguish that characteristics for girls were dissimilar to characteristics for boys (Reddy, 2010). This is seen in how girls behave in cross-sex relationships because they are socialized to display feminine characteristics at an early stage. Girls' understandings

of normality were about revealing gentleness and caring in their social interactions (Martin & Muthukrishna, 2011), as reflected in the responses below:



Interviewer: Who are your friends?

Njab (boy): My friends are Lindo (girl), Mbali (girl), Mpumelelo (boy) and Nipho (boy).

Interviewer: How is the relationship towards each other?

Njab: Our relationship towards each other is very good because we support each other if someone is sick or upset. Sometimes we fight but we still care for one another. I love playing with girls because they are very polite and caring

In the light of the above, Njab is comfortable to be surrounded by girls because of their gentle, polite and caring nature. Njab mentioned that they do have conflicts like any other children but he has seen something valuable (feminine behaviour) in girls that make him want to be in girls' company (Healy, 2011). Characteristics of femininities are displayed by girls in their relationship with boys. On the other hand Njab challenged the dominant discourses of masculinity by using difference lenses when viewing his opposite sex peers. He noticed that their politeness and the sense of caring was something special which came from within, as (Healy, 2010) suggests, that boy's

thinking conform to rules and justice conditions while girls are more liable to think in terms of caring in relationships.

It was also discovered that the understanding of cross-sex relationships to boys was about being powerful, rough, tough, uncaring and showing no respect when proposing love to girls (Anderson, 2005; Swain, 2006). To possess dominant characteristics of masculinity indicated acceptable masculinity behaviour for boys, as Morojele (2011b) stresses, that hegemonic masculinity is a method used by males or boys to control and rule their subordinates. Data revealed that the boy in the excerpt below adhered strictly to the rules which governed masculinity (Morojele, 2009b; 2011b; Morojele & Muthukrishna, 2012) in order to gain status from his circle of friends who were witnessing the incident:

Interviewer: Are you in a good mood today?

Asanda: Not really, it's about what I saw yesterday on my way back home.

Interviewer: What did you see?

Asanda: The boy who was trying to stop the girl. The girl was afraid to talk to that boy because the girl was walking with her small brothers. The boy was angry and tried to use his power to force the girl to stop. Then one of the girl's small brothers threw a stone at the boy and one hit him on the back. The boy was furious but nothing was done because the two young brothers disappeared into the bushes. The boy went back grumbling at the girl. He grabbed her hand

saying today I'm going with you. I didn't see the ending because I had to take my own path home.

Interviewer: Where did the boy want to take the girl to?

Asanda: The boy wanted to take her to his home. The girl was refusing that's why she chose to walk with her small brothers. Other boys at the back were passing remarks encouraging the boy to continue with what he was doing.

Interviewer: Is that a good thing?

Asanda: No, but that boy is so rude. He treats girls so badly. He is not afraid of doing evil things.

The data in Asanda's responses displayed dominant discourses of masculinity in the manner in which the boy forced the girl to stop. This was also promoted by the group of boys who were witnessing the incident. Anger was aggravated by the girl's younger brother who threw a stone onto the aggressive boy. The small boys did escape by disappearing into the bushes but the girl did not try to run away with her brothers because her understanding of normality was to be shy, quiet and respect boys who propose love by displaying hegemonic masculinities (Morojele, 2011a&b; Martin & Muthukrishna, 2011). In reference to the above relationship between the boy and the girl, it was characterized by unbalanced power thus continuing to privilege one group over the other. Rules that govern masculinity forced the boy to display harsh treatment and, as indicated, that boys are pressurized to conform to hegemonic forms of masculinity (Ouzgane & Morrel, 2007). Schuhmann (2010) concedes that traditional

discourses depict bodies of girls as if it is not their own but icons which belong to the society thus resulting in girls having less power over them (Morojele, 2011a).

The study showed that boys who were caring and playing with girls were depicted as weak and they were laughed at, teased and called by disgusting names. Failure to perform the forms of masculinities had a negative impact on boys, as Hamlall and Morrel (2009) argue, that dominant discourses of masculinity do not operate between cross-sex but within same-sex relations. This is evident in the discussion of the photo below:



Nale (girl): Pointing, these two are involved in something. When I asked them what is happening between them they just ignore me. The boy always buys nice things for her.

Sbu (boy): intervening, No!no!no! I won't spend my money with girls. Girls always want this and that, but he likes to hang around with girls. I don't want to be ruled by girls.

Interviewer: Is it wrong when boys buy nice things for girls?

Nale: It is not wrong if you buy some goodies for the person you like if you can afford. Come on Sbu, are you not jealous?

Boys who displayed alternative forms like caring for girls were seen as if they were buying friendship from girls. Boys do not want to be ruled by girls because they are taught from birth that they have superior status to girls. Nale (girl) did not see any problems with buying nice things for the person you admire but Sbu was not comfortable seeing a boy hanging around with girls. Sbu did not want to view any other alternatives other than adhering to the rules that pressurized boys to perform hegemonic masculinities (Bhana, Nzimakwe & Nzimakwe, 2010). He even commented about being ruled by girls. According to him, boys should be harsh in order to prove that they are real boys who are not ruled by girls. Morojele (2011b) illustrates that showing signs of affection and mixing nicely with girls were not entertained in hegemonic masculinities. This showed that boys and girls thought about their cross-sex relationships differently (Rose, 2007), and that has a bearing on how their gender identities were constructed, shaped and socialized (Harro, 2000). Gender roles and behaviors which are learnt from birth are policed by children, not only in cross-sex, but among the same-sex relations (Hamlall & Morrell, 2009).

4.2.2 Children's Experiences of Cross-sex Relationships

Findings revealed that children's experiences were based on things done together; like playing, walking, sitting, sharing, etc. It was discovered that conflict among children was triggered by disputes as there were many unique and overlapping dynamics in the construction and keeping of relationships. To sustain those relationships called for the involvement of desirable behavioural characteristics and social positioning. Data

revealed that their experiences were not experienced in a similar manner. Three categories emerged, namely: personal involvement, things observed and things heard. Some of their experiences were fine but some caused tension and exclusion of their peers for some time. The study of Blazek (2011) reveals how essential the daily spaces are for boys' and girls' practices of their relationships and how those relationships are very much linked to their disputes and negotiations. The following excerpts are examples of their different experiences:

Naledi: We are four in our group, two girls and two boys. I sit with Fezeka (a girl). Lindo and Bheka (boys) sit at the back desk. When it was Life Orientation period, Lindo the boy at the back of me drew a picture of a girl with plaited hair and he hanged it on the wall near him. Everybody was laughing in class except me and Fezeka. When I turned my head I saw everybody staring at me. Fezeka (whispering) "look at the picture on the wall". When I looked at it, it was a picture of a woman with a baby on her back trying to stop a car with my name written at the bottom. I screamed and tore the paper to pieces. I was so angry with him the whole day. After school he bought me a vetkoek, I wanted to refuse it but I was hungry so I took it (Naledi).

Life Orientation is a period where children find time in Arts and Crafts to put what is in their minds down on the paper or to pour their emotions into a symbolic form. What had been drawn by the boy made Naledi to go crazy because their classmates were laughing at her. Her behaviour sent a quick message to Bheka about the disapproval of

what was drawn. Seeing Naledi's reaction, Bheka tried to find ways of winning his friend back, as Ellis and Zarbatany (2007) point out, a combination of common issues in the construction and caring of relationships relies on the involvement, desirable behavioural traits and the ability to make harmony among the associates. It is normal for children to leave out their targets when annoyed (Marion, Buhrmester & Underwood, 2007).

Findings show that when children constitute their life-world they form relationships with the society and they observe how people around them behave in cross-sex relationships. Children behaved according to societal expectations of their gender (Lorber, 2010). As the school is part and parcel of the society, the knowledge gained from different spheres is put into practice at school. Healy (2011) affirms that more focus should be directed to how schools might create spaces for children's relationships. Boys and girls understood one another by the way in which they behaved in a group, as Zanele's behavior displayed a great deal of her home background:

Interviewer: Tell me more about your friends.

Qiniso: Hahaha (laughing). We have all been friends since grade R. We come from the same area. All our big sisters and brothers are in the same school with us. I play lot of games with them. Our special game is "ugxa" hopscotch. We share our food during break time.... pause but Zanele shouts a lot and she tried to control us most of the time.

Interviewer: Why did Zanele shout at you?

Qiniso: Hmm, Zanele shouts at us for no reason. She behaves like bully boys. She is like her mother who shouts at her father when he is drunk. Her parents always fight during fortnight paid days. Her father took all his money and spends it in alcohol with the shebeen women. He comes home drunk with no money and with no food. Zanele's mother shouts at him, they exchange vulgar and her mother beats him. Zanele is not afraid of anyone in the class. It is nice to be around her because nobody messes with her. She can fight too.

Data revealed that boys and girls in romantic relationships were policed by other children at school. When they had done wrong it was easy for other learners to find out because they were reprimanded openly. Children in romantic relationships were not showing any respect towards the non-teaching staff. Girls who were caught with boys in wrong places were labeled as loving boys too much as a result they were scolded more than boys. Felmlee, Sinclair and Sweet (2012) comment on the issue that girls expect more intimacy and emotional closeness in their relationships than boys. Boys have developed a secretive strategy of dealing with the cleaning staff when they are caught with girls. They did not make their girlfriends aware of that strategy. This placed girls in a way that attracted more shouting. Sbusiso presented an interesting photo depicting the above:



Sbu (boy): This is Lizwi and aunt Lolo who is cleaning our school premises.

Interviewer: Tell me more about your experiences with her.

Sbu: Aunt Lolo tells the students and the teachers that, she is tired of seeing group of big boys and girls who is drinking alcohol and smoking in the toilets and behind the classrooms. Now boys are trying to make good relationships with aunt Lolo so that they won't get to trouble. One day I heard Aunt Lolo warning a girl who was kissing and hugging her boyfriend after school in front of her. She said "oh! My girl tomorrow it will be you who will witness what you are doing as a sign of disrespect towards adults".

Some boys in romantic relationships were not fair enough to their partners because they did not make them aware of how to deal with the situation when they are caught. Some girls deliberately do not show respect at all towards the non-teaching staff working at school. Martin and Muthukrishna (2011), in their study, observe that girls are shy to be seen with boys because of the stigma attached. Findings of this study revealed that girls were not shy to be seen with boys; instead, boys humble themselves in front of the non-teaching staff for the sake of peace. Girls did not show respect for two reasons: they were rude or they were exposed to sexuality at a very young age. To them, kissing and

hugging, abusing alcohol and smoking was a normal thing practiced daily at their homes and in the community. Children's family background contributed to amoral behaviour of boys and girls. Some children shared one bedroom with their parents in the compounds and in unplanned urbanization. The girl didn't see any harm when she was caught kissing with a boy because she was socialized that boys and girls should be romantic friends only. The boy tried to make peace when he was caught but the girl had been shouted because she failed to humble herself and asked for forgiveness. Children are expected to show respect to themselves, peers, and all adults at school and out of school.

4.2.3 Factors Shaping Children's Understanding of Cross-sex relationships

Findings revealed that children were socially influenced by their societal ways of doing things and were also challenged by peer pressure in performing their gender behaviours by imitating various societal relations thus creating a sense of belonging to their peers. When they become aware of things around them, they begin to form their own self-identity by shaping their own world with the behaviours they learnt within their social socialization regarding gender positioning of girls and boys. Blazek (2011) emphasizes the formation of children's own social worlds which mimic the beliefs of a society. The study also highlights how relationships can be a performative mechanism in the construction of children's individuality aspects. Young boys were often influenced by home, society, school and elder peers to perform roles of manhood (Lorber, 2010; Ouzgane & Morrell 2007) then boys practiced roles of manhood like proposing love to

girls at school. Boys who had many girl friends were admired at school. Media, in general, also played a major role in shaping children's understandings of cross-sex relationships (Halatsis & Christakis, 2009). Boys and girls are aroused to romantic relationships while schooling which has negative consequences if correct guidance is not given.



Sbusiso: My brother is in a relationship with a girl. They walk together in the afternoons, sit together in the back seats of the bus. One day I tried to sit with them but his friends chased me away saying, “ifunani lentwana lapha” meaning what is this young boy doing here? I looked at my brother for help but nothing was done except that he accompanied me to the front seats.

Interviewer: Why do they chase you away from the back seats?

One Saturday morning when I woke up I saw two mothers and Bongji my brother's girlfriend talking very soft with my mother. When I looked at Bongji, she was crying. My mother asked me to call my brother. After a long talk they left. Mother was very furious; she passed strong words to my brother. “You have to look for a job to support your baby my boy, I have taken care of you and your young brother all by myself, but you decided to sleep around with girls. This is

what I get in return. I am sick and tired of you and girls". Other children at school told me that Bonggi is pregnant and Sizwe is the father (Sibusiso).

Young children, and those who were not involved in romantic relationships, were not welcomed in the back seats of the bus since the young boy was chased away in their own special language. His brother had no say because he knew the rules of the game; instead, he accompanied his brother to the front seats. It was found that boys who had romantic relationships were respected and given high position at school (Skelton, 2001). Sibusiso's brother wanted to belong to that group. To boys, being unable to have a romantic relationship was not accepted and as a result it attracted ridicule and laughter (Martin & Muthukrishna, 2011). Unfortunately for Sizwe, his girlfriend was pregnant. Their mother was talking about that pregnancy with the two mothers that arrived early in the morning.

It was obvious that Sizwe and his girlfriend did not take any precautions. Reddy & Dunne (2007) note that in most incidents of unsafe sexual behaviours, which include carelessness, ignoring safe sexual practices was associated with men. The news was very disturbing to Sizwe's mother as she was raising the two boys on her own. She scolded him because he failed to do what was right for his future and decided to be sexually active without using any contraceptives. Condom use seemed to be problematic in sexual practices even though it is a principal message in HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns (Reddy & Dunne, 2007).

4.2.4 Factors Affecting Children's Engagements with Cross-sex Relationships

Findings revealed that children were affected by cultural norms that pressurised them to adhere to specific roles and behaviours assigned by gender. Children may bring with them some gender specific expectations into their relationships (Underwood, 2007). As children become involved in cross-sex relationships, some gender specific expectations pose challenges. Boys are influenced to behave within their gender roles as masculine dominance plays a major a role in children's engagements in cross-sex relationships. Boys were puzzled to witness a girl who possessed similar characteristics as them. Morojele (2011a), in one of his field notes, illustrates the inability of a boy to perform as expected. That boy was scolded because of his weakness since boys should not be beaten by girls. The following excerpt illustrates how girls are viewed when they execute gender in a manner that undermines dominant discourses of femininities:



Njab (boy): This boy and a girl are friends but they always fight. When we were saying riddles in class, his friend made a bad riddle about her. We all laughed. Weh! Zan (girl) was furious she kicked him very hard. Then they started to fight.

Qini: I was so surprised to see a girl fighting so strong. Other boys were telling the boy to kick Zan but it was too late because the boy was bleeding. All the class looked at them.

Njab: If, I was him I would have hurt her with a chair. Boys should not be defeated by girls if seen you would be described as weak and of no use. Other boys will scold you.

The above data illustrates that some girls could be more powerful and stronger than boys. Girls who displayed masculine behaviour were not entertained by boys. It was said that Zan's relationships were characterised by fights. It seemed as if the above scenario was big and most revealing in that not all girls are perceived as weak and fragile. Zan was one of those girls who can fight with boys and made some marks but no credit is given to those girls; instead of crowning them, more tips for fighting are given to the boy. In the above excerpt, bleeding was a core sign of being defeated but blood did not make the boy retreat because he was afraid of being called by disgusting names. Bleeding symbolized two things; being defeated or having an open cut. According to hegemonic masculinities, it is not acceptable for boys to be defeated or share any blood in a fight with a girl; moreover, hegemonic masculinity was not for the marginalization of girls only but found even among other boys (Kirk & Winthrop, 2006; Martin & Muthukrishna, 2011; Morojele, 2011b).

4.3 GEOGRAPHIES OF CHILDREN IN CROSS-SEX RELATIONSHIPS

The concept of geographies refers to a focus on detailed and explicit attentiveness to everyday spatialities in the lives of individuals. "It draws the dynamism and on-

goingness of lived experience against the state of being closed, neutral and static in space” (Van Ingen & Halas, 2006, p.380). Findings revealed that schools as contact sectors could enable or inhibit spaces for cross-sex relationships. Power relations among children demonstrated that cross-sex relationships were influenced by many aspects of social identities (Ni’ Laoire, 2011). Numerous types of cross-sex relationships are characterised by myriad of factors occurring in different spaces and places around the school.

4.3.1 Profile of children in Cross-sex Relationships

Although gender identity is not separated from social identities such as age, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, culture and ableism, it is found that children’s cross-sex relationships were influenced by some social identities (Weller, 2007). Profiles of children displayed that they policed themselves and others. They knew other peers strengths and weaknesses in their relationships. Some children knew how others constructed their cross-sex relationship and how do they interacted with their peers (Rose, 2007). Their responses were as follows:



Interviewer: Why does Sphelele carry a lot of money to school?

Asanda: His mother gives him lot of money because Sphelele sometimes does not want to go to school. He experiences difficulties with school work. He is repeating grade 9 for the third time this year. So he is trying to buy fame to girls.

Interviewer: Why is he doing that?

Sbusiso: He wants to be popular because many children knew that he is not doing well at school.

Ageing in one grade, as a result of barriers to learning, pushed Sphelele to be involved in money based relationships with senior grade girls for recognition sake. This means that Sphelele could not go to school without money but that did not solve his difficulty with schoolwork. He was positioned in a state that hindered him from forming any relationship with girls in his class because he was older than his classmates and that was used as a punishment and a hurting sign of being excluded (Kehily, 2003). He was not popular with his classmates because they knew his problem. It was good for Sphelele to spend his money with his friends other than being friendless Rose (2007). Money was his most powerful tool to form relationships with girls.

Sphelele was frustrated for not having a relationship with girls in his own class as his popularity and sense of belonging seem very important at his age. His mother did not know that her son was experiencing a twofold problem. She was only aware that her son was experiencing barriers to learning and no steps were taken towards addressing that problem; instead, she gave his son some money in order for him to go to school. She was not aware that her son was missing social links with his fellow classmates, as

Weller (2007) illustrates, the essentiality of stability in children's relationships, in the most demanding times of schooling life, is by mapping all the reasons that encourage lasting and bursting of relationships.

Religion had a positive influence in cross-sex relationships, in the sense that children were proud and showed signs of appreciation of the newly discovered singing talents. The church played a significant role in creating a space for children to mix with the opposite sex, not only in spiritual development even in social development. Rubin, Fredstrom & Bowker (2008) state that there is a possibility for children to have relationships with other children with whom they share similar interests. This is reflected Nokwanda's response:

Interviewer: You sing very well!

Nokwanda: (stop singing) I did not notice that you are around. I learned how to sing well in Sunday school, now I sing with other boy called, Zama in the church.

Interviewer: That's nice, you seem so interested in singing, tell me more about it.

Nokwanda: When we were doing auditions at the church for the circuit competition. My choir mistress told me that I have to sing in a duet competition with Zama. At first I was nervous because I did not know Zama. He comes from another church society. I met with him twice a week, Friday afternoon and on Sunday after church for rehearsals. One week before the competition we sang in the church. Our choir mistress wanted to check whether we would be able to sing in front of the audience. We sang to our best potential. All we heard was hoorah!

at the end. We sing mostly in the church events. We won that competition and our parents are very proud of us. Zama's mother told him that he is coming to my school next year, so that it can be easy for us to practice together. People at the church said that we have golden voices.

From the above excerpt, it becomes clear that religion provided a space for Nokwanda and Zama to display their outstanding talents. Nokwanda looked very happy with her partner and the love for music is well developed in her. There was music in everything she did. Evidence was that she did not see that I was around looking at her. Their parents were very happy and supportive in their relationship even though it was cross-sex. Zama's mother told him about the following years plan. The plan was for Zama to join Nokwanda at her school. This was done to show that parents were concerned about their children's' achievements. Nokwanda and Zama would have more time for their rehearsals. Rose (2007) concedes that children can enjoy relationships with their peers who are in different schools.

The choir mistress did a remarkable job at the church because she did not use gendered lenses but she promoted the interests of all children under her supervision. She also had the full support of parents. Healy (2011) comments about parents who bother themselves about the cheerfulness in their children's relationships as they normally act the same in regard to their educational development. The mutual understanding between all stakeholders in the church presented an opportunity for children to love and value their cross-sex relationships. McDougall and Hymel (2007)

found that 90% of children report to have an existing cross-sex relation. The church had worked to promote meaningful social connections and shared interests between boys and girls.

It was also found that domestic violence had affected children in their relationships at school because they were exposed to it daily at home. Aggressive behaviour was displayed when children played or interacted with others. Zanele's violent behaviour is described as follows:

Hmm, Zanele (girl) shouts at us for no reason. She behaves like bully boys. She is like her mother who shouts at her father when he is drunk. Her parents always fight during fortnight paid days. Her father took all his money and spends it in alcohol with the shebeen women. He comes home drunk with no money and with no food. Zanele's mother shouts at him, they exchange vulgar and her mother beats him. Zanele is not afraid of anyone in the class. She can fight. It is nice to be around her because nobody messes with her.

From the above extract, shouting is used as a way of reclaiming power thus resulting in children being afraid of Zanele. Qiniso seemed frustrated by Zanele's behaviour but at the same time liked her company. Zanele's behaviour was similar to her mother who used her strength and power to get money from her drunken husband. Zanele's home is characterized by violence. Walter and Roberts (2006) explain that aggressive children usually learn their behaviour from their parents or caregivers who are violent and have

emotional outbursts. Qiniso described Zanele's behavior as similar to bully boys because bullying to him was associated with boys only. Olweus and Limber (2007) illustrate that boys seem to bully more than girls because bully girls are difficult to discover. Regarding the above, Zanele and her friends were never taken for granted. Zanele had internalized the shouting and it was a way of drawing attention since her mother shouted at her father when he was drunk. Strong ties in Qiniso and Zanele's relationship is reinforced for the sake of protection because children at school were threatened by Zanele's aggressive behavior. Children sometimes learn to show perseverance towards the strongest peer for the sake of keeping the relationship. Qiniso has altered his coping styles to accommodate Zanele even if she shouted at them for no apparent reason (Rose, 2007).

4.3.1.1 Power Relationships of Children in Cross-sex Relationships

Due and Riggs (2010) confirm that it is always the case that those who have power will decide to include or exclude those who are powerless in their social interactions. Findings of the study exposed issues of power embedded in cross-sex relationships. Power and oppression were revealed from the different perspectives. People in possession of power sought to have authority over those who were powerless in order to remain in power; therefore, it was not nice for boys to see a girl fighting so strong. Boys did not like to witness those who are regarded as powerless trying to reclaim power (Young, 2000). Ni'Laoire (2011) affirms that a boy's way of life is more brutal than a girl's way of life as boys are more prone to maltreatment than girls, for example,

physical violence is more familiar among boys. In the excerpt below, boys did not entertain a girl who displayed features of being powerful because she was a threat to them (Young, 2000).



Njab: This boy and a girl are friends but they always fight. When we were saying riddles in class, his friend made a bad riddle of her. We all laughed. Weh! Zan was furious she kicked him very hard. Then they started to fight.

Qini: I was so surprised to see the girl fighting so strong. Other boys were telling the boy to kick Zan but it was too late because the boy was bleeding. All the class looked at them.

Njab: If, I was him I would have hurt her with a chair. Boys should not be defeated by girls.

Interviewer: Why do you say that?

Njab: You would be seen as weak and of no use. Other boys will scold you.

According to dominant masculinities boys have to endure pain without retreating (Morojele, 2009a) but in this case things were totally different because the girl who was accorded less power than the boy was displaying what was not expected, unacceptable

and uncomfortable to the boys who witnessed the fight and also to the boy who fought. It was a disgrace for a boy to be defeated by a girl in a fight (Swain, 2006). The boy who fought had to seek other means of winning the fight in order to retain the social status given by hegemonic masculinity. The girl tried to reclaim power by challenging the status quo. It was obvious that the girl was not scared of the boy. This was shown by her attitude when she first kicked the boy very hard (Hamlall & Morrel, 2009; Morojele, 2011b; Martin & Muthukrishna, 2011). It was a disgrace for boys to be kicked by girls because girls are supposed to respect boys in dominant characteristics of femininities. (Schuhman, 2010).

The following excerpt shows that boys had to protect their sisters because in traditional femininities girls are depicted as vulnerable and fragile.



Mthunzi is very cheeky and short tempered but he cares a lot for his sister. They communicate well and Mthunzi does not like it when his sister gets treated badly by other learners.

Mthunzi had a responsibility of taking care of his twin sister since dominant femininity depicted girls as powerless and fragile hence bearing a minority social status unlike boys (Reddy, 2010). It was noted that Mthunzi is cheeky and short tempered towards other children but he became very furious when he finds out that his sister was treated roughly. Mthunzi displayed what is considered as good enough for dominant values of masculinities (Ouzgane & Morrel, 2007).



I have taken this picture because Siyanda and Lindi are always together during break, lunch and after school. I took this photograph at break time while they were standing at the school public phone. Lindi was trying to phone but Siyanda was hanging his arms on the telephone booth thus preventing Lindi to make a call (Njabulo).

The above excerpt displays Siyanda trying to stop Lindi from using the telephone booth. He put his arms on the booth. How can Lindi make a call if her boyfriend was not prepared to take his arms off the telephone booth? This means that Lindi was not allowed to make her own decisions. She should always ask for her boyfriend's approval in order to be seen as a good partner. Girls are socialized to show respect to their

fathers and husbands when they are married. They are not allowed to take decisions on their own (Anderson, 2005; Morojele, 2011a). Siyanda tried to exercise his status as a man by not letting Lindi to exercise her right. In reference to the above, jealousy in the relationship is also displayed. Siyanda failed to hide his insecurity thus using his body as a commodity that is understood and respected by girls (Swain, 2006). “Females or girls are objectified as prizes and cherries used to bargain with in order to gain popularity and acceptance” (Martin & Muthukrishna, 2011, p.9). Lindi’s attitude demonstrated that she conform to her minority status hence allowing her boyfriend to have power over her life.

4.3.2 Spaces and Places of Cross-sex Relationships

Findings confirmed that children’s lives are practised in dissimilar ways, in diverse times, places and spaces in contradictory situations (Van Blerk, 2005). Findings reveal a noticeable trend that children’s relationships took place in diverse periods, places and spaces in various situations. Pictures taken reveal places within the school as sites of cross-sex relationships. School buses below are used as spaces for romantic relationships.



My brother is in a relationship with a girl. They walk together in the afternoons, sit together in the back seats of the bus. One day I tried to sit with them but his friends chased me away saying, “ifunani lentwana lapha” meaning what is this young boy doing here? I looked at my brother for help but nothing was done except that he accompanied me to the front seats.

Interviewer: Why do they chase you away from the back seats?

Sibusiso: (Pause) many bad things happen in the back seats. Boys kiss, harass, propose love to girls and smoke together. When the bus drops us off, they walk slowly hand in hand (Sibusiso).

School buses were used as love zones for children in romantic relationships. The intention of school buses was to help learners who travel long distances to school but certain places on the bus were reserved for certain boys and girls. Children who are not in romantic relationships were not allowed to utilise seats at the back of the bus. It was discovered that boys and girls police each other and they are under close watch by those who are not in romantic relationships (Bhana, Nzimakwe & Nzimakwe, 2010). Sibusiso once tried to sit on the back seats but he was chased away because he would see what was happening. He did not receive any protection from his brother; instead, he accompanied him to the front seats. His brother would not offer any help because he was among those who occupy the back seats. Unprincipled things took place at the back seats like sexual harassment, kissing, smoking and love proposing.

One grade R child picked up a condom and tried to blow it thinking that it was a balloon. Unused classrooms are next to the grade R playing area. Grade R teachers are now responsible to keep an eye when grade R children are playing (Asanda).



This is the picture of grade R children who found used condom in the unused classrooms where older children used as their love zone. Grade R children were playing with it until one girl reported the incident to our teacher. The teacher asked us if we have seen used condoms in the school. Most of us in class replied with a big yes. We told her that most of used and unused condoms are found in the toilets, in unused classrooms and at the back of the cottages. Hmm..... they break the locks and make those classrooms their bedrooms (Sbu).

Young children are exposed to danger and sexual licentiousness at an early age. This is caused by the negligence of boys and girls who are obsessed with sex. They changed unused classrooms into their bedrooms and they did not even consider leaving them clean for future use. It was difficult to make boundaries for children since the study was conducted in a combined school. Grade R children were not aware that their lives were

placed in danger. They did not know that they were playing with a condom. According to their understanding they thought they were playing with a balloon because they knew nothing about condoms. If it was not for the girl who reported, nobody would have known that such occurrences were taking place around the school. Grade R learners did not even know what condoms are used for. Foundation phase children are not always included in HIV/AIDS awareness programs. Most children at school knew about condoms found in the unused classrooms but they decided to keep quiet. They started to talk about it when asked. They identified places and spaces around the school where condoms are mostly found. Surprisingly, no one ever brought the subject to the attention of teachers. Below, is an extract of how the spaces and spaces around the school are utilized.



I took this picture while the girl was feeding the boy with a pear, in the corner of the car parking. The boy is sitting on a log with his legs wide open. The girl is standing between the boys legs. They are having a good time (Nokwanda).

The car park was used as a place where children enjoy their time while teachers are in the classrooms or in the staffroom. Their way of sitting revealed more than just ordinary friends. Halatsis and Christakis (2009) mention the different ways of sitting, talking and

behaviour of people who have feelings for one another. The boy's legs are wide open thus allowing the girl to stand in between them. They look into each other's eyes while the girl is feeding her partner with a pear. Both of them are enjoying their spare time without any disruptions. They did not care about those who were looking at them. What was important at that time was their intimacy. It was evident that teachers never witnessed what was really happening in the car park. It is obvious that the school yard has many corners where different types of cross-sex relationships took place. Relationships of this nature do not occur in front of teachers. Children tried to hide their feelings for one another in the classroom because they knew very well that it is not going to be approved. They have learnt to wait for their free time during break, lunch and after school. Boys and girls in these relationships have their own different spots around the school which they make use of.

4.3.3 Forms and Types of Cross-sex Relationships

Findings reveal that there were different forms and types of cross-sex relationships which took place in different places at school. Hymel and McDougall (2007) find that children examined cross-sex relationships as feasible. Some forms or types of cross-sex relationships seemed to be tightly regulated, some loosely regulated and some of them were stigmatised. Boys and girls carried out their relationships freely and openly even though some types were done in awkward places and with wrong timing. Participants presented different types of cross-sex relationships as evidenced in the following excerpts:



These are our school clowns. They get along because they both like jokes. They can make a joke out of anything. They did not practice. They just say things without memorizing. One day they say good things about boys and bad things about girls. The following day it's vice versa. They debate about things but they never fight. It is nice to listen to them. At break time we followed them from class to class (Njab).

Cross-sex clowns were appreciated by most children in different phases at school because they brought fun after the demanding teaching and learning periods. Their way of communication is cherished for many reasons. They are both interested in cracking jokes. They are talented at making fun out of anything that came to their minds at that particular time. They do not have time for rehearsals, their cognitive skills are quick because they engage with any subject that is on the table at a particular time and they complement each other. They can agree to disagree about different things that are done or acceptable to gender. It is possible to make a mistake by thinking that they could end up in a fight but none of that ever happened to them. Rose (2007) developed a model which addresses boys and girls associations and the impact that it has on their

expressive and behavioural modification. Their skilled way of doing things has paved a road for them to be well known at school. Children enjoyed listening to them; as a result they have many followers. They have put aside their gender difference and focused in entertaining children at school. Children would learn that boys and girls can be in relationships without threats, fights and dominance. In the above case cross-sex relationships was a two way process where one learnt from the other (Blazek, 2011).

I am the youngest of them all in the class. Our female class teacher calls me "Thumbu" meaning last born. In the morning I make sure that I meet my teacher at the gate and carry her bags to the class. I dust her table and put her bags neatly and rush to the assembly point. During Mathematics period, things do not go very well with me as I am battling with Mathematics. I do not receive any favour with this subject. One day the teacher brought a mathematical puzzle for us to do in class. We tried to do it but I was the only one who did very badly. All my classmates were laughing at me but she patiently took me through all the steps without shouting. From that day I did not feel threatened by Mathematics and I feel safe when the teacher is around (Njabulo).

Njabulo knew very well that he was the youngest of all in his class; no wonder his teacher called him by 'Thumbu,' an abbreviation of 'uThunjane', meaning last born. To Njabulo, being called by that name increased his admiration of his female teacher.

This was seen in his actions towards the teacher. He makes sure that he meets the teacher at the gate, carries her bags and dusts the table. Underwood (2007) emphasizes that children engage in particular behaviours in their chosen forms of social situations which can be manipulative on their interpersonal practices. Njabulo is confused by the attitude he received from the teacher in Mathematics as it was the only subject that he was experiencing difficulties in; after failing to do the puzzle while the whole class laughed at him. Young children normally laugh at each other when failing to perform a task. Njabulo expected an intervention by the teacher towards his mathematical problems but knew that nothing would be done with his Mathematics problem. He began to have second thoughts about the teacher. To his biggest surprise, he found that the teacher came to his rescue.

From that day on, his love for Mathematics was reinforced and he felt at ease when the teacher was around. Many children make the same mistake as Njabulo when thinking that the teacher-learner relationship is something that can be traded. The teacher was doing justice that was expected from her; to first identify the problem and thereafter give remedy where needed. A problem-posing approach was used as the basis of inventiveness as children should not be depicted as containers to be filled by the teacher (Boltadano, Darder & Torres, 2009). The above excerpts also indicate that children do have relationships with their cross-sex peers, teachers, romantic partners, siblings and groups. All these relationships occurred in diverse spaces and places at school. Some relationships have a smooth flow but some pose many challenges in their navigation as is discussed in the following themes.

4.4 CHILDREN'S CONTESTATIONS AND NAVIGATION OF CROSS-SEX RELATIONSHIPS

4.4.1 Disagreements and Agreements in Cross-sex Relationships

The data reveals children are prone to agreements and disagreements within social interactions. Mayall (2002) suggests that through patterns of friendships and rituals of play, children create meaning for themselves and others. Cross-sex relationships are seen as a mutual agreement between children but at some stage disagreements on certain things cropped up, as reflected in the responses of the participants:



Njab: This boy and a girl are friends but they always fight. When we were saying riddles in class, his friend made a bad riddle of her. We all laughed. Weh! Zan was furious she kicked him very hard, and then they started to fight.

The relationship between Zan and the boy is characterized by many fights. It is a fact that some cross-sex relationships are rife with contestations (Underwood, 2007). The

fight was caused by a riddle which caused the whole class to laugh. Zan was angry because she did not expect her friend to draw other children's attention to her. She was disappointed at her friend because she thought that he would be the last person to betray her in class. Girls wanted to hold their relationships to firm regulations unlike boys (Felmlee, Sinclair & Sweet, 2012).

Zan did not take into consideration that they were in class and they were expected to obey the class rules. Her hard kick to the boy resulted in the fight. Nobody in class made an effort toward peace-making between the two friends. In fact, children are keen to witness fights. All they wanted to observe was the winner and the loser. I conclude that young children are sensitive when being laughed at as their self-actualization journey is not yet fully developed. Another reason for disagreements is that girls desire more closeness in their relationships, and if they did not receive such, they ended up being frustrated (Rose, 2007). On the other hand, boys are inexperienced in how to treat their cross-sex friends accordingly.

Disagreement between friends is also evident in the quotation below:



We are four in our group, two girls and two boys. I sit with Fezeka (a girl). Lindo and Bheka sit at the back desk. During Life Orientation period, Lindo the boy at the back of me drew a picture of a girl with a plaited hair and he hanged it on the wall near him. Everybody was laughing in class except me and Fezeka. When I turned my head I saw that everybody was staring at me. Fezeka whispering, "Look at the picture on the wall". When I looked at it, it was a picture of a woman with a baby on her back trying to stop a car with my name written at the bottom. I screamed and tear the paper into pieces. I was so angry with him the whole day. After school he bought me a vetkoek, I wanted to refuse it but I was hungry so I took it (Naledi).

The above excerpt depicts cross-sex relationship among two girls and two boys. Lindo had done something that Naledi was not happy about. The drawn picture was the reason for their disagreement. Naledi's screaming and tearing of the drawn picture is a sign of disapproval of Lindo. This is a sharp contrast with Marion, Buhrmester and Underwood's (2007) findings that view girls' interpersonal desires for harmony promote them to contain their real emotional dissatisfaction for the sake of sustaining relationships. Seeing this, Lindo tried to find ways of apologizing for his wrong doing. It was very hurting for Lindo to see Naledi in that situation for the whole day. The vetkoek was used as a symbol of an apology since Lindo did not intend to offend Naledi. Children construct connotations for themselves and others through patterns of their relationships and customs of play (Mayall, 2003). Drawn pictures can be a source of provocation and disagreement among friends, but on the other hand, it can be a signal

of surveillance, waiting and daydreaming of future romantic relationships (Underwood, 2007).

4.4.2 Pretences and Deceptions in Cross-sex Relationships

In the study, data revealed that children made many pretences and deceptions in the navigation of their relationships. Girls were found to be more skilled than boys in pretending for the sake of getting what they needed at the time. The norms that govern boys' behaviours permitted them to publicly stand up for their rights (Marion, Buhrmester & Underwood, 2007). The smooth running of relationships depends on the commitment expected from both sexes. Normally girls are more accommodating than boys in cross-sex relationships. The excerpt below revealed that boys can accommodate their cross-sex friends if need be.



Gugu does not want to carry eggs because one day when she opened her lunchbox, everybody shakes their heads because of the bad smell.

Interviewer: What did you do?

Qini: At first I wanted to laugh, but I remember that Gugu would feel very bad to see me laughing at her. I tried to explain from the whole class that she did not do as they think. It was eggs that had a bad smell. Gugu was so relieved to see that I was with her.

Qini tried to pretend as if nothing happened when the whole class reacted to the bad smell made by the eggs. Qini did not want to disappoint Gugu so he stood by her. The explanation that he gave the class made Gugu feel somehow relieved. If it wasn't for Qini's genuine explanation, the whole class would have believed that the bad smell was coming from her and not from the lunchbox. Rose (2007) concedes that cross-sex relationships offer boys and girls a pleasurable friendship, assistance and support when it is required. From that day, Gugu never carried egg sandwiches. Their friendship was reassured by what Qini has done for her. Interaction between boys and girls become strong if both parties are prepared to work together towards the development of their relationships.

The study also found that some children pretended to be mediators for other children's relationships for the sake of being well informed of what was happening in the relationships of other children, as evidenced in the following excerpt:



Asanda: Khayelihle is pulling Ndabezinhles' hand.

Interviewer: Why is Khayelihle pulling Ndabezinhles' hand?

Asanda: Khayelihle want to talk to Ndabezinhle inside the class room. He is trying to take the letter in her hand.

Interviewer: Why was he doing that?

Asanda: Ndabezinhle is replying to Sifiso so Khayelihle is a middle man between Ndabezinhle and Sifiso. Ndabezinhle is afraid to give Khayelihle the letter because he might read the letter and find out what is going on.

Interviewer: Does the teacher allow you to write letters in class?

Asanda: No, all the letters are written and passed under the desk while the teacher is busy doing something or when she is not in the classroom.

Interviewer: What happens if the letter is found?

Asanda: Shame, the letter is read aloud and the perpetrators are dealt with accordingly.

It was evident that Khayelihle wanted to know what was happening between Ndabezinhle and Sifiso. Khayelihle tried to force Ndabezinhle inside the classroom with the aim of reading the contents of the letter in Ndabezinhle's hand. Khayelihle pretended to be their mediator but his intention was to know what was in the letter. Children seem to be very good at pretending if they are curious about something (Marion, Buhrmester & Underwood, 2007). Ndabezinhle refused to give the letter to Khayelihle maybe she was aware of Khayelihle's intention. Blazek (2011) emphasises the significance of support, trust and collective coalition in children relationships. Writing

of letters is a way of communicating between boys and girls in the absence of the latest technology. Small written letters are passed under the desks or given in the absence of teachers because it was not allowed. If teachers' suspect that something funny is happening, the children pretend as if nothing happened, and when the teacher leaves, they continue with their underground way of communication (Kehily, 2003). The incident below illustrates how money was used as a significant token of social inclusion:

Qiniso: I took this photo because many girls pretend to be friends with Sphelele so he could buy nice things for them. When they get what they want they leave him alone. This is shown by the way Nokukhanya's smile.

Interviewer: Why is he doing that?

Sbusiso: He wants to be popular because many children knew that he is not doing well at school.

Girls pretended to care for Sphelele in order to get his money and nice things. Sphelele is desperate for recognition so money was his valuable tool to friendship-making with girls. Girls in his grade are not interested in him. This has made Sphelele more vulnerable toward girls who pretend to love him. They know that he won't suspect anything if they accommodate him in their relationship. Sphelele uses his money to buy nice things in order to be comfortable in a relationship. Kehily (2003) illustrates that some children can trade with what they have to form alliances with others. His classmates were younger than him. They are genuine about their emotions unlike senior class girls who use Sphelele's weakness to their own advantage. Girls used their

heterosexual attractiveness to attract boys who want to hang around with girls (Martin & Muthukrishna, 2011; Morojele, 2011a&b).

4.4.3 Overcoming Challenges in Cross-sex Relationships

Underwood (2007) makes it clear that the study of gender and relationships is fraught with challenges. Girls and boys view their world through femininity and masculinity lenses; therefore, the possibility of biasness exists. Findings reveal the fact that boys and girls come with some gender specific expectations in their relationships which causes problems as they engage with one another. Ni' Laoire (2011) admits that boys and girls are immersed from early childhood with different peer context which both strengthen and complicate their multifaceted social positioning.

Children encountered many challenges such as jealousy and gossiping. Moreover, being in a cross-sex relationship held different meanings for children. Girls tended to express strong anxiety about their relationships. Boys and girls appreciated their friends despite the challenges imposed by these relationships (Martin & Muthukrishna, 2011). Some children demonstrated good negotiation skills for the progress of their relationships (Ni' Laoire, 2011); while on the other hand, some boys needed girls who might do their activities for them.



Our relationship is good even though other boys are jealous of our talents. They say we do not match. I like the way we dance together. We have our own different styles of dancing. I lead 'ingoma yabafana' boys dance group and she leads 'ingoma yamantombazane' girls dance group. Being around her makes me to be famous at school because she is talented, clever and she believes in herself. They once tried to convince her saying bad things about me but they failed because she told me everything. I like it when jealous people fail to convince your mate. It shows that your relationship is strong (Sbu).

Some boys displayed jealousy toward Sbu and Bongji's talents. Their combination is envied by some children. They both lead their dance groups. Their unique styles of traditional dancing made other boys to have ill talks about Sbu. They tried to discourage Bongji in her relationship with Sbu. Nasty comments came to their understanding but no harm was done because Bongji did not allow other boys to come between them. In dominant masculinities, long and lasting relationships are not entertained (Morojele,

2011b). The above relationship demonstrated a total commitment even though challenges were common (Felmlee, Sinclair & Sweet, 2012).

In the light of the above, it became clear that other boys were envious when they see good connection between a boy and a girl other than heterosexual inclination. They attempt to dissolve that relationship (Halatsis & Christakis, 2009). They become very worried if their mission is not accomplished. Bongis' intelligence saved their relationship, as Weller (2007) contends that relationships can confer confidence and development of shared interest.

4.4.3.1 Stereotypes in Cross-sex Relationships

It was found that boys and girls relationships were characterised by a lot of compliance thus making them work. Some children were not prepared to alter their behaviour or interpersonal styles and that caused a lot of tension in their relationships. Most children valued their cross-sex relationships but they did not leave behind their stereotypical gender socialization (Hall, 2011). They continued to behave according to gender expectations in their social interaction with the opposite sex. It was exposed that boys suffered a lot of abuse when they behave nicely to girls because it was compulsory for boys to attain hegemonic masculinity. On the other hand, girls were labelled as loving too much (Halatsis & Christakis, 2009). Girls who displayed power and challenged the stereotypical constructions of gender were not criticized, as reflected in the subsequent excerpt:

Njab: If, I was him I would have hurt her with a chair. Boys should not be defeated by girls.

Interviewer: Why do you say that?

Njab: You would be seen as weak and of no use. Other boys will scold you.

Njab's comment demonstrated stereotypical construction of gender by putting pressure on the boy to fight. It pressurized the boy who was fighting to continue fighting even if he was in pain. He even encouraged rough fighting because he believed that boys should not be beaten by girls in any way (Morojele, 2011a; Schuhmann, 2010). Njab stressed that failing to display forms of hegemonic masculinity has bad results. He passed bad remarks to the boy who was failing to show characteristics of hegemonic masculinities. Some highly gendered proverbs were given to boys who are regarded as weak because boys should be physically strong and be in a position to tolerate hurt without withdrawing (Ouzgane & Morrel, 2007; Swain, 2006). Nothing tangible was said about the girl who was giving the boy a tough time. The positioning of girls in the stereotypical gender construction is given minority social status whereas more power and social status are assigned to boys (Cameroon, 2004 & Morojele, 2009b).

The findings also show that some cross-sex relationships adhere strongly to the stereotypical discourses of masculinity and femininity, as illustrated in Asanda's response:

Asanda: The boy wanted to take her to his home. The girl was refusing that's why she chose to walk with her small brothers. Other boys at the back were passing remarks encouraging the boy to continue with what he was doing.

Interviewer: Is that a good thing?

Asanda: No, but that boy is so rude. He treats girls so badly. He is not afraid of doing evil things.

Stereotypical construction of gender supported the discourses of dominant masculinities and femininities which perpetuate gender inequality in cross-sex relationships. With reference to the above quotation, the boy did not treat the girl with respect in front of her younger brothers. The girl also did not show any dislike to what was done to her. For that girl, heterosexual normalization of femininity had an impact on what it means to be a girl (Morojele, 2009a). She didn't do anything more to show that she was refusing because she was socialized to be ladylike, polite and to express heterosexual inclinations to the boy who displayed hegemonic masculinities (Reddy, 2010). The boy exercised his superiority over the girl when he forced her to his home. Their relationship was characterized by ill-manners and disrespect. Some boys and girls relationships are static and closed because the views of girls are not invited or entertained. Schuhmann (2010) points out that discourses of femininities depict girls' bodies as subjects to boys; thus allowing boys to have full control over them.

4.4.3.2 Power and Dominance in Cross-sex Relationships

The findings revealed that dominance was prevalent in children's cross-sex relationships. The element of dominance in certain games was noted when children play together. Some boys treat girls badly in their relationships. (Fiske, 2009). They acted as if certain sports were designed solely for them. It was also discovered that boys control girls in their relationships as dominant forms of masculinity are often centred on sports, powerful, intensely competitive, proposing love to girls and subordination of other boys who are seen as caring (Swain, 2006). Rose (2007) observes that most cross-sex relationships are initiated by boys whilst girls are responsible for maintaining those relationships.

When I play with them they tell me not to be weak and not to cry easily. One day they kicked the ball too hard and I could not catch it. It hit me on the stomach and I fell down. Children who were watching us laughed at me and passing bad remarks saying I won't be able to compete with boys. I don't like it when boys try to possess games and giving girls harsh treatment (Asa)

When Asa played with the boys they mentioned that weakness was not entertained in football. Boys did not try to alter their playing style to accommodate their opposite sex peer. The strongly kicked ball proved that it was not their culture to pretend or to change their interpersonal style of playing (Rose, 2007). Asa was expected to display strong physicality to fit into the boys company. Failing to catch or hold the ball resulted in being

teased by other children. They accepted Asa in the group but she had to take orders from them. Dominance was displayed in the manner in which they treated the girl while playing. They made it clear that football was not suitable for girls. Boys sometimes tried to own certain sports like football. They did not give any encouragement; instead, they passed nasty remarks saying she was unfit to compete with boys. Ni'Laoire (2011) focuses more on the manner in which gender dynamics put more pressure by obscuring boys and girls multifaceted social situations. It is very difficult for girls to possess boy's qualities of standing the hardship without showing signs of retreat. Girls enjoyed the boys' company but sometimes they experienced challenges when boys tried to subordinate them (Fiske, 2009). Normally, rough sports are usually dominated by boys. Football belongs to sports which are highly gendered and it is dominated by boys most of the time. More fitness, power, roughness and extreme competitiveness is required (Martin & Muthukrishna, 2011; Morojele, 2011a& b). Rose (2007) finds that dominance in cross-sex is caused by the lack of boys to adjust their playing styles in a manner that enables flexibility in sporting activities.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented children's experiences of cross-sex relationships through individual and focus group interviews with the use of a participatory technique. Themes that emerged were identified as cornerstones in understanding the voice and agency of children in cross-sex relationships. The study found that children valued their cross-sex relationships even though common challenges are experienced. Both girls and boys

are placed at risk by specific customs linked to the discourses of femininities and masculinities. The following chapter will deal with the conclusion and implications of findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The issue under study was young children's experiences and constructions of cross sex relationships in a farm combined school setting. This study set out to explore cross-sex relationships among grade four children in one farm co-educational combined school in uMgungundlovu. The focus was to understand, the voice, agency and innovative habits of children who constructed, contested and navigated cross-sex relationships. It is important to stress, yet again, the research questions that guided this study:

1. What are the ways in which young children's observations in a schooling context shape their understanding and construction of cross-sex relationships?
2. What are the geographies of cross-sex relationships?
3. How do children navigate the spaces and places of cross-sex relationships?

This chapter is structured, firstly, to present a concise summary of theoretical, conceptual and methodological reflections. Secondly, my personal and academic-professional reflections will be shared, followed by the limitations of this study and by an offering of ideas of how this study could be improved upon by other researchers. Finally, I discuss the implications of the study; stating the implications for policy and practice and the implications for further research.

5.2 THEORETICAL-METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

This study was drawn from both theoretical and conceptual frameworks; namely, social constructionism, children's geographies and the new sociology of children. School is an arena which produces unfair social order and also creates transformation and this was used to explore the experiences and construction of cross-sex relationships in children (Morojele, 2011b). By the time children come to school, they would already have been socialized, consciously or unconsciously, from birth to behave according to accepted gender rules and behaviors in their relationship making. I used boys and girls socialization to explore and understand children's experiences in terms of how their gender in social relations was constructed and experienced (Harro, 2000). When children are at school, their individual levels of socialization emerge.

Messages from home and society contribute to the factors that shape their understanding of cross-sex relationships; therefore, ethnicity, gender and many other dynamics of social identities have much influence in the construction of cross-sex relationships. Locating this study in the context of children geographies and the new sociology of children, which is a new way of researching with children, presented me with an opportunity to differ from the traditional belief that perceives children as incompetent, passive, dependent and immature. I considered them as meaning producers in their own right and have given them the right to participate in this study in order to make their lives perceptible (Brown, 2011).

The theoretical and conceptual framework, methodology and research design had collaboratively complemented each other to understand boys and girls experiences. Their voice and agency were conveyed through their narratives. Children's narratives were based on what they had seen, heard and personal accounts. Children geographies and the new sociology of children formed the umbrella for this study and made it possible to understand children as a neglected social grouping that experience numerous forms of social-spatial marginalization in the essence of cross-sex relationships (Van Blerk, 2005).

The study used qualitative research methodology as an inquiry approach to explore the central phenomenon; namely, cross-sex relationships, by means of collecting detailed views of participants in the form of words and images. Thick descriptions of children's experiences, feelings, attitudes and behaviors were gathered (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Communicating with participants in their natural setting and rapport between the researcher and participants enabled participants to freely expose factors that shaped their understanding of cross-sex relationships, the spaces and places of cross-sex relationships and the challenges as well as the navigation of cross-sex relationships (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Narratives of children served as a valuable data of the study.

The employment of narrative inquiry in individual and focus group interviews assisted in making the life experiences of children in cross-sex relationships easy to tell. Children's narratives served as the basic unit of analysis. This study turned to be very reflexive but it was kept in the margins of social constructionism, new sociology of childhood and

literature review. These boundaries were used to elicit concrete evidence in order to capture the authentic voices of children from the gathered data. The inclusion of the participatory technique, namely photovoice, added value to the children's narratives thus simplifying the way of depicting their cross-sex relationships.

Critical incidents that were narrated and the discussion of the pictures taken resulted in the emergence of the subsequent themes for data analysis; construction and understanding of cross-sex relationships, the geographies of cross-sex relationships and children contestations and navigation of cross-sex relationships. Thematic and basic content analysis was used for data analysis. In extracting the essence of the unprocessed data and interpreting it, the literature review and the theoretical and conceptual framework were used as strong pillars for the study. The data analysis procedure undertaken was to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the data analysis process.

5.3 PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL-ACADEMIC REFLECTIONS

My personal stance about children would be amiss if I didn't differ with the traditional viewing of children as incompetent, passive and dependent. Believing in the latest innovative way of researching with children has caught the liveliness and ongoingness of lived experiences in opposition to the state of being neutral, clogged and fixed (Van Ingen & Halas, 2006). Children geographies and new sociology of children made it possible for me to understand children's experiences and constructions of cross-sex

relationships in a school setting. Although children were positive about cross-sex relationships in their customs of play, visible patterns of gender inequality and physical features were evident.

The study compelled me to be more thoughtful and to do self-interrogation on specific aspects of my teaching, especially since I'm responsible for laying a strong base in the foundation phase. This calls for the implementation of quality teaching and learning without any stereotypical gender discrimination thus addressing children social relations equally. My academic quest sought to uphold gender performances which encourage fair gender relations; therefore, it was important in my pursuance to understand how gender dynamics of femininities and masculinities bear on children's social lives at school. The school tended to focus mostly on the cognitive aspect, hence, ignoring the social life of children. As a social justice practitioner, it was my responsibility to explore the gendered nature of boys and girls relationships and their negotiations over space, paving the way for improvement in future research undertaken within this field.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The employment of narrative inquiry meant me collecting as many narratives as possible from the participants about the current study. Data showed that boys were more vocal than girls. The upbringing of boys and girls, according to traditional norms, limited this study from adding maximum value to the findings. Girls' narratives and answers were straight forward and they sometimes spoke softly and were always

reminded to speak loudly; unlike boys, who spoke their minds and soul about their experiences of cross-sex relationships.

Further, school practices contributed to shortcomings of this study; in a sense that stereotypical beliefs hindered the smooth running of cross-sex relationships. The treatment of boys and girls at school were not the same. Inequality in gender was noticeable in children's narratives since disruptive behaviour was particularly regarded as boys' behaviour and girls had to behave in a polite, gentle and tidy manner. Seating arrangement in class created gap for boys and girls to interact with one another. Classroom chores were assigned according to gender. Unisex sports, which would have promoted the spaces for the above, were not encouraged because of the stigma attached to cross-sex relationships. Finally, the study could have obtained more data if it was conducted indoors because the playground atmosphere easily distracted the participants.

5.5 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Findings show that boys were more vocal than girls in the focus group activities. Boys also adhered strictly to the traditional discourses of masculinity. Girls' understandings of femaleness were to be; quiet, ladylike, show respect and not to be equal to boys. Some boys who were caring and interacted well with girls were criticized by other boys. Unequal treatment of boys and girls showed that school practices favoured traditional discourses of male dominance. The seating plan and classroom chores in other grades

did not promote spaces for cross-sex relationships since girls were not allowed to sit with boys. Classroom and school chores were distributed according to gender. Boys were responsible for outdoor work, for example, gardening and cleaning the school yard; whilst girls were responsible for sweeping, dusting the furniture, etc. Findings reveal that children had diverse experiences of cross-sex relationships. They observed how people around them behave in cross-sex relationships. Their experiences also include things they heard from home, society and at school. Their experiences showed how they constructed the performed gender in cross-sex relationships.

Diverse forms of cross-sex relationships took place in different spaces and places at school. Cross-sex relationships which occurred in hidden, unacceptable and unauthorised places; namely, school buses, toilets and in unused classrooms, had negative effects on the children since it exposed them to teenage pregnancy, delinquency and womanising. Findings also reveal that romantic relationships took place in school buses. Front seats were utilized by all children whereas the backseats were reserved for lovers.

Identity profiles of children in cross-sex relationships revealed that their relationships were influenced by aspects social identities. The home background played an important role in the social positioning of children in cross-sex relationships. Homes that are characterised by domestic violence placed children at high risk of exercising aggressive power in their relationships. Homes that encouraged correct behaviour thereby

exercised gender equality between boys and girls and respect for one another; thus, creating spaces for social relations among boys and girls at school.

5.6 IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

5.6.1 Implications for Policy and Practice

Inadequate communication between the Department and teachers, in the form of service training and regular workshops, make teachers go off-track; thus not putting policies like South African Schools Act, White Paper 6, HIV/AIDS, in to practice. The source of this tension might be the exclusion of teachers from policy planning and policy making. The Department uses a top-down approach which confuses teachers because nobody familiarises them with the new policies. The above mentioned approach posed more challenges for teachers. They failed to adhere strictly to departmental documents and circulars. Teachers experienced difficulty in the implementation of the new curriculum (CAPS) because of inadequate workshops. On the other hand teachers do not acquaint themselves with important departmental documents. Some teachers are not implementing inclusive education in their schools because they have not been work shopped on White Paper 6 of 2006; which deals with the inclusion of learners to schools regardless of their disability, health, and socio-economic status, where all children's needs are addressed. Teachers are expected to embrace the diversity of all learners in one over-crowded class. How can we expect teachers to address learner's needs while their own needs are not being addressed? Teachers have very strenuous teaching

loads because of the post-provisioning norm (PPN) which allocates teachers according to the enrolment without taking into account the status of schools and their curriculum needs.

Social development of learners is not fully attended to in schools. Social relations of children is not addressed or integrated into the subjects taught at school. It is left entirely up to teachers who teach Life Orientation. Due to limited period allocated for Life Orientation, some teachers do not dwell much in the issue of relationships. Those who occasionally touch on the subject of cross-sex interactions continued to promote gender inequality among boys and girls; therefore, hindering more chances of cross-sex relationships at school. Children are not assisted in any way in making and keeping relationships. It is entirely left up to an individual to decide. All children need to know about different types of relationships in order to behave accordingly. The Department of Basic education should consider the following issues for the smooth implementation of future policies:

- Department should consult teachers in policy-making hence designing the bottom-up approach where all stakeholders will be represented.
- Drafters of policies should first pilot their draft policies and teacher should be represented. Teachers should be work-shopped thoroughly to ensure effective and efficient practice of policies. Skilful and knowledgeable facilitators will be needed in those workshops to provide teachers with the

correct information to avoid self-interpretation of policies. Time frames for workshops should be increased as teachers would be expected to implement them on a daily basis.

- Allocation of teachers should be done according to curriculum needs of schools to minimize multi-phasing and multi-grading of teachers in certain grades. Two grades or two phase classes being taught by one teacher in one class impede the quality delivering of the policies.
- School infrastructure should be attended to by ensuring that classrooms, toilets and the playground are in good order.
- Alternate discourses that would support boys and girls to challenge the deep rooted ethics of femininity and masculinities should be introduced. If need be, textbooks can be revised and all other school practices that are deeply implanted in the reinforcement of the tradition discourse can be removed.

5.6.2 Implications for Further Research

Further, research is required to provide insights on the following issues illuminated by this study:

- The traditional discourses of masculinity and femininity should be interrogated in the school. This can be done in the form of school workshops, cluster

networking, assignments, projects, speech and drama, cultural activities, etc. School environments which promote gender equality among boys and girls should be created. School policy should emphasize the importance of fair treatment and respect of one by another at school and the demonstration of emotional intelligence among learners should be reinforced.

- Rotation of sport code convenors and sport organisers should be done. It would give every teacher an opportunity to demonstrate their skills and creativity in sport despite gender obstacles. This could promote unisex sports thus decreasing the domination of sports by a particular sex.
- Awareness campaigns and programmes could be used by teachers to address gender inequality which seems rife at school. Other programmes dealing with, for example, teenage pregnancy could be infused into school policy to help boys and girls to gain the knowledge of practising safe sex.
- Ground supervision which includes monitoring of school buses, toilets etc. should be done regularly during and after school hours. Unused classrooms should be locked and monitored to prevent trespassing of children. In the light of the above instilling values of self-respect and risk-identification and self-discipline should be taught to learners.

- Forming partnership with the church should be promoted as positive messages from the church could be of great help in fostering meaningful connections especially for children in Sunday schools and for youth gatherings. In this case, cross-sex relationships could serve as a remedy, if not a cure, for the correction of stereotypical behaviour among boys and girls.
- School should nominate peer counsellors to cater for the needs of all children. Peer counsellors should be equipped with knowledge to assist children with any personal or classroom issues. Children could understand better if the issue of relationships is explained from children's point of view.
- Suggestions of ways to deal with gender inequality amongst boys and girls should be emphasized; thereby, addressing the issue of boys and girls behaviour in cross-sex relationships, and teachers' views on the formation and keeping of relationships among children should be included in future research.
- School should focus on the impact that home and society have on children's construction and experiences of cross-sex relationships since children are the product of a society. The rate of imitation is very high in early grades at school and, therefore, stereotypes and dominance issues around cross-sex relationships could be minimized.

- Children should be taught that cross-sex relationships are not one-sided but it is a two-way process which requires all stake holders to work things together toward achieving a common goal; which is a happy relationship. Dominance and other forms of gendering that does not promote equality among children should be disregarded.

Cross-sex relationships ought to be a mutual agreement but some cross-sex relationships were characterised by disagreements where boys and girls were placed in danger due to the principles and norms of masculinity and femininity. Girls appeared to be flexible in amending their behaviour in cross-sex relationships more than boys. Children viewed their cross-sex relationships as a continued commitment, development and a life shared together. Some children appreciated their cross-sex relationships even though gender inequality continued. Those who valued their cross-sex relationships have better chances in the formation of sound social relationships in adulthood.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Consent Letter District Office: KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Education Department

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Edgewood Campus
Ashwood
3605
3 October 2013

To whom it my concern:

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Request for permission to conduct research at your school

I am a Master's in Education student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, conducting a research project titled: "**Young children's construction of cross-sex relationships in a Combined School setting: A narrative Inquiry**". I am keen in exploring learner's experiences in cross-sex relationships in the schooling context.

I humbly request your assistance in this research project by being granted permission to conduct my study at one school in your district. The participants in my study will be learners from the various schools in the district. They will be required to participate in individual and focus group interviews that are expected to last between 20 to 45 minutes.

Please note that

- The school and participants will not receive material gains for participation in this research project.
- The learners will be expected to respond to each question in a manner that will reflect their own personal opinion.
- The school or the participant's identities will not be divulged under any circumstance.
- All learner responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Pseudonyms will be used (real names of the participants and the institution will not be used throughout the research process).

- Participation is voluntary; therefore, participants will be free to withdraw at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to them.
- The participants will not, under any circumstances, be forced to disclose what they do not want to reveal.
- Audio- recording of interviews will only be done if the permission of the participant is obtained.
- Data will be stored in the University locked cupboard for a maximum period of five years thereafter it will be destroyed by burning.

Thanking you.

Yours Faithfully

Patience Nonhlanhla Maphanga

Supervisor: Professor Pholoho Morojele

031 7852858/0732822182
 pnmaphanga@vodamail.co.za

031 2603234
 Morojele@ukzn.ac.za

CONSENT FORM:

If permission is granted to conduct the research in the District school, please fill in and sign the form below.

I,, (Full Name) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project. I hereby grant permission for the researcher to conduct the research project at the _____ Combined School. I understand that learners are free to withdraw from the project at any time, should they so desire.

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Appendix 2: Consent Form for School Principal

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Edgewood Campus
Ashwood
3605
3 October 2013

Dear Sir

Re: Request your participation in a research project

I am a Master's in Education student at the university of KwaZulu-Natal, conducting a research project titled: "**Young children's construction of cross-sex relationships in a combined school setting: A narrative Inquiry**". I am interested in exploring learners experience in cross-sex relationships in the school in the schooling context. I kindly request permission to conduct my study at your school. Learners will be the participants in my study. They will be required to participate in individual and focus group interviews

Please note that

- The school and learners will not receive material gains for participation in this research project.
- You will be expected to respond to each question in a manner that will reflect your own personal opinion.
- The school or your identity will not be divulged under any circumstance.
- All learners' responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Pseudonyms will be used (your real name and the name of the school will not be used throughout the research process).
- Participation is voluntary; therefore, you will be free to withdraw at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to them.
- You will not, under any circumstances, be forced to disclose what you do not want to tell us.
- Audio- recording of interviews will only be done if permission of the participant is obtained.

- Data will be stored in the University locked cupboard for a maximum period of five years thereafter it will be destroyed by burning.

Thanking you

Yours faithfully

Patience Nonhlanhla Maphanga

031 7852858/ 0732822182
pnmaphanga@vodamail.co.za

Supervisor: Professor Pholoho Morojele

031 2603234
Morojele@ukzn.ac.za

CONSENT FORM:

If permission is granted to conduct the research in your school, please fill in and sign the form below.

I,, (Full Name) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project. I hereby grant permission for the researcher to conduct the research project at my school. I understand that learners can withdraw from the project at any time should they so desire.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3: Informed Consent Form for Parents

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Edgewood Campus
Ashwood
3605
3 October 2013

Dear parent

I am a Master's in education student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, conducting a research project titled: "**Young children's construction of cross-sex relationship in a combined school setting: A narrative Inquiry**". I am interested in exploring learners' experiences in cross-sex relationships in the schooling context. I request your permission for your child to participate in the study. The interviews will take place at his/her school.

Please note that

- There will be no material benefits that your child will receive for taking part in this research project.
- Your child will be expected to respond to each question in a manner that will reflect his/her own personal opinion.
- Your child's identity will not be disclosed under any circumstance.
- All your child's responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Pseudonyms will be used (your child's real name and the name of the school will not be used throughout the research process).
- Participation is voluntary; therefore, your child will be free to withdraw at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to him/her.
- Your child will not, under any circumstances, be forced to disclose what he/she do not want to tell us.
- Audio- recording of interviews will only be done if you and your child gave permission.
- Data will be stored in the University locked cupboard for a maximum period of five years thereafter it will be destroyed by burning.

Thanking you.
Yours faithfully

Patience Nonhlanhla Maphanga

031 7852858/ 0732822182
pnmaphanga@vodamail.co.za

Supervisor: Professor Pholoho Morojele

031 2603234
Morojele@ukzn.ac.za

CONSENT FORM:

If you agree for your child to take part in this project, please fill in your full name and sign the form below.

I, (Full Name) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project. I hereby grant permission for my child to participate in the research project.

Name of the child: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 4: Incwadi Yabazali Yesicelo Socwangingo

University of KwaZulu Natal

Edgewood Campus

Ashwood

3605

3 October 2013

Mzali

Isicelo sokwenza ucwangingo

Ngingumfundi waseNyuvesi yakwaZulu-Natal owenza ucwangingo ngesihloko esithi **“Ubudlelwane obuphakathi kobulili obehlukene kubantwana abancane esikoleni esihlanganise amabanga kwaZulu-Natal”**. Ngicela ukuba umntwana wakho azibandakanye nalolucwangingo. Kuzoba nemibuzo azobuzwa yona eyedwa noma aseseqenjini.

Ngicela uqikelele lokhu okulandelayo:

- Akukho lutho oluyotholwa umntwana wakho ngokuba ingxenye yalolucwangingo.
- Kulindeleke ukuba umntwana wakho aphenjule imibuzo ngokunikeza uvo lwakhe.
- Ngeke lisetshenziswe igama lakhe. Kuyosetshenziswa amagama okungewona awabo
- Zonke izimpendulo zakhe ziyokwamkelwa.
- Imibuzo azobuzwa yona engeke idalulwa.
- Ukuba yingxenye yocwangingo uyazikhethela. Uvumelekile ukuyeka noma ingasiphi isikhathi. Lokho ngeke kumlethele imiphumela emibi.
- Ngeke aphoqwe ukuba akhulume izinto angazithandi uku zikhuluma nezizomenza asabe
- Ukuqopha yonke ingxoxo kuyokwenziwa ngemvume yomntwana
- Ulwazi lonke olutholakalile luyongcinwa eNyuvesi iminyaka emihlanu emva kwalokho lushiswe.

Ngiyabonga

Yimina ozithobayo

Patience Nonhlanhla Maphanga

031 7852858/0732822182

pnmaphanga@vodamail.co.za

Umbhekeleli: uProfesa Pholoho Morojele

031 2603432

Morojele@ukzn.ac.za

Uma uvumelana nalokhu okubhalwe ngenhla ngicela ubhale leminingwane elandelayo

Amagama akho aphelele..... ngiyaqinisekisa ukuthi ngizwile ngezinto eziphathelene nalolucwaningo. Ngiyavuma ukuthi umntwana wami azibandakanye nalo.

Sayina_____

Igama lomntwana_____

Usuku_____

Appendix 5: Informed Consent Form for learners

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Edgewood Campus
Ashwood
3605
3 October 2013

Dear Learner

I am a Master's in education student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, conducting a research project titled: "**Young children's construction of cross-sex relationships in a combined school setting: A narrative Inquiry**". I am interested to learn about your experiences, engagements, observations and feelings of cross-sex relationships.

I kindly request your assistance in this research project by being a participant in an individual and focus group interviews. The interviews will take place at your school premises on these dates (.....).

Please note that

- There will be no material benefits that you will receive for taking part in this research project.
- You will be expected to respond to each question in a manner that will reflect your own personal opinion.
- Your identity will not be disclosed under any circumstance.
- There are no right or wrong answers.
- All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Pseudonyms will be used (your real name and the name of the school will not be used throughout the research process).
- Participation is voluntary; therefore, you are free to withdraw at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to them.
- You will not, under any circumstances, be forced to disclose what you do not want to reveal.

- Audio- recording of interviews will only be done if permission of the participant is granted.
- Data will be stored in the University locked cupboard for a maximum period of five years thereafter it will be destroyed by burning.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

Patience Nonhlanhla Maphanga

031 7852858/ 0732822182
pnmaphanga@vodamail.co.za

Supervisor: Professor Pholoho Morojele

031 2603234
morojele@ukzn.ac.za

CONSENT FORM:

If you agree to take part in this project, please fill in your full name and sign the form below.

I,, (Full Name), hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project. I hereby grant permission to participate in the research project. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, should I do wish.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 6: Incwadi Yabafundi Yesicelo Socwaningo

University of KwaZulu Natal

Edgewood Campus

Ashwood

3605

3 October 2013

Mfundi

Ngingumfundi waseNyuvesi yakwaZulu-Natal owenza ucwaningo ngesihloko esithi **“Ubudlelwane obuphakathi kobulili obehlukene kubantwana abancane esikoleni esihlanganise amabanga kwaZulu-Natal”**. Ngithanda ukwazi ngakho konke okwaziyo kanye nemizwa yakho mayelana nobudlelwane obuphakathi kobulili obehlukene. Ngicela ukuba ube yingxenye yalolucwaningo. Kuzoba nemibuzo ozobuzwa yona uwedwa noma ususeqenjini. Konke kuzokwenzelwa emagcekeni esikole sakho ngalolusuku (.....).

Ngicela uqaphele lokhu okulandelayo:

- Akukho lutho oluyotholwa ngokuba ngokuzibandakanya nalolucwaningo.
- Kulindeleke ukuba uphendule imibuzo ngokunikeza uvo lwakho.
- Ngeke lisetshenziswe igama lakho. Kuyosetshenziswa igama okungelona elakho.
- Zonke izimpendulo zakho ziyokwamukelwa.
- Imibuzo ozobuzwa yona ngeke idalulwe.
- Ukuba yingxenye yocwaningo uyazikhethela. Uvumelekile ukuyeka noma ingasiphi isikhathi. Lokho ngeke kukulethele imiphumela emibi.
- Ngeke uphoqwe ukuba ukhulume izinto ongathandi ukuzikhuluma nezikwenza usabe.
- Ukuqopha yonke ingxoxo kuyokwenziwa ngemvume yakho.
- Ulwazi lonke olutholakalile luyogcinwa eNyuvesi iminyaka emihlanu emva kwalokho lushiswe.

Ngiyabonga

Yimina Ozithobayo

Patience Nonhlanhla Maphanga

0317852858/0732822182

pnmaphanga@vodamail.co.za

Umbhekeleli: Profesa Pholoho Morojele

031 2603432

Morojele@ukzn.ac.za

Uma uvumelana nalokhu okubhalwe ngenhla ngicela ubhale lemininingwane elandelayo.

Amagama akho aphelele..... ngiyaqinisekisa ukuthi ngizwile ngezinto eziphathelele nalolucwaningo. Ngiyavuma ukuba yingxenye yalo.

Sayina _____

Usuku _____

Appendix 7: Biographical Data Capture Form for Participants

Please tick the appropriate block below. All the information contained hereon will be treated with the strictest confidentiality. I also assure you of your complete anonymity in undertaking this study.

1. Gender

Male female

2. Age

3. Race

4. No. of years at school

5. Grade

Thank you once again for your participation

Appendix 8: Imininingwane yabafundi

Ngicela ufake uphawu ebhokisini elifanele ngenzansi. Yonke imininingwane ekhona lapha iyoba imfihlo. Nginyaqinisekisa ukuthi imininingwane yakho ngeke idalulwe.

1 Ubulili

umfana

intombazane

2. Iminyaka

3. Ubuhlanga

4. Iminyaka emingaki usesikoleni

5. Isigaba noma ikilasi

Ngiyabonga

Appendix 9: Interview Guide

Reminders:

- Welcome and thank interviewee for participating in the research study.
- Completion of informed consent and biographical data sheet.
- Check equipment e.g. (recorders and videos) that are in a good working order
- Assure participants that confidentiality and anonymity will be exercised at all times.
- Tell the participants that it is important to explain in full when narrating their stories.

Broad Question

Tell me about your experiences of cross-sex relationships.

Probing questions:

1. Who are your friends?
2. What do you do with them?
3. Why did you choose them?
4. Where and when did you meet?
5. How is the relationship towards each other?
6. What are the qualities of good relationships?
7. Have you ever been involved in a cross-sex group, peers, games etc?
8. Do you keep your relationship for a long time? Why do you say so?
9. What do you like or do not like in cross-sex relationships?

Appendix 10: Inkombandlela

Ukuzikhumbuza

- Ukubingelela nokubonga abafundi ngokuzibandakanya nalolucwaningo.
- Ukugcwalisa amafomu aphantselane nabo.
- Ukuqiniseka ukuthi izinto zokwenza ucwaningo ziphelele futhi ziyasebenza.
- Ukuqiniseka abafundi ukuthi okukhulunywe nabo ngeke kutshelwe muntu kuzoba imfihlo namagama abo ngeke adululwe.
- Ukutshela abafundi ukuthi kubalulekile ukuchaza ngokugcwele uma bexoxa indaba.

Umbuzo ovulelekile

Ngicela ungitshele ngakho konke okwaziyo ngobudlelwane noma ubungani obuphakathi kobulili obehlukene.

Imibuzo yokwengeza

1. Obani abangani bakho?
2. Yini eniyenza nabo?
3. Wabakhetha kanjani?
4. Natholana kuphi futhi nini?
5. Bunjani ubudlelwano benu? Chaza
6. Yini eyakwenza wakhetha ukuba ubenobudlelwane bobulili behlukene?
7. Zingaki izinhlobo zobudlelwane zobulili obehlukene ozaziyo?
8. Lobudlelwane bubakhona isikhathi esingakanani? Yini usho kanje?

Appendix 11: Interview Questions

Key research questions

- What stories do children tell about cross-sex relationships?

In their stories I will explore the construction of cross-sex relationships?

- What are the geographies of children in cross-sex relationships?

I will explore the spaces and places of cross-sex relationships.

- How do children navigate the spaces and places of cross-sex relationships in the school?

With the above question I want to discover how children cope with the challenges encountered in the navigation of cross-sex relationships.

Probing Questions

What do you understand about cross-sex relationships?

What factors in children context inform your meaning-making of cross relationships?

What experiences do you have that inform your understanding of cross-sex relationships?

What forms or types of cross-sex relationship do you know?

Individual interviews

1. Who are your friends?
2. What do you do with them?
3. Why did you choose them?
4. Where and when did you meet?

5. How is the relationship towards each other?
6. What drives you to a cross-sex relationship?
7. What types of cross-sex relationships do you know?
8. Do you keep your relationship for a long time? Why do you say so?
9. What do you like or do not like about cross-sex relationships?

Focus group interviews

I will ask the participants to take photographs depicting cross-sex relationships at school. Three disposable cameras will be given to boys first as per agreement and girls to use them on the second day. Participants will choose two pictures which will be most important to them to talk about and the following probing questions will be asked in the discussion of photos.

Probing questions

Why did you take this picture?

What is happening in the picture?

Why do you think these people are in a cross-sex relationship?

What type of cross-sex relationship is depicted in this picture?

Instruction

Participants will be asked to take photographs of the places within the school or outside the school where cross-sex relationships occur.

Probing questions

Where do cross-sex relationships occur?

What form of that relationship is that?

Which type or form of cross-sex relationship happens in these places?

Type of cross-sex relationship

Place where it occurs

Why do you say that type of cross-sex relationship does or doesn't happen there?

How do you see that? Please explain

Furthermore, I will explore children's location in cross-sex relationships by profiling issues of power embedded in cross-sex relationships.

Who is dominant in the picture?

Who is marginalised in the picture?

Who has power in the picture?

Who proposes the relationship in this picture?

Who plays the important role in the picture?

Who is responsible for keeping the relationship on?

In order to explore how other children construct cross-sex relationships identity profiling will be done. Children will be asked to write up identity profiles of children involved in cross-sex relationships which are influenced by social identities, namely, gender, class, age, culture, ableism, sexual orientation, religion, etc. This will be done on A4 paper. I will use the following probing questions to get their personal accounts.

How does class affect cross-sex relationships?

How does gender affect cross-sex relationships?

How does age affect cross-sex relationships?

How does culture affect cross-sex relationships?

How does religion affect cross-sex relationships?

What power relations are in those relationships?

How do they ensure that the specific type of cross-sex relationships doesn't happen in those places?

Why this form of cross-sex relationship does not happen in that place?

What are other factors present in cross-sex relationships?

Is cross-sex relationship always a mutual agreement?

If so, why do they fight?

What happens if they don't agree on issues?

How do they raise pressure?

Who is the perpetrator?

How does the victim feel?

Appendix 12: Imibuzo

“Ubudlelwane obuphakathi kobulili obehlukene kubantwana abancane esikoleni esihlanganise amabanga kwaZulu-Natal”

Umbuzo qho wokuqala

- Iziphi izindlela izingane ezincane ezibona futhi zibe nolwazi ngazo ngokwakheka kobudlelwane obuphakathi kobulili obehlukene.

Umbuzo qho wesibili

- Iziphi izindawo okwenzeka kuzo lobudlelwane bobulili obehlukene?

Umbuzo qho wesithathu

- Ngabe lwenzeka kanjani loluhlobo lobudlelwane bobulili obehlukene?

Imibuzo yokwengeza

- Bazini abafundi ngobudlelwane bobulili obehlukene?
- Zinto zini ezisezingeni labafundi elibenza ukuba baqonde kabanzi ngobudlelwane bobulili obehlukene.
- Zibona ziphi izinto noma zazikanjani ngalobudlelwane?
- Iziphi izinhlobo zobudlelwane obuphakathi kobulili obehlukene ozaziyo?

“abafundi bazonikezwa imishini yokuthwebula izithombe ukuze bathwebule izithombe ezikhombisa ubudlelwane bobulili obehlukene”

Imibuzo

- Kungani uthathe lesithombe?
- Kwenzakalani esithombeni?

- Yini ekwenze wacabanga ukuthi labantu abasesithombeni banobudlelwane bobulili obehlukene?
- Nhloboni yobudlelwane obusesithombeni?

Ezithombeni abazithathile kuzogxilwa kakhulu ezindaweni lapho kuba khona lobudlelwane.

Imibuzo yokwengeza

- Benzeka kuphi lobudlelwane?

Indawo obenzeka kuyo

Uhlobo lobudlelwano

- Yini ekwenza uthi loluhlobo luyenzeka noma alwenzeki kulendawo oyishoyo?
- Ubona kanjani ukuthi luyenzeka? Chaza

Ngifuna ukuthi kwembuleke indlela olwenzeka ngayo.

- Ubani obonakala ethathe indawo ebalulekile noma enkulu?
- Ubani obonakala ethathe indawo engaphansi noma encane?
- Ubani oshaya umthetho kulesithombe?
- Ubani obonakala engumsunguli walobudlelwane ?
- Ubani odlala indawo esemqoka kulobudlelwane?
- Ubani ohlala ngokugcina lobudlelwane bukhona?

Imibuzo yokwengeza

- Babona kanjani noma ngani ukuthi lobudlelwane akufanele lwenzeke kulezozindawo?
- Iziphi izinto ezinye ezitholakala kuloluhlobo lobudlelwane?
- Yini imbangela yokuthi ezinye izinhlobo zalobudlelwane zingenzeki kwezinye izindawo?
- Ngabe lobudlelwane bobulili obehlukene buyisivumelwano sabo?
- Uma kunjalo, yini eyenza baxabane?
- Kwenzekalani uma kukhona ukungavumelani?
- Kwenzeka kanjani pho ukuthi kube nokuphoqa?
- Ubani oqale ingxabano noyisiqhwaga?
- Ubani lona okuxatshanwa naye?

Appendix 13: Transcription Validation Form

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Edgewood Campus
Ashwood
3605
21 November 2013

Dear learner

Thank you again for so considerately and willingly participating in my research project titled: **Young children's experiences and construction of cross-sex relationship in a combined school setting: A narrative Inquiry**". I've learnt a lot, personally and professionally, from the interviews.

In order to certify the trustworthiness of this study, I humbly request your assistance, once more. I require that you confirm and validate the authenticity of the interview and the verbatim transcription thereof. This will ensure that the interviews were conducted in an ethical manner and that no information was included, excluded, distorted or altered in any way.

Please note that, to improve coherence of the transcription, information such as hesitations (e.g. er, eish) were left out. It is suggested that you read the transcript while listening to the recorded interview. You may alter, sentences or any such information that you think was not recorded or transcribed in an appropriate manner.

I, _____ (participant's name), hereby verify and validate that the information transcribed from my interview was verbatim, and that no information was included, excluded, distorted or altered in any way.

Signature of participant _____ Date: _____

Thanking you

Yours Faithfully

Patience Nonhlanhla Maphanga

031 7852858/0732822182

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Supervisor: Professor Pholoho Morojele

031 2603234

Morojele@ukzn.ac.za

Appendix 14: Incwadi Yesiqiniseko Socwaningo

University of KwaZulu Natal

Edgewood Campus

Ashwood

3605

21 November 2013

Mfundi

Ngiyabonga ukuba uvume ukuba yingxenye yocwaningo lwesihloko esithi **“Ubudlelwane obuphakathi kobulili obehlukene kubantwana abancane esikoleni esihlanganise amabanga kwaZulu-Natal”**. Ngifunde okuningi uqobo lwami nangomsebenzi engiwezayo.

Ukuqinisekisa ukuthembeka kwalesifundo, ngicela ukuba ungisize ngokuhlaziya ukuthi konke owakusho kunjengoba kunjalo. Lokhu kuzoba yisiqiniseko sokuthi konke okushilo kuyikho akukho okunye okufakiwe nokukhishiwe noma ingayiphi indlela.

Ngicela ufunde konke okubhaliwe ube ulalele isiqophamazwi. Ungakufaka obona ukuthi kukhishiwe noma ukhiphe okungashiwongo kahle. Ngicela ungazise ngoshintsho olwenzile. Lokhu kuzokwenza ukuba lolucwaningo luthembeke.

Mina(igama lakho) ngiyaqinisekisa ukuthi konke okubhaliwe nokuqoshiwe ngiyavumelana nakho. Akukho okufakiwe engingakwazi.

Sayina_____

Usuku_____

Ngiyabonga

Yimina ozithobayo

Patience Nonhlanhla Maphanga

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Umbhekeleli: Profesa Pholoho Morojele

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Appendix 15: Ethical Clearance Certificate



26 April 2013

Professor A Muthukrishna 845
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/0250/013

Project title: The geographies of children's schooling in six Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries: Narratives of children, parents/caregivers and teachers

Dear Professor Muthukrishna

Expedited approval

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)

/px

cc Dr P Morojele
cc Academic leader researcher Dr MN Davids
cc School administrator Ms B Bhengu

Humanities & Social Sc Research Ethics Committee
Professor S Collings (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

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Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS





The research presented in this dissertation is part of a larger project in the School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal titled, 'The geographies of children's schooling experiences in six Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries: Narratives of children, parents/caregivers and teachers' (School of Education, 2013). Ethical clearance for the project has been obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (HSS/0250/013).

Professor Nithi Muthukrishna

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17 March 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to record that I have carried out language editing on the dissertation:

Young children's constructions of cross-sex relationships in a combined school setting:

A Narrative inquiry

by

Patience Nonhlanhla Maphanga



D.G.Naidoo

(Language Editor)

