

Boys Being Boys: Psychosocial Factors Associated with Alcohol Use among Mid-Adolescent  
Males in a Durban Boys' High School

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(Clinical Psychology) in the School of Psychology  
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## **Declaration**

I declare that the dissertation titled “Boys being boys: Psychosocial factors associated with alcohol use among mid-adolescent males in a Durban Boys High School” is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university, and that all sources, citations, references and borrowed texts have been duly acknowledged.

Furthermore, this dissertation is being submitted for the partial fulfillment of the degree Masters of Social Sciences (Clinical Psychology) in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

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## **Abstract**

The challenges of adolescence include negotiating risk behaviours such as alcohol use. The high prevalence and frequency of alcohol use among adolescents has been noted with concern, as has the rapidly decreasing age of initiation. Adolescent alcohol use has been found to be associated with numerous factors at intra-personal, inter-personal and contextual levels. This study aimed to explore qualitatively the perceived underlying factors related to alcohol use and binge drinking among adolescent boys, as identified and explained by the boys themselves. Exploration of these factors was guided by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, the Prototype/Willingness Model and Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. The study population was comprised of male learners who were at that time in Grade 11 at the school and ranged in age from 16 to 18 years. Three focus group discussions were conducted, each comprising between 8-11 male learners, which were transcribed and analysed thematically in order to identify commonalities and variances among the responses of participants. The Nvivo software program was used to aid analysis. The findings of this study indicate that there are a variety of factors which influence adolescent alcohol use, and which operate individually as well as cumulatively. While adolescent boys are aware of the consequences of alcohol use and binge drinking, they often do not perceive themselves to be vulnerable to these risks. Protective factors include the school identity, team activities such as sports, and a sense of future. In conclusion, adolescent alcohol use is extremely complicated as it is impacted by multiple factors, and thus an awareness and greater understanding of the nature in which these factors interact are important for future interventions.

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## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

#### **Overview of the Problem**

Adolescence is recognized as being a challenging time for both parents and children. It is during this phase that many young people are exposed to and begin to experiment with substances such as tobacco and alcohol. In South Africa, alcohol is reported to have one of the highest volumes per capita consumption in the world (Parry et al., 2005). It is also the drug most commonly used among all age categories (Reddy et al., 2003) and the statistics offered by the South African Youth Risk Behaviour Survey 2002 (Reddy et al., 2003) indicate that there is a high prevalence of alcohol use among the younger age groups. It has been noted with concern that the incidence of alcohol use seems to be increasing and that adolescents' age of initiation into drinking is becoming progressively younger (Reddy et al., 2003), with the initiation of alcohol consumption occurring typically by middle adolescence (Clark, 2004).

Many studies have been conducted in recent years to examine the effects of family environment and parenting styles on the development of adolescent risk behaviours (Adalbjarnardottir & Hafsteinsson, 2001; Harakeh, Scholte, Vermulst, de Vries, & Engels, 2004). Various investigations have indicated that the parenting styles used to raise children can affect the development of risk behaviours during adolescence (Adalbjarnardottir & Hafsteinsson, 2001; Borawski, Ievers-Landis, Lovegreen, & Trapl, 2003; Engels & Willemsen, 2004; Harakeh et al., 2004; Jackson, 2002).

However, it has been found that parents themselves may play a more direct role in their children's behaviour than expected. Studies have suggested that adolescents' whose parents indulge in risk behaviours such as smoking and drinking, and have more liberal norms concerning these behaviours, are more likely to smoke and drink themselves (Clark, Scarisbrick-Hauser, Gautam, & Wirk, 1999; Engels & Willemsen, 2004; Harakeh et al., 2004). More specifically, such research has pointed to evidence suggesting that parental influence is most pronounced among same-sex parents and adolescents (Andrews, Hops, & Duncan, 1997).

Furthermore, research has also indicated that the influence of sibling alcohol use on adolescent alcohol use has often been underestimated and results indicate a somewhat greater similarity in substance use levels between siblings than between parents and children (Fagan & Najman, 2005). These findings therefore suggest that the family environment has a far more influential role in controlling adolescent risk behaviour than previously anticipated and it is therefore important to continue investigations into the possible effects both parenting styles and parental or sibling risk behaviour may have on adolescent behaviour.

Although parental alcohol use has been demonstrated to be a significant risk factor for adolescent's alcohol use (Clark et al., 1999; Engels & Willemsen, 2004; Harakeh et al., 2004; Payne & Meyer-Weitz, 2008), the use of alcohol and other illicit drugs by peers has been found to be an even more significant risk factor. Research has suggested that the role of the peer group becomes increasingly important in the adolescent years, meaning that parental influence is to a large extent replaced by the influence of peers (Payne & Meyer-Weitz, 2006).

Peers may influence adolescent alcohol use in several ways, either actively by offering alcohol or passively through social modelling and perceived norms (Wood, Read, Mitchell, & Brand, 2004). Heavy and moderate drinkers report the strongest friendships as compared with adolescents who abstain from alcohol use, while abstainers and light drinkers report equally strong relationships with their parents, significantly more so than heavy drinkers (Hoel, Eriksen, Breidablik, & Meland, 2004). Adolescents who become problem drinkers also tend to be more susceptible to pressure from peers than moderate or light drinkers (Arata, Stafford, & Tims, 2003). At a more personal level, alcohol use among adolescents has been found to be associated with the desire to avoid or escape from unpleasant realities (Herbert, 1987; Hoel et al., 2004). Alcohol acts as a release for shy teenagers by enabling them to perform socially and is therefore often used by adolescents to reduce inhibitions and anxiety, thereby facilitating easier interaction among peers (Herbert, 1987; Hoel et al., 2004).

The role of the media is being increasingly investigated in terms of its impact on adolescent alcohol use. Studies have indicated that exposure to alcohol advertising during very early adolescence predicts high levels of alcohol use and drinking intentions one year later (Gibbons, Gerrard, & Lane, 2003). Children who are exposed to extremely high levels of overall advertising were found to subsequently be 50% more likely to drink and 36% more likely to intend drinking than children exposed to low levels of advertising (Collins, Ellickson, McCaffrey, & Hambarsoomians, 2007).

However, research has also found that risk images may in fact play an inhibitory rather than facilitating role in adolescent risk behaviour. This may be due to the fact that adolescents' risk images of a person who drinks too much tend to be fairly negative, and even among those currently engaging in risk behaviours, these images continue to be more negative than

the individual's self-image (Gibbons et al., 2003). It is therefore possible that many young people may in fact refrain from engaging in a specific risk behaviour in order to avoid being associated with an image or certain characteristics of an image (Gibbons et al., 2003).

Research into the impact of masculinity on men's health has suggested that as men accept masculine ideals they may simultaneously adopt health behaviours that reflect those ideals, and in so doing put their health at risk (Mahalik, Burns, & Syzdek, 2007). Men construct masculinities by embracing risk, and a man may therefore define the degree of his masculinity, for example, by driving dangerously or performing risky sports (Courtenay, 2000) or, as in this case, by engaging in frequent binge drinking.

Religiosity is generally viewed as a protective factor against adolescent alcohol use, with adolescents who view themselves as religious less likely to use or abuse drugs than teenagers from less religious families (Nielsen, 1996). Studies have indicated that attendance at religious services have been found to be a significant protective factor against drunkenness (Parry, Morojele, Saban, & Flisher, 2004). Religiosity is a factor that is often determined by the adolescent's family, as most adolescents adopt their family's religious views and habits.

Underage drinking has been associated with many adverse consequences, most notably, an increased probability of motor vehicle accidents (Williams, 2003), risky sexual behaviour and thus sexually transmitted diseases (Cook & Clark, 2005) as well as HIV/AIDS (Kalichman, Simbayi, Kaufman, Cain, & Jooste, 2007). Mental health is also adversely affected by youth alcohol use and an association with suicide has been found (Swahn & Bossarte, 2007). The age at which adolescents first begin to experiment with alcohol can also have more long-term consequences. A retrospective study conducted with adults (McGue, Iacono, Legrand,

Malone, & Elkins, 2001a, b) found an association between the first drink before age 15 and adult alcohol dependence. This seemed to be strongly attributed to heritable rather than environmental factors, particularly in males. Therefore, an early initiation into drinking and regular alcohol use seem to be significant predictive factors for the development of alcohol use disorders during later adolescence or adulthood (McGue et al., 2001a, b). The high rate of reported binge drinking among adolescents is another worrying trend as the trajectory of binge drinking during adolescence has been found to be predictive of negative adult outcomes, such as alcohol dependency (Brown et al., 2007; Hill, White, Chung, Hawkins, & Catalano, 2000). Hill et al. (2000) found that patterns of alcohol use characterized by rising levels of binge drinking throughout adolescence (i.e. 'increasers') predicted a high rate of alcohol use disorders at age 21. Patterns of alcohol use and abuse therefore appear to become entrenched during the adolescent years and underage alcohol use is therefore strongly predictive of future dependence on alcohol (Brown et al., 2007).

Explanations for adolescent risk-taking are much more complex than lack of knowledge or social skills, as most adolescents have the ability to perceive risks accurately, yet do not always consider these risks in their decision-making (Greene et al., 2000). Risk-taking among adolescents has been viewed as a developmental phenomenon and has also been considered a personality characteristic and a learned behaviour. However, alcohol influences risk-taking behaviour through multiple channels, including risk-taking personality characteristics, drinking environments, expectations regarding the effects of alcohol on risk-taking and the psychogenic effects of alcohol on decision making (Cook & Clark, 2005).

## **Rationale for the Study**

Research indicates that adolescent boys tend to engage in risk behaviours more frequently, and with greater severity than female adolescents (Reddy et al., 2003), making the need for intervention among this group more urgent. The fact that up to 60% of adolescent males from this site were previously found to engage in binge drinking on a regular basis is especially concerning (Payne & Meyer-Weitz, 2006). Binge drinking has been customarily defined by researchers as consuming five or more drinks on a given occasion (Gruza, Norberg, & Bierut, 2009). However, a more sex-specific definition of binge drinking was established by Wechsler, Dowdall, Davenport, and Rimm (1995) as having at least four drinks on one occasion for females and at least five drinks on one occasion for males. Although the prevalence of substance use amongst adolescent males has been identified, it appears that the reasons for this risk status are not well understood, which indicates that there is an urgent need for more information about what motivates alcohol use among adolescent boys. The majority of the research in South Africa on adolescent substance use has focused on prevalence studies (Amoateng, Barber, & Erickson, 2006) and thus on quantitative rather than qualitative methodologies. This study aims to contribute to the qualitative research literature in South Africa by substantiating the quantitative research findings of a previous study (Payne & Meyer-Weitz, 2006) relating to alcohol use among adolescent boys.

## **Aim of the Study**

Against the background of the above discussion, the aim of the study is to explore qualitatively the perceived underlying factors related to alcohol use and binge drinking in particular, among adolescent boys, as identified and explained by the boys themselves.

This research therefore aims to meet the following objectives:

- What is the role of significant others i.e. family and peers, in adolescent alcohol use risk behaviours?
- What is the impact of risk images in relation to alcohol use as portrayed by the media?
- What role do gendered social norms play in terms of adolescent alcohol use?
- What are adolescents' own perceptions of vulnerability to the risks associated with alcohol use?
- Finally, which psychosocial factors play a role in alcohol use?

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the study protocols and measures were reviewed and approved by the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the principal of the school selected for the study. Support for the study was also obtained from relevant gatekeepers (the deputy principal and Life Orientation teacher), who were first approached for consent to the study. The informed consent of participants was obtained prior to the study. As a process of informed consent (see Appendix 1) ethical concerns relating to the study, i.e. informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality and voluntary participation were discussed prior to obtaining volunteers to participate. Participants were informed that the focus group discussions would be recorded to facilitate analysis, and were also briefed on the sensitivity of the issue and the need for mutual understanding and respect. Participants were informed that participation was voluntary and that they could choose not to participate or to withdraw from participation of the research at any time with no disadvantage to them. The importance of privacy was discussed and all participants were asked to agree to maintain confidentiality within the

group. All questions pertaining to the study were answered and misconceptions were cleared prior to beginning the participation process. All results were de-identified prior to the reporting.

### **Outline of the Dissertation**

The first chapter of this dissertation provides a brief introduction to adolescent alcohol use in South Africa and elsewhere, and provides information relating to the prevalence of this problem and the many factors with which it is associated. The aims and objectives of the present study are then outlined and the ethical considerations observed throughout the study are summarized.

In chapter two, this dissertation focuses on consolidating the current literature related to adolescent risk behaviour, specifically in terms of adolescent alcohol use. The use of South African literature has been emphasized as far as possible, however the majority of this literature relates to prevalence studies and therefore literature from elsewhere has been used to provide further information on this topic. This chapter therefore provides a comprehensive survey of prior research, and presents a framework by which to understand the background for the study and the context in which the research is situated. This dissertation makes use of the Prototype/Willingness Model outlined in Gibbons et al. (2003), Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (Glanz & Rimer, 2005), as well as Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). These models are presented and reference is made to the application of the theoretical framework with regard to adolescent risk behaviour.

The methodological framework for this study is outlined in chapter three, which begins with an overview of the research process, including the design, participant sampling method,

instruments and measures utilized, method of data collection and the data collection procedure. This chapter also outlines measures of credibility and justification for the methods used in order to authenticate the findings.

The findings of this study are presented in chapter four. This chapter incorporates the participants' narratives, thereby allowing their voices to be heard and producing a rich, contextualized body of data around the factors underlying and influences alcohol use amongst adolescent boys. The findings are presented as themes which emerged from the participants' narratives.

In chapter five the discussion of these results is provided, where the results are also integrated into the conceptual and theoretical structure of the study as outlined in previous chapters. This chapter concludes with a discussion relating to the limitations of this particular study.

Chapter six provides the conclusion for this dissertation as it draws on preceding chapters in order to place the findings obtained in the study within the broader social context of alcohol use. This chapter further highlights the necessity and importance of conducting research of this nature in order to provide insight into the underlying reasons for adolescent risk behaviour and concludes with the recommendations that emerged from the research.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

#### **Overview of the Problem**

Adolescence is a phase of development during which many young people begin to experiment with alcohol. Although alcohol use has been identified as the fifth highest cause of death in most countries, the consumption of alcohol continues to increase exponentially, especially in developing nations (Reddy et al., 2003). Around the world, alcohol use is to blame for 3.2% of all deaths every year (1.8 million), with a higher average of males being killed than females (Reddy et al., 2003).

In the South African context, alcohol is the drug most frequently used by South Africans across all age groupings (Reddy et al., 2003). The South African Youth Risk Behaviour Survey 2002 (Reddy et al., 2003), provided statistics which indicate that there is a high prevalence of alcohol use among the youth of South Africa. According to the South African Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (SACENDU), trends in adolescent alcohol use seem to indicate that alcohol is widely misused by adolescents in South Africa, and that alcohol is the second most common primary substance of abuse among adolescents in treatment centres in Durban and Gauteng (Parry et al., 2004). Data from specialist substance abuse treatment centres has shown that from January 1997 until December 2001 the proportion of patients who were under the age of 20 and being treated for alcohol and other drug use increased from 5.5% to 24.1% in Cape Town and from 7.0% to 22% in Durban, while in Gauteng this proportion has increased from 9.9% in 1998 to 23.4% in 2001 (Parry et al., 2004). It is therefore evident that the incidence of such behaviour seems to be increasing, and what is even more cause for concern is that adolescents' age of initiation into drinking alcohol is becoming much younger (Reddy et al., 2003), as the survey showed that 12% of

those who used alcohol (49%) had their first drink before the age of 13 years (Parry et al., 2004).

Binge drinking has also been found to be the most common form of substance misuse among South African youth of both genders. Parry et al. (2004) found that over half of school-going males in Durban and over a third of males in Cape Town reported to have engaged in binge drinking by grade 11. These findings are consistent with the results obtained by Payne and Meyer-Weitz (2006) which found that over 60% of males in grades 10 to 12 had engaged in binge drinking during the previous month. This high rate of binge drinking is especially worrying given the significant association found in previous research between alcohol use in the past month and absenteeism from school, as well as academic failure (Flisher, Parry, Evans, Muller, & Lombard, 2003). Similarly, a significant correlation between being punished for achieving bad marks at school and drinking alcohol has been found (Payne & Meyer-Weitz, 2006), indicating that unsatisfactory performance at school may be the result of excessive drinking habits. A correlation has also consistently been reported between use of alcohol and the use of illegal narcotics, as most adolescents who experiment with drugs have previously engaged in the use of alcohol (Herbert, 1987; Adalbjarnardottir & Hafsteinsson, 2001).

Underage drinking is associated with a variety of serious risks and consequences, including increased probability of motor vehicle accidents (Williams, 2003), risky sexual behaviour and sexually transmitted diseases (Cook & Clark, 2005), as well as suicide (Swahn & Bossarte, 2007). Research has indicated that alcohol consumption may increase the likelihood of risky sexual behaviour in several ways, such as sexual intercourse without using contraception and

regretted sexual experiences, which may include having many sexual partners (Coleman & Cater, 2005).

While for some adolescents trying alcohol is a one-time occurrence, for many others it marks the initiation of a pattern of alcohol use. Though age of alcohol initiation does not determine future patterns of drinking, it does correlate with future dependence (Brown et al., 2007).

The age at which adolescents first begin to experiment with alcohol can therefore have long-term and far-reaching consequences. In a retrospective study conducted with adults, McGue et al. (2001a, b) found that a reported age of first drink before age 15 was associated with adult alcohol dependence and could be attributed to heritable rather than environmental factors, particularly in males. Therefore, an early age at first 'drink' and regular alcohol use can be seen to be significant predictive factors of the development of alcohol use disorders during later adolescence or adulthood. The high rate of reported binge drinking among adolescents is another worrying trend as the trajectory of binge drinking during adolescence may be predictive of adult outcomes (Hill et al., 2000). Using binge drinking patterns from ages 13 to 18 to predict outcomes at age 21, a trajectory of alcohol use characterized by little binge drinking in early adolescence and high levels of binge drinking in late adolescence (i.e. 'increasers') predicted a high rate of alcohol use disorders (AUDs) at age 21 (43%) (Hill et al., 2000). It is therefore apparent that adolescent alcohol use has serious repercussions which may lead to more serious psychological and physiological consequences among teenage drinkers.

## **Factors Related to Alcohol Use among Adolescents**

The factors related to alcohol use among adolescents will be presented in terms of intrapersonal, interpersonal and contextual factors. While these factors are separated for conceptual clarity, studies have shown that there are several strong relationships among the different risk factors for alcohol use among adolescents. Nation and Heflinger (2006) found that the results of their study on risk factors for serious alcohol and drug use were consistent with the growing body of information which indicates that poor outcomes are often the result of the accumulation and interactions among different risk factors. Thus, factors relating to the individual, their family environment, relationships with their peer group and other variables such as religion and the media may all play a role in determining the risk behaviour and alcohol use of any adolescent.

### **Intrapersonal factors.**

In this section attention will be paid to demographic, identity and other psychological aspects of the individual, as well as perceived risks regarding alcohol use.

### ***Ethnicity, gender and age.***

Various factors influence the likelihood of alcohol use among adolescents. Ethnicity and gender seem to be influential factors in patterns of substance use among South African adolescents (Reddy et al., 2003). The South African Youth Risk Behaviour Survey 2002 (Reddy et al., 2003) indicated that significantly more "White" (86.0%) and "Coloured" learners (66.0%) had ever experimented with alcohol in comparison with "African" learners, and it was found that "African" males were significantly more likely to have experimented with alcohol than were "African" females. However, this gender difference was not found among "White" or "Coloured" learners. In a report on social and neighbourhood correlates of

adolescent drunkenness (Parry et al., 2004) it was also found that the risk of having been drunk was associated with being “White”. In terms of the prevalence of alcohol use among different age groups, rates of ever using alcohol, alcohol use in the past month and binge drinking in the past month increased according to the age and grade of the learners (Reddy et al., 2003).

### *Masculine identity.*

Research has found that the overall prevalence of risk behaviours among adults is more common among men than women for many nonsex-specific risk behaviours, including smoking, drinking and driving, using safety belts, getting health screenings, as well as awareness of medical conditions (Powell-Griner, Anderson, & Murphy, 1997). This may be explained by investigations into the impact of masculinity on men’s health, which suggest that men who accept masculine ideals may simultaneously adopt health behaviours that reflect those ideals, and in so doing put their health at risk (Mahalik et al., 2007). Studies seem to indicate that men and boys experience comparatively greater social pressure than women and girls to endorse gendered societal norms, such as established health-related beliefs which endorse the idea of men as being autonomous, physically powerful, robust and tough (McCreary, Saucier, & Courtenay, 2005). It is therefore evident that males use these health beliefs and behaviours to express hegemonic masculine ideals that clearly establish them as men (Courtenay, 2000).

Men also construct masculinities by embracing risk, and a man may therefore define the degree of his masculinity, for example, by driving dangerously or performing risky sports (Courtenay, 2000) or, in the case of alcohol use, by engaging in frequent binge drinking, thereby making drinking behaviour a demonstration of masculinity (Holmila & Raitasalo,

2005). Masculinity is therefore defined largely in opposition to positive health behaviours and beliefs, as a man's disregard for physical risk or health care needs have become means of indicating difference from women, who are seen to represent these feminized attributes (Courtenay, 2000; McCreary et al., 2005). Engaging in risk behaviours therefore serves as proof of men's superiority over women, as well as evidence of their ranking among other men (Courtenay, 2000). A man's success in adopting (socially feminised) health-promoting behaviour, along with a failure to engage in (socially masculinised) physically risky behaviours, can therefore undermine his masculine image (Courtenay, 2000). It is therefore to be expected that the more traditional beliefs about manhood that are adopted by young men, the higher their levels of risk taking and involvement in behaviours such as cigarette smoking, high-risk sexual activity and use of alcohol and other drugs are likely to be (Courtenay, 2000; McCreary et al., 2005). However traditional gender ideology also prescribes that according to the division of labour in heterosexual relationships men act as protectors and providers and women act as caretakers (Eastwick et al., 2006). It is therefore possible that boys who identify more strongly with this role may not adopt as high levels of risky behaviours. However, research has confirmed that as a consequence of acceptance of traditional gender roles by both men and women, certain behaviours which are acceptable and even idealized for boys, such as drinking, are not tolerable for girls, who are not seen as having a valid reason to experiment with substances (Jeftha, 2006).

### ***Personality and self-esteem.***

Theories relating to personality and self-esteem may also provide insight regarding adolescent alcohol use. Self-esteem can be thought of as an evaluation of the self, and therefore includes feelings and judgements about the identity (Scheier, Botvin, Griffin, & Diaz, 2000). Research suggests that self-esteem plays an important role in mental well-being,

positive interpersonal relationships and resilience, as well as alcohol and drug use during adolescence (Scheier et al., 2000). Adolescents with low self-esteem may experience psychological distress and therefore a strong desire for acceptance. As they find it difficult to accept themselves, they may look for alternative sources of esteem enhancement.

Adolescents with low self-esteem are therefore more likely to bond with deviant peers as a means of gaining self-acceptance, and this increases their vulnerability to risk behaviours such as alcohol use (Scheier et al., 2000).

Problems with self-esteem during adolescence may arise from a variety of sources, including parent-adolescent conflict (Caughlin & Malis, 2004), as well as other family and school problems. Alcohol is often used by adolescents to avoid interpersonal problems, especially by individuals with escapist tendencies and the desire to avoid unpleasant realities (Herbert, 1987). Interaction amongst peers may also increase anxiety in adolescents with low self-esteem, and alcohol may be used to reduce inhibitions thereby facilitating easier interaction among peers (Hoel et al., 2004).

A further motivating factor for alcohol use during adolescence is the perception of peers who use alcohol as being “cool”, and the desire to enhance self-esteem through association. Brown et al. (2007) found that early adolescents who report experimenting with alcohol primarily say that they do so because ‘they think it will make them cool’ or because ‘they want to see what it is like’. Even adolescents who were found to disapprove of adolescent drinking and regard their peers who drink alcohol as very ‘uncool’ recognized that a major motivator for teens to begin experimenting with alcohol is ‘think[ing] it will make them cool’ (Brown et al., 2007). Thus, adolescents with low self-esteem are particularly vulnerable to engaging in such risk behaviours in order to win approval and acceptance from peers.

An alternative explanation, as demonstrated by Heaven (2001), is that adolescents who have negative attitudes towards authority will often engage in diverse 'anti-authority' behaviours such as drinking alcohol. In particular, adolescents who exhibit sensation-seeking tendencies engage in risky behaviours because they are bored or want to seek out new and varied experiences. Sensation seeking is based on the premise that humans have an optimal level of stimulation. Zuckerman (1978) describes a sensation seeker as "a person who continually searches for novel experience in order to reach optimal levels of arousal" (p. 510). If the environment fails to provide enough stimulation, individuals will actively seek novel experiences to satisfy their stimulation needs. Sensation seeking has been found to decrease with age from adolescence, with males typically scoring higher on sensation seeking scales than females (Zuckerman, 1978).

#### *Adolescent perceptions of vulnerability.*

Explanations for adolescent risk-taking are much more complex than lack of knowledge or social skills, as most adolescents have the ability to perceive risks accurately yet do not always consider these risks in their decision-making (Greene et al., 2000). Risk-taking behaviour has at times been considered a personality characteristic, a learned behaviour, as well as a developmental phenomenon. As a personality characteristic or trait, risk-taking can be seen as a form of individual difference, with risk-taking behaviours having been associated with traits such as sensation-seeking or self-esteem (Greene et al., 2000). As learned phenomena, risk-taking behaviours are considered to be forms of social deviance that are part of an overall syndrome of problem behaviour. As a developmental phenomenon, adolescent willingness to take risks has been considered to be normal, developmentally appropriate exploratory behaviour, as well as a negative outcome of cognitive development, specifically egocentrism (Greene et al., 2000). The perspective as to whether the behaviour is normal or

adaptive places emphasis on risk-taking due to developmental challenges that result in the impairment of the ability to accurately assess the extent of risk in a given situation. Risk-taking is thus considered to be deliberative, that is, it is a conscious decision about how to act, by weighing the apparent risk against other factors (Greene et al., 2000).

Developmental immaturity or lack of experience may also lead to errors in judgment when decisions about risk behaviour have to be made. Elkind's (1967) theory of adolescent egocentrism proposes two distinct but related constructs – the *imaginary audience* and the *personal fable*. The personal fable (PF) yields a sense of invulnerability and distinctiveness that is commonly associated with behavioural risk-taking (Alberty, Elkind, & Ginsberg, 2006). Studies have found that adolescents tend to undervalue their own risk when they compare themselves with adults as well as with their peers (Macintyre, Rutenberg, Brown, & Karim, 2004). Thus the egocentrism perspective, in contrast to the age-appropriate exploratory behaviour approach, emphasises a specific type of error in judgment that results from a sense of one's own uniqueness (Greene et al., 2000). This sense of uniqueness is the result of a cognitive overdifferentiation of the self from others, coupled with an underdifferentiation of object of thought. Thus adolescents tend to focus their attention on their own thoughts, while making the assumption that others must be thinking the same thing as them, known as the imaginary audience (Greene et al., 2000). In such cases, risk-taking behaviour is not the result of an error in judgment, but is instead due to a lack of recognition that a judgment is needed in a given situation because the adolescent is focusing on the feelings of invulnerability that accompany feelings of uniqueness (Greene et al., 2000). This finding has been apparent in research examining adolescent alcohol use. For instance, Greene et al. (2000) found a significant interaction effect between sensation seeking and

personal fable, with the highest alcohol consumption being reported for adolescents who scored highly in both sensation-seeking and personal fable.

A further dynamic contributing to risk behaviour, is that children and adolescents tend to exhibit a pervasive phenomenon known as unrealistic optimism when they are evaluating their risk of harm (Greening, Stoppelbein, Chandler, & Elkin, 2005). Greening et al. (2005) tested four theoretical explanations for this cognitive bias, and found that lacking personal experience with negative health events and not worrying about health threats were statistically significant.

### **Interpersonal factors.**

In this section the influence of significant others, including family members and peers, will be explored as to ascertain the impact of these relationships on adolescent alcohol use.

#### *Parental influence.*

Although the probability that an adolescent will use alcohol is increased if both parents drink, the manner in which the adolescent approaches this behaviour is also influenced by their parents. Parents who drink alcohol moderately will generally convey such restraint to their children, while children of parents who abuse alcohol seem to replicate such risk behaviour (Grinder, 1978). The predisposition of a specific individual to abuse alcohol is therefore influenced by general predisposing factors, such as family influences, as well as specific events which may both produce and sustain such risk behaviours (Herbert, 1987).

Associations between parenting styles and adolescent alcohol use have been found (Adalbjarnardottir & Hafsteinsson, 2001; Clark et al., 1999; O'Byrne, Haddock, Poston, &

Mid America Heart Institute, 2002). **Parenting style** can be thought of as being the environment in which parents raise their children, and in which the family operates as a whole (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Baumrind (1967) identified four distinctive parenting styles, most commonly referred to as authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and rejecting-neglecting. Authoritative parents are characterized by displaying firm control over their children but are also more supportive and communicate better with their children than do other parents. Authoritarian parents are less nurturing and supportive of their children, exert firm control and expect immediate compliance. Permissive parents are less organized and controlling in their parenting style, and demand little of their children. Neglectful parents are detached from the experience of child rearing and exhibit a low level of control which reflects a desire to avoid the responsibilities of parenting (Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991).

Literature relating to various parenting and child **socialization styles** has consistently indicated that authoritative parenting practices such as parental warmth, support and consistency in discipline is correlated with positive developmental outcomes in children (Baumrind, 1967; Lamborn et al., 1991). Adolescents from authoritative families demonstrate higher scores in terms of psychosocial competence and lower scores in terms of psychological or behavioural dysfunction in comparison with adolescents from neglectful homes, for whom the opposite is indicated. Adolescents with authoritarian parents are likely to show higher levels of obedience and conformity, but appear to have poorer self-concepts than other adolescents. Finally, adolescents with indulgent parents have comparatively higher levels of self-confidence but are more likely to engage in alcohol use and have other disciplinary problems (Lamborn et al., 1991). It is therefore important for parents to be aware of the role their parenting practices play in preventing adolescent risk behaviour, as

adolescents who identified their parents as being authoritative have been found to be less likely to engage in substance use than were adolescents from neglectful or authoritarian families (Adalbjarnardottir & Hafsteinsson, 2001; Sargent & Dalton, 2001). In her study of perceived legitimacy of parental authority, Jackson (2002) found that adolescent perceptions of parental authority in terms of smoking and alcohol consumption differs notably according to particular parenting styles. Adolescents from authoritative families were found to be more likely to acknowledge parental authority regarding tobacco and alcohol use than were adolescents from neglectful homes, thereby confirming theories associating authoritative parenting with lower opposition to parental influence (Jackson, 2002).

Parent-child **communication** refers to the extent to which parents will reason with their children and consider their opinions when giving instructions (Baumrind, 1967). Parent-child communication is considered to be one of the fundamental ways that parents can influence their children's decisions about alcohol use, as it is through verbal communication that parents are able to most directly express their feelings and concerns relating to substance use and how the child should behave (Ennett, Bauman, Foshee, Pemberton, & Hicks, 2001). Parents have been found to talk most often to their children about the negative consequences of alcohol use, strategies for resisting peer pressure for use, encouragement for non use, and rules about use (Ennett et al., 2001). However, the findings from some research does indicate that the effect of such parent-child communication is not as strong as expected, with adolescents in some cases being seen to increase their alcohol use after discussions with parents about the rules and reprisals for such behaviour (Ennett et al., 2001).

In her study on the influence of parenting practices on child behaviour, Baumrind (1967) defined parental **control** as the parental actions which influence the child's activities,

moderate his or her behaviour, and encourage the adoption of parental values and principles. Included in this definition are variables such as consistency in the enforcement of instructions, the ability to withstand pressure from the child, as well as the capacity to exercise authority over the child. Studies focusing on dimensions of parenting such as **support** and **control** indicate that low parental support and control results in an increased probability of adolescent alcohol use (Engels & Willemsen, 2004; Bjarnason, Thorlindsson, Sigfusdottir, & Welch, 2005). Higher family cohesiveness, perceived parental support and parental monitoring are therefore associated with a lower prevalence of adolescent risk behaviour (Adalbjarnardottir & Hafsteinsson, 2001; Borawski et al., 2003; Engels & Willemsen, 2004; Harakeh et al., 2004; Jackson, 2002).

Borawski et al. (2003) found that both males and females show an increase in risk behaviour when they are allowed greater unsupervised time with friends, while in males high levels of parental monitoring was linked with a decrease in alcohol use. Females, on the other hand, demonstrated the greatest decrease in risk behaviours when higher levels of parental trust were perceived. Gender differences in parental monitoring have often been reported, with women reporting higher levels of general monitoring as adolescents (Veal & Ross, 2006). It seems that parents tend to be more protective of their daughters who are the focus of much of their monitoring efforts, perhaps due to the prevalent norms in our society which expect girls to be more vulnerable, as well as fear of sexual promiscuity and pregnancy (Veal & Ross, 2006). The fact that in comparison with girls, boys tend to be less strictly monitored by their parents causes males to be at higher risk of exposure to deviant peer behaviour, such as alcohol use, which then has a strong influence on their own risk behaviour (Veal & Ross, 2006). Therefore findings that parental monitoring does not prevent alcohol use may be due to the fact that it is not extensive enough and therefore does not adequately limit the

opportunities for adolescents to engage in unsupervised behaviour with their friends (Simons-Morton, 2002).

Adolescents who perceive their parents as **neglectful** in terms of demonstrating a lack of interest in their whereabouts and activities tend to experience lower self-esteem, which may decrease their ability to resist peer pressure (Harakeh et al., 2004). While adolescents from indulgent families have been found to be less likely to indulge in experimentation with substances in early adolescence, evidence suggests that parental leniency in this regard may result the development of such behaviours at a later stage (Adalbjarnardottir & Hafsteinsson, 2001; Sargent & Dalton, 2001). It has been found that parental monitoring and parental drinking habits are associated with decreased and increased adolescent alcohol use respectively (Chuang, Ennett, Bauman, & Foshee, 2005). Family influences, such as a parent who drinks excessively, have also been found to predispose an adolescent to alcohol abuse. This seems to be especially common when it is the father who drinks heavily (Herbert, 1987), as fathers' drinking is generally more frequent and therefore more apparent than mothers, and fathers are also more likely to offer a drink to their adolescent (Andrews, Hops, & Duncan, 1997). Adolescents can therefore be motivated to begin experimentation with alcohol if their parents themselves drink alcohol, and especially if parents allow the adolescent to drink at home and in their presence (Andrews et al., 1997; Arata et al., 2003; Grindler, 1978).

Adolescents' relationships with their parents also play a very strong role as it has been found that heavy and moderate drinkers report having stronger peer relationships, while abstainers and light drinkers tend to have equally strong relationships with their parents (Hoel et al., 2004).

Studies have also indicated that parents' **attitudes** regarding alcohol use are influential on adolescents' drinking habits with problem drinking often being associated with parental approval of such behaviour (Boyle & Boekeloo, 2006). Fathers' opinions seem to be particularly important, and adolescents whose fathers' have strong views regarding alcohol use, and who respect their fathers' views, are less likely to obtain alcohol from people other than their parents, or drink alcohol without their parents knowledge (Beck, Boyle & Boekeloo, 2003). Parental monitoring and parental disapproval of heavy drinking have both been found to be negatively associated with heavy episodic drinking, meaning that higher levels of parental monitoring and disapproval are associated with lower levels of alcohol use (Wood et al., 2004). On the other hand, parental permissiveness seems to be significantly associated with heavy episodic drinking, and less stringent perceived limits for drinking are associated with increased frequency of heavy alcohol use (Wood et al., 2004). From an adolescent perspective, the adolescents who felt that their parents are supportive of them tend to reflect their parents' negative attitude towards alcohol use to a greater degree than adolescents who perceive their parents as being neglectful (Adalbjarnardottir & Hafsteinsson, 2001). Adolescents from neglectful homes are therefore more likely to engage in risk behaviours which are in opposition to their parents' views.

However, the influence of **parents' own drinking behaviours** should not be underestimated. It has been found that while younger adolescents are more influenced by their parents' opinions about underage drinking, older adolescents who may be nearing the legal drinking age tend to look more to their parents' drinking habits to guide them as they develop their own adult drinking behaviour (Boyle & Boekeloo, 2006). Parents who abuse alcohol have been found to demonstrate a greater tolerance of adolescent drinking and other substance use and in so doing provide implicit approval for their children's alcohol use (Windle, 1996).

Higher levels of parental tolerance of such risk behaviour have in turn been found to be associated with an earlier onset of drinking among children, as well as with the escalation towards higher levels of alcohol use (Windle, 1996). Parental modelling of such behaviour has also been found to be a more significant predictor of adolescent alcohol use than other aspects of parenting, such as parent-child communication. Early adolescents whose parents model frequent alcohol use have been found to be 2.5 times more likely to use alcohol than those whose parents model less frequent use (Jackson, Henricksen, Dickinson, & Levine, 1997). The effect of parent substance use behaviour on adolescent behaviour is therefore indicative of the fact that parents' nonverbal communication to their children by way of their own behaviour is in fact more important than their direct verbal communication (Ennett et al., 2001).

Perceived parental approval of adolescent alcohol use by way of parents allowing adolescents to drink alcohol in front of them may have two possible outcomes. Research has shown that adolescents' who report that a parent or friend's parent had provided alcohol at a party within the last year were more likely to have consumed more drinks on their last drinking occasion, were twice as likely to have consumed alcohol within the past 30 days and to have engaged in binge drinking (Foley, Altman, Durant, & Wolfson, 2004). However, adolescents who received alcohol from a parent or other adult relative, or who reported drinking with their parents on the most recent drinking occasion indicated that they consumed fewer drinks and were also less likely to have engaged in binge drinking (Foley et al., 2004). Therefore it appears that the provision of alcohol by an adult to an adolescent is not necessarily associated with alcohol use and abuse, and that drinking with parents may also have a protective effect on drinking behaviours. However research has found that adolescents belonging to communities with higher access to alcohol also had higher provision of alcohol by parents,

suggesting a community wide tolerance for adolescent drinking (Dent, Grube, & Biglan, 2005). It therefore appears that the social setting in which alcohol is provided and whether that adult is a parent or adult relative seems to affect the sanctioning of drinking behaviour, and may therefore have different outcomes for adolescent alcohol use (Foley et al., 2004).

Substance use has also been found to be tied to how **religious** an adolescent is, a factor that is often determined by the adolescent's family, as most adolescents adopt their family's religious views and habits. Those adolescents who are religious are less likely to use or to abuse drugs than are teenagers from less religious families (Nielsen, 1996). Studies have indicated that attendance at religious services have been found to be a significant protective factor against drunkenness (Parry et al., 2004). Inverse correlations with adolescent alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana use have also been found, and research has shown that religiosity also provides a buffering effect against life events which may otherwise instigate substance use among adolescents (Wills, Yaeger, & Sandy, 2003). It is thought that religiosity may offer such protection due to its effect on attitudes and values, or possibly because of its contribution towards coping processes and social networks (Wills et al., 2003).

### ***Sibling influence.***

Research has indicated that the influence of sibling alcohol use on adolescent alcohol use has often been underestimated, and in fact results indicate a somewhat greater similarity in substance use levels between siblings than between parents and children (Fagan & Najman, 2005). It therefore seems that substance use by older siblings has a greater effect on younger siblings tobacco and alcohol use in comparison to parental substance use (Fagan & Najman, 2005). This research therefore provides evidence to suggest that siblings may act as more powerful role models than parents, particularly during adolescence, as siblings are more

likely to share more time, activities and interests than are parents and children (Fagan & Najman, 2005). Currently, the majority of alcohol use prevention programs are aimed at the relationship between parents and children however this information indicates that as siblings are more powerful role models than parents, siblings and their potential influence on one another should be the primary focus of such interventions (Fagan & Najman, 2005).

### *Peer influence.*

Adolescence as a transitional period from childhood to adulthood often involves a shift in emphasis away from child-parent relationships to young adult-peer relationships. Although parental alcohol use is a strong risk factor for children's use, the use of alcohol and other illicit drugs by peers has been found to be even more significant (Wood et al., 2004). The influence of peer variables such as perceived peer pressure, are therefore also influential in terms of determining the reasons for adolescent alcohol use. Peers may influence adolescent alcohol use in several ways, either actively by offering alcohol or passively through social modelling and perceived norms (Wood et al., 2004). Studies have found that adolescents who are heavy drinkers are more susceptible to peer pressure than are adolescents who do not drink, or who drink moderately (Arata et al., 2003). Adolescents who are heavy drinkers have been found to be more likely to socialize with other heavy drinkers, while nondrinkers tend to associate with other nondrinkers (Arata et al., 2003). Heavy and moderate drinkers also seem to report the strongest friendships in terms of both quality and quantity as compared with adolescents who abstain from alcohol use, while abstainers and light drinkers report equally strong relationships with their parents, significantly more so than heavy drinkers (Hoel et al., 2004).

It has also been found that adolescents who report having deviant peers tend to display more conduct problems, including substance use (Chuang et al., 2005), however this may be due to the fact that teenagers with psychological, social, family, or academic problems will often choose to associate with people like themselves, meaning that these adolescents will already be more likely to engage in alcohol use due to pre-existing problems in their lives (Nielsen, 1996). The tendency for individuals to affiliate with like-minded friends is known as homophily (Steinberg & Monahan, 2007), and although research with adolescents has not conclusively determined the relative importance of selection versus socialization as contributors to behavioural and attitudinal similarity between adolescents and their friends (Brown, 2004), there is little doubt that peers actually influence each other and that the effects of peer influence are stronger during adolescence than in adulthood.

Brown (2004) described two mutually compatible explanations for the increased significance of peer influence during adolescence. Firstly, the increasingly important role of peers during early and middle adolescence means that as individuals begin to sort themselves into groups, both perceived and actual pressure to adopt the styles, values, and interests of one's friends intensifies. Adolescents use social influence to regulate each other's behaviour in an attempt to promote solidarity and uniformity within their group and in order to develop and maintain a unique group identity (Brown, 2004). Secondly, at an individual level, during adolescence individuals' have been found to become more susceptible to peer pressure. The increased importance of peers causes adolescents to want to alter their behaviour in order to conform to a group. Because they care more about what their peers think of them, they are therefore more likely to go along with the crowd to avoid being rejected (Brown, Eicher, & Petrie, 1986). Researchers have therefore hypothesized that the increase in conformity to peer pressure during early adolescence is an indicator of an emotional interval between developing

emotional autonomy from parents and becoming a genuinely autonomous person (Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986). In other words, the adolescent may become emotionally autonomous from parents before he or she is emotionally ready for this degree of independence and may therefore turn to peers to fill this space.

Older adolescents and adolescents whose friends drink are often found to be more likely to have been drunk at least once (Parry et al., 2004). Research has also found that substance use is modulated by the adolescent's perceptions of peers' smoking or drinking practices, which is concerning as young people typically tend to overestimate or exaggerate peers' involvement in substance use (Olds & Thombs, 2001). Adolescents have been found to take more risks, evaluate risky behaviour more positively, and make more risky decisions when they are with their peers than when they are by themselves (Gardner & Steinberg, 2005). These findings therefore indicate that perceived peer risk behaviour and susceptibility to peer pressure to drink alcohol are strongly connected to whether adolescents use alcohol or not, as well as how much alcohol they drink.

### **Contextual factors.**

In this section the influence of broader contextual factors relating to the social environment of the adolescent will be examined as to their relationship and impact on adolescent alcohol use.

### ***Media influence.***

Studies have indicated that exposure to alcohol advertising during very early adolescence predicts both beer drinking and drinking intentions one year later. A recent study has found that the joint effect of advertising exposure from all sources was significant after controlling for potentially confounding variables, including prior drinking (Collins et al., 2007).

Children who are exposed to extremely high levels of overall advertising were found to subsequently be 50% more likely to drink and 36% more likely to intend to drink than children exposed to low levels of advertising (Collins et al., 2007). Thus, ownership of advertising items such as hats, posters or t-shirts advertising alcohol have been found to be strong predictors of drinking and drinking intentions, with the odds of drinking doubled for children who own such items (Collins et al., 2007). The desirability of media portrayals of alcohol use also predict the desire among adolescents to emulate those portrayals, which in turn cultivates positive expectancies associated with alcohol brands and alcohol use (Austin, Chen, & Grube, 2006). These results therefore provide strong evidence as to the effects of alcohol branding and merchandising on children and adolescents.

Exposure to other forms of media, such as television and music video exposure also appears to be linked specifically to the onset of drinking among adolescents (Robinson, Chen, & Killen, 1998). Research indicates that music videos are a source of strong positive images for alcohol use, and that both the content, which tends to glamorize alcohol use, as well as the advertisements which are associated with music videos, make the idea of drinking alcohol more alluring to young people (Van den Bulck & Beullens, 2005). Studies have confirmed that the strength of the association between television and music video exposures and subsequent onset of alcohol use has been found to be quite large, with one extra hour of television viewing per day associated with an average 9% increase in the risk of alcohol use initiation within the next 18 months (Robinson et al., 1998). Watching music videos has been found to be even more risky as one hour of music video viewing per day was associated with a 31% increase in the risk of starting to drink alcohol within the next 18 months (Robinson et al., 1998). Overall television viewing per day and music television viewing have also been found to significantly predict the amount of alcoholic beverages that adolescents consume

while going out, with adolescents who watch more television and music videos being likely to consume more alcoholic drinks than their peers (Van den Bulck & Beullens, 2005).

However, research has also indicated that risk images may also play an inhibitory rather than facilitating role in adolescent risk behaviour (Gibbons, Gerrard, Blanton, & Russell, 1998).

This may be due to the fact that some risk images tend to be fairly negative, and even among those currently engaging in risk behaviours, these images continue to be more negative than the individual's self-image. It is therefore possible that many young people may in fact refrain from engaging in a specific risk behaviour in order to avoid being associated with an image or certain characteristics of an image (Gibbons et al., 2003).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Socio-psychological theories are critical in facilitating an understanding of health behaviour, explaining the dynamics of the behaviour and the effects of external forces on the behaviour. In this section, three theories will be examined according to their relevant applications at the individual (intrapersonal), interpersonal, and social or community level.

*An ecological perspective* emphasizes the interaction between, and interdependence of, factors within and across all levels of a health problem. It highlights people's interactions with their physical and sociocultural environments (Glanz & Rimer, 2005). Two key concepts of the ecological perspective help to identify intervention points for promoting health: first, behaviour both affects, and is affected by, *multiple levels of influence*; second, individual behaviour both shapes, and is shaped by, the social environment (*reciprocal causation*).

**Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory** (Bronfenbrenner, 1994) is useful when exploring health and risk behaviours of adolescents as it is multi-dimensional with influences at the micro (individual), meso (family) and macro (socio-cultural, policy) levels. This theory views the development of a child within the context of the system of relationships that form his or her environment. Bronfenbrenner's theory defines complex "layers" of the environment, each of which are interdependent and have unique as well as cumulative effects on a child's development. A child's development is therefore seen as being subject to interaction between factors in the child's maturing biology, his immediate family/community environment, and the broader society, with changes or conflict in any one layer having a ripple effect on others (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Therefore according to this theory, in order to study and understand risk behaviour amongst adolescents, we need to look not only at the child as an individual, but also the immediate and broader environment, and the interactions between these levels as well.

According to Bronfenbrenner's structure of environment, the *microsystem* refers to the layer closest to the child and the structures with which the child has direct contact. The microsystem therefore encompasses the relationships and interactions a child has with her immediate surroundings (Berk, 2000). These structures therefore include family, school, neighbourhood, or childcare environments. The second layer is known as the *mesosystem*, which provides the connection between the structures of the child's microsystem (Berk, 2000). Examples are the connection between the child's teacher and his parents, or between his church and his neighborhood, etc. Next, the *exosystem* forms the larger social system in which the child does not function directly. The structures in this layer may impact the child's development by interacting with some structure in her microsystem (Berk, 2000). Examples therefore include parent workplace schedules or community-based family resources.

Although the child may not be directly involved at this level, he/she does feel the positive or negative force involved with the interaction with his own system.

The *macrosystem* forms the outermost layer in the child's environment, and is comprised of cultural values, customs, and laws (Berk, 2000). The effects of larger principles defined by the macrosystem have a knock-on effect throughout the interactions of all other layers. For example, if it is the belief of the culture that parents should be solely responsible for raising their children, that culture is less likely to provide resources to help parents. This, in turn, affects the structures in which the parents function. The parents' ability or inability to carry out that responsibility toward their child within the context of the child's microsystem is likewise affected.

Finally, the *chronosystem* is a system encompassing the dimension of time as it relates to a child's environments (Berk, 2000). Elements within this system can be either external, such as the timing of a parent's death, or internal, such as the physiological changes that occur with the aging of a child. As children get older, they may react differently to environmental changes and may be more able to determine more how that change will influence them.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory therefore focuses on the quality and context of the child's environment with the interaction within these environments becomes more complex as the child's physical and cognitive structures grow and mature (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Bronfenbrenner's theory regards the family as the principal context in which human development occurs, and sees the instability and unpredictability of family life we've let our economy create as the most destructive force to a child's development (Addison, 1992) as children no longer have the constant mutual interaction with important adults that is

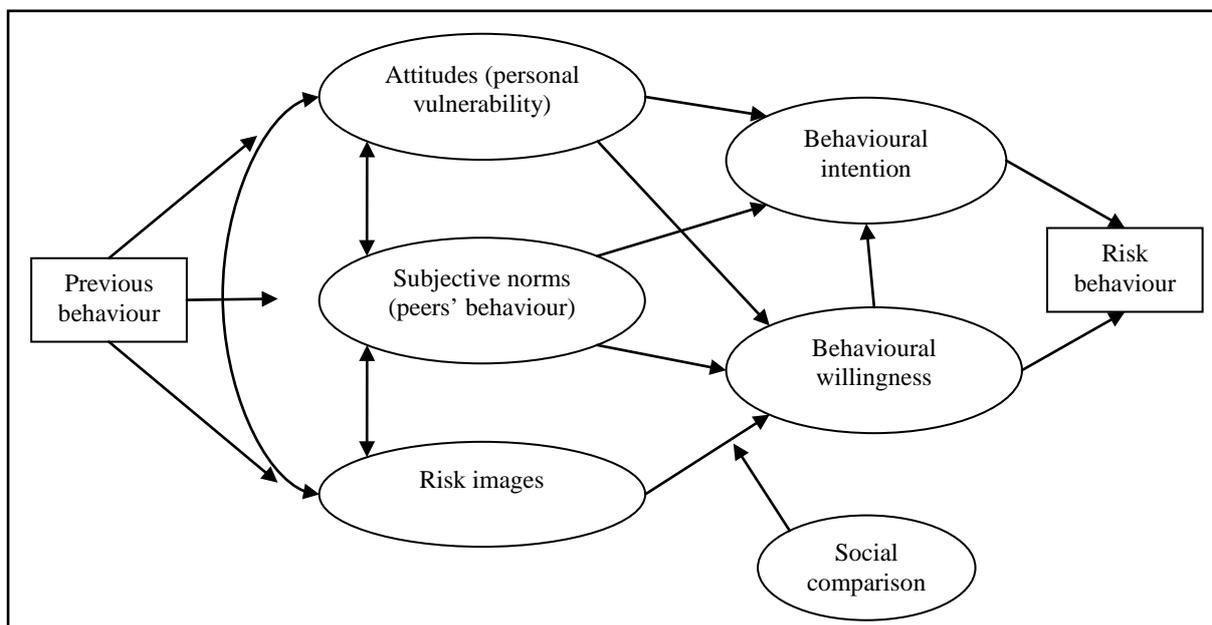
necessary for development. According to the ecological theory, if the relationships in the immediate microsystem break down, the child will not have the tools to explore other parts of his environment. These deficiencies show themselves especially in adolescence as anti-social behaviour, lack of self-discipline, and inability to provide self-direction (Addison, 1992).

In addition to exploring behaviour, individual-level theories focus on intrapersonal factors which are those that exist or occur within the individual self or mind, and therefore include knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, motivation, self-concept, developmental history, past experience, and skills (Glanz & Rimer, 2005). The **Prototype/Willingness Model** presents as an ideal theoretical framework for the exploration of intrapersonal factors relating to risk-taking behaviour, with particular focus on alcohol use, among adolescent males (see Figure 1).

The prototype/willingness (P/W) model as outlined in Gibbons et al. (2003) is based on the belief that risk behaviour can occur in one of two ways, one of which is reasoned, while the other is not. The first way in which risk behaviour occurs reflects the fact that sometimes adolescents engage in risky behaviours because they have made a conscious decision ahead of time to do so, and this idea incorporates elements of expectancy value theories. However, the second way is much less deliberative and much more reactive, and is thus reflective of social reaction pathways (Gibbons et al., 2003). This second pathway is the focus of this model and suggests the first and most fundamental of three assumptions, this being that much adolescent risk behaviour is a reaction to risk-conducive circumstances rather than a pre-planned event (Gibbons et al. 2003). The second assumption of the model is that because these situations generally occur in social situations, they have clear social images associated with them that are widely recognized by adolescents and even pre-teens. The third

assumption is that because young people are very image conscious (Carroll, Hattie, Durkin, & Houghton, 1997; Elkind, 1978; Lloyd, Lucas, Holland, McGrellis & Arnold, 1998), these risk images or prototypes have a significant influence on their risk behaviour in that the adolescent compares him/herself with the image, with the more comparison the adolescent engages in, the more influential the image will be.

**Figure 1: Prototype/Willingness Model (Gibbons et al., 2003).**



The Prototype/Willingness Model also takes into consideration previous behaviour, with its primary goal being to examine the cognitive factors that *mediate change* in behaviour, including onset and escalation, as well as decline (Gibbons et al., 2003). The constructs used in this model are operationalized similarly to those used in reasoned action theory, however, differences occur due to the nature of the behaviour. First, regarding *subjective norms*, adolescents typically identify two significant sources of social influence: parents and peers (Simons-Morton, Haynie, Crump, Eitel & Saylor, 2001). Realistically speaking, as few parents are accepting of risk behaviours and communicate this to their children (Simons-Morton et al., 2001), parents as a group tend to yield comparatively little variance on this

dimension. While the influence of the peer group is stronger, it appears that although the peer group may accept and even facilitate the behaviour, young people seldom report that their friends or peers *want* them to engage (boyfriends perhaps being the exception). Consequently, the model includes descriptive rather than injunctive norms (Blanton, Köblitz & McCaul, 2008) – i.e., what the adolescent thinks his/her friends are doing rather than what they want him/her to do.

The *attitude* construct has been operationalized in a manner that is generally consistent with the expectancy value approach but slightly different from that in planned behaviour or reasoned action theories. It is assumed that most young people have ambivalent feelings towards many risk behaviours. While they may find these actions enticing and exciting, they also recognize at least some of the inherent risks and so they also view the behaviours as somewhat worrying (Gibbons et al., 2003). While this ambivalence is quite common, there are more pronounced differences in the extent to which young people view themselves as personally vulnerable to the negative outcomes that could accompany these actions, largely because there are considerable differences in the extent to which they have thought about these consequences. Some consider themselves “uniquely invulnerable” – a form of optimistic bias (Helweg-Larsen & Shepperd, 2001); others do not. For this reason, attitude operationalization in this model focuses on perceived personal vulnerability to negative consequences (Gibbons et al., 2003).

When risk behaviours are assessed, expectation (BE) measures rather than intention (BI) measures are used. BE is a modified version of BI, which measures the individual's perceived likelihood that he/she will actually engage in a behaviour rather than his/her plan to engage. Because it is less restrictive than BI, it often has more variance and is therefore

better at predicting less appropriate behaviours, such as heavy drinking and speeding (Gibbons et al., 2003). In fact, the use of BE measures is typical practice in research in this area, as it is acknowledged that admitting that one is likely to drink and drive or have unprotected sex is not the same as planning to do so, and it is quite different from having these actions as goals or ‘desires’. Gibbons et al. (2003) therefore recommend that future studies in this area, especially with adolescents, use both measures, along with a third proximal antecedent from this model, behavioural willingness (BW).

In terms of *risk images*, research has indicated that adolescents’ risk images tend to be fairly negative. Even among those who are currently engaging, risk images tend to be more negative than self-images (Gibbons et al., 2003). This suggests that most young people do not engage in risky behaviours in order to acquire an image or certain characteristics of an image. Risk images appear to be more inhibiting than facilitating, and therefore do not have as strong a relationship with intentions as expected. Instead, they are more strongly associated with a different proximal antecedent to behaviour, behavioural willingness (BW) (Gibbons et al., 2003).

*Behavioural willingness* refers to “an openness to risk opportunity”, or “an acknowledgement by the individual that he/she might do the behaviour under some circumstances” (Gibbons et al., 2003, p. 114). Behavioural willingness is usually linked with behavioural intention and behavioural expectation but it is not the same thing, and it is able to predict risk behaviour independently of both BI and BE. This is because adolescents have been found to be generally more willing to engage in riskier behaviours than they intend or expect to do (Gibbons et al., 2003). The central focus of this model is therefore that although intention implies willingness to engage in behaviour, the opposite is not true and that there are a

number of individuals, usually young, who are willing to engage in behaviours that they may never intend to actually act out. However, what is also concerning is that this lack of intention may in fact cause these adolescents to be more at risk, as their lack of intention may mean that they are not prepared for risky behaviours, for example, by carrying condoms or arranging a designated driver.

At the interpersonal level, theories of health behaviour assume individuals exist within, and are influenced by, a social environment. The opinions, thoughts, behaviour, advice, and support of the people surrounding an individual influence his or her feelings and behaviour and the individual has a reciprocal effect on those people. The social environment includes family members, co-workers, friends, health professionals, and others (Glanz & Rimer, 2005). In this study, the primary sources of influence from this level that will be explored with regard to adolescent alcohol use include parents, siblings and peers. Bandura's **Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)** describes a dynamic, ongoing process in which personal factors, environmental factors, and human behaviour exert influence upon each other. According to SCT, three main factors affect the likelihood that a person will change a health behaviour: (1) self-efficacy, (2) goals, and (3) outcome expectancies (Glanz & Rimer, 2005). Thus, if individuals have a sense of personal agency or self-efficacy, they can change behaviours even when faced with obstacles but if they do not feel that they can control their health behaviour, they will not be motivated to act. SCT evolved from research on Social Learning Theory (SLT), which asserts that people learn not only from their own experiences, but by observing the actions of others and the benefits of those actions (Glanz & Rimer, 2005).

SCT involves the following concepts: *Reciprocal determinism* refers to interactions between behaviour, personal factors, and environment, where each influences the others. *Behavioural*

*capability* states that, in order to perform a behaviour, a person must know what to do and how to do it. *Expectations* are the results an individual anticipates from taking action (Glanz & Rimer, 2005). Bandura considers *self-efficacy* to be the most important personal factor in behaviour change and it is present in almost all health behaviour theories.

*Observational learning*, or modelling, refers to the process whereby people learn through the experiences of credible others, such as parents, siblings or peers, rather than through their own experience. *Reinforcements* are responses to behaviour that affect whether or not one will repeat it. Positive reinforcements (rewards) increase a person's likelihood of repeating the behaviour while negative reinforcements may make repeated behaviour more likely by motivating the person to eliminate a negative stimulus (e.g., when drivers put the key in the car's ignition, the beeping alarm reminds them to fasten their seatbelt).

The present study therefore makes use of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory in order to understand the multi-dimensional influences which interact across each level and which may affect adolescent risk behaviour either individually or cumulatively. The Prototype/Willingness Model provides greater insight and understanding of decision-making at an intra-personal level with regard to risk behaviour. Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory provides information as to the way in which the thoughts and actions of others affects individual behaviour. These theoretical frameworks therefore encompass all levels of influence, these being intra-personal (individual characteristics), inter-personal (family and peers) and contextual (broader social) factors.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Research Methodology**

I begin this chapter by providing an overview of the aim and the research methodology used in this study. With regard to the latter, I provide a rationale for the qualitative methods used. Thereafter, an overview of the research design, data collection techniques, method of analysis and ethical considerations for the study are provided.

#### **Aim of the Study**

This study aims to provide a qualitative understanding of the factors related to alcohol use among adolescent males attending a high school within the Durban area in KwaZulu-Natal.

#### **Research Design**

##### **Qualitative research.**

The majority of the research in South Africa on adolescent substance use has focused on prevalence studies (Amoateng et al., 2006; Flisher et al., 2003; Madu & Matla, 2003; Parry et al., 2004a; Parry et al., 2004b; Reddy et al., 2003) and thus on quantitative (surveys) rather than qualitative methodologies. Past research on adolescent substance use has also tended to neglect the value of qualitative research in detailing and corroborating research findings. Bearing this in mind, a qualitative methodological approach including focus group discussions was used for this study, as it allows for a greater in-depth investigation and understanding of the motivators for alcohol use among adolescent boys than could be generated by quantitative research methods (Krueger, 1994).

A “generic” understanding of qualitative research implies a multimethod focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Mertens, 1998). Qualitative research allows the researcher to gain an empathic understanding of the social phenomena. Thus attempts are made to understand thoughts, feelings and emotions by getting to know people’s underlying values, beliefs and emotions. In this study, focus group discussions were used to explore the motivating factors behind adolescent alcohol use. The study was conducted in a public high school in the Durban area of KwaZulu-Natal. The qualitative approach allows for a deeper understanding, may produce a wealth of detailed information and is capable of capturing the richness of the adolescents’ experiences in their own words.

The qualitative research approach was also selected for this study as this approach is primarily exploratory and descriptive in nature (Mouton & Marais, 1991). According to York (1998), it is useful to conduct an exploratory study when the researcher has limited knowledge about a given subject or wants to develop new perspectives on it. The present study was exploratory since relatively little research has been done on identifying motivating factors for alcohol use among youth in the South African context.

#### **Focus groups: Justification.**

Focus groups produce qualitative data that provides insights into the attitudes, perceptions, feelings and opinions of participants (Krueger, 1994). The benefit of open-ended discussions with participants is that it provides an arena in which participants are able to choose the manner in which they respond and also allows the researcher observe the participants in the group discussion, which will be informative during the analysis of the data. The focus group

also presents a more natural environment than that of an individual interview because participants are influencing and influenced by others, just as they are in real life, therefore providing socially orientated research which captures 'real-life' data (Krueger, 1994).

One of the unique elements of focus groups is that there is no pressure by the facilitator to have the group reach consensus. Instead attention is placed on understanding the thought processes of participants as they consider the issues under discussion (Krueger, 1994). The usefulness of focus group discussions are in their ability to yield in-depth information which enables the researcher to 'get in tune' with the respondents and discover how people construct reality (Krueger, 1994).

In terms of the validity of focus groups, Krueger (1994) suggests that they have high face validity, which is due in large part to the believability of comments from participants. People open up in focus groups and share insights that may not be available from individual interviews, questionnaires, or other data sources (Krueger, 1994). Focus groups offer a unique advantage in qualitative research, since this method of yielding data acknowledges that people are influenced by the comments of people around them, and by using such a method these people are placed in natural, real-life situations as opposed to experimental situations, typical of quantitative studies (Morgan, 1998). The dynamic nature of this group interaction is impossible to capture in a one-to-one interview situation, and provides greater insight into the relational construction of reality.

The format for focus group discussions also allows the facilitator to probe, and this flexibility to explore unanticipated issues is not possible within more structured questioning procedures (Krueger, 1994). As mentioned earlier, the advantage of having high face validity allows for

data to be easily understood since the results can be presented in lay terminology embellished with quotations from group participants (Morgan, 1998). Another advantage is that focus groups enable the researcher to increase the sample size of qualitative studies without dramatic increases in resources or time required of the interviewer.

As with other information gathering techniques, focus group discussions have their limitations (Morgan, 1998). Firstly, the researcher has less control in the group interview as compared to individual interviews. The focus group discussion allows the participants to influence and interact with each other, and, as a result, group members have greater influence over the course of the discussion (Morgan, 1998). Secondly, since group interaction provides a social environment, comments must be interpreted within that context and care must be taken to avoid lifting comments out of context and out of sequence. Researchers must also be aware that participants occasionally modify or reverse their position after interacting with others. Therefore the method requires carefully trained interviewers, using techniques such as pauses and probes, and the ability to know when and how to move to new topics (Morgan, 1998). And finally, the discussions must be conducted in an environment conducive to conversation. These factors often present with logistical problems and may require the provision of incentives to facilitate participation.

### **Generalisability.**

Morse (1997) argues that theory derived from qualitative research is different from theory derived from quantitative research. She contends that qualitatively derived theory has been 'tested' in the process of development and is therefore more representative of reality and involves less speculation than quantitatively derived theory. Morse (1997) therefore suggests that this has important ramifications for the evaluation of qualitative research and its role in

knowledge development. While it was previously considered that qualitative research was so context bound that it was not generalizable, it is now evident that qualitative research is generalizable according to its level of abstractness (Morse, 1997).

Morse (1997) emphasizes that the aim of a qualitative researcher is ultimately to make links, or to help the reader make links, between what he or she has observed in one situation and what is occurring in other situations. Qualitative researchers investigate naturally occurring phenomena and describe, theorize and analyze them contextually in the 'real world' rather than in controlled situations, thereby yielding important findings for practice (Morse, 1997). Realities or meanings come about as people go about their daily lives, interpreting things or events that happen to them. Through interacting with others, meanings or realities are modified to enable a person to cope with his or her world. As persons constantly interact with others, meanings are continuously modified and shared and individual behaviour is aligned with that of others. Morse (1997) therefore identifies qualitative methods as yielding important insights into why attitude and behaviour changes occurred, which has important implications for programme evaluation, as prevention programs can be enhanced through the use of qualitative methods.

### **Applicability.**

Morse (1997) warns researchers who conduct qualitative research in the health sciences that the state of knowledge development is such that research results may well find their way into clinical applications regardless of the researcher's explicit assumption about their origins. This factor therefore alters the health science researcher's disciplinary responsibility beyond traditional evaluative criteria as extensive consideration of how findings might reasonably be interpreted or even used must be undertaken (Morse, 1997). Thus, a proper critique of

qualitative research within the health sciences should extend beyond merely considering adherence to methodical rules, but should also involve a thorough examination of the more complex question of exactly what meaning can be made of research findings.

Within the health sciences, most qualitative research is applied, in the sense that it aims to develop knowledge that would eventually influence one or another health care practice (Simmons, 1995; Landry, Amara & Lamari, 2001). Health science research seeks to understand how people experience problems in the mind, body, or spirit, in order to be able to alleviate unnecessary suffering or harm and promote as much well-being as is possible under the circumstances. Therefore, it is argued that research ought to be judged in terms of these criteria (Morse, 1997). This requires that the researcher puts forward compelling evidence as to why we need this knowledge to be extracted from people, and the purpose and use of having such knowledge once it has been obtained. Thus, the uses of possible findings should be accounted for even before one knows what they will include. Morse (1997) elaborates as follows:

Our rationale must link the findings to potential benefits for the health care of those we serve before we find it defensible to place any marginalized group at risk of social censure or antipathy because of the new knowledge we extract or because of the manner in which we make the knowledge accessible to those whose purposes may be distinct from a humanitarian health care agenda. (pg. 123)

There are therefore no guarantees that qualitative health researchers will be able to present their results with confidence that no one will apply them to practice before they become scientifically 'proven', and researchers in this field are therefore obliged to consider their findings 'as if' they might indeed be applied in practice (Morse, 1997). As qualitative

research is based on assumptions that are socially constructed, they are likely to be shared by others in the field, as well as by research participants. Therefore qualitative research serves to re-create them 'as if' they were factual (Morse, 1997). The fact that no absolute standard exists against which to measure qualitative research so as to account for the notion of truth or accuracy within the real world, or ensure confidence that research findings are indeed entirely valid, means that qualitative research accepts that there is value in recognising that some kinds of knowledge exist as 'probable truth'. However, as Morse (1997) points out, qualitative research endeavours not to seek truth, but to create meaning, to construct images from which people's fallible and tentative views of the world can be altered, rejected, or made more secure.

#### **Focus group discussion schedule.**

A reading of the literature suggests that the following content areas are of relevance in terms of understanding the factors related to alcohol use among adolescent boys:

- Ethnicity and gender (Reddy et al., 2003);
- Social interaction between adolescents (Brown et al., 2007; Hoel et al., 2004);
- Exposure to alcohol advertising and other media influences (Collins et al., 2007; Van den Bulck & Beullens, 2005);
- Masculinity and identity issues (Courtenay, 2000; Mahalik, Burns & Syzdek, 2007; McCreary et al., 2005);
- Family influence in terms of parenting styles (Adalbjarnardottir & Hafsteinsson, 2001; Clark et al., 1999; O'Byrne et al., 2002), and sibling alcohol use (Fagan & Najman, 2005);
- Peer influence (Arata et al., 2003; Wood et al., 2004); and
- Religiosity (Nielsen, 1996; Parry et al., 2004).

A semi-structured 60-minute discussion schedule was therefore devised in order to address the objectives of the study (see Appendix 2). Core themes to be addressed in the focus group were developed on the basis of the above content areas as identified through a review of relevant empirical literature, as well as in consideration of the results from the previous study conducted on this site in 2006 (Payne & Meyer-Weitz, 2006).

### **Sampling Procedure**

#### **The study site.**

This qualitative study involved learners from a public boys' high school in Durban, Kwazulu-Natal. This specific site was chosen due to the fact that the researcher had previously conducted research at this site during 2006. The school is situated in an urban area and is a historically 'white' school in a predominantly 'white', middle-class suburb. However, this school was chosen as its current learner population is diverse, including learners from each race group and different socio-economic positions. The school is currently acknowledged to be among the leading boys' school in the country and emphasises a need for achievement in academic, cultural, and sporting spheres.

#### **Selection of participants.**

Substance use rates among adolescents in South Africa show considerable gender variations, with the substance use rates for adolescent boys higher than that for adolescent girls (Reddy et al., 2003). The study population was comprised of male learners who were at the time in Grade 11. The participants ranged in age from 16 to 18 years. Time was made available to the researcher during school hours and convenience sampling was therefore employed as the participants were approached in their separate classes, and were then asked to volunteer to participate in the focus group discussions. A total of 64 learners were invited to participate in

the study. A total of 29 learners chose to participate, with the breakdown of each focus group as follows: focus group 1 - nine, focus group 2 - nine, and focus group 3 - eleven. The participants were of different races<sup>1</sup>, with White, African, Indian, and Coloured learners participating in the study. The language used during the focus group discussions was English. As the school is an English-language institution, the learners were able to communicate effectively in this language even though it may not be a mother tongue for some participants. They were informed that participation was voluntary and were briefed on the nature of the study. More detail regarding the ethical procedures can be seen in the paragraph on Ethical Considerations.

## **Procedures and Data Collection**

### **Phase 1: Consultation.**

A comprehensive literature search had been conducted during 2007 using a variety of online databases, such as PROQUEST and EBSCO HOST, as well as several primary sources of information. As I had conducted previous research at this school site during 2006, contact was first made with the Deputy Principal of the school to discuss the purpose of the study with her and to negotiate conducting the study on the school premises. She referred me to the Head of the Life Orientation Department at the school for further discussion and negotiation. I then met with this teacher to discuss possible fieldwork times and venues. He was also asked to brief the learners about the study. The issue of informed consent was discussed and it was decided that as the study would occur during school hours, the school would act as guardian for the participants and so it was not necessary to gain explicit parental consent. Prior to the focus group discussions, the learners were given a brief introduction to the study

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<sup>1</sup> During the Apartheid years, all South Africans were classified into race groups in accordance with the Population Registration Act of 1950 namely, Black African (people of African descent), Coloured (people with mixed descent), Indian (people of Indian descent) and White (people of European descent). The researcher in no way subscribes to this classification.

and asked to volunteer to participant. The volunteers were then given a more in-depth introduction to the study (see Appendix 2) and were asked to sign informed consent forms before the discussion began (see Appendix 1).

### **Phase 2: Focus group discussion process.**

Three (3) focus group discussions were conducted at a Durban boys' high school, each comprising between 8 to 11 male learners in Grade 11, between the ages of 16 and 18 years. Prior to conducting the focus groups, I did extensive research on the role of the facilitator (Krueger, 1994; Morgan, 1996), and discussed this topic with my supervisor to ensure that I was as prepared as possible. The discussions took place on the school premises in a classroom provided by the school management. The focus group discussions were facilitated by the researcher and the duration of each group discussion was approximately 60 minutes.

The structure of the focus group discussions was relatively open-ended, allowing for the exploration of emerging themes, with the facilitator providing appropriate cues when necessary. This approach was favoured as it allowed the participants to direct the course of the discussion under the general theme of alcohol use among adolescent boys, thus permitting as much information as possible to emerge without prompting from the facilitator. This therefore provides valuable insight into the behaviour of adolescent boys as it is both understood and experienced by them within a specific context, with the least amount of research driven presuppositions.

The discussions were conducted in English and were tape recorded with the consent of the participants (see Appendix 2). Tape recording increases the accuracy of data collection and it permits the moderator to be more attentive to the discussion (Morgan, 1996). Although I

have had no previous experience in this regard, I assumed the role of the facilitator in the discussions. Unfortunately the audio file from the third focus group was lost and it was therefore necessary to conduct another focus group with the same participants in order to replace the lost data. However, a summary of the salient issues that emerged during the initial discussion was retained and was used to add richness to the data. Data was collected to a point of redundancy.

### **Data Management and Method of Data Analysis**

The discussions were transcribed verbatim from the audiotapes. In the absence of standardised rules, transcription can be problematic. According to Kvale (1996) there are inherent differences between oral and written mode of discourse. Therefore, much effort was put into making sure that transcription was conducted in a systematic and accurate manner to minimise these inherent discrepancies.

The transcriptions were analysed thematically in order to identify commonalities and variances among the responses of participants. The Nvivo software program was used to aid analysis. According to Neuman (1997), organising qualitative data involves being faced first with completely uncategorized data. The primary task is to look for patterns in the data. The researcher therefore engaged in careful observations, which leads to the uncovering of connections and patterns in the data.

The method of analysis used in this study was thematic analysis. According to Henning (2004), thematic analysis is a “way of seeing”. In other words, it is the ability to recognise patterns in seemingly random information. The researcher used thematic analysis to see something that is not evident to others. As it can be used with a variety of theoretical

frameworks, thematic analysis is a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis can be seen as a process for encoding qualitative information as it provides a procedure for analysing the social distribution of perspectives on a phenomenon. The underlying assumptions of thematic analysis are that in different social worlds or groups, there are differing views (Henning 2004).

According to Boyatzis (1998), thematic analysis is a way of seeing by making observations and coming to the insights 'intuitively'. People use thematic analysis to see something that had not been evident to others, and this is done by perceiving a pattern or theme in seemingly random information. The perception of this pattern allows one to proceed to the next step, which involves classifying or encoding the pattern by giving it a label or definition or description. Thereafter, the third major step involves interpreting the pattern (Boyatzis, 1998). As a process of encoding qualitative information, thematic analysis facilitates the location of themes found in information that at minimum describes and organises the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon (Boyatzis, 1998). A theme may be identified at the manifest level (directly observable in the information) or at the latent level (underlying the phenomenon). A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents a level of patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

By using a data driven approach, which is constructed inductively from raw information, information appreciation is enhanced and with a complete view of the information available, the researcher can appreciate gross (i.e. easily evident) and intricate (i.e. difficult to discern) aspects of the information (Boyatzis, 1998). However the approach of developing a code on

the basis of prior research places the researcher approximately in the middle of the continuum. It is vital for the researcher to become immersed in the data so that they are familiar with the depth and breadth of the content. Immersion usually involves 'repeated reading' of the data, and reading the data in an active way - searching for meanings, patterns and so on (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The theory driven approach is one of the more highly popular approaches, and in this approach the researcher begins with the theory of what occurs and then formulates the signals, or indicators, of evidence that would support the theory. The wording of the themes emerges from the theorist's construction of the meaning and style of communication or expression of the elements of the theory (Boyatzis, 1998). Combining this approach with the prior data driven approach, provided the researcher with a broader knowledge base when developing themes that were investigated, and such preliminary investigations of existing phenomena increases inter-rater reliability.

The following steps in thematic analysis as outlined by Boyatzis (1998) were followed by the researcher:

- Identifying themes
- Identifying common themes
- Developing a code to process and analyse the themes
- Interpreting the information and themes

In this study the focus group discussion guide was used to categorise the data into various themes. New themes were created for data that did not fit into the existing category of codes. Raw data was ordered into categories and descriptive statements developed to illustrate these categories. Quotations were also used to highlight salient issues. The purpose of this description is to highlight information from the participants' point of view and provide a

holistic picture of activities and events. Finally, the researcher's interpretation of the data provides meaning and attaches significance to descriptive statements by explaining patterns, relationships and comparisons between the different themes.

There are three limitations to using thematic analysis effectively in research (Boyatzis, 1998). The first is projection, meaning that the stronger the researcher's ideology or theory, the more the researcher will be tempted to project his/her values or conceptualisation of the events onto the interviewees. The second is with regards to sampling. Boyatzis (1998) states that the researcher's judgement is used to choose participants. Being knowledgeable of this fact, the researcher remained aware of the influence of her judgement while selecting participants. The last limitation refers to mood and style. As qualitative research is subjective, it is recognized that many factors may threaten the quality of information, collection, processing and analysis.

### **Data Verification**

Criteria for judging the quality of qualitative research that parallel the criteria for judging positivist, quantitative research have been outlined by a number of writers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; De Vos, 1998). Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified four criteria to ensure the trustworthiness of qualitative research. These are credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

A number of research strategies can be used to enhance credibility, for example, prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer debriefing and member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, credibility was enhanced by summarizing salient points during focus group discussions and asking if the notes accurately reflected the person's position (member

checks). Secondly, discussions with an experienced researcher and supervisor regarding methodological issues and during analysis helped to decrease the influence of personal bias (peer debriefing). Thirdly, the focus group discussions were structured in order to avoid premature closure and coming to conclusions about a situation without sufficient observation (persistent observation).

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) in qualitative research, transferability or external validity is determined by the reader. The reader has to determine the degree of similarity between the study site and the receiving context while the role of the researcher is to provide sufficient information in order for the reader to make this judgment. Transferability was established by providing a fairly detailed description of the setting in which the research was conducted and methodological considerations that influenced the study.

The dependability and neutrality of the study can be ensured by means of an audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which is conducted in order to confirm the quality and appropriateness of the investigation process. In this study all interview transcripts and field notes and documents were retained, and the analytical process was conducted in as organised a manner as possible, so that this information could be readily accessible.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Findings**

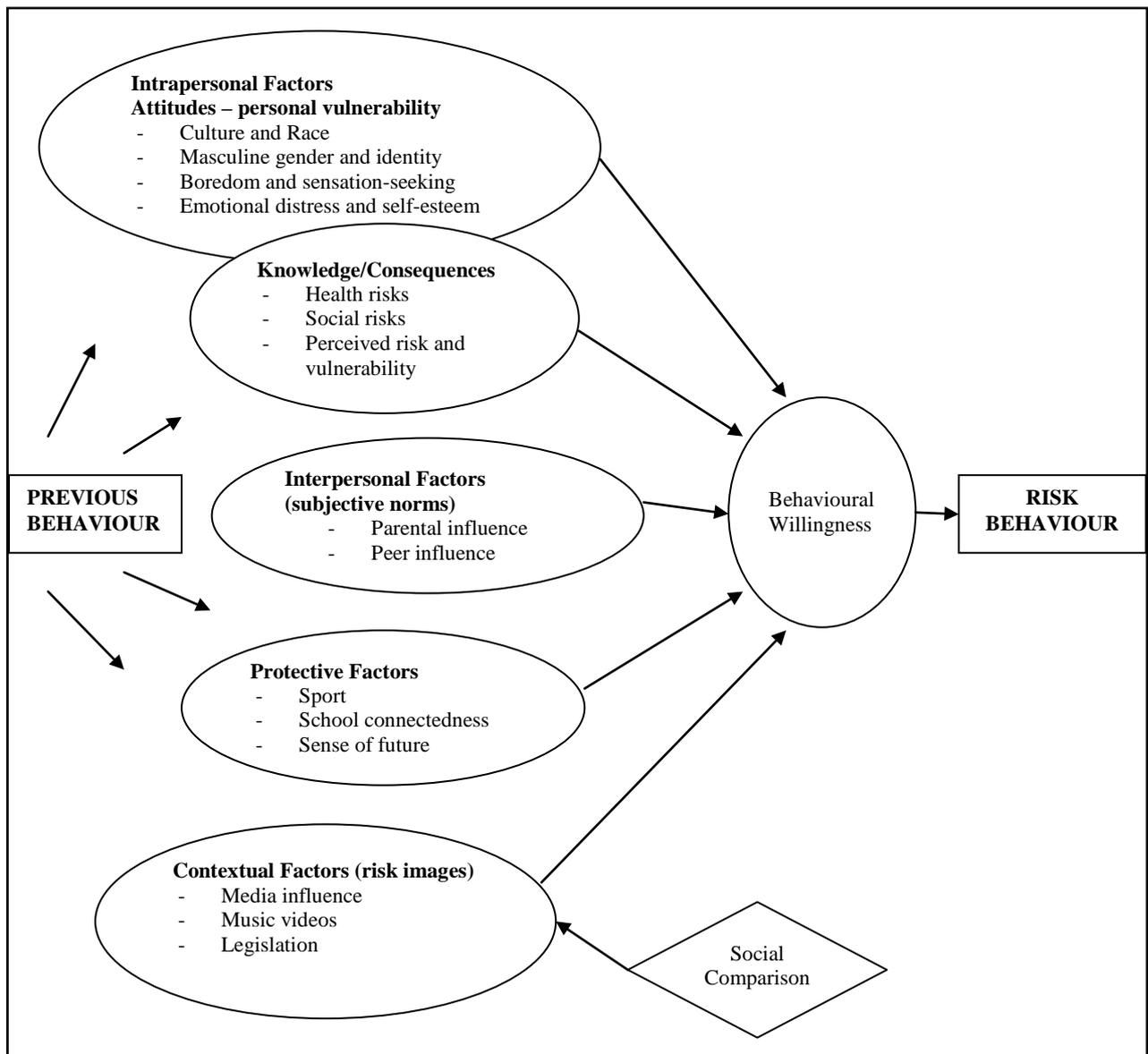
The findings described in this chapter emanate from four focus group discussions conducted with adolescent boys. This chapter highlights the themes that were identified by the researcher from extensive analysis of the focus group discussion transcripts and observations made during the course of the study. The results are presented in accordance with the major themes that were explored during the focus group discussions. Adolescent risk behaviour, specifically adolescent alcohol use seems to be influenced by psychosocial factors which exist at different levels, such as the intra- and interpersonal levels as well as factors that emerged from broader social issues such as legislation and the media. From an ecological perspective, it is important to note that the grouping of these factors into the three dimensions is primarily done for analytical clarity, but it should be remembered that these factors do not operate in isolation and that for any adolescent they are often inextricably linked to one another.

#### **Factors related to Alcohol Use among Adolescents**

##### **Intrapersonal factors.**

In this section the data pertaining to demographic and identity factors, as well as psychological aspects of the individual such as masculinity, self-esteem, personality characteristics and perceived risks regarding alcohol use will be presented.

**Figure 2: Overview of Findings**



### ***Culture and Race.***

From the data it emerged that cultural factors have a quiet but significant role in influencing adolescent alcohol use. Many boys identified strongly with their cultural heritage and this meant that traditions either encouraging or abstaining from alcohol use were powerful messages for them. For many participants, alcohol was seen as a normal part of their culture and traditions:

Participant (White): *“I’m Afrikaans and the traditional fun thing to do is just have a braai and have beers...and brandy...”*

Participant (Black): *“...you’ve got these traditional things and they make like traditional Zulu beer and you have to have some...”*

However, the individual’s culture can also be a protective factor, as discussed by this participant:

Participant (Indian): *“It also depends on like, coming from an Indian family, um, my dad drinks but...he knows that I’m not allowed to touch any of his stuff, nor have I got a right to buy anything when he gives me money to go out, so, like, it’s up to my responsibility to live up to his expectations as well as mine and ah, to learn from it so, coming from an Indian home, no we don’t, I can’t drink.”*

### ***Masculine identity and gender.***

From the data it emerged that for adolescent boys, masculine identity is strongly associated with risk behaviour such as alcohol use and binge drinking. In addition, an important aspect of alcohol use is that its initiation is seen as a significant step between childhood and adulthood, and from being a boy to becoming a man.

Participant (Coloured): *“You feel like you’ve moved up, you don’t feel like a child anymore, you feel like a man...that’s how I felt.”*

It appears that adolescents also feel a need to engage in such behaviour out of a desire to conform to a stereotype of what they believe it means to be a teenager.

Participant (Black): *“I mean we, we, as the younger generation we’ve got a reputation for the stuff like that you know, a party and that type of thing.”*

Alcohol use and particularly binge drinking seem to form an important aspect of accepted masculine ideals for adolescent boys, with masculinity strongly associated with the amount of alcohol an individual is able to consume.

Participant (White): *“It’s a masculinity thing, it’s also a factor. Like ah, guys think the more you can take without passing out ah, the more of a man you are and stuff like that...”*

Participant (Black): *“I know people who will sit down with a bottle of Jack, finish it and go on to a bottle of Fish Eagle, and a whole lot of ciders and then we’re like ah dude, you’re the man.”*

It therefore appears that for many boys, the prevalent discourse around male identity and what it means to be a man is linked to risk behaviour such as alcohol use. As demonstrated by the excerpt below, men who drink alcohol are “cool” and men who do not are “wimps”. Conversely, it appears that only “cool” guys are given the status of being “men” and are also perceived to be “good guys”.

Participant (White): *“It’s cause you see like, you see if you look out at the world, if you go to bars and stuff, you see a lot of the cool okes, like men, lots of good guys, all drinking...and you look at other okes and they look, they don’t drink some of them, so like bang and like wimps and stuff.”*

However, alongside this concept of masculinity and risk behaviour emerged an alternative discourse in which men are viewed as responsible protectors, particularly of women.

Participant (White): *“...but I would personally, if I had to go out jolling with my girlfriend, I would never, ever, ever touch ah, touch a drink because majority of guys they came to take advantage of girls when they, when they’ve had a couple to drink because they feel more lovable...and, and like they want to touch...and so, that, I would never drink with my girlfriend I have to keep an eye out.”*

Participant (White): *“...that’s why I think um, fathers are really overprotective of their daughters because they don’t want their daughters to experience this, and I understand why they don’t want it. It’s actually a good thing to protect the women, cause that’s the role that fathers are supposed to play in society so as boys, we should really carry that up from our fathers as well...”*

This feeling also extends to responsibility for siblings, especially sisters, whereby boys feel that they should be responsible for the safety of their siblings, as well as set a good example for them to follow.

Participant (White): *“But when ah, when you said that uh, like a, a boy is meant to look after the girl, like let’s say a brother and sister go out and your parents say to the guy that, you know, please look after your sister or something and then the sister sees the, the brother drinking and everything and then she, she’ll think ah, if he’s allowed to do it then why can’t I do it, and then I think she’ll probably try it...”*

In general, it also seems that the participants are very much aware of double standards that exist between the genders in terms of alcohol use and other risk behaviours. While boys see themselves as “players”, and use alcohol to enhance their masculinity this begins a process by which boys are allowed to learn how to do so “responsibly” and therefore learn from their

mistakes. This implies that they are “allowed” to make mistakes so that they can learn. However this process is not allowed for girls, who are expected to “protect” themselves and, it seems, are not allowed to make mistakes as these will not be forgotten, and will negatively affect her future.

Participant (White): *“I really think that, for the fact that the reason why our parents think that if a guy would drink right, that wouldn’t be more trouble, I think it’s because of the fact that the role that boys are supposed to play in the society, the thing is we have to be responsible at a young age, you know, because in the future we’re going to learn from our mistakes. Normally for a girl, I mean I’m not saying it’s bad but when a girl is messed up in her, in her teenage years and then everybody knows her by that and she’s been doing this and that, obviously no one will get, would want to like date her and all this stuff, they’ll say no she’s sloppy and all this, she’s done this and that, and it will be hard for her to get a guy, you know. And then her parents will obviously be disappointed because of the mistakes she’s done in the past and obviously a guy, he can start from scratch. So I think it’s a lot easier for a guy to go out there with all those things he’s done and he’s forgotten about them, but for a girl it’s kind of difficult, you know, influencing their future.”*

From the data it emerged that girls are highly influential when it comes to endorsing a masculine identity linked to alcohol use among boys. Although it appears that alcohol is used in an effort to appear more masculine and therefore make themselves attractive to the opposite sex, boys have to negotiate strict boundaries between pushing their limits in order to impress girls while simultaneously maintain their dignity.

Participant (White): *“No I think the girls that do like it, it’s cool for a while but when they see the guy sleeping on the pavement or something they’re not gonna, they’re gonna laugh at the guy.”*

Participant (White): *“...chicks they also like guys that are also like responsible, you know you, I’m sure, you know chicks don’t mind if your boyfriend has one or two drinks but you know you don’t want him vomiting every weekend...”*

The masculine identity linked to alcohol use is also desirable as this determines which males are at an advantage with females, as well as who is more dominant amongst other males.

Participant (White): *“And like also some of the guys that drink, they get the better girls, than the nerds that don’t drink and they don’t get anything...but, it’s, it’s almost sort of like lions, I mean, the males are trying to be well, like dominant, they want to show that, that, that they are out there, I mean it’s sort of also with fighting as well cause they want to show that I can beat you up, I’m better than you, I’m stronger than you, it’s all about dominance, we want to be known and we want to, you know, show people what, what we can do....it’s what guys do.”*

Therefore, it appears that for some boys being masculine and showing social dominance is about being responsible and mature, and knowing their limits. While for some boys this means that they abstain from alcohol altogether it seems that for others using alcohol is acceptable but must occur within specific boundaries, as is demonstrated by the excerpts below.

Participant (White): *“...a real man would have like the courage to say no like, I don’t want to drink....”*

Participant (White): *“It’s ok if you act like, mature about it, cause if you have a drink and you know you’re going to get drunk that night, you mustn’t go around and do stupid, not, acting immature, go around and like, start being a vandal and what have you, you know, that’s just not socially acceptable obviously and ja, it’s just control it a bit better.”*

The ability to control their behaviour is the difference between what is acceptable and unacceptable, with transgressions of acceptable behaviour such as the engagement in vandalism and other “immature” actions described as “stupid”.

For boys who choose not to engage in alcohol use, it appears that they then often assume a role of responsibility and maturity within their peer group. This seems to be accepted and even encouraged as they are able to take care of the rest of the group when they are drinking.

Participant (Black): *“Well my friends don’t mind that I don’t drink, in fact they like it because then they know they can drink and get totally smashed and I’ll be there to clean up after them. Cause like...if I don’t go to a party with them, they’ll come back looking pretty sober, but if I go with them then I’m like the daddy-carer or whatever, I take care of them and stuff.”*

Participant (White): *“...at least I’m checking out all my friends and you guys can have a good time and it’s on me. And then I tell you if you do that, your friends really look up to you and wanna go out with you even more, like don’t like push you into it but like hold you back and like appreciate you for what you’re doing.”*

*Emotional distress and self-esteem.*

Many boys identified emotional distress as being a possible contributing factor compelling the use and abuse of alcohol during adolescence. Alcohol use is described as an outlet for the various stressors experienced by adolescents, whether these are school problems, family problems, depression or low self esteem. It therefore appears that alcohol is used as a coping strategy by many adolescents in order for them to deal with many problems that they may encounter while growing up.

Participant (White): *“Also stress. Like stress with school, people always want to chill or whatever, go have a drink to relieve the pain.”*

Participant (Black): *“But, but alcohol isn’t always about having fun. I mean some people, when they...ja, heavily depressed, they also take alcohol to sort of ja, ease the pain and like make it easier for them to go through.”*

Participant (Black): *“Well I had a friend who used to get drunk for some psychological reason, I don’t know what it was, but he passed away last year cause he kept on complaining about how much, ok, his family didn’t care about him and stuff, and then his sister always kept him in the house cause when he got drunk he’d always cause fights and problems...”*

Alcohol is commonly used as a confidence booster or “Dutch courage” which enables boys to interact socially in a more confident manner and to be less self-conscious. They find they are able to dance, talk to girls and generally behave in a more outgoing way.

Participant (White): *“Ja, I think it’s for security reasons as well. You feel better approaching people and talking to them when you’re under the influence and stuff like that.”*

Participant (White): *“I think it could also be just like a form of bottled confidence, cause like people do it, they’ll have one or two to like gain confidence to do something...”*

Interaction with girls often provokes the most anxiety for adolescent boys and they therefore use alcohol for numerous reasons – to gain confidence, to make themselves look more mature and masculine. The pressure to drink is especially powerful if girls are also using alcohol, as this is supposed to be a masculine activity and boys therefore feel that they have to meet this expectation.

Participant (White): *“No also if you see a girl drinking you think that she’ll only like you if she knows that you drink. And you end up drinking because she’ll think you’re more fun and stuff.”*

Participant (White): *“Some types of guys like to have a shot of something first before they go meet up with a girl. They’ll have more confidence. They like, can go up to her and dance. But if I don’t drink anything, I have to think about what I’m going to say. But if I drink, I don’t have to do that.”*

#### ***Alcohol use in alleviating boredom and sensation-seeking.***

From the data it emerged that for many adolescents, engagement in alcohol use often appears to arise out of boredom and a desire to be constantly entertained and have fun.

Participant (Coloured): *“It’s to create some fun, when you got nothing else to do...you start drinking and stuff.”*

Participant (White): *“So we don’t like try to get drunk, it’s just how we have fun...”*

Adolescents have a low boredom threshold and at times engage in risky behaviours out of a desire to purposefully defy social rules or regulations. For younger adolescents in particular the risk of engaging in illicit or illegal behaviours increases the excitement and appeal of such activities. This may be even more prevalent in those adolescents who have sensation-seeking personality traits.

Participant 5 (White): *“Also when you older it’s like, when you’re older it’s not as fun.”*

Participant 6 (White): *“Ja because you’re not doing it on the sly or where you have to take a drink and go around the corner and drink it and then come out and then ja...that’s what you’ve been doing. It’s not on the sly like when you over eighteen then it’s like ja, whatever, you can do it if you want to.”*

Participant 3 (White): *“Ja, it’s like going to the shop and getting a coke, it’s like just the same thing.”*

In addition to this, problematic decision-making skills during adolescence make teenagers more likely to underestimate the risks involved in such behaviours and to view alcohol use as purely a pleasurable activity. This leaves them vulnerable to greater risks associated with alcohol use which may cause them physical harm.

Participant (Black): *“Ja your mind, it’s happened to plenty guys before. Because you just have a good time and it’s like, all your endorphins like and you just like yeah,*

*adrenaline and it's like woo-hoo, I'm drunk, yeah, let's go jump off a building or something."*

### **Interpersonal factors.**

#### ***Parental influence.***

From the data it emerged that parents generally seem to be accepting that their adolescent boys will use alcohol at some stage during their teenage years, and that this behaviour appears to be acceptable within reasonable limits.

Participant (White): *"I think it depends on the father, like my dad lets me drink fine, like he has no problem with me having drinks just as long as I keep myself under control...I think it's up to what kind of parent you have."*

Parents are also much more accepting of alcohol use by sons rather than daughters. They appear to view this as a rite of passage for boys to engage in, and are supportive of this progression into adulthood.

Participant (White): *"Like, like my parents when I'm at home they say ja, you can drink, not, not obviously not going overboard and say ja, have one or two and only when like, when we have a braai, a get-together or whatever they'll say ja here, you can have a drink, get one for your mates as well and it's fine. But if my sister had to, ok my sister's seventeen and I'm sixteen, my sister had to ask it would be a different story, she's not allowed. And I, it's, it's not like, that's the only thing that she's like, I don't want to say downgraded to, cause I mean, that's the only thing that she's not allowed to do that I am. And, I don't know why, I don't know what it is, but that's just ja, um, I don't know."*

It also seems that drinking alcohol is more accepted by parents than other risk behaviours such as smoking cigarettes or using other substances.

Participant (Coloured): *“See like you, you’d be more comfortable going and telling your parents that you had a drink than, than that you had a smoke.”*

Participant (White): *“Ja well like my mom never had a problem with me drinking when I told her but when I told her that I was smoking, she made out like it was this big deal, like you shouldn’t do this and that, but I could drink as much as I want, but I, when it came to like, smoking like a packet a day, she used to like, have this big problem, and I could be wasted out of my mind with drink and she wouldn’t mind.”*

From the data it emerged that the majority of adolescent boys and their parents perceive the consequences of smoking to be much worse than the consequences of alcohol use. It appears that consequences of smoking also seem to be more well-known and are perceived to be more “real” and more serious than the possible outcomes related to alcohol use, perhaps due to extensive anti-tobacco legislation.

Participant (White): *“Ja but I think more people drink when they smoke, I think cause, cause your parents would definitely have a big thing about smoking and really there’s a huge effect of smoking, you see the coughing, a lot of people do, it’s just got this, all these things have a big effect on people, it’s seems more real than the things you can get from drinking.”*

Participant (Black): *“And also on the smoking boxes now they tell you the like what’s gonna happen the repercussions, but on a bottle of beer they don’t tell you that your kidneys gonna fail when you fifty or something.”*

However some participants did recognize that the consequences of alcohol use are generally more immediate whereas the consequences of smoking are generally more long-term.

Participant (White): *“...I rate, parents need to think about, about it in that perspective cause I mean, if you smoke, ja, as I say, nothing can happen to you, if you drink you can go out, get hurt, if you, if you drink behind your parents back you can maybe get in a car with someone that’s been drinking and he has a car accident and you die and, or you get badly injured or I mean, that, that’s why I say drinking’s more, so it’s worse than ah, smoking.”*

While parents seem accepting of alcohol use by their adolescent boys, they prefer their children to drink in the home so that they are able to supervise them and also ensure that their behaviour is somewhat contained.

Participant (Black): *“But then like you’re finding a lot more parents are starting to accept that their children drink, and they’d rather their children drink in the house than they go somewhere else and get drunk and do something stupid, and get arrested for underage drinking and stuff...”*

However, it appears that parental monitoring of adolescent behaviour is often poor and the home is seen to provide easy access to alcohol for under-age adolescents.

Participant (Coloured): *“Ja, I think it does start in the home because sometimes at first the parents don’t know, like, if you sleep over at your friend’s house and your dad’s got a secret stash or whatever...you end up going for it at some stage.”*

Participant (White): *“Ja people, people will go and steal it out of their parents fridge or out of their big like cabinets, hidden you know, somewhere or something like that.”*

The data indicates that the influence of parental behaviour is extremely powerful, and can influence adolescent alcohol use in two ways. Adolescents described instances where explicit parental alcohol use directly influences their thoughts and behaviour around alcohol. It appears that alcohol abuse by parents may affect adolescent alcohol use in that boys model parental behaviour, and also use alcohol either as a tool in rebelling against their parents and/or as a strategy to cope with family problems.

Participant (Coloured): *“It’s also our parents as well, um, cause we see them drinking so we think it’s ok to do it because they’re doing it so we end up doing it as well.”*

Participant (Black): *“...you could say that because a mother or father are alcoholics, he’s got no other choice, that’s how he escapes from it so he, it’s that, he drinks from that...that’s the reason why he goes out and doesn’t listen to his parents and drinks...”*

Although parental behaviour regarding alcohol use appears to be highly influential, parental alcohol abuse was mentioned as a major deterrent for adolescents engaging in alcohol use.

Participant (Black): *“Also, like, to make some people drink you, I mean, some people don’t drink, you probably find that at their homes their father or their mother might be an alcoholic, or even a brother or a sister, and they don’t want to turn out like them so that stops them from drinking...”*

The influence of parental behaviour, particularly that of **fathers**, is therefore apparent. It emerged from the data that adolescents model not only parental risk behaviour, but also behaviours that actively involve not using alcohol. It appears that fathers can be extremely

positive role models and many boys spoke about wanting to live up to their fathers' expectations of them, and not to disappoint them.

Participant (Black): *“Basically I don’t drink because my dad doesn’t drink...and like, he hasn’t, he’s never touched a drop of alcohol. And I think of it as if he could do it why can’t I?”*

Participant (Black): *“...if I was to ah, rock up at home sloshed out of my mind, what would my father say, what would I expect my father to do or say, because I’ve never seen him drunk so ah, it’s just the fear of disappointing him...”*

Fathers are seen as playing a pivotal role in disciplining their sons, both directly and indirectly. Mothers are seen as more accepting and forgiving of risky behaviour, while fathers are viewed as the primary disciplinarians and as the parent that boys would be most afraid to disappoint.

Participant (Coloured): *“Ja well like, like with me, if I go out and start drinking I’ll make sure it’s my mother opening the gate cause if my father opens the gate I know I’m getting slapped back outside and then I’ll have to come home the next day so hey um...if like, fathers play a big role hey...you’re like scared of your father, but like if it’s your mother it’s just like ah whatever and you go to sleep.”*

The majority of participants felt a strong desire to make their parents proud and to repay them for the opportunities they have been given by achieving their goals. This may be a protective factor as they generally seemed to view alcohol use as a potential obstacle to the achievement of future goals.

Participant (Black): “...*at times you just ask for so much and then you come back and like, you’re drunk at home and like that’s when your parents like get like really disappointed with you because they feel like you’re never going to reach your goals or anything.*”

Although religiosity has often been cited as a protective factor (Nielsen, 1996; Parry et al., 2004) it appears that there are tendencies for even those boys who profess to follow a certain religion to often use alcohol.

Participant (Black): “...*if you like ask a Christian guy, cause some guys come to SCA, and on the weekends you’ll come, you’ll see them, drunk out of their minds and when you ask the guy, hey bro, why do you drink? You’re intoxicating your body and your body’s your temple and whatever...and the guy will be like, no dude, Jesus used to drink wine so why shouldn’t I, and don’t you take holy communion, what’s wrong with you?*”

### ***Peer influence.***

From the data, it was evident that the peer group is the most pivotal influencing factor on adolescent alcohol use. Alcohol use is related to peer pressure in several ways. Firstly, through direct pressure and influence by friends and secondly, through a need to compete with one another whereby boys feel they have to fight to be seen as most masculine or dominant within the group. It appears that boys who are willing to take risks and engage in risky behaviour become the dominant or “alpha” males amongst their peers while boys who are unwilling to engage in such behaviour often being bullied or possibly even ostracized from the group.

Participant (White): *Just the way your friends also look at it, if you go out and I know it happens in my group of friends, go out and someone says no we don't want to drink or whatever, then they'll start to like tune the ou like you're a lightweight, look at you, you can't handle and whatever.*

In addition, the peer group provides a sense of security by which boys can judge the behaviour of themselves and others and choose to fit in with the group by conforming to such behaviour. Thus, engaging in risky behaviour when with friends builds a sense of connection and bonds between each individual, establishing a sense of belonging which is pivotal during adolescence.

Participant (White): *You try to stand out, but you won't ever do it when you by yourself, you will only do it when you with friends.*

Participant (Coloured): *I don't, I don't, think it's this whole thing about having someone with you, you know, I mean I don't drink on my own, it's no fun, it's like it doesn't seem to have much point to it."*

Participant (White): *"...people are just going to buy it so they can take it and say look I've got a beer, I, I can fit in with everybody..."*

For some boys, this desire to fit in is so strong that the participants have told stories about boys behaving as if they are drunk even though they were only tricked into thinking they were drinking alcohol:

Participant (Coloured): *“No we did that to a guy once, we put like a bit of Jack on the rim of the glass or something, and by the end of the night he was legless, but mean time he was just been drinking Coke.”*

Although there is a lot of peer pressure to drink alcohol and engage in risk behaviours, some boys also feel that they are unfairly judged for this behaviour as they view it to be normal. However, they also feel that those boys who do not engage in risk behaviours in moderation then go on to be more affected by it at a later stage. It seems that there is a sense that engaging in risk behaviours such as alcohol or cigarette use is inevitable, and that learning to drink with your peers is in some ways a protective factor as boys are able to moderate their behaviour to fit in with their friends.

Participant (Black): *“Ja, I once knew a guy like that too, he was so negative when it comes to like people, drinking people, smoking people, as soon as he started drinking and smoking he became like an alkie and like he wouldn’t want to hang around with me anymore he wanted to be with the cool ou’s and it was like look at this guy, he doesn’t know how to handle himself...”*

Instances of bullying and victimisation were reported by the participants in the study, and this appears to be done more to boys who are perceived as less masculine and who do not endorse masculine ideals to the same extent as their peers.

Participant 2 (White): *“I think that also one of the things of it is ah, people, there are also guys that spike other guys drinks just to...”*

Participant 4 (Indian): *“Just to see how funny it is.”*

Participant 6 (White): *“But it’s also a funny thing. If, if you get the pill you gonna...ok, it’s never happened, well I’ve never seen it. Just put it in a mindset like, if you’ve got, if one of your mates has one of the pills and you go come it’s go give it to whatever it is and see what it does to him, or, or the more ‘lightie’ guy in the group, or the more guy, the guy that doesn’t stand out as much as the rest...”*

Participant 3 (White): *“Not as macho.”*

But although the data suggests that the peer group encourages alcohol use among adolescents, in some cases friends are also able to accept and respect their non-drinking peers.

Participant 3 (White): *“It depends on who your friends are, if they understand then they’re better friends, or if they those kind of guys who are just going to make you do it.”*

Participant 2 (White): *“No but if he’s a true friend then he’ll understand that you’ve got commitments and that you believe that drinking’s not the right thing to do.”*

### **Contextual Factors.**

#### ***Media influence.***

Boys appear to be highly influenced by the media, particularly advertising on billboards and television. Alcohol is represented in the media as an indicator of status and success, and also symbolizes fun and enjoyment.

Participant (Black): *“...if you walk down West Street, on the buildings there’s like big billboards and on Umgeni Road and like, basically in the locations, on the highway to the Bluff there’s like three or four, uh, alcohol adverts and stuff...and people see that and like cause they associate high class living with alcohol and people want to escape*

*their surroundings or they wanna drink to seem more posh or whatever, like they living more lavish lives....”*

Participant (Coloured): *“Yeah, on tv you see the people having a good time drinking so you think the same thing is gonna happen with you...”*

### ***Music Videos.***

Music videos are also influential, particularly those which associate alcohol with wealth and luxurious lifestyles – boys want to model themselves after music icons and therefore emulate their lifestyles in achievable ways i.e., through the alcohol they drink.

Participant (Black): *“And I know most of us here like hip hop and rock and stuff, and out of every like five music videos there’s at least three where you see some brand of alcohol being advertised...”*

The type and brand of alcohol is seen as a representation of the self and the type of person you would like to be. Expensive whiskey and brandy is associated with being serious, wealthy or superior, while beers and ciders are associated with fun, celebration and humour. Therefore although for some boys drinking alcohol is about relaxing with friends and being mature and grownup, for other boys, alcohol is seen as something to spend money on and therefore establish their reputation.

Participant (White): *“...the Miller advert...the one where you just, you see it parties everywhere, different countries, , you don’t see no one sloshed, you just check people having fun with a Miller in their hand, sexy women, nice guys, all that stuff you think ah, I’d love to be there, do that type of thing.”*

Participant 1 (Black): *“...the fish eagle it’s calm and the eagle takes the fish at the end, and it’s like Fish Eagle, naturally superior cause like...”*

Participant 3 (White): *“Nothing can stop it...”*

Participant 1: *“...it’s the eagle, ja. And people will be like, I’m naturally superior that’s, that’s me right there, and it’s associated, people associate a certain personality with a certain type of alcohol.”*

Things that are exotic or not African are seen as being superior and are associated with wealth as they are generally more expensive e.g., Irish whiskey. Boys who are able to afford such luxuries are therefore given higher status than their peers, which improves their social standing.

Participant 1(Black): *“And there’s this other one though, the Jameson one, it doesn’t say, it doesn’t say much at all, it just shows you the picture and it says Irish Whiskey’ and it’s like woah!”*

Faciliator: *“So it, so what does it make you think?”*

Participant 1: *“Woah! It’s not very African... Ja it’s like this is from a culture that’s like another...it’s just like Irish whiskey, where does this Irish stuff come from, I don’t know about Irish, it’s like an island...”*

Expensive alcoholic beverages are therefore associated with a particular “stylish” identity which is created by the media. Adolescents therefore act out the identity through their behaviour in regards to alcohol use. Many adolescent boys therefore use expensive alcohol products as a way to give themselves prestige and status amongst their peers. They spend large amounts of money on expensive brands of alcohol and on buying drinks for their peers and they believe this demonstrates to others that they have money to spend and are generous.

Generally the influence of the media is linked to the extent of the identification with particular personality characteristics.

Participant (Black): *“Yeah, it’s just for the good life, we know what we have and we all just spend it like cash, cash, spending the cash, it makes you feel good, like yeah, yeah, I spent like R200 last night, what happened? And I drank it all, like God, I spent so much cash and then I start getting happy because I spent cash.”*

Participant (Black): *“It’s like a status, you’ve got money to spend...So it makes you, it makes you look like you’ve got money.”*

During our discussion advertisements showing the effects of alcohol use such as drunken driving advertisement campaigns were discussed, and the participants generally felt that these were ineffectual.

Participant (Black): *“I’d like to see an ad where they really exposed the truth of alcohol. Like if they actually showed guys like hanging outside of the window of a car, he’s like drunk or about to crash or something, I’d like to see that more and see how many people still want to drink after that.”*

### ***Legislation.***

Boys described alcohol as exceptionally easy to obtain either directly from liquor stores or clubs. Underage drinking appears not to be seen as a social problem and is not highly monitored.

Participant (Coloured): *“You can still get drink, cause those, those guys go together to those bottle stores, cause they usually have saloons there...the guy will buy a couple of packs of cigarettes, you know build a relationship with the guy selling and*

*basically after a while the guy will be like hey dude just sell me a beer quick, it's for my uncle I promise and the guys like, after a while guys are like ok..."*

In addition, alcohol is much more socially accepted than other forms of substance use, such as illicit drugs or even cigarettes. Alcohol advertising and sponsorship is still prevalent which is in sharp contrast to the increasingly strict national legislation regarding smoking. From the data it emerged that alcohol use is strongly associated with events such as national sports in the minds of most adolescent boys.

Participant (Black): *"Ja, national pride is a factor cause well, I mean, Castle sponsors the Springboks...so then if we, it's like basically if you lose, let's go drown our sorrows, if we win, let's go celebrate."*

### **Consequences of adolescent alcohol use.**

Although the data indicates that many boys see the consequences of alcohol use in a joking light and do not take them seriously, a number of consequences of alcohol use were identified and discussed during the focus group conversations.

### ***Health risks.***

The participants in the study mentioned various health risks, one of which is "alcohol poisoning" resulting from binge drinking.

Participant (White): *"When I was at a club, the guy got so intoxicated that like he passed out, and he ended up getting up and then he walked outside and he passed out again...so they had to get the ambulance and he had to go to hospital and get his stomach pumped..."*

Incidents of drunken driving and **motor vehicle accidents** were also identified as being problematic amongst adolescent boys.

Participant (Black): *“Like that, that, that’s basically how I learned to drive, cause you get there and the guy who drove you to the party is just smashed, and he gives you the keys and he’s like dude just get us home in one piece, I can’t drive, I’ll probably kill us all. You think to yourself, I don’t wanna die...”*

From the data it emerged that most boys are aware of the consequences of engaging in **risky sexual behaviour**.

Participant (White): *“...for both guys and girls you can contract like HIV/AIDS or some other kind of STDs or whatever you what to call it...”*

However, some boys view alcohol use as a tool to try and ensure that this does happen, and will even set out to intentionally use alcohol to reduce inhibitions. At least it does however appear that they are willing to protect themselves by using condoms.

Participant (White): *“Ja you get the Bacardi and then you get the condoms and then it’s straight into the pants or whatever.”*

From the data it emerged that alcohol is still considered to be a **gateway drug**, and that it increases vulnerability both to increased alcohol dependence and also to other types of substances and drugs.

Participant 2 (Black): *“But the alcohol is also like ah, a gateway thing cause like um, I know guys who are like ah, you’re still a child dude, why you drinking Coke, you’re supposed to drink man. And the guy take like a beer, he drinks a beer, and he’s like ok now I want something and he drinks more and more and more...”*

Participant 5 (Coloured): *“...and after a while alcohol doesn't do anything for him anymore, he turns to like ah, the beers don't satisfy him anymore, then he goes to drugs and other stuff like that...”*

Participant (White): *“...when you do drink, like, you might have people around you who will start offering you other stuff besides alcohol like drugs and stuff...”*

Participant (White): *“...drinking leads to other drug use, like for example so far, say for example, um, when you start smoking sooner or later you will start smoking weed, then from weed you start taking ecstasy and all that...”*

Drinking alcohol also seems to be strongly associated with smoking, with many boys alternating between alcohol and cigarette use, or using both simultaneously.

Participant (White): *“...from like what I've seen my friends doing...a lot of them drink and then they smoke only if they're drinking. During the day they won't smoke, but only when they drink.”*

Participant (White): *“...like let's say people do drink and smoke at the same time, and then they might stop, they might stop drinking because...just for their own reason, they might stop drinking but then you'll find they'll start smoking more, or the other way round...”*

Awareness of future health risks, such as **permanent organ damage**, that are associated with alcohol use was generally good although boys do not seem to know the specific effects that

alcohol has on particular organs in the body. Being aware of these consequences was even cited as a possible protective factor.

Participant (Black): *“Ja other people they also they don’t drink because of the whole thing that it can destroy your kidneys and they’re too scared to have that happen in their life later on...”*

Participant (White): *“I mean like usually we drink, we drink for years and years and years, then you start having problems with your pancreas and your liver and kidneys and stuff.”*

**Addiction** to alcohol was discussed briefly during the focus groups and although the boys seemed to recognize that this was a serious topic, they tended to discuss it in a light-hearted manner.

Participant (White): *“...and then you get okes that honestly they, they would drink for breakfast, if you know what I’m saying...drink in their cereal or something like that [laughter] and then like, you, you look at them and you like where are you going in life and you do this even when you, you got a wife and kids at home and stuff like that.”*

### ***Social risks.***

The participants in this study spoke about **inappropriate and antisocial behaviours** that emerge when adolescent boys drink alcohol. These behaviours range from low-grade vandalism to serious verbal and physical confrontations. However most of these behaviours are seen in a disapproving light.

Participant (Black): *“So most of the stuff that happens at night like, people think ah that’s why we’ve got such hectic security systems, cause ah, people play ah, mailbox, um, baseball. It happens in South Africa, you go hitting things, or they’ll ah, buy eggs and throw them...”*

Participant (Coloured): *“Just like doing things that you wouldn’t usually do. Like um, like sometimes you can have someone that’s like close to you that you say something to that you wouldn’t usually say to them...and that’s not so fun.”*

**Fighting** is seen as one of the major and most common consequences of alcohol use amongst adolescent boys. The participants described instances where a fight would occur by accident amongst two or more boys who have been drinking, or may occur on purpose where a boy may get drunk in order to have an excuse for or become confident enough to start a fight.

Participant 6: *“Ja, cause you check two guys, maybe the one’s a bit drunk and the other ou’s like hasn’t even touched anything that night. The one ou will start, the drunk ou, it’s normally the drunk ou who starts...”*

Participant 3: *“Going on and chirping...”*

Participant 6: *“He starts with the guy that hasn’t been drinking and then that’s how the fights always start and people looking stupid and whatever...”*

Participant 1 (Black): *“Or he hits on his girlfriend.”*

Participant 9 (Black): *“And someone will always declare barroom rules or something, like one guy will start fighting and then, the guys friends who, they’ll see him getting beaten up will jump in as well, and then it will just be one huge brawl.”*

Participants spoke about the **legal consequences** of underage drinking as being of concern, but these were generally not thought out or discussed in detail, merely mentioned.

Participant (White): *“Going to jail, getting arrested, ja.”*

It emerged from the data that boys generally appear to be casual about the effect of alcohol use on **school performance**. Although it seems that boys are aware that alcohol has an effect on their academic performance, they are only willing to compensate for this during exam time and when they are under extra pressure work hard.

Participant (White): *“But it’s also like that cause, there’s this certain times that guys will remain sober for like a month, like I’ll tell you last term guys didn’t touch, they were dry as a bone for those, that exam period, but afterwards you saw all of them gone the whole holidays.”*

Participant (Black): *“Ja you better enjoy yourself now you know, it’s grade eleven, it’s grade ten, it’s grade eleven, just get sloshed, matric’s no joke dude, honestly...then the day after you finish your last exam ou’s are gone!”*

Boys who do engage in binge drinking are particularly vulnerable to instances of **victimization and bullying** by their peers as while under the influence of alcohol they are more vulnerable and unable to defend themselves.

Participant (Black): *“I know, um, I don’t drink because I mean, I’ve been to a lot of parties and stuff, and I’ve seen what the guys are capable of when they’re drunk, and I don’t want to see myself in that type of situation...cause um, there was this one party that I went to with a friend, and this one guy got drunk and passed out, and they got*

*shaving cream and cigarette butts, and they stuck the shaving cream on his face and put the cigarette butts on him and took a photo and posted it on the net...”*

***Perceived alcohol risk and vulnerability.***

Overall there does however appear to be poor insight regarding the possible consequences as most adolescent boys feel that they are invulnerable to these outcomes.

Participant (Coloured): *“But I mean, we mostly drink while we’re young, I mean cause our, we’re young, our bodies can take it, I mean what as soon as you get older, we end up going through like liver failures and everything, so we try, we try to have as much fun while we’re young and we can handle it.”*

Participant (White): *“...there’s no harm in doing it, you’re going to do it, I mean if you feel safe and you can handle it...people can tell you otherwise but you’re still gonna do it at the end of the day.”*

However, for some boys the extent to which the consequences of alcohol use worries them is dependent on the perceived degree of seriousness and whether they are willing to engage in more risky behaviour.

Participant (Coloured): *“Ja but you get guys who they know the consequences but they still do it, it doesn’t worry them at the time.”*

Participant (White): *“It depends on how big it is. Like some things for me, it’s like ja, it could happen, but like, it doesn’t worry me.”*

Participant (White): *“...I used to never tend to worry about that kind of stuff because I, I don’t purposely go out and look for a fight or I don’t go ah, like riding my friend’s motorbike while I’m extremely drunk and I tend to look after myself when I’ve been drinking and I hang around with crowds of friends that will look after me. So I don’t really worry about that kind of stuff cause I don’t get involved in it.”*

Although this was not discussed in detail, not all boys perceive themselves as invulnerable to the consequences of alcohol use, and some do choose not to drink because of a personal bad experience with alcohol.

Participant (White): *“Sometimes people don’t drink because something bad happened to them...ja, that could like change a person, so that’s, that’s true about drinking.”*

The participants in the study also mentioned that most adolescent boys do not engage in alcohol use in a recreational manner or for enjoyment, but purposefully set out to binge drink and get as drunk as possible. They feel that this awareness is something that comes with age and experience.

Participant (White): *“I know a lot of boys and like when they’re underage drinking, they’re just doing it just to get drunk. They don’t actually, like understand that you’re meant to be having fun as well.”*

Generally girls are also seen as being much more vulnerable to the dangers associated with alcohol use than are boys.

Participant (White): *“Ja alcohol helps like predators and stuff like, on a serious note. Because like people just, basically the girls cause like guys spike drinks and stuff cause like girls try to look cool and drink with guys and taking a drink, and guys are*

*buying her drinks and she doesn't know which drink comes from who, you know, and there might be a dirty old geezer sitting at the corner there, waiting for her to consume everything and then afterwards, he takes her home and does freaky things with her and then she doesn't know what's happened."*

Participant (White): *"...cause for guys if they get drunk and stuff, it's like you know like, you pass out or something but girls can like get taken advantage of or like they're a lot more vulnerable when they're drunk than when they're not."*

Consequences such as pregnancy are also seen as mainly being girls' problems.

Participant (Coloured): *"Like if a girl's drunk or whatever and a ou can just take advantage of her and stuff, if she was, if she feels...next thing she's pregnant and she doesn't know who the father is or anything and, and obviously the guy's not going to own up to it and hey listen, I'm probably the father and stuff."*

### **Protective Factors**

Apart from the well-documented influence of parents and friends, several other issues also emerged as possible protective factors against adolescent alcohol use.

#### **School connectedness.**

The school is also seen as an integral part of a boy's identity.

Participant 3 (White): *"It's like your tribe type of thing..."*

Participant 6 (Black): *"Basically, no it's not school, but I mean it's you cause you're part of that, and you don't want that to be degraded or anything."*

Participant 3 (White): *"It's like your dignity."*

### **Sport.**

From the data it emerged that involvement and success in school sports can be a protective factor against alcohol use and abuse. This is because boys who excel at sports are often respected and can use their sport and training as an acceptable excuse not to drink alcohol.

Participant (White): *“...I know quite a few of the first team guys, and I know some of them do drink and it does, ah, what I see it definitely doesn't affect their rugby cause they play exactly the same whether they do or don't. And um...I think the reason maybe that if they, I, I rate if they had to say no we're not drinking tonight or whatever, I think other okes would follow them cause I mean they look up to them...”*

However, sports are also associated with alcohol use through sponsorship, and also because sport is often associated with masculine ideals, therefore there are also often expectations of alcohol use linked with sports events.

Participant (White): *“That's the same as on the rugby field, like when the guys have just played a hard game and they come off and they're like ah, I'm, I'm amped for a nice beer now or something like that...”*

Participant (Black): *“Hey those Jaguar ou's and those ou's that play rugby in Durban, those rugby clubs...at half time you don't have water or those energy drinks, it's just like ah give me a beer!”*

### **Sense of future.**

A sense of planning for the future was often mentioned by participants in the study and these expectations by the self and by others were identified as being critical protective factors against alcohol use amongst adolescent boys.

Participant (Black): *“Maybe someone will have got self-respect for themselves. So then, maybe they see themselves going high in life maybe, by not drinking.”*

Boys who have this ambition and desire to be successful are often respected by their peers and are not pressured into engaging in alcohol use.

Participant (Black): *“They give them respect, like ja. At least you know that this guy he knows what, he knows what he’s looking for, ja, and alcohol is not what he’s looking for.”*

## **Chapter Five**

### **Discussion**

Adolescence as a developmental phase is associated with increased engagement in risky behaviours, particularly alcohol use and binge drinking, as supported by various other studies (Reddy et al., 2003; Parry et al., 2004). Areas of concern include the incidence of alcohol use among adolescents which has been found to be progressively increasing, as well as the progressively younger age of initiation into drinking (Reddy et al., 2003). This study therefore explored the psychosocial determinants of alcohol use and abuse amongst adolescent boys with the primary objectives of the study being to examine the influence of family members and peers; the impact of risk images found in the media; the role of gendered social norms and wider forms of social influence, such as religiosity on adolescent alcohol use. This study also explored insight into possible consequences of adolescent alcohol use, and the boys' perceived vulnerability to these negative consequences.

#### **Factors related to Alcohol Use among Adolescents**

##### **Intrapersonal factors**

##### *Culture and race.*

It became apparent from the focus group discussions that various intrapersonal factors are highly influential in determining whether or not adolescent boys will engage in alcohol use, and to what extent. Firstly, it appeared that culture plays an important role in promoting either alcohol use or abstinence, as cultural practices either incorporated or prohibited the use of alcohol. From the findings, it seems that learners from all cultural groups appeared to be susceptible to alcohol use during adolescence. Although this differs from the results of the South African Youth Risk Behaviour Survey 2002 (Reddy et al., 2003) which indicated that

significantly more "White" (86.0%) and "Coloured" learners (66.0%) had ever experimented with alcohol in comparison with "African" learners, this finding may reflect more recent behavioural patterns which, as they develop in a multilevel social context, are impacted by a range of interpersonal relationships and societal-level structural constraints and cultural traditions (Bjarnason et al., 2003). Thus it appears that the impact of societal-level alcohol culture is increasing amongst different ethnic groups.

### ***Masculine identity and gender.***

The findings in this study indicate that masculine identity plays a major role in adolescent alcohol use and abuse. Alcohol is viewed as a symbol of adolescence and its initiation linked to the progression from childhood to adulthood. The initiation of alcohol use is therefore seen by many adolescent boys as being the marker between these two life phases, and is something that is eagerly anticipated as it validates their journey into manhood. Associated with this is a desire to conform to stereotypical adolescent behaviour patterns which embrace risk. It also appears that many boys feel that they need to live up to the "reputation" of how a typical teenage boy should be behaving.

Alcohol use and particularly binge drinking seems to form the foundation of accepted masculine ideals for adolescent boys. It is therefore evident that adolescent boys are embracing these beliefs about health and risk behaviours in order to demonstrate hegemonic masculine ideals that clearly establish them as men (Courtenay, 2000). As boys have been reported to experience comparatively greater social pressure than girls to endorse gendered societal norms such as those linked to health-related beliefs which promote the idea of men as being autonomous and physically dominant (McCreary et al., 2005), boys who are willing to engage in binge drinking and who are able to drink large amounts of alcohol are seen as

“cool” and are allocated higher status than boys who do not and who are therefore seen as “wimps”.

However, in direct contrast to this discourse around masculinity and risk behaviour, emerged an alternative concept of men as *protectors* whereby they feel that they are responsible for the safety of others, particularly women. This concept is prominent in gender ideology research which has found that the traditional division of labour in heterosexual relationships prescribes that men act as protectors and providers (Eastwick et al., 2006). Boys identified this responsibility as an important aspect of masculinity as it is a role that they are taught by their fathers and are therefore expected uphold by ensuring the safety of and setting an example for their girlfriends and siblings.

It therefore seems that boys are often given ambivalent messages in regard to alcohol use. The boys feel that there is an expectation for them to “bend the rules” and engage in risky behaviour, and believe that this is an important step towards gaining masculinity and that they should be allowed to make mistakes in order to learn acceptable behaviour. However, they also feel that they are expected to be “responsible” and set a good example for others. Therefore while masculinity is largely defined in opposition to positive health behaviours and beliefs (Courtenay, 2000), it seems that this is not without its limitations.

It appears that these ambivalent messages also extend into the relationships between adolescent girls and boys. Although girls seem to endorse masculine ideals that embrace risk, this risk is however contained by their expectation that boys demonstrate responsibility and maturity and a capability to protect himself and others, which is also perceived as important by the boys themselves. Also, it was generally agreed that the tolerance extended towards

boys in regard to their mistakes does not extend to adolescent girls who, once they have made a mistake, are not “easily forgiven”. This reinforces the idea that girls need to protect themselves and also be protected by boys from the consequences of making such errors. It appears that young women are generally expected to be the primary caregivers, i.e., they should stay at home and take care of their families. While this is also consistent with gender ideology research (Eastwick et al., 2006) it means girls are expected to curtail risk behaviours which are acceptable and even idealized for boys, such as drinking or using any other substances. Girls are therefore not seen as having a valid reason to experiment with substances, unlike boys (Jeftha, 2006).

This provides evidence to suggest that gender differences in alcohol consumption has become an important way in which societies symbolize and regulate gender roles. Cultural differences in normative drinking patterns reveal how, and to what extent, societies differentiate gender roles, for example, by making drinking behaviour a demonstration of masculinity (Holmila & Raitasalo, 2005). Similar to other research, it seems that the engagement in risk behaviours is used as evidence of men's superiority over women as well as a measurement of their ranking among other men (Courtenay, 2000; McCreary et al., 2005).

Although the majority of adolescent boys are expected to negotiate these ambivalent messages and find an acceptable compromise, some boys abstain from alcohol use altogether and are still able to assume a position of responsibility which is tolerated and even encouraged by their peers. From the data it emerged that taking care of the peer group in this way is generally viewed positively and earns respect amongst peers for endorsing acceptable behaviour. For these boys, their masculine identity appears to be reinforced by setting

appropriate examples and protecting their peers from transgressing the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. It therefore appears that many boys have found a way in which to assert their masculinity through dominant discourses (i.e., the risk taker or the protector), either through the use or non-use of alcohol.

*Emotional distress and self-esteem.*

It emerged that many adolescent boys use alcohol as an outlet to cope with emotional stress and possible psychological problems, suggesting that their internal coping mechanisms to deal with the complexities of adolescence are underdeveloped. Research has already shown that alcohol use among adolescents is associated with escapist tendencies and the desire to avoid unpleasant realities (Herbert, 1987). Problems within the family or at school were identified by the participants as being major contributing factors towards adolescent vulnerability to use and abuse alcohol. Studies focusing on dimensions of parenting such as support and control indicate that low parental support and control results in an increased probability of alcohol use among adolescents (Engels & Willemsen, 2004; Bjarnason, et al., 2005). Therefore adolescents who perceive their parents as demonstrating a lack of interest in their whereabouts and activities tend to experience lower self-esteem. This is concerning as the influence of drinking peers has been found to be mitigated by increased psychosocial maturity and assertiveness, thus low self-esteem will decrease their ability to resist peer pressure (Harakeh et al., 2004). Teenagers with psychological, social, family, or academic problems will also often choose to associate with people like themselves meaning that these adolescents will already be more likely to engage in alcohol use due to pre-existing problems in their lives (Nielsen, 1996).

Linked to lower levels of self-esteem is the use of alcohol as a confidence booster, commonly referred to as “Dutch courage”, whereby alcohol is primarily used to reduce inhibitions and anxiety, thereby facilitating easier interaction among peers (Hoel et al., 2004). Alcohol use is thus seen to enable boys to interact socially in a more confident manner and to be less self-conscious, and thus better able to dance, talk to girls and generally behave in a more “outgoing” way. This is consistent with research which has found that alcohol acts as a release for shy teenagers by enabling them to perform socially (Herbert, 1987).

Interaction with girls was described as provoking the most anxiety for adolescent boys, and alcohol was used to gain confidence, as well as to make themselves look more mature and masculine. The pressure to drink is especially powerful if girls are also using alcohol, as this is supposed to be a masculine activity, and boys therefore believe that they have to meet this expectation. However, it appears that boys who are inherently confident with high self-esteem are better protected and do not feel as much of a need to prove themselves through abusing alcohol.

***Alcohol use in alleviating boredom and sensation-seeking.***

The data suggests that boredom is a common reason for both initiating and sustaining alcohol use during adolescence. The reasons for increased boredom during adolescence are unclear, however we may speculate that the current social context which encourages instant gratification through media and technology has undermined the ability of children and adolescents to occupy themselves in more constructive ways. In addition, increased pressure on parents to work may result in lower levels of involvement with their children, leaving them up to their own devices in order to provide their own entertainment.

This problem may be further increased by personality factors whereby the individual demonstrates an increase in thrill-seeking and lower boredom thresholds (Greene et al., 2000) which, together with poor decision-making skills and lack of experience during adolescence makes teenagers more likely to underestimate the risks involved in such behaviours (Greening et al., 2005). Adolescents may also engage in such behaviours with the purpose of intentionally flouting social and legal rules, which serves to increase the risk involved and therefore heighten perceived thrill-seeking. This suggests that adolescent risk-taking forms part of a broader personality trait, such as sensation-seeking (Moore & Parsons, 2000; Parsons, Siegel & Cousins, 1997).

### **Interpersonal and social influences.**

#### ***Parental influence.***

The strong influence that parents have over determining alcohol use during adolescence was evident from the data. From the discussions it emerged that parents generally seem to be accepting that their adolescent boys will use alcohol at some stage during their teenage years, and that this behaviour appears to be acceptable to them as long as it is within reasonable limits and does not result in severe consequences. This permissiveness is concerning as less stringent perceived limits for drinking are associated with increased frequency of heavy episodic drinking (Wood et al., 2004). Parents were also described as being much more accepting of alcohol use by their sons rather than their daughters. This is consistent with research into gender differences in parental monitoring which has found that women report higher levels of general monitoring as adolescents (Veal & Ross, 2006). It appears that parents also tend to view initiation into alcohol use as a rite of passage for boys into adulthood and thus are implicitly supportive of this notion.

From the data it emerged that drinking alcohol is more accepted by parents than other risk behaviours such as smoking cigarettes or using other substances. It appears that the majority of adolescent boys and their parents perceive the consequences of smoking to be much worse and much better known than the consequences of alcohol use. This is possibly due to the clear and comprehensive anti-smoking health warnings and legislation resulting from the absence of a safe limit in tobacco use, which is different from alcohol use in that low to moderate use seems to pose no serious health threats to most healthy adults (Reddy & Meyer-Weitz, 1997). In addition, parental alcohol use also seems to be accepted by adolescents, making parents likely role models despite current legislation and warnings regarding age restrictions. This is consistent with research which has found that adolescents with higher provision of alcohol by parents generally belong to communities with higher access to alcohol. This suggests that parents are more likely to model such behaviour where there is a community wide tolerance for adolescent drinking (Dent et al., 2005) as existing legislation and warnings may tend to be ignored.

Although it appears that some parents do seem to accept alcohol use by their adolescent boys, they prefer their children to drink in the home so that they are able to supervise their alcohol consumption and behaviour so as to ensure that they are not at risk of serious consequences, such as being arrested for underage drinking. This desire to monitor adolescent behaviour is important given research by Borawski et al. (2003) which found that unsupervised time with friends increases risk behaviour, while in males high levels of parental monitoring was linked to a decrease in alcohol use. However it appears that parental monitoring of adolescent behaviour often seems to be poor and the presence of alcohol in the home provides easy access to alcohol for under-age adolescents.

Despite attempts by parents to ensure alcohol use by their male children within a more secure and supervised environment, they appear not to consistently follow through with this intention. This could perhaps be due to pressures from adolescents to trust them to be mature and responsible. The tendency of parents to be more protective of their daughters than sons was obvious in this study as girls seemed to be the focus of parental monitoring efforts, perhaps due to the prevalent norms in our society which view girls as more vulnerable because of greater sanctioning of sexual promiscuity and its negative consequences i.e., pregnancy (Veal & Ross, 2006). However, these attitudes are communicated to their sons, who mirror these perceptions of themselves as less vulnerable generally, and also that the consequences of alcohol use are more severe for girls than boys. Nevertheless, the effect of parental supervision on decreasing opportunities for alcohol use and binge drinking suggests that important protective role of parents in this regard (Borawski et al., 2003).

Although parent-child communication is considered to be one of the fundamental ways that parents can influence their children's decisions about tobacco and alcohol use, in this study direct verbal communication from parents to adolescents was not often mentioned. The lack of direct verbal communication around alcohol use is concerning as it is through verbal communication that parents are able to most directly express their feelings and concerns relating to substance use and general behavioural issues (Ennett et al., 2001). It appears that non-verbal communication through the modelling of parental behaviour, particularly that of **fathers**, is more prevalent. As suggested by other research (Boyle & Boekeloo, 2006) fathers appear to be influential role models to adolescent boys. The findings suggest that adolescents do not only model parental alcohol use behaviour, but also non-alcohol use behaviours.

The influence of parental behaviour is also extremely powerful in that parental alcohol use directly influences adolescent thoughts and behaviour around alcohol. This study supports previous research findings indicating that parents who drink alcohol moderately generally convey such restraint to their children, while children of parents who abuse alcohol also seem to model such risk behaviour (Grinder, 1978). Modelling of parental alcohol use behaviour seemed to be influential in the alcohol use behaviour of the adolescents' similar to previous research, suggesting that this is a more significant predictor of adolescent alcohol use than any other aspects of parenting, such as parent-child communication (Jackson et al., 1997; Van der Vorst, Engels, Meeus, Dekovi•, & van Leeuwe, 2008). The data suggests that parents who abuse alcohol can influence adolescent alcohol use in two possible ways: firstly, either by modelling risky behaviour which the adolescent mimics or which causes the adolescent to use alcohol as a coping strategy; or secondly by acting as a deterrent which prevents adolescents from engaging in such behaviour. This data is consistent with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory which asserts that people learn not only from their own experiences, but by observing the actions of others and the benefits of those actions (Glanz & Rimer, 2005). Thus adolescents may be influenced to use alcohol through *observational learning*, whereby the experiences of credible others, in this case parents, are incorporated into the adolescent's learning process and may therefore encourage or discourage alcohol use.

It appears that each family's rules regarding alcohol use are often modelled to adolescent boys by their fathers and are therefore communicated non-verbally rather than being explicitly and openly discussed. These limitations regarding alcohol use therefore seem to be communicated implicitly through parental drinking habits as this extends to their expectations of their sons' behaviour. However, parental attitudes regarding alcohol use, although generally not expressed openly, are highly influential on adolescents' drinking habits. This

has important implications for parenting as problem drinking has often been associated with parental approval of such behaviour (Boyle & Boekeloo, 2006). In a similar study it was found that fathers' opinions seem to be particularly important, and adolescents whose fathers have strong views regarding alcohol use, and who respect their fathers' views, are less likely to engage in risky behaviours such as obtaining alcohol from people other than their parents, or drinking alcohol without their parents knowledge (Beck et al., 2003). The influential effect of parent substance use behaviour on adolescent behaviour is therefore evident and suggests that parents' nonverbal communication to their children by way of their own behaviour is in fact more influential than their direct verbal communication (Ennett et al., 2001).

Many boys spoke about their desire to emulate their fathers' behaviour and therefore abstain from using alcohol. Fathers are therefore seen as playing a pivotal role in disciplining their sons, both directly and indirectly. Fathers' opinions seem to be particularly important, and adolescents whose fathers have strong views regarding alcohol use, and who respect their fathers' views, are less likely to obtain alcohol from people other than their parents, or drink alcohol without their parents knowledge (Beck et al., 2003). Research has indicated the importance of the role played by fathers, with positive fathering including both verbal and non-verbal components such as recreation and sport, emotional and practical availability and support, consistency and reliability, approval and guidance, and appropriate discipline or boundary setting (Gruenert & Galligan, 2007). Mothers are seen as more accepting and forgiving of risky behaviour, while fathers are viewed as the primary disciplinarians and as the parent that boys would be most afraid to disappoint. This is consistent with research which indicates that adolescents are more likely to share feelings with their mothers, whereas fathers are viewed as relatively distant figures to be consulted primarily for information and material support (Steinberg & Silk, 2002). In addition single mothers have been found to

monitor their children's activities less closely and tend to use more peremptory and coercive techniques to discipline their sons' behaviour (Collins & Laursen, 2004) rather than direct discipline.

Religion did not appear to be as strong a protective factor as has been found by previous research (Nielsen, 1996; Parry et al., 2004), and belonging to a particular religious denomination did not seem to act as a protective shield against alcohol use as boys used Bible scriptures as justification for alcohol use. Although religiosity is generally linked to cultural practices, it seems that the extent to which religion inhibits alcohol use is tied to the strength of these beliefs within the family unit, and the degree to which each religion accepts or prohibits the use of alcohol. Therefore, as found by Wills et al. (2003) it appears that the protection offered by religiosity could be through its contribution towards coping processes and social networks rather than a strict interpretation of expected behaviour.

### ***Peer influence.***

In support of the literature, the peer group was found to be the most pivotal influencing factor on adolescent alcohol use (Wood et al., 2004; Hoel et al., 2004), and that within peer groups alcohol use is heavily pressurized (Arata et al., 2003; Parry et al., 2004; Olds & Thombs, 2001). As previously mentioned, alcohol use and binge drinking is related to perceptions of masculinity and the peer group plays an influential role in defining and perpetuating these myths about what it means to be a man. Peer pressure concerning alcohol use occurs in several ways. Firstly, through direct pressure and influence by friends, and secondly through a need to compete with one another in order to be seen as most masculine or dominant within the group. This corresponds with research which has found that peers may influence adolescent alcohol use in several ways (Wood et al., 2004), either actively by offering alcohol

or passively through social modelling and perceived norms. In this study peers actively influence alcohol use by buying one another drinks and encouraging drinking, while passive influences include perceptions and norms regarding masculinity.

The powerful influence of the peer group stems from identification with peers which provides a sense of security. This requires boys to conform to group behaviours such as drinking alcohol, in order to fit in with the majority of their friends. Thus, engaging in risky behaviour when with peers builds a sense of connection and bonds between individual group members and this sense of belonging seems crucial during adolescence. The role of the peer group in adolescent affective development has been found to be critical (Furman, McDunn, & Young, 2008). Although this is beneficial, more supportive adolescent friendships have been related to elevated levels of adolescent substance use, especially when peers exhibit high levels of substance use (Wills & Vaughan, 1989; Wills, Mariani & Filer, 1996), as shared propensities toward risky behaviours influence peer selection. The adolescent therefore plays an active role in the selection of peers and responses to peer behaviours. Research has confirmed that strong influence of peers during adolescence, and that this influence is stronger during adolescence than in adulthood (Brown, 2004). For some boys, this desire to fit in is so strong that the participants have told stories about boys behaving in a drunken manner even though they were only tricked into thinking they were drinking alcohol.

Research has also found that substance use is modulated by the adolescent's perceptions of peers' smoking or drinking practices, which is concerning as young people typically tend to overestimate or exaggerate peers' involvement in substance use (Olds & Thombs, 2001). Therefore perceived peer risk behaviour and susceptibility to peer pressure to drink alcohol are strongly connected to whether adolescents use alcohol or not, as well as how much

alcohol they drink. In this case what is concerning is that the desire to conform to the behaviour of the group is so strong that boys may initially overestimate their peers' involvement in alcohol use which sets up a cycle by which substance use within becomes increasingly exaggerated in order for boys to constantly conform to what is perceived to be the current norm.

The general feeling about the current levels of alcohol use amongst adolescents is that engaging in such risk behaviour and wanting to conform to the peer group is normal, and some boys feel that they are unfairly judged by non-drinking peers for engaging in this type of behaviour. It seems that there is a sense that engaging in risk behaviours such as alcohol or cigarette use is inevitable. This is consistent with literature indicating that as children grow older, they tend to develop more favourable social images (attitudes) of other young people who use alcohol, and believe that more of their peers are using alcohol (peer-based descriptive norms) (Hampson, Andrews, Barckley & Severson, 2006), which impacts of their intentions to try alcohol during adolescence or adulthood. It appears that as children develop, their self-perceptions are increasingly more likely to match that of the social images of alcohol users. This is consistent with the Prototype/Willingness Model's concept of risk images as being influenced by the peer group and impacting on the adolescent's willingness to engage in risk behaviour (Gibbons et al., 2003).

It seems that most boys in this study felt that adolescents who do not engage in risk behaviours in moderation during their teenage years then become negatively affected by it at a later stage. Engaging in alcohol use with peers was seen to be a protective factor as boys saw themselves as learning to moderate their behaviour to fit in with their friends. Therefore it is possible for peers to have a moderating effect on adolescent alcohol use, especially when

light or non-drinkers associate with other nondrinkers (Arata et al., 2003). Although initial alcohol use may occur because of the desire to fit in with the peer group, and although there is a potential for this behaviour to escalate, the general perception of the participants is that engaging in alcohol use amongst peers can be protective as boys are simultaneously forced to conform to the accepted limitations of such behaviour. However, these moderating effects have been found to be lessened by poor parental monitoring (Dick et al., 2007) suggesting that this moderation may be more due to more supervised and restricted environments, rather than adolescent restraint.

Negative examples of peer pressure mentioned by the participants included “spiking” another boy’s drink with alcohol or drugs. Generally this type of victimization was described as happening to boys who are perceived as less masculine and who do not endorse masculine ideals to the same extent as their peers. These findings are consistent with the research which has found that the self-attribution of masculine traits may lead children to endorse aggressiveness and bullying of their schoolmates (Gini & Pozzoli, 2006). Bullying has been found to justify the appropriateness of these gender schemas while maintaining and reinforcing the status hierarchies within social relationships (Gini & Pozzoli, 2006).

However, the data also suggests that in some cases friends are able to accept and respect their non-drinking peers. Non-drinking friends tend to be respected as they identify strongly with the role of the protector in the group and are valued as they are able to take care of those who do choose to drink. Thus, boys who choose not to drink appear to be exempt from peer pressure to use alcohol if they are able to adequately fulfil an alternative idea of masculinity, such as that of the protector of the group.

## **Contextual Factors.**

### *Media influence.*

The participants in the study appeared to be highly influenced by the media, particularly advertising on billboards and television, and specific examples of advertisements, images and catch phrases were demonstrated to be easily remembered by the adolescent group, even those boys who do not drink alcohol. The main ideas that appear to be represented in alcohol advertising in the media involved using alcohol as an indicator of status and success, thus symbolizing “high class living”. Advertising also represents alcohol as a tool for social interactions in order to ensure fun and enjoyment of special occasions. In a study of television and music video exposure and adolescent alcohol use (Robinson et al., 1998) it was found that alcohol use is represented more frequently by attractive, successful, and influential people in a positive social context, and is often associated with sexually suggestive content, recreation, or motor vehicle use while it is rarely portrayed in an unattractive manner or is associated with negative consequences. The images created by alcohol advertisements are of alcohol users who are independent, attractive, sociable, and risk takers, and these images are stereotypes that have been found to become embedded in an individual’s subconscious (Workman, Arseneau, & Ewell, 2004).

Generally research on the effect of advertising seems to focus on television advertisements, however in this study other forms of print advertising such as magazines and billboards also seemed to be influential. Although research has shown that merchandising, including ownership of advertising items such as hats, posters or t-shirts advertising alcohol have been found to be strong predictors of drinking and drinking intentions (Collins et al., 2007), this was not mentioned by the participants in this study.

### *Music videos.*

Music videos appear to be highly influential on adolescent perceptions relating to alcohol use, particularly those which associate alcohol with wealth and luxurious lifestyles. From the data it emerged that adolescent boys want to model themselves after their music icons and therefore emulate their lifestyles in achievable ways i.e., through the brand of alcohol they drink. This is consistent with research which indicates that music videos are a source of strong positive images for alcohol use, and that both the content, which tends to glamorize alcohol use, as well as the advertisements which are associated with music videos, make the idea of drinking alcohol more alluring to young people (Van den Bulck & Beullens, 2005). Alcohol is seen as a representation of the self and the type of person you would like to be which is consistent with research linking media portrayals of alcohol use with the desire to emulate those portrayals (Austin et al., 2006). The participants tended to identify with one of two possible representations i.e., either mature, wealthy and superior, which is associated with expensive brands of spirits such as whiskey or brandy; or fun, adventurous and humorous which is associated with cheaper liquor such as beers and ciders. Advertising and music videos therefore emphasise aspects of the identity that adolescent boys want to emulate such as confidence and popularity. The desirability of media portrayals of alcohol use therefore cultivates positive expectancies associated with alcohol brands and alcohol use (Austin et al., 2006). These results therefore provide strong evidence as to the effects of alcohol branding and merchandising on adolescents. One of the major challenges of adolescence is self-identity acquisition and a shift towards autonomy. Bonnie and O'Connell (2004) found that during identity acquisition, adolescents may be motivated to use alcohol to gain a new experience that will allow them to evaluate if it will or will not fit with their newly developed identities (Bonnie & O'Connell, 2004). The role of goods, in this case

alcohol products, has therefore been found to be important to signal and reinforce conceptions of identity (Park & Breland, 2007).

The symbolic meaning of expensive alcohol products are also used to distinguish individuals from others and in particular to distinguish them in terms of social class. This finding is consistent with research suggesting that music videos promote a lifestyle that stimulates the consumption of alcohol (Van den Bulck & Beullens, 2005), and that adolescents who are controversial in their status are more popular amongst peers and more likely to have a romantic partner (Miller et al., 2009). Research has also found that adolescents may make choices that they know they may later regret to act more adult-like or impress others (Moffitt, 1993; Park & Breland, 2007). Many adolescent boys therefore use alcohol as a way to give themselves prestige and status amongst their peers suggesting that advertising strategies are successful in facilitating alcohol use among adolescents by appealing to their search for identity and autonomy.

Risk images have been found to play a role in managing alcohol use among adolescents. Research has indicated that risk images which are fairly negative may cause young people to refrain from engaging in a specific risk behaviour in order to avoid being associated with an image or certain characteristics of an image (Gibbons et al., 2003). However the images associated with advertising and music videos tend to be overwhelmingly positive (Robinson et al., 1998). Therefore although risk images were initially thought to be predominantly negative and inhibitory (Gibbons et al., 2003), this study therefore provides evidence to suggest that current portrayals of risk images in the media are overwhelmingly positive, and which may increase willingness to engage in risk behaviours. Although advertisements showing the effects of alcohol use such as drunken driving advertisement campaigns were

discussed, the participants generally felt that these were ineffectual as they did not identify with the risk image portrayed in these advertisements. The Prototype/Willingness Model (Gibbons et al., 2003) views risk images as having a direct influence on an adolescent's willingness to engage in risk behaviour through social comparison. This has important implications for future advertising campaigns, as it is only through the creation of an effective negative risk image with which young people might identify that these campaigns to deter alcohol use might be effective. The success of marketing to adolescents also makes this a highly lucrative target market. Advertising has been found to contribute to "experiential thinking" that gives substance use a positive association (Park & Breland, 2007).

### *Legislation.*

An unanticipated theme that emerged in this study was the role of current legislation in regard to access to alcohol by underage adolescents, as well as the lack of legislation regarding advertising and sponsorship. Boys described alcohol as exceptionally easy to obtain either directly from liquor stores or clubs. Underage drinking appears not to be seen as a social problem and is not highly monitored by adults in general, which indicates an implicit acceptance of such behaviour. Many adolescent boys also appear to have incorrect perceptions about legislation both within South Africa as well as other countries such as the United States of America. It can be hypothesised that this is also due to the effect of the media and especially American movies and music videos which often depict underage and excessive alcohol use even though their legislation regarding the legal age for alcohol use is more severe than our own.

In addition, alcohol is much more socially accepted than other forms of substance use, such as illicit drugs or even cigarettes. The fact that alcohol advertising and sponsorship is still

prevalent is in sharp contrast to the increasingly strict national legislation regarding smoking including bold steps taken by Government to discourage tobacco use, to protect non-smokers from environmental tobacco smoke, and to protect children from pro-smoking advertising messages (Groenewald et al., 2007). From the data it also emerged that alcohol use is strongly associated with events such as sports in the minds of most adolescent boys, possibly due to ongoing and highly visible sponsorship of national sports teams. Finally, South Africa's involvement in wine and alcohol producing industries, from which a large percentage of revenue is generated, suggests that alcohol use by teenagers may be tolerated more often than prohibited. Societal problems relating to alcohol use in South Africa can be linked to the legacy of the "dop" system, particularly in the Western Cape; falling prices of certain kinds of alcohol products (e.g. malt beer and brandy); poor social conditions and a lack of social controls and law enforcement to deal with those misusing substances; increased availability and access to licensed liquor outlets, and finally societal attitudes in general (Parry, 1998). However, the necessity of more closely regulating the alcohol consumption of our adolescents will become clearer during the discussion of the consequences thereof, as outlined below.

### **Consequences of adolescent alcohol use.**

While adolescent boys seemed aware of numerous potential consequences associated with alcohol use, the prevailing attitude with which many boys view these consequences appeared to be fairly light-hearted, and they were generally not taken seriously. Below a number of the consequences of alcohol use that were identified during the focus group conversations are discussed.

### *Health risks.*

Boys often mentioned various health risks as being potential consequences of alcohol use, amongst which is “alcohol poisoning” which occurs after an episode of binge drinking. This is consistent with literature which has found that alcohol use often involves serious short-term and long-term health risks as well as other negative behavioural consequences and personal problems (Hawkins et al., 1997).

The study participants commonly cited incidents of **drunken driving** and **motor vehicle accidents** as being problematic amongst adolescent boys, which correlates with research indicating that underage drinking is associated with increased probability of motor vehicle accidents (Williams, 2003). Research has found that adolescents with fewer parental influences discouraging their participation in problem behaviour (i.e., more monitoring and less permissiveness), a weaker bond to conventional society, and more substance-use problem behaviour would be more likely to exhibit problem behaviour such as problem driving, and that there is a high likelihood of continuity of problem behaviour from adolescence into young adulthood (Bingham & Shope, 2004).

From the data it emerged that most boys are aware of the consequences of engaging in **risky sexual behaviour**. However, some boys appear to view alcohol use as a tool to try and ensure that this does happen as there is a perception that the consequences thereof would be more serious for girls than for boys. In general, however, boys did seem to be aware of the importance of using condoms. These findings are consistent with research suggesting that alcohol consumption may increase the likelihood of risky sexual behaviour in several ways, such as sexual intercourse without using contraception, and regretted sexual experiences, which may include having many sexual partners (Coleman & Cater, 2005). Given the high

rate of HIV infection in South Africa (Pettifor et al., 2005), particularly amongst the age-group between 15 and 24, this behaviour is especially concerning and suggests an urgent need for intervention in this specific area.

From the data it emerged that alcohol is still considered to be a **gateway drug**, and that it increases vulnerability both to increased alcohol dependence and also to other types of substances and drugs. Drinking alcohol also seems to be strongly associated with smoking, with many boys alternating between alcohol and cigarette use, or using both simultaneously. The positive association between smoking and alcohol use has been consistently demonstrated in research (Dierker et al., 2006), with a clear association between the initiation and escalation both smoking and drinking being clearly demonstrated (Jensen et al., 2003). In addition, adolescents who experiment with smoking in early adolescence have been shown to be two to three times more likely to become heavy drinkers compared with those who had never smoked (Griffin, Botvin, Doyle, Diaz, & Epstein, 1999). Binge drinkers have been found to be more likely to smoke than non-binge drinkers (Tucker, Ellickson, & Klein, 2002)

Awareness of future health risks associated with alcohol use, such as **permanent organ damage**, was generally good although boys do not seem to know the specific effects that alcohol has on particular organs in the body. However, just being aware of these consequences was cited as a possible protective factor. This lack of specific knowledge regarding the effects of alcohol use suggests that a potential point of intervention may include the use of *universal prevention* strategies such as harm reduction media campaigns and drug education programs that encourage youth to use a decision-making process in the face of an opportunity to use a substance such as alcohol (Dickson, Derevensky & Gupta, 2004). Prevention approaches involving memorable information for adolescents, also called “just

say know” movements, focus on providing cognitive drug education and fostering decision-making skills with the goal of minimizing the negative consequences associated with drug use (Dickson et al., 2004). It appears that there is potential for such interventions to work amongst adolescent boys as they still seem to lack appropriate information which is relevant to them, and therefore memorable.

**Alcohol abuse and dependence** was discussed briefly during the focus group discussions and although the boys seemed to recognize that this was a serious topic, they tended to discuss it in a light-hearted manner, suggesting that they do not believe that these risks apply to them (Greene et al., 2000). While research indicates that for some adolescents trying alcohol is a one-time occurrence, for many others it marks the initiation of a pattern of alcohol use (Brown et al., 2007), this did not appear to be acknowledged seriously by the adolescent boys. Although binge drinking has been identified as a particularly problematic risk factor in terms of negative adult outcomes (Hill et al., 2000), boys generally do not appear to be concerned about this.

### *Social risks.*

The participants in this study spoke about **inappropriate and antisocial behaviours** that emerge when adolescent boys drink alcohol. Research has confirmed the association between substance use and delinquency in adolescence (White, Tice, Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 2002). These behaviours range from low-grade vandalism to serious verbal and physical confrontations, with fighting identified as one of the major and most common consequences of alcohol use amongst adolescent boys. This finding correlates with research which has found that offences against persons were more likely to be committed under the influence of alcohol, and aggressive offences were more often related to acute use of alcohol

than other drugs (White et al., 2002). Although these behaviours seem to occur at a disturbingly high rate, they appear to be generally viewed in a disapproving light.

Although the participants did mention possible **legal consequences** as being of concern for underage alcohol users, these were mentioned briefly without elaborating on detail. Although research has shown that adolescents who commit offences while under the influence of alcohol are more likely to have been arrested (White et al., 2002), the participants did not seem to view this as a concern, perhaps reflecting a leniency or lack of enforcement of laws regarding alcohol use amongst adolescents.

It emerged from the data that boys appear to be casual about the effect of alcohol use on **school performance**. Although it seems that boys are aware that alcohol has an effect on their academic performance, they are only willing to compensate for this during exam time and when they are under extra pressure work hard, such as during their matric year. It seems that the majority of boys are able to keep their alcohol use at a level where it does not impact their schoolwork directly, but this attitude is concerning as boys may find that if they ignore this problem they will be unable to perform adequately in their future years at school or university. Research has found that high levels of unsupervised daily activities amongst adolescents leads to less engagement in academic efforts and more in the use of alcohol and other substances (Thorlindsson, Bjarnason & Sigfusdottir, 2007).

Boys who do engage in binge drinking appear to be particularly vulnerable to instances of **victimization and bullying** by their peers as while under the influence of alcohol they are more vulnerable and are therefore unable to defend themselves. Research has corroborated the fact that bullying and fighting amongst adolescents is associated with the use of alcohol

(Kuntsche, Knibbe, Engels & Gmel, 2007). New sources of information, such as the internet, and other social networking tools, increases the risk of new forms of indirect victimisation which although less visible are nonetheless equally distressing to the victim (Ybarra, Diener-West, & Leaf, 2007).

***Perceived alcohol risk and vulnerability.***

Explanations for adolescent risk-taking have been found to be much more complex than a lack of knowledge or social skills, as although most adolescents have the ability to perceive risks accurately, they do not always consider these risks in their decision-making (Greene et al., 2000). This finding appeared to be replicated in this study, as boys were able to name various possible consequences of their behaviour, but they rarely seemed to apply this knowledge in their decisions to engage in alcohol use, nor did they perceive themselves as being vulnerable to these outcomes. For many, the extent to which the consequences of alcohol use worries them is dependent on the perceived degree of seriousness and whether they perceive themselves as being willing to engage in more risky behaviours. However adolescents are vulnerable to a psychological bias regarding their perception of risks and therefore are prone to underestimate their own risk for future negative events (Frankenberger, 2004).

These findings also correspond with theories of risk taking as a developmental phenomenon, which sees adolescent willingness to take risks to be both normal, developmentally appropriate exploratory behaviour, as well as a negative outcome of cognitive development, specifically egocentrism (Greene et al., 2000). It seems that many of these boys perceive themselves to be invulnerable to the consequences of alcohol use which indicates that their cognitive development is still at a stage whereby they are susceptible to errors in judgment

resulting from a sense of their own uniqueness (Greene et al., 2000). However, risk-taking behaviour is often also due to a lack of recognition that a judgment is needed in a given situation because the adolescent is focusing on the feelings of invulnerability that accompany these feelings of uniqueness (Greene et al., 2000). Adolescents therefore feel that they are unique in that the consequences of alcohol use apply to others and not to themselves, and therefore their knowledge of the consequences does not have as large an influence on their decision-making. Adolescents also tend to exhibit a pervasive phenomenon known as unrealistic optimism when they are evaluating their risk of harm (Greening et al., 2005). As risk-taking is thus considered to be deliberative, that is, it is a conscious decision about how to act, by weighing the apparent risk against other factors (Greene et al., 2000), these cognitive biases which arise as a result of the adolescent's developmental level have a significant impact on apparent levels of insight as teenagers are less able to accurately evaluate the risks involved in a particular course of action. However, although many boys perceive themselves as invulnerable to the consequences of alcohol use, some boys do choose not to drink because of a personal bad experience with alcohol or the possible negative consequences thereof. This personal experience therefore serves to negate these cognitive biases and causes these boys to evaluate risks much more seriously.

It is therefore highly interesting that the consequences of smoking seem to be better known and are perceived to be more "real" and more serious than the possible outcomes related to alcohol use. Research conducted with university students has further indicated that problem drinking is significantly related to the belief that getting drunk is acceptable on occasion, and decreased focus on the negative health consequences of alcohol use consumption (Thakore et al., 2009). It is also intriguing to note that parents also appear to have this perspective. This may be explained by research which indicates that social norms regarding drinking are

ambiguous whereas such norms regarding smoking are clearer in their disapproval (Ennett et al., 2001). This comparable lack of awareness of the consequences of alcohol use may arise from social perceptions of alcohol as being more acceptable than smoking, perhaps because smoking has been linked more often to developmental progression for addictive behaviours during adolescence (Biederman et al., 2006). Linked to this is the variety of anti-smoking legislation which has been highly publicised and is strictly enforced worldwide. Cigarette use is therefore associated in the minds' of the public with much more information regarding possible risks.

The evaluation of risks also appears to be hampered by notions of masculinity, particularly in regard to vulnerability, as generally girls are seen as being much more vulnerable to the dangers associated with alcohol use than are boys (Courtenay, 2000; McCreary et al., 2005). For example, consequences such as risky sex and pregnancy are also seen as mainly being girls' problems. From the discussions it emerged that in general boys used alcohol so that they would be able to decrease their own inhibitions, as well as those of the girls involved, when it came to engaging in a sexual relationship. Therefore girls were seen as possibly being more vulnerable as they would be subjected to the advances of boys, and also left with the consequences thereof (i.e., pregnancy).

### **Protective Factors**

Apart from the well-documented influence of parents and friends, several other issues also emerged as possible protective factors against adolescent alcohol use.

**School connectedness.**

The school is seen as an integral part of a boy's identity and is a source of pride and discipline. It is at school that the majority of peer relationships are formed and the school can therefore be seen as a larger "peer group". This finding is consistent with research which has found that school bonding, school interest, school effort, academic achievement, and parental help with school are negatively associated with adolescent alcohol use (Bryant, Schulenberg, O'Malley, Bachman & Johnston, 2003). The protective effects of positive school attitudes and perceptions of high status connected to academics is therefore evident and the prevailing attitude towards alcohol put forward by the school can potentially have a great impact on the behaviour of its students.

**Sport.**

From the data it emerged that involvement and success in school sports can be a protective factor against alcohol use and abuse. It appears that boys who excel at sports are often respected and can use their sport and training as an acceptable excuse not to drink alcohol. This finding corresponds with research which has found that participation in organized group activities and sports is protective against substance use (Elder, Leaver-Dunn, Wang, Nagy, & Green, 2000). However, sports are also linked to alcohol use through sponsorship, particularly of national sporting teams, and also because sport is often associated with masculine ideals there are often expectations of alcohol use linked with sports events, particularly when adolescent boys might play a sport at a higher level, such as for an external club, where they would be exposed to older boys and increased peer pressure. Therefore, although currently sports are associated with alcohol use, there appears to be potential for this to change so that the influence is more positive (Werch et al., 2003).

### **Sense of future.**

A sense of planning for the future was often mentioned by participants in the study and these expectations by the self and by others were identified as being critical protective factors against alcohol use amongst adolescent boys. Boys who have this ambition and desire to be successful are often respected by their peers and are not pressured into engaging in alcohol use. This is supported by research which has found that combination of conventional, pro-societal attitudes, along with ambition, individual achievement goals, and concern for oneself can coexist positively and ultimately lead to favourable outcomes in adulthood (Stein & Newcomb, 1999). Conversely, a less positive future orientation has been found to be significantly related to risk behaviours such as risky sex, drug use and more quantity and frequency of alcohol use (Robbins & Bryan, 2004). The concept of future orientation is linked to self-esteem as boys who view themselves as being able to achieve their goals are more likely to persevere and avoid potential obstacles, such as alcohol use.

### **Limitations**

As with any study, this inquiry has its limitations. There are several methodological limitations, with the first being that this study only considered male adolescents from a particular public high school in the Durban area of KwaZulu-Natal. The results obtained are therefore not necessarily able to be generalised to adolescent boys in other geographical regions. Secondly, the ages of the participants ranged between 16 and 18 years old and as such the findings may not be applicable to adolescent males in other age ranges. Third, the sample size of this study was small and therefore some of the conclusions that were drawn may be biased and therefore may not be generalised to other adolescent males. Fourth, because this study made use of a qualitative approach, it cannot be applied to the larger

population. The inclusion of complementary quantitative methodology would therefore reinforce the results obtained.

While the Prototype/Willingness Model, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory fit the data well and provide an interpretable model, it should be noted that other models might also provide plausible interpretations of this study.

Furthermore, not all aspects of adolescent alcohol use were taken into account in this study, due to limited response time and the desire to focus on specific aspects of this phenomenon. Aside from the influence of family members and peers, the impact of risk images found in the media, the role of gendered social norms and wider forms of social influence such as religiosity as well as perceived possible consequences on adolescent alcohol use, there are a variety of other factors which are influential in determining patterns of alcohol use during adolescence. Future research should therefore consider these additional aspects.

Despite these limitations, the findings of this study provide significant information regarding the motivating factors which contribute towards alcohol use amongst adolescent males, particularly with regard to the influence of family members and peers, the impact of risk images in the media, the role of gendered social norms and wider forms of social influence such as religiosity, as well as perceived possible consequences of adolescent alcohol use. These findings also support and extend the findings of previous researchers that the abovementioned factors are highly influential in contributing towards the abuse and use of alcohol during adolescence.

## Chapter Six

### Conclusion and Recommendations

#### Conclusions

In conclusion, this study provides further evidence suggesting that the reasons for underage drinking are multifactorial, and include psychosocial issues relating to the intra- and interpersonal levels as well as broader social issues, each of which operate in isolation as well as being linked to one another. This research is therefore consistent with the growing body of information which indicates that poor outcomes are often the result of the accumulation of and interactions among different risk factors (Park & Breland, 2007). The importance of using ecological perspectives such as Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory in understanding this phenomenon is therefore evident.

Aspects of the individual's culture and ethnicity was found to be a significant influence on adolescent alcohol use, and this finding has implications for interventions within cultures in order to moderate alcohol use amongst adolescents. It appears that culture may play a potential role in teaching adolescents about the appropriate use of alcohol. Although culture and religiosity are generally linked, it appears that cultural practices are more influential than religion when it comes to alcohol use.

From the study it was found that the influence of gender and masculine identity is possibly the most significant factor relating to alcohol use at the intrapersonal level. Although this is a complex issue and influences alcohol use in many ways, it appears that the core issues pertain to ideals regarding what it means to be a man and how adolescent boys feel they need to accomplish this. Given the alternative concept of masculinity that emerged from this study

whereby men are seen as protectors who are responsible for the behaviour of themselves and others, this finding has important implications for intervention. If this aspect of masculinity can be emphasised then perhaps the use of risk behaviour as proving manliness can be decreased. However further research on this finding is urgently needed in order to further explore the extent of its influence on the behaviour on adolescent boys, and how it could best be employed for intervention purposes.

Overall the messages that are conveyed to adolescent boys concerning the use of alcohol appear to be highly ambivalent. While boys are expected to be responsible and mature, the indulgent attitude that “boys will be boys” is still prevalent and boys seem to be expected and allowed to make mistakes, so long as they also learn from them. The need to clarify the expectations and messages communicated to boys is therefore clear, as it appears that allowing them to make “mistakes” may be more harmful than anticipated.

Although emotional factors have always been associated with alcohol use and abuse, this study clearly indicated that adolescent boys are at increased risk of using alcohol when experiencing emotional distress, such as problems at school or within the family. It appears that many adolescent boys do not have adequate adaptive coping mechanisms and so resort to dysfunctional behaviours, such as alcohol use, in order to deal with the abovementioned problems. This suggests that the influence of the family environment during adolescence is still highly significant. Although research has shown that it is during adolescence that the child begins to identify less with the parents and more so with the peer group, these findings provide evidence that a cohesive family unit and strong parental support has an extremely positive effect on self-esteem, thus enhancing coping. This research therefore suggests that

although the peer group is highly influential, a healthy home environment may increase adolescent resilience and decrease vulnerability to peer pressure.

Adolescents are renowned for their tendency towards increased risk-taking and sensation-seeking behaviour. This study indicates that alcohol is often used to as part of this behaviour, firstly because engaging in illicit behaviour is a novelty, especially for younger teens, and secondly because alcohol lowers inhibitions and thus leads to further risk behaviour. The importance of engaging adolescent boys in more acceptable activities and sources of entertainment is therefore clear as boredom was mentioned as common motivation for experimentation with alcohol.

The findings regarding parental attitudes to adolescent alcohol use provide interesting insights into the influence that parents have regarding their sons' behaviours. It appears that parents also view initiation into alcohol use as a rite of passage for boys to engage in, and therefore are seen as being implicitly supportive of this progression into adulthood, with parents even offering their sons alcohol while at home. Interestingly, parents were found to view smoking cigarettes as being much worse than alcohol use, with far greater and more severe consequences, and this attitude was reiterated by the boys themselves, which suggests that adolescents' opinions regarding risk behaviours and their consequences are often influenced by those of their parents.

The fact that parental monitoring in this study was found to be somewhat limited may be explained by the fact that as the participants in this study were older adolescents, their parents may feel that their children are mature enough to be trusted. However, it appears that there is a tendency for parents to be more protective of their daughters, suggesting that parents tend to

believe that their sons are less in need of strict supervision. This attitude is indirectly communicated to the boys, thus reinforcing gender stereotypes. It therefore appears that parents generally seem to have little knowledge about what exactly their sons are doing with their friends whether at home or not. The importance of parental communication, not only with their sons, but with other parents about what their children are doing and where they are is therefore evident. As parents often tend to lose contact with the parents of their child's peer group as the child reaches high school, a possible intervention could therefore involve setting up parent networks within the school system.

Although previous research (Payne & Meyer-Weitz, 2006) has found that that the role of parents seems to be far less influential than that of the peer group, parental modelling of behaviour concerning alcohol use has still been found to be a significant influence on their adolescent sons, even more so than other aspects of parenting, such as parent-child communication. Parental behaviour is a source of strong non-verbal communication to the adolescent about what that parent finds acceptable and the strength of this influence suggests that the example set by parents for their children is much more significant than verbal communication regarding alcohol use. This is consistent with theories which emphasise the role of observational learning, such as Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. The influence of the father in providing a positive role model for his son to emulate was particularly clear, as it appears that it is through their fathers and other male role models that boys first perceive what it means to be a man, and how their fathers would expect them to behave. However, this does not negate the need for clear verbal communication between parents and adolescents regarding acceptable and safe use of substances but provides that best way for parents to emphasise the lessons they are attempting to teach their children. Further understanding this dynamic between parents and children, particularly between fathers and

sons, is crucial as educating parents about the best ways to communicate their opinions and attitudes regarding alcohol use to their children appears to be a critical point of intervention in managing this growing problem.

While media and advertising has been found to be highly influential in terms of adolescent alcohol use, research has proved that parental guidance of television viewing directly and negatively affected youths' decisions to choose beer-themed items and to drink alcohol, which strongly suggests that parents can help counter media effects and influence children's alcohol expectancies by teaching them to improve their information processing and critical skills (Austin et al., 2006). Parents therefore need to feel empowered in their roles as teachers and guides for their children as the prevailing view that the peer group is all important is discouraging to parents and leaves them doubting their own ability to shape the development of their children.

That being said, it was still evident that the peer group is the most pivotal influencing factor on adolescent alcohol use, and that alcohol use is heavily pressurized within peer groups. Although a boy's first perceptions of masculinity may be communicated via the father, during adolescence the peer group plays an influential role in further defining and perpetuating these observations. The risk presented by peers is that alcohol becomes part of this process and its use escalates either actively by the offering of alcohol or passively through social modelling and perceived norms with which boys feel obliged to compete. The peer group is an important source of security for adolescent boys and they gain a sense of assurance by conforming to group behaviours. This may be either negative or positive depending on the extent to which the group engages in such behaviour and whether each adolescent correctly perceives the other members involvement. The concern here, however, is that although

substance use is typically modulated by the adolescent's perceptions of peers' drinking practices, young people typically tend to overestimate or exaggerate peers' involvement in substance use and may therefore escalate their behaviour accordingly. However, it appears that by engaging in such behaviours with peers adolescent boys are often able to push boundaries within an environment which is able to mirror their behaviour and offer feedback, thus allowing them to learn acceptable limits.

Boys who abstain from alcohol use are at risk of victimisation and coercion by peers. However, those boys who are able to maintain their masculinity through other channels are generally respected and still included in the group even though they do not conform to the majority. Boys who are able to offer a useful service to the rest of the group, such as taking responsibility for other boys, are able to become valuable members of the unit. The use of alcohol to enhance social performance amongst peers, particularly with girls, was reiterated in this study. However self-esteem was identified as a protective factor which mediates social anxiety. Interventions aiming to increase self-esteem amongst adolescent boys, such as social skills or assertiveness training may therefore assist in increasing a sense of social competency which would allow boys to interact with peers naturally, without the social "crutch" that alcohol can provide.

The influence of contextual factors, such as the media, has recently become the focus of much research concerning adolescent risk behaviour. From this study it the significance of media suggestion was apparent. The significance of the media in determining patterns of alcohol use amongst adolescents appears to slowly be emerging and the need to regulate exposure during childhood and adolescence is apparent as during youth perceptions of the self are highly suggestible and easily altered.

The topic of legislation emerged as an unanticipated finding in this study. Perceptions relating to current legislation regarding the legal age for alcohol use and the prosecution of underage drinking, as well as alcohol advertising and sponsorship of increasingly noticeable brands, seemed to indicate that generally alcohol use is not viewed seriously by the South African legal system, is not closely monitored and has very few serious repercussions. Alcohol use appears to be ingrained into the context of South African society, through our cultures, music, sports, and agriculture. However, the need to more closely regulate these messages which are constantly being communicated to adolescents is clear.

Although the majority of participants appeared to be aware of the consequences of drinking, many did not seem to understand the serious risks that are involved with the abuse of alcohol. This suggests that this information is not being effectively communicated to adolescents at either an interpersonal level, such as through parents and friends, or at the contextual level, through social norms and expectations. As it appears that parents themselves are not fully aware of the risks of alcohol use, it is unsurprising that they are not communicating this information to their children effectively. A possible intervention should therefore involve educating adolescents as well as parents about the risks of drinking alcohol and teaching parents successful methods of communicating such information to their children.

Participants identified a range of serious consequences, and although some future implications were discussed, it appears that immediate risks are taken more seriously. This reflects the adolescent tendency to think of the present, and to have difficulty with accurately anticipating and judging future consequences. Participants also appear to engage in “othering” whereby others are identified as vulnerable rather than the self. Thus overall insight as to the consequences of alcohol use appeared to be poor. Although various

developmental processes complicate the development of insight during adolescence, the need to educate our young people regarding the outcomes of their behaviour is apparent. As the boys were generally more aware and concerned about the consequences of smoking, this indicates that they do have the capacity to understand and acknowledge such risks if they are given necessary information.

Finally, several unanticipated protective factors emerged during this study. The importance of the school in the development of the identity provides a surprising source of new intervention. As boys generally feel connected to their school in a positive manner, the utilization of the school in providing positive role models, education and support in all aspects of development during adolescence makes this environment a pivotal one. Similarly, involvement in sport is also seen as a positive source of influence as this enhances discipline, confidence and self-respect. However, this protection is compromised by the link that sport often has with alcohol through advertising and sponsorship, as well as through cultural practices. Finally, the adolescent's sense of future was found to be highly protective. The importance of providing sources of support with regards to planning and achieving future aims is therefore clear. Adolescent boys need to be targeted early on so that they feel that they have a future to be working towards and so that they can develop a sense of purpose and self-worth. The point of this intervention could again potentially be positioned within the school environment as it is here that specific aptitudes and abilities might be best identified and fostered. This therefore points toward a need for more holistic education which, in addition to following appropriate syllabus, could potentially influence all facets of a learner's current and future lifestyle.

In addition to expectations regarding their alcohol use, the boys felt a strong desire to repay their parents for the opportunities they have been given and feel that using alcohol is a potential obstacle to achieving their goals and thereby making their parents proud of them. As this is linked to self-esteem, it is important to foster this sense of ability and goal-setting in young adolescents and to facilitate the achievement of their goals and dreams so that they may feel that their future is worth the effort to abstain from alcohol use during adolescence.

### **Recommendations and Future Implications**

The findings of this study indicate that as factors relating to the intra-, inter- and social contexts all play a significant role in determining the risk behaviour and alcohol use of adolescents, interventions that extend across all three levels are very important. Many factors have the potential to negatively as well as positively impact on rates of alcohol use, and it is therefore essential that emphasis is placed on the potential for more positive impact. For instance, culture has been found to play potential role in teaching adolescents about the appropriate use of alcohol. Therefore cultural practices that call attention to moderation in the use of alcohol should be promoted by parents and community leaders.

The impact of masculinity and gender norms on adolescent alcohol use also has important implications for intervention. If positive aspects of masculinity can be emphasised, such as the role of men as protectors, then perhaps the use of risk behaviour and substance use as proving manliness can be decreased. The data indicating that fathers and older boys can often be positive role models also suggests that positive male role models are wanted and needed. In addition, the importance of the family is not to be forgotten. Although peers are recognized as playing an important role in terms of influencing alcohol use, the role of a

cohesive family unit and strong parental support should not be underestimated in terms of enhancing adolescent coping and overall mental health.

The fact that boredom was described as a motivating factor for alcohol use is concerning. This suggests that there is a need to provide more acceptable activities and sources of entertainment for adolescents. Parents do also appear to be resigned to the fact that their sons will use alcohol during their adolescence however the fact that parental opinion, especially of fathers, is still respected by their sons suggests that adolescents would still be open to opinions and rules expressed by parents. The findings suggesting that adolescents do not only model parental alcohol use behaviour, but also non-alcohol use behaviours indicate that there is potential for parents play a more positive role in terms of modelling appropriate behaviours. Parents therefore need to feel more empowered in their roles as teachers and guides for their children in order to increase their confidence in setting rules and boundaries. The ability of parents to do so impacts their ability to moderate adolescent exposure to alternative and possibly negative influences, such as the media. With the need to regulate exposure during childhood and adolescence apparent from research, the role of parents in mediating these influences is extremely important.

In addition to parenting interventions, the need to increase preventative intervention work amongst adolescents is apparent due to the findings that self-esteem plays a significant role in counteracting peer pressure to drink alcohol. Interventions aiming to increase self-esteem amongst adolescent boys, such as social skills or assertiveness training may therefore assist in increasing a sense of social competency which would allow boys to interact with peers more confidently.

It appears that alcohol use is generally not viewed as seriously as other substances by the South African legal system, is not closely monitored and has very few serious repercussions. Alcohol use appears to be ingrained into the context of South African society, through our cultures, music, sports, and agriculture. However, the need to more closely regulate these messages which are constantly being communicated to adolescents is clear. It appears that information is not being effectively communicated to adolescents at either an interpersonal level, such as through parents and friends, or at the contextual level, through social norms and expectations. Ongoing interventions educating adolescents as well as parents about the risks of drinking alcohol and teaching successful methods of communicating such information is critical in ensuring that adolescents are empowered to make better choices. The fact that boys appear to be more aware of the consequences of smoking suggests that they do have the capacity to understand and make choices to avoid risks if they are given necessary information.

Although intervention points have been identified amongst adolescents themselves, and within the family unit, the school environment appears to have been under-utilized and has been identified as a potential location for involvement. Research has uncovered the possibility for the school to positively influence adolescents and therefore this environment would be ideally placed to supply positive role models, education and support during adolescence. The school environment also provides links to sport which has also been identified as a protective factor, both of which also have a significant role to play in the development of the adolescents' sense of future and capabilities, thereby supporting adolescents in their the achievement of their goals, enhancing self-esteem and encouraging abstinence from alcohol use.

Thus it appears that there is a need for interventions at all levels – amongst adolescents themselves in order to improve self-esteem and decision-making; amongst families in order to improve cohesiveness and encourage parents in their communication and limit-setting with their adolescents, as well as through the modelling of appropriate behaviour; and also at a broader social level, particularly at schools, which have been identified as an underutilized resource.

Future research on each of the factors identified in this study would always be beneficial. In particular, more information is needed regarding the interaction between legislation, community mores and parental attitudes regarding alcohol use as these appear to be interlinked. In addition, further research expanding on the protective influence of the school, team activities and sports, and adolescents' sense of future may provide greater insight into the reasons for the high prevalence of alcohol use amongst South Africa's youth, and may also reveal further sites for interventions.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Informed Consent Documentation**

Dear Learner,

I am a student in Psychology doing my Masters degree in Clinical Psychology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. My student number is 203504300 and my supervisor for the study is Professor Anna Meyer-Weitz. As I have explained to you the aim of my study is to investigate the motivating factors that influence alcohol use among adolescent boys. We are eager to understand the relationships between factors such as alcohol use among parents, siblings and peers, and how this impacts on alcohol use by adolescent boys, as well as the role of the media in encouraging underage alcohol use and portraying a false image of masculinity in connection to alcohol.

Your participation in this study would be much appreciated. If you do choose to volunteer, you will take part in a focus group discussion with 5 to 9 other boys, where a conversation relating to alcohol use among adolescent boys, as well as topics relating to masculinity issues and media influence will be discussed. Although the discussion will be tape-recorded, all of the information will be strictly confidential and will be used only for the purposes of this study. You will not be required to reveal any personal information and will remain completely anonymous as your name will not be used at any stage. The principal, teachers, and parents will not have any access to the information you give. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any stage should you wish to do so.

Each focus group will take place during class time and will take approximately one hour.

Your contribution in participating in a focus group discussion, and talking about these topics honestly and truthfully will be of great help in the development of programmes that will aid adolescent boys in developing the skills needed in order to make informed choices about the risk behaviour they engage in and to reach their full potential in life.

Please fill in the attached form if you have decided to participate, and do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries regarding the study. A final copy of the research report will be made available to you at your request, should you be interested to read it.

**Best wishes,**

**Kirsten Payne**

**Researcher: Ms. Kirsten Payne**

**083 295 5513**

**Supervisor: Prof. Anna Meyer-Weitz**

**School of Psychology**

**University of Kwazulu-Natal**

**(031) 260 7618**

**Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher.**

**THANK YOU**

**Title of proposed research study:**

*Boys being boys: Psychosocial factors associated with alcohol use among mid-adolescent males in a Durban boys' high school.*

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**CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS:**

I ..... (full names of participant)  
 hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. I understand and consent to the tape recording of the focus group discussion in which I am a willing and voluntary participant. I am aware that this discussion will be both anonymous and confidential, and that I will not be identified in any way in the finished dissertation.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire, and that this will not result in any form of disadvantage.

**SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT****DATE**

.....

.....

---

 Please tear off and keep for future reference
**Researcher: Ms. Kirsten Payne****083 295 5513**

**Supervisor: Prof. Anna Meyer-Weitz**  
**School of Psychology**  
**University of Kwazulu-Natal**  
**(031) 260 7618**

**Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher.**

**THANK YOU**

## **Appendix 2**

### **Focus Group Introduction**

Good morning and welcome to our session today. Thank you for volunteering to participate in this discussion. My name is Kirsten Payne and I am a student from UKZN. I am doing my masters in Clinical Psychology, of which this research is a component. I am interested in the motivating factors that influence alcohol use among adolescent boys, as well as the role of the media in encouraging underage alcohol use and portraying a false image of masculinity in connection to alcohol. You have all been selected due to the fact that as adolescent boys you may have some insight into some of these topics.

So today we will be discussing your thoughts and opinions about alcohol use among adolescent boys. There are no wrong answers but rather differing points of view and please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others may have said. Also keep in mind that we are interested in negative as well as positive comments, and at times the negative comments may be the most helpful.

Before we begin, let me suggest some things that will make our discussion more productive. As you can see we will be tape-recording our session because I don't want to miss any of your comments, so please make sure to speak up. Only one person should speak at a time and sometimes I might have to direct the traffic a bit. We'll be on a first-name basis, but in my later report you will all be given pseudonyms or fake names to ensure confidentiality, and no names will be linked to any information in any circumstances.

My role here is to ask questions and listen. I won't be participating in the conversation, but I want you to feel free to talk with one another. It is very important that we all respect one another and what each person has to say. Remember that you might not always agree with someone else's opinion, but you need to let them speak. It is also important to ensure that we keep what was said today confidential, as we may speak about personal experiences and issues. Although you are welcome to talk to other people about what we did in general, it is important to keep what was said by each person private and confidential. Some of the issues we are going to discuss may make you feel uncomfortable and if you are not willing to discuss any aspect then you should feel free to indicate this to me.

During the discussion I will be asking several questions and moving the conversation from one question to the next. Sometimes in these discussions there is a tendency for some people to talk a lot and for some people not to say much. But it is very important for me to hear from each one of you today because you have different experiences. So if one of you is sharing a lot, I may ask you to let others talk. And if you aren't saying much, I may ask for your opinion. We've placed name cards in front of you to help us remember each other's names.

### Appendix 3

#### Focus Group Schedule

**Boys being boys: Psychosocial factors associated with alcohol use among mid-adolescent males in a Durban boys' high school.**

#### Focus Group Schedule

*(It should be noted that this is only a guideline but that the discussion will determine the sequence of probing and emergent issues will be investigated)*

Some of the issues that we are going to discuss might make you feel uncomfortable and if you are not willing to discuss any aspect, you should feel free to indicate this to me. This information will be kept strictly confidential and no names in any circumstance will be linked to the information gathered in this discussion. All the data that we gather will only be used for research purposes only. It will also be important to keep what is said in this discussion confidential within the group, as we will be speaking about very personal experiences and issues. I am sure that everyone will agree that they would not want what they discuss to be repeated to others outside of the group, and so part of agreeing to participate in this focus group means that you will keep the information in the discussion private and confidential.

1. I would like to start our discussion by talking about alcohol use among adolescent boys.

What can you tell me about that?

*Probe:*

- At what age do boys first use alcohol?
- What are the circumstances and who are they with? (Friends, family members)

2. Who or what do you think young boys might be influenced by when considering using alcohol for the first time?

*Probe:*

- Friends
- Family members
- Advertisements

3. What do you think some of the reasons could be as to why adolescent boys may choose either to drink alcohol or not to drink?

*Probe:*

- To be cool
- Social confidence
- Escape reality
- Rebellion
- Sport/academic performance
- Consequences of alcohol use

4. Can you tell me about an advertisement for any type of alcohol that you can remember?

Can you describe the advertisement for me, and tell me what you think about it?

*Probe:*

- What advertising medium is it? (Print, TV, radio)
- What type or brand of alcohol is it? (Beer, wine, spirits)
- What aspect of the advertisement has the greatest impact?
- Do these advertisements encourage you to use alcohol, if so why? (Sport's stars, handsome, popular men, sense of fun and enjoyment, popular with women/sex appeal)

5. Alcohol use and being able to drink large amounts of alcohol or get drunk is often seen as being a sign of 'manhood'. What do you think about this?

*Probe:*

- Masculinity issues and risk taking behaviours
- Peer pressure (Popularity, 'coolness')
- Who is expected to use alcohol and who is exempt? (Sports players, academics)

6. Girls sometimes complain that there are double standards when it comes to how they are expected to behave, in contrast with how boys behave. Do you think that the norms for alcohol use are different for girls than for boys? *Probe:*

- Is it more acceptable for boys to drink/get drunk than for girls?
- Do those of you with sisters find that there are different rules with regard to alcohol use for you (and your brothers) than for your sisters, or do your parents have different expectations as to how you should behave?

7. We know that using alcohol may have many consequences. Can you tell me about some of the consequences you may have thought of?

*Probe:*

- What type of consequences can you think of? (Drunk driving, unprotected sex, fighting, health consequences)
- Do you think that you might be vulnerable to any of these outcomes? Why or why not?

## Appendix 4

### Excerpts of Interviews

This appendix consists of transcripts of one of the four focus group discussions conducted with adolescent boys from a public high school in the eThekweni region of KwaZulu-Natal.

M = Moderator

P = Participant

M: Ok, so I'm going to put this in the middle of the table. Ok, so the first thing I want to start off with is just kind of like a general question around, um, alcohol use among adolescent boys, and what you guys can kind of tell me about it. What are any opinions that you might have?

P1: I'll go guys.

M: Sorry?

P1: I'll go guys. Uh, basically like I've got lots of friends that drink.

M: Uh-huh.

P1: And you sitting in the quad, and on Thursday guys are telling each other like Friday is gonna be a big jol night. Ou's are gonna get smashed, I'm not gonna be able to see two feet in front of me, ou's it's gonna be hectic. And ja, basically dudes want to have fun and stuff.

P2: Ja.

P1: If you chill with guys and I mean, you watch them get sloshed and then you have to be the responsible one to try and get them back into the taxi cause you have to get home now [Ha]...guys are chasing after the ugliest chicks you've ever seen [laughter], because they're smashed they're just doing things...dancing on top of taxi's and stuff...

[Participants all laugh].

M: What do some of the other guys think about that?

P2: Ja, I think it's for security reasons as well. You feel better approaching people and talking to them when you're under the influence and stuff like that.

P3: A lot of guys do that...

M: A lot of guys...

P3: Ja, cause they like might be shy to dance in a club, but then if they have one, two drinks then they feel more open [Ja]...

M: And what kind of age do you think guys are starting to drink?

P3: Thirteen.

P1: Sjoe, twelve, ten, eleven.

P4: It all just, it all depends on where you're coming from [Ja]...like your background. I live, I used to live in the country and no one there would do that type of thing...

M: Ja...

P4: It's more city based.

P5: I rate, Ja, fifteen, sixteen... [Mm-hmm]...

P1: But then like you're finding a lot more parents are starting to accept that their children drink, and they'd rather their children drink in the house than they go somewhere else and get drunk and do something stupid, and get arrested for underage drinking and stuff...

P5: But they do that anyway, so...[laughter]

M: So do you think a lot of the times when guys are starting to drink it's happening in the home, or do you think it's happening elsewhere?

P5: Elsewhere...

P1: They have to be exposed to it somewhere...

P6: It's like in homes...this is what I know from my mates and at home, you're allowed to have like, one or two...not go overboard, but I know when you go out you do go overboard,

you...everyone says Ja, I'm only going to have one or two but you don't, it's like it's impossible, so like...[Well, I.]...that's how I think how it starts.

P7: I think it depends on the father, like my dad lets me drink fine, like he has no problem with me having drinks just as long as I keep myself under control...[Mm-hmm]...I think it's up to what kind of parent you have.

M: Ok.

P3: Ja, I think it does start in the home because sometimes at first the parents don't know, like, if you sleep over at your friend's house and your dad's got a secret stash or whatever [laughter]...you end up going for it at some stage...Ja.

P1: Guys get introduced to it like at a young age, like I have Italian friends and like Italian dinners usually end off with a glass of wine or something, and if you grew up around this then you know drinking to be the norm, and it's just like at supper time you have a glass of wine.

P4: It's like a celebration.

P1: Ja but it escalates cause you start with the small stuff, people start with wine, you get those box, that box wine...and then it escalates to the stronger stuff.

P8: I also think parents would rather have their children drinking at home where it's more safe...than going out and getting drunk, getting arrested...so maybe that's also, sort of the reason why.

P4: Ja...they can keep more control. [pause]

M: Ok, so moving on from there, who do you think are the major influences when boys are starting to use alcohol?

P4: Friends...

P5: Friends.

P4: Peer pressure.

P1: And the tv...

M: And the tv?

P1: And the media cause you, if you, kay...most of you guys don't know what West Street looks like but anyway, but if you walk down West Street, on the buildings there's like big billboards and on Umgeni Road and like, basically in the locations, on the highway to the Bluff there's like three or four, uh, alcohol adverts and stuff...and people see that and like cause they associate high class living with alcohol [Mmm] and people want to escape their surroundings or [Mmm] they wanna drink to seem more posh or whatever, like they living more lavish lives...And then like you get told it's a good feeling.

P4: Yeah, on tv you see the people having a good time drinking so you think the same thing is gonna happen with you...

P1: Exactly...

P6: And also, like, it's easy to get from a normal bottle store, you normally have to show and ID and everything, this is what I heard, [laughter]...but, if you go to like a shebeen or something like that...

P4: Yeah, a scabba place...

P6: Yeah a normal, like Ja sort of a scabba place like he says, then they just give it to you they don't ask any questions cause they're making the money...[Ja]...And I think, that also promotes it a little bit.

P8: Also, if you think about it, some guys um, you know think ah, there's gonna be girls there and stuff, you know, and they're gonna be drinking so you might as well drink as well.

M: Ok so if the girls are already drinking, then some guys will drink to join in as well.

P8: Ja, then they also kind of feel like...

M: Then they have to do it.

P3: It's also our parents as well, um, cause we see them drinking so we think it's ok to do it because they're doing it [Ja] so we end up doing it as well.

P5: No also if you see a girl drinking you think that she'll only like you if she knows that you drink. And you end up drinking because she'll think you're more fun and stuff.

P1: Music videos, who doesn't watch music videos.

All: Ja [Laughter]

P1: And I know most of us here like hip hop and rock and stuff, and out of every like five music videos there's at least three where you see some brand of alcohol being advertised [Ja]...Budweiser...[Ja]...

P7: Heineken...[Ja]

P1: Jack Daniels...or Dom Perignon...cause the rapper guys like to go all lavish, they drink that expensive stuff...pour it all over the girls and stuff...so people think that's so cool, so they want to do it too.

M: Any of the other guys...you got anything you want to say? [No] Not at the moment? That's fine...

P4: I think it could also be just like a form of bottled confidence, cause like people do it, they'll have one or two to like gain confidence to do something...and then they end up having like, over that...so they end up going too far and they start doing stupid things and that...

P1: You know, there's ah...if you like ask a Christian guy, cause some guys come to SCA, and on the weekends you'll come, you'll see them, drunk out of their minds and when you ask the guy, hey bro, why do you drink? You're intoxicating your body and your body's your temple and wadda wadda...and the guy will be like, no dude, Jesus used to drink wine so why shouldn't I, and don't you take holy communion, what's wrong with you? And stuff like that so...

M: So there's always ways to justify it?

P1: Exactly...ja, they have to justify it.

M: Alright...So, we all know that there are some guys though who don't drink, ok?

Although the majority do, ok so what are some of the reasons that you think some guys will choose to drink and some won't choose to drink? I know we have kind of touched on a lot of them already.

P9: I know, um, I don't drink because I mean, I've been to a lot of parties and stuff, and I've seen what the guys are capable of when they're drunk, and I don't want to see myself in that type of situation...cause um, there was this one party that I went to with a friend, and this one guy got drunk and passed out, and they got shaving cream and cigarette butts, and they stuck the shaving cream on his face and put the cigarette butts on him and took a photo and posted it on the net...[Ja]...so, I don't think I ever want to be seen in that kind of a situation.

P3: No, some people can handle it as well, they can control themselves, not being aggressive...

P4: When I was at a club, the guy got so intoxicated that like he passed out, and he ended up getting up and then he walked outside and he passed out again...so they had to get the ambulance and he had to go to hospital and get his stomach pumped...

P3: Alcohol poisoning...

P4: Ja...

P6: Also, like, to make some people drink you, I mean, some people don't drink, you probably find that at their homes their father or their mother might be an alcoholic, or even a brother or a sister, and they don't want to turn out like them [Ja] so that stops them from drinking...Or you could put it in another perspective, you could say that because a mother or father are alcoholics, he's got no other choice, that's how he escapes from it so he, it's that,

he drinks from that [Mm-hmm]...that's the reason why he goes out and doesn't listen to his parents and drinks and Ja...

P3: But it also comes from both sides as well, cause no matter if you drink or don't drink, it's all about having fun, some people have fun while they drink, they have fun having one or two beers, or something like that, and other people can also have fun just by not drinking at all, just by being themselves...and they don't want to over-induce or overdo it...and become like the people that they see, but majority can handle...[Mmm]..um, it's all about how you control yourself.

P8: It's also about how much they drink...

P3: Ja...

P4: Ja, like if, if you get a lot of people who think like the first time they did it they went way too far and got sick and passed out then they might think ay, I don't like that, they think it's gonna happen every time so they don't do it again.

P1: Basically I don't drink because my dad doesn't drink...and like, he hasn't, he's never touched a drop of alcohol. And I think of it as if he could do it why can't I? I've had lots of like, I have friends whose like parents are ah...alcoholics, like the guy would be ah, it'll be like two o'clock and the guy would be like it's six o'clock somewhere else in the world, knocking a few back...I mean, it tore the guy apart, it tore his family apart so I mean like, if I was to ah, rock up at home sloshed out of my mind, what would my father say, what would I expect my father to do or say, because I've never seen him drunk so ah, it's just the fear of disappointing him...[Mmm]...and plus, like, you know I'm not that easily influenced by other people...as most of you guys know...[laughter]

P7: Ja...I also think sport plays a role in it, with your fitness and stuff...cause when you drink you get a beer boep and stuff like that so...[laughter]

P5: And also athletes don't want to get that and, ja...

M: Ok, do you think that uh, those athletes, like say like the first team rugby guys, do you think they, if they choose not to drink, are they kind of exempt? Do guys kind of accept that?

P2: No, if it's after a big rugby game people are like, Foxy's ou's...

P4: Ja, let's go celebrate...

P6: But I know just from...I know from personal experience like, cause a know quite a few of the first team guys, and I know some of them do drink and it does, ah, what I see it definitely doesn't affect their rugby cause they play exactly the same whether they do or don't [Ja]. And um...I think the reason maybe that if they, I, I rate if they had to say no we're not drinking tonight or whatever, I think other okes would follow them cause I mean they look up to them [Mmm] and ja, that's what I say...

P8: Ja other people they also they don't drink because of the whole thing that it can destroy your kidneys and they're too scared [Mmm] to have that happen in their life later on...

M: So it sounds like a lot of the guys are aware of some of the consequences that are out there, and are kind of trying to balance that with some of kind of the positive aspects like you know, seeming cool among your peers, uh, kind of social confidence, meeting girls, that type of thing [Ja] so trying to balance that and see which is, which way you want to go...

P7: Ja but you get guys who they know the consequences but they still do it, it doesn't worry them at the time.

M: Mmm, ok...

P1: It's a masculinity thing, it's also a factor. Like ah, guys think the more you can take without passing out ah, the more of a man you are [Ja] and stuff like that...

M: Do you think guys believe that?

P1: A lot do..

P3: A lot do...

P1: I know people who will sit down with a bottle of Jack, finish it and go on to a bottle of Fish Eagle, and a whole lot of ciders and then we're like ah dude, you're the man. And after he walks out the door he's out like a light [Mmm]...until the next day.

P4: Or he goes and gets sick or something...

P1: Ja, exactly...

M: And what do you find is the reaction from like girls to that type of behaviour?

P5: Some girls like it, some girls don't.

M: Ja?

P5: It's like a fifty-fifty thing.

M: Uh-huh.

P3: It's all about choice.

P4: No I think the girls that do like it, it's cool for a while but when they see the guy sleeping on the pavement or something they're not gonna, they're gonna laugh at the guy.

[pause]

M: Ok, so just moving on to the kind of media aspect, which you guys have brought up already, um...and I know you've brought up things like music videos, and some of the billboards and things. So, what kind of ads, if I ask you to think about an ad for a, for any type of alcohol, what kind of springs to mind first off...

P1: Ah, I see um, ok cause we're influenced by a lot of American tv [Ja]...so I see a big keg, a frat party, a whole lot of people going crazy and, and doing fun stuff and people are playing darts...or in a classy bar, people are drinking out of clean glasses and having good, intimate conversation, people playing darts and people playing checkers and...but, I'd like to see an ad where they really exposed the truth of alcohol [Ja]. Like if they actually showed guys like, hanging outside of the window of a car, he's like drunk or about to crash or something, I'd like to see that more and see how many people still want to drink after that.

P7: What I see is that Bells advert when they pour the brandy or the whisky in slow and straight on the rocks, ja, and then ah, they make it as if it's only for ah, high class men...you drink it and like, like he said it's not always like that...

M: So what part of that advert has the greatest impact for you?

P7: Me? Um...It just, it just looks inviting, [Ja] the way they pour it slow...

P3: Dramatic effect...

M: So it looks, looks like something that a rich guy would, would buy or something like that...ja.

P5: Cause that is, that is a very expensive drink.

M: Ja.

P4: The one, the one advert, the Miller advert...the one where you just, you see it parties everywhere, different countries [Ja], all these well-known countries, exotic places nice places, Paris, England, and you get, it shows like all these parties and what you see is, you don't see no one sloshed, you just check people having fun with a Miller in their hand, sexy women, nice guys, all that stuff and they all partying, having a good time. And it's not like these dreg places, it's nice like stuff...so when you check that you think ah, I'd love to be there, do that type of thing.

M: Ja.

P5: I think a main one is that Peroni advert, where they, it's in black and white and they showing all the high fashion and classy people, but...

P2: Oh, ja...

M: And the calendars and all the hot models...

P5: Ja, but that's not really the case, it's like...

P1: That Fish Eagle one, that one was quite, quite a great ad...

P4: Oh, ja...

P1: Cause like...

P3: It's all calm...

P1: ...the fish eagle it's calm and the eagle takes the fish at the end, and it's like Fish Eagle, naturally superior cause like...

P3: Nothing can stop it...

P1: ...it's the eagle, ja. And people will be like, I'm naturally superior that's, that's me right there, [Uh-huh] and it's associated, people associate a certain personality with a certain type of alcohol.

M: Ok so you're trying to, kind of like you're trying to find a certain identity for yourself as well? So if you're wanna be a fun, party guy you'll drink Millers, if you wanna be classy and superior you're gonna maybe a whisky or something like that...

P3: Ja.

P1: Ja.

P6: Um, I just, I also see that advert, I don't know if it was Smirnoff or something, where they're in Alaska or wherever, and they're sitting outside, no they're inside then and he opens this fridge and walks through and it's like the ice and everything and then they sit down and then they drink the...and ja I just see that because I mean ah...

P3: Funny, cool...

P6: Ja it's, it's sort of just a...it gives you the thing that if you drink that you'll be refreshed and whatever...Ja.

P7: You also associate it with humour as well.

M: Ja.

P7: A lot of the adverts.

P4: And also that other new beer advert, it's like it's got that expensive beer where that cork pops off [Oh, ja, ja] and like, it looks like, like it's really really nice, like you want it, it's like you want to get your hands on it...it's like...

P7: It's got like a different caption...

M: Mmm.

P9: I think like the Smirnoff adverts with the guy walking outside as his fridge, I think that humour plays a lot in the person's mind cause then they go into the bottle store and they remember oh wait, Smirnoff advert, and they go to Smirnoff and buy a couple of cases and go pay for it.

M: So it's also what's like kind of memorable and what sticks in your mind, so, so if something's funny then it's going to be more memorable.

P6: I also just wanna say like, that Bavaria Light, that zero percent alcohol one, um, this isn't really an advert but I mean, if you're promoting a zero percent alcohol, what's the point in even having it? It's just it's, people are just going to buy it so they can take it and say look I've got a beer, I, I can fit in with everybody and I don't see the point of that, I mean, if you're going to drink, if, if, if your friends are all drinking like, proper beer with alcohol and everything, you just wanna fit in, so what's the point in even drinking a beer, why not have a normal cooldrink?

P4: It's a social thing.

P6: Ja, it's a social thing, if you just, if you're doing it just to fit in, so it's zero percent alcohol it's not going to be doing anything to you anyway.

P3: But some people, I don't know it's like a chemical imbalance or something...but some people can actually get drunk just by thinking about it, thinking that you drunk you can [Ja] start feeling all amped up and high and...it happens.

P5: No we did that to a guy once, we put like a bit of Jack on the rim of the glass or something, and by the end of the night he was legless, but mean time he was just been drinking Coke.

M: Oh really?

P3: Ja your mind, it's happened to plenty guys before. Because you just have a good time and it's like, all your endorphins like and you just like yeah, adrenaline and it's like woo-hoo, I'm drunk, yeah, let's go jump off a building or something.

P1: But the alcohol is also like ah, a gateway thing cause like um, I know guys who are like ah, you're still a child dude, why you drinking Coke, you're supposed to drink man. And the guy take like a beer, he drinks a beer, and he's like ok now I want something and he drinks more and more and more...

P4: Ja until it gets accepted...

P1: ...and after a while alcohol doesn't do anything for him anymore, he turns to like ah, the beers don't satisfy him anymore, then he goes to drugs and other stuff like that...but most people can stop, it's just with alcohol people just drink.

M: Ja. So a lot of it can kind of go hand in hand as well.

P3: But, but alcohol isn't always about having fun. I mean some people, when they [depressed]...ja, heavily depressed, they also take alcohol to sort of ja, ease the pain and like make it easier for them to go through.

P1: Ja cause the guys begging on the corner want ah...there was a guy I saw who was standing by a robot, he was standing there with his board and he's like I'm not going to lie to you and say I want bread, honestly I just want booze. And the one guy actually stopped and gave him a beer and the guy was like ok thanks and he went and sat down [Mmm] and was like drinking his beer.

P8: That's the same as on the rugby field, like when the guys have just played a hard game and they come off and they're like ah, I'm, I'm amped for a nice beer now or something like that...

P1: That happened with me the other time...

[laughter]

P1: Hey those Jaguar ou's and those ou's that play rugby in Durban, those rugby clubs...at half time you don't have water or those energy drinks, it's just like ah give me a beer!

[laughter] And they're smoking hectically, it's a bit dumb but I mean ok, that's what they do...

M: So it kind of goes in with that whole image of being a rugby player...

P1: And national pride too.

M: And national pride...for SAB...

P1: Ja national pride is a factor cause well, I mean, Castle sponsors the Springboks...so then like if we, it's like basically if you lose, let's go drown our sorrows, if we win, let's go celebrate.

P3: Ja, you're going to drink either way.

M: So basically, if you, if you had to give me in a nutshell then why do those advertisements, ah... encourage you to use alcohol? What would those...if you just had to list those factors...

P7: Well they're catchy...

M: They're catchy?

P3: Ja, it's all about how you look at it cause I mean if you feel like...like there's no harm in doing it, you're going to do it, I mean if you feel safe and you can handle it...people can tell you otherwise but you're still gonna do it at the end of the day.

M: So, so do you think those ads make you feel like it will be safe and you will be able to do it?

P3: Ja, because they, they make it all calm and sophisticated and,...ja, happy, I mean...

P2: They associate it with ah, like having a good time and having a party and...

P3: Ja and you want to do that, ah...

P7: But you, you sit there and you drink and drink and you hope that one day sooner or later, you'll come to that stage and you'll be drinking like that, doing that as well.

M: Mmm...

P4: There's things in an advert that people get attracted to, so, in specific drinks adverts they might appeal to you so then you'll go to the shop and remember and go buy it, ja.

P5: It also looks so nice like so you'll see they have them so you'll think ah, that looks nice I want to try that cause it just, it looks good...

P2: The packaging...

P1: It's like in that ad, that guy's crawling through the desert [Ja] towards this glass of water, and he crawls past it, and the water's just, there's dust all around the glass and inside the water just looks so dry, it's liquid but it looks so dry, and he crawls past and you check the beer there, and the beer's just dripping [laughter] and it looks so nice and cool and refreshing, and all the people are like as he's about to take it he looks back at the sun and the sun's beating down on him, and he grabs the beer and he drinks it, and the next thing you see this parachute opens up and he's just coming down from a plane or something, and I was like oh, ok...[laughter].

M: So kind of false advertising?

All: Ja...

P1: Cause you feel, you feel like, I want to feel like that...plus, people associate that sort of stuff with an adrenaline rush, like guys will take bungee jumping...you bungee jump to the bottom of the river and he picks up a beer and comes back up with the beer and lands...

P3: Oh ja...

P1: And it's like so cool, what a rush, and you think about it every time you drink it.

P6: Also with the adverts, they say at the bottom of them not for sale to persons under the age of eighteen, now...my mates say, it says not for sale, it doesn't say you can't drink it, so that's what, that's just a stupid thing that the people I know do [Ja] and that they say, so then, so why not drink?

M: Ja...

P1: You can still get drink, cause those, those guys go together to those bottle stores, cause they usually have saloons there...the guy will buy a couple of packs of cigarettes, you know build a relationship with the guy selling and basically after a while the guy will be like hey dude just sell me a beer quick, it's for my uncle I promise and the guys like, after a while guys are like ok...get the money together and give it to that guy, he'll go, he'll go buy us alcohol and come back.

P7: I think it's the other way, cause like, well, from like what I've seen with my friends doing...a lot of them drink and then they smoke only if they're drinking. During the day they won't smoke, but only when they drink.

P5: Ja but I think more people drink when they smoke, I think cause, cause your parents would definitely have a big thing about smoking and really there's a huge effect of smoking, you see the coughing, a lot of people do, it's just got this, all these things have a big effect on people, it's seems more real than the things you can get from drinking.

M: Ok.

P4: And also on the smoking boxes now they tell you the like what's gonna happen the repercussions, but on a bottle of beer they don't tell you that your kidneys gonna fail when you fifty or something.

P3: Well, I, I only started smoking like halfway when I, when I was drinking, but the only time that I used to smoke is cause when I smoke it took my mind off the alcohol because I didn't want to overdo it, and then since then um I've, I've, I've been smoking like, like everyday and it's, it's like, it feels like it's like a part of my life so it's like I mean and I don't drink much anymore because of the smoking...but, I quit smoking on Sunday.

P9: I think cost also plays quite a large role in the consumption of, of alcohol, cause I mean compare the price of a quart of beer to a pack of cigarettes...I mean...

P1: Ja that's true...

M: So people are more likely to smoke, I mean to drink, because smoking's so expensive?

P9: Ja.

M: Ok.

P3: And I think, I don't think smoking gives you such a rush as drinking [Ja] cause it's just, ja more people chase the rush than just.

P5: Smoking is more of an image thing...

P2: Alcohol is like, easier to get to, like at my house none of us in our family drink, but we have a cabinet of alcohol and that cause like, it's not just for like visitors, it's like every now and then my dad will, ok might have a thing of whiskey or something like that but...

M: Ok, ok so alcohol is more easy to get like I don't know...stealing out of your parents...

P2: Ja people, people will go and like steal it out of their parents fridge or out of their big like cabinets hidden you know, somewhere or something like that.

P7: It's like more available...

P5: I also, I also think there's like a greater disapproval of smoking than drinking...

P3: See like you, you'd be more comfortable going and telling your parents that you had a drink than, than that you had a smoke.

M: Does everyone agree with that?

P6: I don't agree with that...

M: You don't agree with that?

P6: No because if you say you're drinking, drinking leads to getting drunk, and getting drunk leads to getting hurt...

P3: And getting girls pregnant...

P6: With smoking, smoking's just smoking, you can't, nothing can happen to you if you smoke, yes your lungs will collapse...

P3: Eventually...

P6: ...later in your life, or whatever but, your parents, I rate, parents need to think about, about it in that perspective cause I mean, if you smoke, ja, as I say, nothing can happen to you, if you drink you can go out, get hurt, if you, if you drink behind your parents back you can maybe get in a car with someone that's been drinking and he has a car accident and you die and, or you get badly injured or I mean, that, that's why I say drinking's more, so it's worse than ah, smoking.

P7: But I would rather let my parents catch me drinking...

P3: Ja.

P7: ...like they, they know I drink but, I don't want to, I don't want them to find out that I smoke.

P3: Ja well like my, my, my mom never had a problem with me drinking when I told her but when, when, when I told her that I was smoking, she made out like it was this big deal, like you shouldn't do this and that, but I could drink as much as I want, but I, when it came to like, smoking like a packet a day, she used to like, have this big problem, and I, I could be

wasted out of my mind with drink and she wouldn't mind. So, some parents are just, they're more worried about, well I personally say most parents are worried about smoking more than drinking.

P7: I think like, I think it's like this whole thing with gangsters, um, like there's more adverts out showing the effects of like smoking and that, and then there are of alcohol. Like, for ah, for alcohol and that, there's more things promoting it and ja, the acceptance of it and that.

P3: You don't, you don't see adverts that much of people smoking and having a good time and [Ja]...

P4: Like in the olden days...

P3: ...like buy Marlboro, cause look at these people having a good time or something like that.

P4: Ja, like, like back in the day, I remember my dad was telling us, they had the one advert with that camel, and the camel was a cartoon, [Oh ja] and he looked all cool with the jacket and the glasses and a smoke. But it's funny because now, in this day and age, I saw another one, it was of the camel in bed with cancer and he's bald...

M: Oh ok, ok. So ja cause there was, there's all this legislation now where things are, like you're not allowed to sponsor teams who, you know, it used to be, what, the Rothman's July and the Gunston 500 [Ja, Ja] but that's now all changed. And alcohol meanwhile is still a major sponsor, like you were mentioning rugby and all that.

P4: Heineken, ja.

M: So it sounds like for a lot of parents they, the smoking has become the major thing to kind of worry about and that's kind of foremost in a lot of people's minds, whereas alcohol....

P3: Is a lot more dangerous.

M: ...ja, alcohol, even though there are more kind of drastic and immediate consequences that kind of flies under the radar a lot. It's a bit more acceptable. So, back to um, you know that whole topic of manhood and masculinity, and you guys mentioned that, you know, to be a man, it's kind of like a, a gateway, you know, between childhood and manhood, to be accepted amongst your peers and that. Why do you think, why do you think that is?

P4: It's cause you see like, you see if you look out at the world, if you go to bars and stuff, you see a lot of the cool okes, like men, lots of good guys, all drinking...and you look at other okes and they look, they don't drink some of them so like bang and like wimps and stuff.

P3: And like also some of the guys that drink, they get the better girls, than the nerds that don't drink and they don't get anything...but, it's, it's almost sort of like lions, I mean, the males are trying to be well, like dominant, they want to show that, that, that they are out there, I mean it's sort of also with fighting as well cause they want to show that I can beat you up, I'm better than you, I'm stronger than you, it's all about dominance, we want to be known and we want to, you know, show people what, what we can do...it's what guys do.

M: So, so how do guys show, in terms of drinking, how do guys show that they're dominant then?

P3: Like, um, these days, the dancing is a big thing, but majority of, of guys can't really dance when they're sober, but when they're drunk they can dance, and also the amount of alcohol that they're taking in, they and so so so, and ja, and they showing they better than this person, or better than that person they, getting themselves out there to be seen.

M: Ok so the more alcohol you can drink, the more of a man you are.

P3: Ja.

P1: Also like, most guys when they turn eighteen or twenty-one, their dad will be like, oh you're a man now my son, pop a bottle of beer open and be like, ah, here's your first legal

drink or something, and plus with that age-restriction thing, people think once you've reached a certain age, cause like they say drinking is for adults right, when you've reached that certain age now he is legal, he can do whatever he wants, and the first thing most people do is when they get to their birthday they want to get a drink, and they probably want to drink in front of the police or something so the police can say something to them and you can show them you eighteen and stuff...[laughter]...so it's like that.

M: Ok, so it's like, again, coming back to that being an adult, so even if you're not eighteen you want to be seen as an adult [Yes] so, so that's one way of achieving that. Um...ok, so who do you think, is there anyone who you think is, can use the excuse that they don't want to drink and, and, and be exempt, you know, not be harassed by anyone or anything?

P3: It depends on who your friends are, if they understand then they're better friends, or if they those kind of guys who are just going to make you do it.

P2: No but if he's a true friend then he'll understand that you've got commitments and that you believe that drinking's not the right thing to do.

P3: I think everyone, if it's their choice not to drink they should have the right not to be harassed about it and that.

M: Ja.

P1: Well my friends don't mind that I don't drink, in fact they like it because then they know they can drink and get totally smashed and I'll be there to clean up after them. Cause like...if I don't go to a party with them, they'll come back looking pretty sober, but if I go with them then I'm like the daddy-carer or whatever, I take care of them and stuff. Basically, it's sort of a rash but I mean, at least they, they...

P3: That's the way that you can look more dominant towards them.

P1: But I, I don't mind being dominant and stuff like that because that basically is my personality and stuff.

P7: It's the same with me, sometimes, I don't drink every time I go out, um, like I'd say fifty-fifty, one night I might drink, one night I might not, I mean, some of my friends might ask me why don't you drink all the time, why aren't you drinking tonight, and I just say ah well I don't feel like it, I don't want to and then they're just like ok.

P6: Just the way your friends also look at it, if you go out and I know it happens in my group of friends, go out and someone says no we don't want to drink or whatever, then they'll start to like tune the ou like you're a lightweight, look at you, you can't handle and whatever. And also if a guy like has two beers, like say he's a fit ou and he has two beers and he's finished already, he's gone, then the next day it also carries on more, like you'll go to the oke and ja, look at you, you can't handle, you're a lightweight and ja, and that's just that's what happens.

P7: But also it's like two way because like I live on the Bluff and a lot of like the younger guys, they'll look up to the older guys, and but then if you drink and you get smashed then you pass out and that, then all the older Bluff guys will look at you and say ah, look at you, you're a lightie, you're getting drunk, oh you shouldn't be here cause you making the Bluff look stupid. But then if you don't drink then they're like why aren't you drinking? Or something like that.

P3: I think...

P1: I'm rough and I'm tough and I come from the Bluff.

P3: I think once you've got your driver's license your friends will accept it more, cause then ay, you're the designated driver, so they can have a good time so...

M: Mmm.

P1: They make me drive a lot...

P4: Ja.

P1: Like that, that, that's basically how I learned to drive, cause you get there and the guy who drove you to the party is just smashed, and he gives you the keys and he's like dude just

get us home in one piece, I can't drive, I'll probably kill us all. You think to yourself, I don't wanna die...

M: Mmm.

P1: I've got a family, so, down the road you drive, basically you do a few stupid things. So most of the stuff that happens at night like, people think ah that's why we've got such hectic security systems, cause ah, people play ah, mailbox, um, baseball. It happens in South Africa, you go hitting things, or they'll ah, buy eggs and throw them...

P3: Egg the house.

P1: And then people think someone's trying to break in and stuff.

M: Ja.

P1: People do stupid things like that.

P4: Or you go around with like a paintball gun and you like shoot houses.

M: Shoot houses?

P1: Or people.

M: Or people? Ok.

P1: And dogs and ah, fireworks.

P4: Ooh ja, that's wrong.

P3: Shoot people with air rifles.

M: Alright so it sounds like there are, there's a lot of kind of behaviour that, that happens when people are drunk [Ja] that people are, might not necessarily be proud of the next day?

P7: Ja things seem much, more like less...[serious] consequences and that...

P6: It's ok if you act like, mature about it, cause if you have a drink and you know you're going to get drunk that night, you mustn't go around and do stupid, not, acting immature, go around and like, start being a vandal and what have you, you know, that's just not socially acceptable obviously and ja, it's just control it a bit better.

M: Why do you think you guys act in those ways though?

P6: It's to try look funny or try like, look like the group clown...

P3: You try to stand out, but you won't ever do it when you by yourself, you will only do it when you with friends. I mean, I, I won't lie, I did go post box, post box smashing the one night, but that was, that's cause I mostly hang around with older guys like eighteens upwards, so they'll like, the one night they, they, they had this idea and I, I agreed to do it I mean, cause, you wanna be like, known, I don't know, especially when you younger, you wanna show that you're not afraid to do anything.

P2: I don't, I don't, think it's this whole thing about having someone with you, you know, I mean I don't drink on my own [Ja] it's no fun, it's like it doesn't seem to have much point to it.

P1: Ja alcohol also helps like predators and stuff like, on a serious note. Because like people just, basically the girls cause like guys spike drinks and stuff [Ja] cause like girls try to look cool and drink with guys and taking a drink, and guys are buying her drinks and she doesn't know which drink comes from who, you know, there might be a dirty old geezer sitting at the corner there, waiting for her to consume everything and then afterwards, he takes her home and does freaky things with her and then she doesn't know what's happened.

M: Mmm.

P4: I don't know, I just think, once you get to about your dad's age or whatever, cause I mean if they're watching the rugby at home, they'll go get a beer and drink it because they don't mind, they're old enough, they respect the drink now, they think ja, it's cool to just have one beer sometimes. But if it was us, we wouldn't drink by ourselves cause you only do it to try show your friends that you're like a man.

M: So it's like not for the taste, and it's not for the enjoyment, it's just...

P8: More for the rush.

M: ...kind of a competition between guys.

P4: Ja, ja...

P3: But I mean, we mostly drink while we're young, I mean cause our, we're young, our bodies can take it, I mean what as soon as you get older, we end up going through like liver failures and everything, so we try, we try to have as much fun while we're young and we can handle it.

P5: Also when you older it's like, when you're older it's not as fun.

P6: Ja because you're not doing it on the sly or where [Ja] you have to take a drink and go around the corner and drink it and then come out and then ja...that's what you've been doing. It's not on the sly like when you over eighteen then it's like ja, whatever, you can do it if you want to.

P3: Ja, it's like going to the shop and getting a coke, it's like just the same thing.

M: Ok but doing it because it's illegal, or you know your parents would find out. [Ja] So, so it's a bit of, ja a rebellious thing.

P3: I mean we, we, as the younger generation we've got a reputation for the stuff like that you know, a party and that type of thing so.

P1: Ja you better enjoy yourself now you know, it's grade eleven, it's grade ten, it's grade eleven, just get sloshed, matric's no joke dude, honestly...then the day after you finish your last exam ou's are gone! And then the first day of varsity everything's good, and then you see the party life, and then...then guys get a bit dodgy after that and then you, when exams start and that. But it's also like that cause, there's this certain times that guys will remain sober for like a month, like I'll tell you last term guys didn't touch, they were dry as a bone for those, that exam period, but afterwards you saw all of them gone the whole holidays. Basically a freedom thing too.

M: Someone was mentioning um, about girls and drinking a bit earlier. Do you guys think that there are double standards when it comes to boys and girls...in terms of, you know, you can drink and who can't drink and who should drink and who shouldn't drink?

P3: Well, I think it's, ah, personally I'll say it's more appropriate for a guy to drink, I mean but if you see a girl having one or two drinks it's ok but, when it comes to like the, the more harsher stuff like beer and whiskey and stuff like that it'll be fine, the, the, the ciders and stuff like that will be for girls. It's all like showing...different personalities, like the more harsher stuff will be for the guys, and the less harsh stuff, or the sweet stuff will be for the girls.

P4: Ja, I think there's like this stereotype or whatever cause like, if you see a girl with a beer [Aah!] you're going to be like ah, that must be like some weird chick or something but if you see her with like a Smirnoff Twist or some Brutal Fruit then, you think ja, she's cool.

P3: Now she's cool, she's kind of more attractive.

P1: The thing is a guy will meet a chick at a party and she's gone, and he'll start dating her, and once he starts dating her he'll be like, I don't want you to drink [Ja, ja] and then he's like ah, you're my chick now, you're my chick, and like all stuff like that. So there are double standards cause when she's like, just a random chick at a party you don't mind seeing her drunk, but when she's your girlfriend you don't want to see her drunk.

M: Mmm. Do you think there are like, also double standards from parents and that, for those guys who have sisters maybe?

P1: Ja.

P6: Yes, definitely.

M: Ja?

P6: Like, like my parents when I'm at home they say ja, you can drink, not, not obviously not going overboard and say ja, have one or two and only when like, when we have a braai, a get-together or whatever they'll say ja here, you can have a drink, get one for your mates as

well and it's fine. But if my sister had to, ok my sister's seventeen and I'm sixteen, my sister had to ask it would be a different story, she's not allowed. And I, it's, it's not like, that's the only thing that she's like, I don't want to say downgraded to, cause I mean, that's the only thing that she's not allowed to do that I am. And, I don't know why, I don't know what it is, but that's just ja, um, I don't know.

M: And do you guys agree with that?

P3: I think [Ja?] I think it also comes down to like showing masculinity and that, like it's, it's being, it's gotten to the stage where it's thought that um, the men are like more masculine so, so they um, can handle the alcohol and all that better than like girls and that could so...

P7: Plus you got the reputation like thing where, if a girl gets drunk, and like they can get pregnant so parents are like, I don't want that to happen to my daughter.

P3: Ja...girls, I mean, with girls these days, I mean um, they, they get told like a lot of things like I mean, a girl, a girl can have sex and she'll be like ay this one, this girl had sex with this guy, she's a slut, she's this and that. But a guy can go out and have sex and like, they'll be like fifty, sixty girls and they'll be like ay, joh, this oke's a beast ja, come to my house, let's have a dop.

M: So basically there's this perception that there's more severe consequences for girls if they go out and drink...

P5: Ja.

M: ...than there is maybe for guys.

P6: And also like, if they go out and drink there's, other guys can take more advantage of them, like you like saying right now, that's also a downside of what, I think that's also a reason why they don't maybe, permit drinking in the house, your parents don't say like ja, you can have a drink or whatever. And I think that's also, ja I think that's the reason why.

P4: I think there's a greater risk for girls than guys as far as like that, cause, I don't think, unless the guy's gay or I don't know, something like that, you not gonna get like sexually...

P7: aroused...

P1: attracted.

P4: ja...no like, someone's not really gonna like spike your drink, a girl's not gonna go and spike your drink so she can get you in bed, so it doesn't really happen like that.

P5: More the other way round.

P2: I think that also one of the things of it is ah, people, there are also guys that spike other guys drinks just to...

P4: Just to see how funny it is.

P2: No matter who you are it will happen to you cause once, once you've been spiked you, you don't, won't know what's happening.

P3: A guys that's got that tablet or whatever, I think he'd rather use it for himself than put it in some other guy's drink and then...

P6: But it's also a funny thing. If, if, if you get the pill you gonna ok, it's never happened, well I've never seen it. Just put it in a mindset like, if you've got, if one of your mates has one of the pills and you go come let's go give it to whatever it is and see what it does to him, or, or the more lightie guy in the group, or the more guy, the guy that doesn't stand out as much as the rest...

P3: Not as macho.

P6: Ja, you wanna check what it does to somebody so you go and put it in his drink, and that's, that's also a bad thing so...

P3: But, but I would personally, if I had to go out jolling with, with, with my girlfriend, I would never, ever, ever touch ah, touch a drink because majority of guys they, they, they came to take advantage of girls when they, when they've had a couple to drink because they

feel more lovable...and, and like they want to touch...and so, that, I would never drink with my girlfriend I have to keep an eye out.

M: So you feel like you have to...

P3: Ja, you have to ja, protect her.

P1: And that's a big thing with guys...I'm telling you cause the guys will always say no dude no, you never drink with your girlfriend, unless it's like you're having wine or something, that's just light, it's like one glass, one glass, besides that you never drink with your chick, she goes and drinks with her friends and you go and drink with your friends.

M: Ok so ja, there's that perception that for girls, that sometimes there are more negative consequences, you know like they can maybe be raped or fall pregnant or something like that, but I mean, there are also negative consequences for guys, um, can you guys think of any, think of any kind of...

P1: Stolen kidneys...

M: Stolen kittens?

P1: Kidneys. [Laughter]

P7: Ja you get wiped out and while you take a dos they steal your kidneys. [Laughter]

P6: And also getting into fights...

P2: That's the main thing.

P3: These days you cannot go anywhere without seeing a fight.

P6: Ja, cause you check two guys, maybe the one's a bit drunk and the other ou's like hasn't even touched anything that night. The one ou will start, the drunk ou, it's normally the drunk ou who starts...

P3: Going on and chirping...

P6: He starts with the guy that hasn't been drinking and then that's how the fights always starts and people looking stupid and whatever.

P1: Or he hits on his girlfriend.

P9: And someone will always declare barroom rules or something, like one guy will start fighting and then, the guys friends who, they'll see him getting beaten up will jump in as well, and then it will just be one huge brawl.

P2: Ja, I think it's also like, it depends on the people as well, like if it's someone who's trying to show that he's the stronger person and that they won't let anyone like um, say anything to them or anything like that, that will like demean them, cause like at, my brother goes to Burn every two weeks or so and there are never fights there, no one ever fights there at all.

P5: I think if like you're having a good time with your friends or whatever and you not drunk but you having one or two, and this guy comes and leans on you and starts talking like Swahili to you and stuff [laughter] no, honestly, and you tell him like to get away or whatever, when you drunk you normally get aggressive, so he might start swearing at you or something. And then you try like, your friends get involved and stuff and tell him to go away and then next thing you know a punch is swung at someone and then...you all end up on the floor looking ridiculous.

P3: But it's all about friends these days, I mean you can't go have like a fight one on one. I mean because then...when, when there's friends involved there's more hurt, I mean if your friends break you up it's fine but if, when eventually they all get involved, and then more people get involved and people end up dying and ja, getting stabbed and ja...

P1: It's more of a high school thing...

P3: Ja but that's why it's not fun to go out anymore.

P1: Cause if some random guy's getting beaten up outside our gates, you'd be like ah, he's wearing some random school uniform, ok.

P3: Ja then you'd stand and watch.

P1: He could be getting hectically moered with a drainpipe or something [laughter]...we'd be like ah, he's getting whipped! But if it was a Glenwood guy it would be like hey they're beating up so and so, and you think hey we all know that guy, let's stand up for him.

P3: The whole Glenwood school would.

P1: Ja like in clubs too, people aren't even wearing uniform and like they'll say ah, someone just hit Amile, and we'll be like, Amile from where? Glenwood. Ah, ou's! Cause at the end of the day like guys will be like ah we messed up this Glenwood oke and stuff cause it's not going to be that guy's name, so guys like, have masculine pride one of ours will never fall or be defeated or something like that.

P3: Ja at that, at that DHS compulsory...

P4: Ja that DHS game.

P3: ...at DHS, think about it, if there were just two random guys who started fighting nothing would have happened. But because it was a Glenwood and a DHS guy, the okes felt like they should run on the field and get involved.

P7: Ja it ended up like, it ended up like the whole guys on all the stands whooshing forwards to go.

P1: One guy, one guy. And when DHS like didn't stand up for their guy, we were just like ah, poofers! [Laughter]

M: So it's like a school identity as well? [Ja, ja] So I mean...

P3: It's like your tribe type of thing...

P1: Basically, no it's not school, but I mean it's you cause you're part of that, and you don't want that to be degraded or anything.

P3: It's like your dignity.

P1: Ja.

M: So it becomes like a personal thing?

P1: And plus we get made into drones and stuff, they tell you about ah, brotherhood, comradery. [Laughter]

P7: It's cause, cause people look at your school and they think ah, Glenwood. Ok cause I go to church in Queensburgh cause I live in Queensburgh, and all the like Queensburgh guys, they're from Queensburgh there, they all...

P3: They're all together.

P7: ...say ah Glenwood, ah you guys are such a good rugby school and all this so it's...

M: So a lot of kind of pride comes from it.

P3: And it's also about the kind of areas as well it's like I, I, I hang around a lot with like Seaview and Queensburgh, and like all, all, all those different areas like Hillary and Bellair, they all connected and they all hang together and everyone knows everyone. So and, and, and if someone from the Bluff or, from somewhere else, I'll just say the Bluff for example, comes down and, and tries to start a fight in one of the bars in, in, in our area it's...you, you going to like, all the ou's it doesn't matter like black, white, if you don't even know the guy, you would still get up and knock the oke because he's not from our area.

M: Ok so fighting's a major one then...um, I know you guys have mentioned like some other kinds of consequences of ah, of drinking, like drunk driving...

P3: Passing out.

M: Getting in cars and stuff. What other kinds of things can you, can you think about?

P1: Going to jail, getting arrested, ja.

P5: Underage drinking.

P7: And drinking in public.

P1: Alcohol poisoning.

P4: Ja, that's a hectic one.

P3: And from drinking, going into drugs cause you want to try and do things while you drunk.

P8: Just like doing things that you wouldn't usually do. Like um, like sometimes you can have someone that's like close to you that you say something to that you wouldn't usually say to them...and that's not so fun.

P3: Or you could kill somebody like driving or something.

P4: Ja like that one thing where okes were at the party and the one guy actually he killed another guy.

P1: His own friend.

P7: Jeez, that was hectic.

M: And do you guys actually think that those kind of consequences, are they realistic to you? Do you think that...

P1: Ja

M: ...they could happen to you or your friends?

P7: It depends on how big it is. Like some things for me, it's like ja, it could happen, but like, it doesn't worry me.

M: So like what? Could you give me an example?

P7: Well like that fight thing. For me it didn't worry me much because you know...

P3: It doesn't happen to you.

P7: It's not around me, it's no where near me. But something like, if it happened to someone I knew or something, it would be more...

P3: I would, ok me, I, I used to never tend to worry about that kind of stuff because I, I don't purposely go out and look for a fight or I don't go ah, like riding my friend's motorbike while I'm extremely drunk and I tend to look after myself when I've been drinking and I hang

around with crowds of friends that will look after me. So I don't really worry about that kind of stuff cause I don't get involved in it.

P7: Going back to that fight thing that we talked about a bit earlier, you get a lot of guys, that when they go out drinking, they all bring their mates. Like you'll get like, I remember when I went out to Queensburgh, ou's were saying ja I'm going to go here, we're going to go have a fight. So you get those bunches of groups going, they actually, the only reason they go out, is to fight.

P1: Is to fight, ja.

P7: And they get pissed too.

M: Ja...do you guys have class now? Sorry, do you have to move?

P1: Yes ma'am.

M: Ok, alright, sorry. One last comment.

P6: This guy, he got drunk and he got in a fight. And they pushed into the road and he got ridden over and killed.

P9: I was there that night.

P6: I didn't think you were. Is that that advert?

P9: Ja I was talking about that.

M: Ok guys, well then we're going to have to finish up. But thanks very much, I'm sorry it took your whole break...but thank you. Please ah, if you have any questions or problems, please give me a shout, or my supervisor, ok? Otherwise, thank you very much and have a good day.