

**African township high school boys` articulations of
masculinity, sexuality and sexual risk in the age of
HIV/AIDS**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to explore African high school boys' articulations of masculinity, the meanings they give to their sexuality and risky sexual behaviours in the age of HIV/AIDS. The study focused on finding out what explanations boys offer for engaging in risky and unsafe sexual practices. The study used qualitative research in the form of focus group discussions and individual interviews. Seven African high school boys aged 16 turning 17 were the source of data. The findings show that some boys engage in unprotected sex, while others indicated that unprotected sex is risky. This study argues that the risky sexual behaviours that boys engage in are closely related to their constructions of masculinity. It also found that the meanings boys give to their sexuality are also influenced by external factors whereby they imitate what their peers do in order to gain acknowledgement from them and the society. Alcohol is a key factor promoting unsafe sexual practices, while social networks, such as Facebook and Mixit, are used by boys to share sex videos and pictures, thus exposing them to too much sex. With regards to implications, this study shows that the notion of being a real man is something that most boys want to achieve. Being a real man is tantamount to being courageous enough to engage in risky practices.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Focus and purpose of the study

Understanding youth sexuality is imperative if we are to curb the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic as well as other sexually transmitted infections. Studies of HIV epidemiology in South Africa indicate that at the end of 2001, 20.1% of the population was infected with HIV (Selikow, 2004). A recent national population-based survey of youth HIV prevalence and risk behaviours in South Africa found that 10.2% of young people are living with HIV (Hallman, 2005). The same survey found that HIV prevalence among young people residing in poor urban informal neighbourhoods is much higher (at 17.4%) than for those in urban formal, rural tribal, and rural farm areas (at 9.8%, 8.7%, and 13.5%, respectively) (Hallman, 2005). It is clear that HIV and AIDS has become a serious concern in South Africa, particularly amongst youth.

Research has drawn attention to the importance of focusing on HIV and AIDS as a [hetero] sexuality issue. As Gupta (2000) states that unequal power balance in gender relations increases men's vulnerability to HIV infection, because of their greater power. This, according to Gupta (2000), is due to prevailing norms of masculinity that expect boys to be more knowledgeable and experienced about sex, hence putting them at risk of infection because these norms prevent boys from admitting their lack of knowledge about sex. As a result, these norms coerce boys into experimenting with sex in unsafe ways, and at a young age, to prove their manhood (UNAIDS 1999). According to UNAIDS and WHO (2005), boys in many societies are socialized to be self-reliant, not to show their emotions, and not to seek assistance in times of need or stress. However, Gupta (2000) argues that such expectations of invulnerability associated with being a man run counter to the expectation that men should protect themselves from potential infection and encourages the denial of risk.

This study focuses on African township high school boys' articulations of gender, sexuality and risky sexual behaviour in the age of HIV/AIDS. The aim of this study is to understand the meanings these boys give to their sexual identities and sexual risk and how their constructions around masculinities are related to these meanings. Sociologists often view sexuality as a set of behaviours that are socially learned, culturally acquired, and cognitively interpreted (Connell 1987; 1995). Sexuality is not static; therefore, its meanings and

expressions change over time, fluctuate throughout an individual's life course, and act as reification for other social identities such as gender and race (McGuffey, 2008).

It is important to note that boys' involvement in risky sexual behaviours is externally motivated. In other words, these boys may behave in a certain way in order to meet what the patriarchal society in which they live expect of them. This means that if the patriarchal society regards having multiple partners and engaging in sex as an ideal of manhood, there are boys who conform to those expectations. It is therefore crucial to deconstruct normative heterosexuality. The dominance of heterosexuality, and the fear of being suspected of being homosexual, lead to performances of hyper-masculinity which include violent and risky behaviour among boys (Reddy & Dunne, 2006). Furthermore, Selikow (2004) states that sexually assertive male behaviour is regarded as a prominent factor in being a real man. Therefore, in constructing their masculinity, some boys engage in risky sexual behaviours. It is for this reason this study explores boys' articulations of masculinity and the meanings they give to their sexuality. This is because it is also the assumption of this study that there is a connection between the constructions of masculinity in this context and sexual behaviours, attitudes and practices. Selikow (2004) states that sexually assertive male behaviour is regarded as a prominent factor in being a real man. It is posited that, in attempting to achieve the ideals of manhood, some boys engage in risky sexual practices. The study is also interested in exploring the alternate and safer sex practices and to find out what conditions allow for these perceptions, attitudes and practices to prevail. For it is these more exemplary forms of sexuality that provide hope for working with boys.

My personal motivation for exploring the African township high school boys' articulations of sexuality is to understand the relationship between masculinity and sexuality. Furthermore, as an educator in a coeducational school, my involvement in this study has assisted me to understand the explanations that boys give for engaging in risky sexual behaviours, and the meanings they give to their sexuality. Their explanations and motivations for engaging in such behaviours were explored in order to illustrate the consequences of this engagement both for themselves and for girls. These behaviours sometimes hinder effective learning, since boys are obsessed about sex and not focused on their academic performance, so as an educator this study provided me with information that would be useful in formulating some types of interventions. Moreover, as part of my experience as a learner in an African co-

educational high school in a rural area, I had been aware of how boys who supposedly did not engage in sex and in discussions about sex were teased and labelled as `chicken` until they conformed. The dominant ways of performing masculinity in terms of sexuality was the ability to demonstrate sexual prowess and have multiple partners. Those who did not conform were subjected to labelling and pressure put on them. They were also excluded from certain activities in which boys participated during break time. For example, during break boys would play soccer and marbles, but those boys who refused to conform, were not welcome by other boys to partake in these activities.

Furthermore, as a young man who grew up in a patriarchal rural area in the northern part of KwaZulu-Natal (Msinga), pressure to have many girl friends came both from peers and the society. With regards to peers, having many girls friends was more about having fun and proving that you could beat other boys. This was like a competition where we would compete for the same girl and see who succeeds first and it did not matter how many girl friends one already had. However, in terms of the society, having many girlfriends suggested ideal manhood. This achieved much social status and guaranteed a position of hegemony in the hierarchy of males in my community (Hunter, 2005). Interestingly, when I started teaching in a township school, I observed similar trends and practices. Sexual prowess was what the boys I was teaching aspired to. However, it always bothered me that I did not know the kind of reasons and factors that propelled these boys (and myself) to have many girl friends, while they were so exposed to information about risky factors such as HIV/AIDS. Therefore, I decided to conduct this study in order to find out about the explanations that boys in a township high school give for their engagement in multiple concurrent relationships.

Location and context of the research site

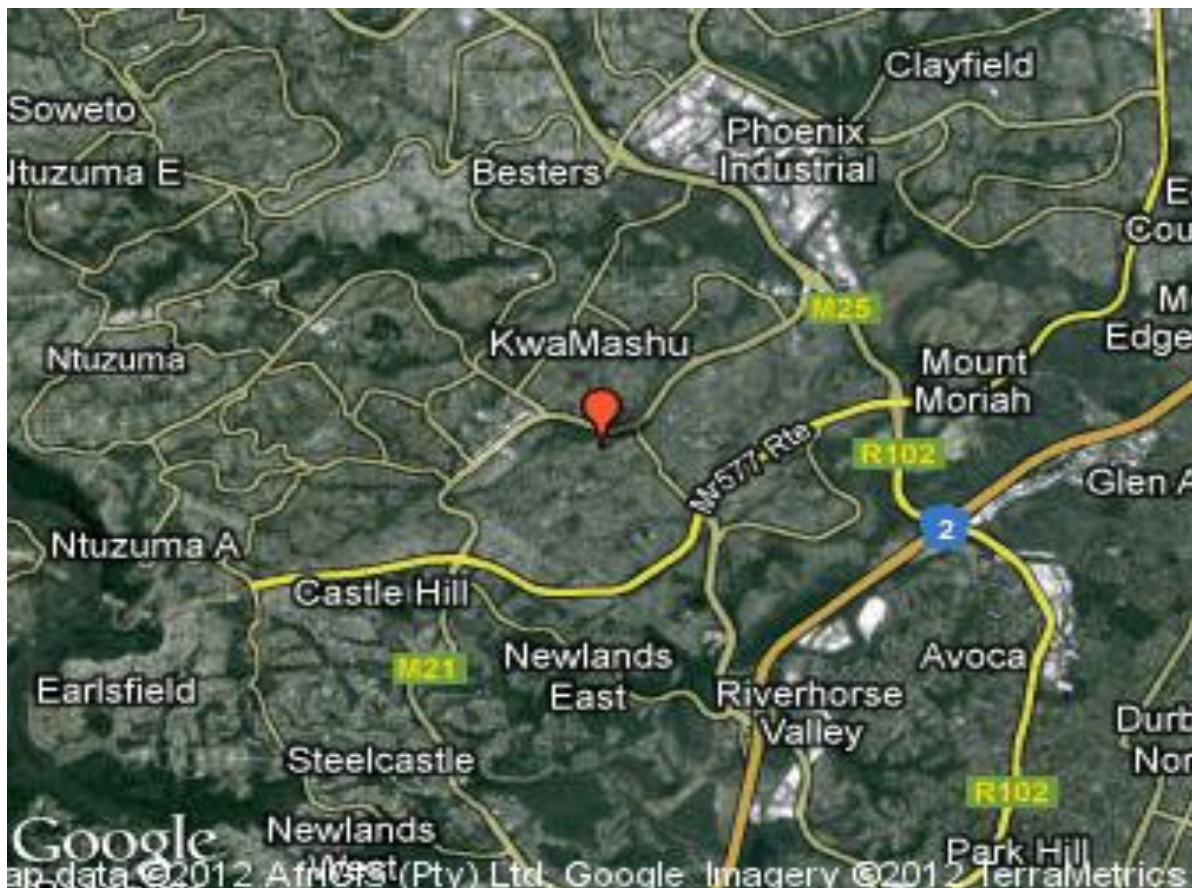
This study was located in a high school in KwaMashu Township, within the Mafukuzela-Ghandi Circuit, Pinetown District in KwaZulu-Natal. During the period of this study this school had an enrolment of 1 524 learners and 52 teachers. This school has a serious problem of overcrowding of learners in the classrooms. This overcrowding was attributed, by some of the teaching staff, to the fact that the school was built in a very congested area. The school shares its premises with a primary school, community library, community hall, and the offices of a certain private company which built the facilities. Therefore, the school can no

longer extend its buildings due to the unavailability of space, hence, the overcrowding in the classrooms. KwaMashu Township was formed by the apartheid government to house the group resettlement of Africans that were living in Cato Manor during the years 1958 to 1965 (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2007). KwaMashu is found at the centre of other townships namely, Lindelani, Ntuzuma, Inanda and Phoenix. The name of this township is in honour of Sir Marshall Campbell (1848-1917) who was a Natal pioneer of the sugar industry and parliamentarian concerned with the affairs of African people (Mohamed, 2002). Therefore, KwaMashu means the place of Marshall. This township is under the EThekweni municipality; it has an estimated population of 175 913, and 98.6% of these people are Black Africans (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2007). According to the Department of Provincial and Local Government (2007) isiZulu is spoken as first language by the majority of people in the township, in fact by 95.6% of the population.

People in this township are faced with socio-economic hardships such as poverty. This township is occupied predominantly by people who are originally from other parts of KwaZulu Natal and other provinces, who came to Durban in search for employment. These people occupy low cost houses, shacks and a big hostel known as *Ezimpohlweni* (Place of Bachelors). There is a high unemployment rate in this township. Due to this, crimes such as robbery and car hijacking have become an alternative to ensure survival.

As a debate coordinator for primary schools in the neighbouring township, I was fortunate to be asked to organise a debate between my school and Sibusiso High School (pseudonym of the research site). The debate topic was 'Poverty is the cause of crime'; my school was on the opposition side and Sibusiso High School on the proposition side. This debate turned out to be a vital lesson for me, as I was able to get community learners' perceptions on the unemployment and crime that is rampant in their community. Indeed, learners from Sibusiso High School seemed firm in their arguments about 'Poverty as the cause of crime' as they kept asking "What must people do when there are no jobs, surely they cannot eat stones". This statement was further emphasising that crime is the only option people have in order to survive when they are unemployed.

My purpose for providing detailed information on the background to this research population is that research on men and boys shows that masculinity cannot be understood without paying particular attention to race and class (Morrell, Unterhalter, Moletsane, & Epstein, 2001). Therefore, it is the purpose of this study to explore the meanings African boys give to their sexuality in a black, low socio-economic context.



Map of the research site: Maplandia, (10 October, 2012)

To understand the meanings that these boys give to their sexual identities the following research questions are the focus of this study.

Research questions

- What do these African boys regard as risky sexual behaviour?
- What explanations do they offer for engaging in risky and unsafe sexual practices?
- How are constructs of masculinity connected to their sexual identities?

To gain some insight into these boys` lives, I provide some biographical information on each of them.

Biographies of participants

Menzi

Menzi is in Grade 10. He stays at KwaMashu in a family of five children and he is the second born. However, he did mention that his family is very big when he includes other members of the family who do not stay with them. Menzi has one girlfriend who stays very far away and this, according to him, is a disturbing factor in their relationship. This is due to the fact that he does not see her as often as he would love to. Furthermore, Menzi stated that the financial situation at home is unbearable, due to the fact that his parent [mother] does not have a proper job. His mother is temporarily employed as a cleaner, and this makes it difficult for her to fulfil all their financial needs as children since the father is no longer staying with them.

Siyabonga

Siyabonga is doing Grade 10. He lives at Bester in KwaMashu. He lives in a family with 14 members. In his family there is a house for boys, a house for his sisters, and then the house for the elders. Siyabonga is the last born. On his fathers` side he comes after a 32-year-old brother, and on his mother`s side he comes after a 20 year-old brother. He initially had two girlfriends, but due to the quarrel between him and his one girlfriend they broke up. Therefore, he remained with one girlfriend. Siyabonga confessed that having a big family as his, is something that is supposed to make one feel more comfortable and protected, however in the case of his family he does not see anything good because they are all dependent on grandparent`s pension. He complained that this money is not even enough for home needs, let alone school needs.

Anele

Anele is in Grade 10. He lives at Nanda-Glebe in a family of eight. He does not have a girlfriend yet, as he claims he is still waiting for the right time. Anele did not seem to be

faced with any financial hardship at home, as he boldly said, “My father runs a tuck shop so I do get what I want even though my parents are unemployed”.

Ntando

Ntando is in Grade 10. He lives at KwaMashu in a family of three. Ntando has one girlfriend. He stated that although his father does not have a decent job as he works as a security guard, he is able to support them because they are a very small family.

Thokozani

Thokozani is in Grade 10. He also lives in KwaMashu in a family of four. Thokozani has a girlfriend who, he claims, is very beautiful. Thokozani said his parents are employed, the mother is a domestic worker, and the father works in a factory. However, he argued that the family’s financial situation has never changed for better, “I suppose they earn peanuts”.

Bongani

Bongani is in Grade 10. He lives at KwaMashu in a family of five. Bongani has one girlfriend. He comes from a poverty stricken family; he has three sisters and an older brother who is not only a breadwinner but also an alcoholic who, at times, wastes all his salary on alcohol. On such days Bongani has to support the family with the money he gets from the sweets he sells at school.

Lwazi

Lwazi is in Grade 10. He lives in Ntuzuma, in a family of three children and three elders. Lwazi is the second born. He initially had only one girlfriend and later in the individual interview claimed to have increased the number of girlfriends to three. According to him the first one is the one he really loves, but the other two he says he does not even know how he got into relationship with them. He feels his financial status will force him to dump these other two girls because he will not be able to pamper the three of them. He earns money

from the piece jobs he gets now and again as a taxi-driver's assistant, and at times steals money from his mother who plants and sells vegetables to put food on the table.

This chapter has looked at the focus and purpose of the study and illustrated the key research questions that were used in order to understand the meanings that boys give to their sexuality. In Chapter Two I focus on the growing body of research both locally and internationally that is concerned with sexuality, particularly that of young men. I draw on local and international literature to discuss the existing studies that focus on young men's constructions of masculinity and sexuality in the age of HIV and AIDS. In Chapter Three, I describe my choice of research design and methodology used in this study. Since this is a qualitative study which is positioned in the interpretivist paradigm, certain principles had to be followed. Therefore, in this chapter I explain and justify my choice of sampling which is purposive sampling; data collection methods namely focus group discussion and individual interview. I further explain the method used in analysing the data, and then discuss the ethical implications that had to be considered. This chapter also considers the limitations of the study and how I overcame them.

In Chapter Four, I present and discuss the findings in terms of themes. This approach follows from the inductive process used, whereby the patterning of responses was noted as I worked through the raw data. Finally, Chapter Five presents the main findings of the study. It also offers recommendations based on the findings of this study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a growing body of research both locally and internationally that is concerned with male sexuality. It is vitally important to understand young men's sexuality in the study of masculinity and HIV. This is because young men, sometimes, involve themselves in risky sexual behaviours as they attempt to achieve/construct their masculinity (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001). Therefore, this chapter explains the theoretical and conceptual framework and further reviews both local and international literature on sexualities and young people's constructions of masculinity and sexuality in the age of HIV/AIDS.

Theoretical and conceptual frameworks

Masculinities: Socially constructed identities

This study engaged with masculinities theory to gain insight into the perceptions, attitudes and behaviours around the risky sexual practices of the group of boys in this study. The study posited that the ways in which boys construct their masculinities is largely responsible for the types of sexual behaviours, attitudes and practices they engage in. According to Anderson (2010), the modern insight into masculinity as a social problem, has put boys on the research map. This is mainly because boys' behaviour is determined by what their society expects of them as boys, which includes the risky sexual behaviours that some boys engage in, in conformity with the expectations of the society.

Connell (2002) offers four categories of masculinities namely, hegemonic, subordinate, complicit, and protest. However, these are not the only four. Connell (1995) devised the term "hegemonic masculinity" to describe the multi-layered processes of expressing and preserving male power and dominance through the denigration and subordination of women and gay men. Research by Connell and others (Connell 1995, 2005; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005) shows how different versions of hegemonic masculinity exist, varying across classes, groups and cultural contexts, yet how the principle of asserting male dominance is central to each. However, not all masculinities are equal in status. In

adolescence, in particular, boys police each other's masculinity strongly in terms of dominance-driven heterosexual male norms (Connell, 2005).

The pattern by which hegemonic masculinity is usually characterized is authoritative, heterosexual, physically brave, sporty and competitive (Mac an Ghail, 1996). This means that hegemonic masculinity dominates other masculinities and it succeeds in creating prescriptions of masculinity that are binding and that create cultural images of what it means to be a "real man". Masculinity is a collective gender identity, one that is fluid and socially constructed, rather than a natural attribute (Courtenay, 2000). Ricardo and Barker (2008) concur with this statement as they assert that masculinities and gender norms are socially constructed rather than biologically determined. Within any society multiple masculinities exist, reflecting factors like race, class, age, religious affiliation, and geographic location (Connell, 1987). Although the pluralistic nature of masculinities has been identified, it is important to underscore that not all masculinities are equal. Instead, cultural groups construct ideal notions of masculinity. This hegemonic masculinity is the ideal that men measure themselves against, and are measured against by others (Connell, 1987). Brown, Sorrell, and Raffaelli, (2005) state that an important element of contemporary masculinity which may represent a reinterpretation of these traditional practices is the importance of having girlfriends, non-marital sexual partners and sexual prowess. It is for this reason that Ricardo and Barker (2008) assert that masculinities influence and drive boys' behaviours to sex and other forms of sexual exploitation. As a result, boys behave in a way that is in compliance with their society. This Western theory of masculinities is important to this study because it describes masculinities as configurations of practice that are constructed, unfold, and are accomplished in social action (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). As a result, these configurations of practice can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting and change through time (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Therefore, Southern Africa's theorist Morrell (1998), in his attempt to adapt masculinity theory for the situational understanding, assembles the evidence about gender transformations in Southern Africa associated with the end of Apartheid, a system of segregated and competing patriarchies (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005).

In this study the focus is on hegemonic masculinity and the effects of compulsory heterosexuality and sexual prowess. This theory is related to my study because the assumption is that boys who are unable to obtain entry to the forms of social power consequently seek alternative means of publicly demonstrating their masculinity through engaging in risky sexual behaviours such as having many sexual partners (Skelton, 2001).

Themes

The literature that I draw on focuses on the following seven key themes:

- a) Gender, sexuality and HIV/AIDS
- b) Constructions of masculinity and risky sexual behaviour
- c) Masculinities: An African perspective
- d) Peer pressure and sexual risk
- e) The use of condoms as a sign of mistrust
- f) Multiple sexual partners and sexual risk
- g) Drug use and risky sexual behaviour

Gender, sexuality and HIV/AIDS

According to Bhana (2007), gender, sexuality, race and class are important in understanding the high levels of HIV prevalence that have affected mainly black South African men and women. Her study found that KwaZulu-Natal has very high rates of HIV prevalence with the large numbers of mainly black people living in informal settlements and on farms being at heightened risk (Bhana, 2007). Aggleton (2000) shows the interconnectedness between gender and sexuality. While both are intrinsically connected, gender is about how males and females behave in ways that are associated with masculinity and femininity respectively, while sexuality is more specifically defined by whom a person has sex with, in what way and under what circumstances (Aggleton, 2000). According to Aggleton (2000), sexuality includes, but is not limited to, how many sexual partners one has, whether or not one practices safe sex and why one engages in sex. Gupta (2000) supports this definition as he

states that an individual's sexuality is defined by whom one has sex with, in what ways, why, under what circumstances, and with what outcomes. He argues that sexuality is more than sexual behaviour, and that it is a multidimensional and dynamic concept (Gupta, 2000). This is because explicit and implicit rules imposed by society, as defined by one's gender, age, economic status, ethnicity and other factors, influence an individual's sexuality (Gupta, 2000).

According to Morrell et al. (2001), cited in Reddy and Dunne (2007), in KwaZulu-Natal it is estimated that, among 15 to 19 year-olds, 15.64% of Black African females are likely to be HIV positive, compared to 2.58% of Black African males. These authors also note that the rates are 1.25% for White females and 0.26% for White males (Morrell et al., 2001). Furthermore, 1.29% of Indian females and only 0.26% of Indian males are HIV positive (Morrell et al., 2001). However, research shows that males are the major transmitters in the spread of HIV and this, at times, happens through forced and un-negotiated sex by boys on their partners (Reddy & Dunne, 2007). As MacPhail and Campbell (2001) have noted in their focus group study conducted in Khutsong township in South Africa, inequality in gender power exists and it prevents girls from negotiating safe sexual encounters. Hence these authors argue that social constructions of masculinity that support the idea of men 'needing' sex further restrain women's negotiation potential by limiting chances for them to either refuse sex or negotiate safe sex (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001). Interestingly, as a boy growing in a patriarchal rural area, I frequently encountered the notion/belief that women and girls are there to satisfy the sexual needs of men and that they are not supposed to experience sexual pleasure. Jewkes and Morrell (2011) state that young women are often described as victims of men, but this inadequately explains women's observed sexual agency. Therefore, my study seeks to understand what explanations boys offer for their engagement in risky sexual behaviours and what consequences their engagement in these behaviours has on themselves and on girls.

Constructions of masculinity and risky sexual behaviour

Masculinity is a collective gender identity, one that is fluid and socially constructed, rather than a natural attribute (Courtenay, 2000). Within any society multiple masculinities exist, reflecting factors like race, class, age, religious affiliation, and geographic location (Connell,

1987). Although the pluralistic nature of masculinities has been identified, not all masculinities are equal. Instead, cultural groups construct ideal notions of masculinity. This hegemonic masculinity is the ideal that men measure themselves against, and are measured against by others (Connell, 1987). In some communities having just one partner as a boy is associated with poverty and weak manhood (Brown et al. 2005).

On a sexual level, traditional masculinity has been viewed as being tied up with heterosexuality (Gullotta et al., 1993). Traditional sex role stereotypes were, and in many respects still are, for men to be the hunter and initiator of sexual activity, the one with the more powerful and demanding sex drive (Jeftha, 2006). Moreover, a man is regarded as the leader and initiator in sexuality, and the powerful figure in an intimate relationship. According to Jeftha (2006) the media and popular culture are packed with male role models for teenage boys that represent a strong expression of sexuality, coupled with minimal affectionate involvement with their sexual partner. The hard-drinking, womanising leading characters in current movies are potent examples of this stereotype (Gullotta et al., 1993). It is believed that boys who are less rigid in their aim toward sexual satisfaction, or who do not talk about their sexual experiences, risk derogatory labels that reflect unwelcome attributes, such as unattractiveness or having homosexual leanings (Jeftha, 2006). Selikow, Ahmed, Flisher, Mathews and Mukoma (2009) concur with this when they argue that masculinity is closely related to engaging in sex, therefore, boys may unwillingly engage in sex, rather than take the risk of their friends being told, that they are abstaining from sex. Indeed, virility is closely associated with masculinity; hence males may not use condoms as they want their girlfriends to become pregnant so that they can showcase their virility (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001).

As mentioned earlier, the modern insight of masculinity as a social problem has put boys on the research map (Anderson, 2010). This is mainly because boys' behaviour is determined by what society expects of them as boys. It is for this reason that Ricardo and Barker (2008) assert that masculinities influence and drive boys' behaviours to sex and other forms of sexual exploitation. They further state that masculinities and gender norms are socially constructed rather than biologically determined (Ricardo & Barker, 2008). As a result, boys behave in a way that is in compliance with society, and gender becomes a major conceptual tool for understanding the evolving HIV pandemic globally (Dowsett, 2003). This framework

is, therefore, important for my study since it utilises concepts such as gender, masculinity and sexuality in exploring boys' sexual behaviours.

Masculinities: An African perspective

It is important to mention that Africa is a diverse continent in terms of religion, language, climate, topography, economy, governance, and most importantly culture (Ouzgane & Morrell, 2005). Sexuality and masculinity are both connected to culture. Hence, the patterns of sexual behaviour, attitudes toward and beliefs about sexuality show significant difference across the African continent (Ouzgane & Morrell, 2005). It is believed that traditionally African sexual systems were based on complex sexual norms, values, and moral codes. However, the present sexual networking or multi-partnered relationships is not a result of some traditional permissiveness, but as a result of a breakdown of traditional norms and regulations surrounding sexual behaviour (Ouzgane & Morrell, 2005). For example, in rural and urban areas of Kenya, the ideology of men as breadwinners is forcefully alive (Ouzgane & Morrell, 2005). Stereotyped notions shared by both genders are that a man should be the head of his family; he should provide a house, pay school fees and clothes for wife and children in order to attain social value and respect. Similarly the notion that men are superior to women and that women should defer to men are the accepted public attitudes in a Zambian village, Chiawa (Ouzgane & Morrell, 2005).

According to Shefer et al. (2007), in Ghana men believe it is not their responsibility to do domestic chores, but that as men they should go to work while the wife stays at home and cooks or does her husband's laundry. Inherent in this construction of masculinity, is the notion that the wife will be at home and the husband goes out to work, and that the wife's place is to serve her husband (Shefer et al., 2007). However, the failure of men to fulfil what is expected of them as men and by traditional norms results in men suffering from feelings of inferiority, being humiliated by their wives and having their pride hurt. According to Ouzgane and Morrell (2005), in such situations, in order to build up their pride and boost their ego, men engage in extra-marital relationships. Therefore, a man's identity, self confidence, and social value are linked to his sexuality.

Men in southern Africa regularly do not want to use condoms because of a belief that flesh to flesh sex is equated with masculinity and is necessary for male health (Ngubane, 2010).

Using a condom is associated with unfaithfulness, lack of trust and love, and disease. In some parts of southern Africa polygamy is practised, and where traditional polygamy is no longer the norm, men tend to have more sexual partners and to use the services of sex workers (Ngubane, 2010). According to Ngubane (2010), this is condoned by the widespread belief that males are biologically programmed to need sex with more than one woman.

Peer pressure and sexual risk

Risky sexual behaviour is widespread among young people, placing them at high risk for HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (Selikow et al., 2009). Some of the adolescents are influenced by people around them to engage in risky sexual behaviours (Jeftha, 2006). These behaviours include boys having multiple partners and engaging in unprotected sex. According to Cooper (2002), this influence is most likely to come from the people an adolescent spends more time with and those with whom he or she feels more comfortable discussing sex-related issues. Selikow et al. (2009) argue that although adolescents feel misled by their peers, and believe that adults could provide more accurate information about HIV/AIDS, they feel more comfortable discussing sex with each other.

It is worth mentioning that girls also put pressure on their female peers and on boys to be sexually active (Cooper, 2002). Moreover, one should not forget that it is somehow fashionable to be sexually active, as is evident from the study by Selikow et al. (2009), where participants boast about their engagement in sex. In the same study Selikow et al. (2009) assert that in circles of friends where boys are sexually active, the pressure to engage in sex is intense. This clearly refers to peer pressure whereby a boy behaves in a way that conforms with the rest of his peers in order to avoid isolation. Furthermore, this behaviour is sometimes encouraged by the social status that boys acquire through sexual prowess.

The use of condoms as a sign of mistrust

Masculine sexuality is manifested in society's classification of heterosexual men as being associated with multiple partners and power over women (Marston & King, 2006). As a result, tension develops between the emotional vulnerabilities of young men and the behaviour that they are expected to adopt in order to be accepted as masculine in society

(Holland, Ramazanoglu, Sharpe & Thomson, 1994). Furthermore, health interventions have frequently encouraged young men to use condoms and to know more about their partners. However, among all young people, young men in particular, there is the perception that they can filter out partners dangerous to their health (Marston & King, 2006). It is for this reason that Selikow et al. (2002) state that despite adequate knowledge of the benefits of condoms, many men still resist using a condom. These authors further state that men believe that partners can be categorised as clean or unclean based on their social interactions and appearance so that decisions about making use of condoms can be made.

Young people also worry that asking for their partner to use a condom implies that they think their partner is diseased, thus, condom-free intercourse can be seen as a sign of trust. This undermines any knowledge and attempts of practising safe sex. For this reason, it is argued that, despite improved knowledge of sexual risk, the majority of cases of HIV transmission persist to occur through unprotected sexual intercourse (UNAIDS & WHO, 2005). As Marston and King (2006) assert, in South Africa and Uganda wanting to use a condom can be interpreted as a sign of carrying disease. Therefore, the nature of the partner and the partnership influences not just whether a young person uses a condom but sexual behaviour in general. This means that a boy's sexual behaviour is determined by the kind of partner he has. If the partner is well knowledgeable and outspoken about sexuality issues they are likely to practise safe sex despite any myths.

It is believed that young people avoid discussing sex for fear that raising the possibility may lead to hurting others' feelings whereby one refuses to engage in sex with a partner after showing interest in sex-related discussions (Marston & King, 2006). These authors further state that this makes safer sex difficult to plan and that if the possibility of sexual intercourse is not acknowledged, contraception is unlikely to be discussed (Marston & King, 2006). Young people could also be reluctant to discuss condom use in case it is seen as equivalent to proposing or agreeing to sex. It is evident in Marston and King's (2006) study that producing a condom to your partner is considered problematic because it is an assumption that one will have sex, despite this not yet having been negotiated with the partner.

Knowledge, acceptance and the use of condoms are important because the campaign to reduce the spread of HIV infection in sub-Saharan Africa has focused on urging men and women to stick to one sexual partner and to use condoms (Zulu, Dodoo & Chika-Ezeh,

2002). It is believed that the number of sexual partners a person has in a given period is positively related to the risk of acquiring STIs and HIV/AIDS, because it compounds the chances of infection (Zulu, Dodoo & Chika-Ezeh, 2002). It is for this reason that Selikow (2004) argues that the likelihood of containing and then reducing the incidence of HIV/AIDS infections in sub-Saharan Africa depends on the extent to which young people abstain from intercourse, or restrict themselves to monogamous sexual relationships, or use condoms when they are uncertain of a partner's sexual history and HIV status.

Moreover, a number of factors undermine the probability of using a condom. As Selikow et al. (2009) assert that adolescents have some knowledge of condoms but this knowledge is infused with misperceptions, the spontaneous nature of sex and beliefs that requesting a condom is akin to accusing a sexual partner of being HIV positive. However, Selikow (2004) looks at this issue from a different perspective whereby boys justify their engagement in unprotected sex. Men and boys commonly use such metaphors “*You can't eat a sweet with its paper on*” (Selikow, 2004). Boys use this metaphor to justify not using condoms. Similarly, they argue that just like you cannot get the full benefits of a shower if you shower in a raincoat, you cannot fully appreciate sex if you use a condom (Selikow, 2004).

Multiple sexual partners and sexual risk

Some boys derive status from having multiple sexual partners (Selikow et al., 2009). However, it is worth noting that some girls are complacent and collude in their oppression by allowing the situation whereby they share a partner. This is evident in Selikow et al. (2009) where some females reported that having multiple partners is becoming a popular norm even for girls. It is, therefore, on this basis that boys sometimes use metaphors to describe the relationship they have with girls such as ‘you cannot eat cabbage everyday’ meaning boys need to change girls (Selikow, 2004). This metaphor implies that men would get bored with one woman, and this is presented as an idea that is not challengeable, as these men believe it defines them as real men. In addition, cabbage is a cheap and relatively available food in the townships, the metaphor suggesting that women are easy to obtain and they are like objects to be consumed by men. Therefore, it is evident from the above quote how language can be used to justify multiple relationships. Similarly, in a Xhosa township the number of girlfriends a boy has is a defining feature of what it means to be a man (Raffaelli, 2005). It is for this reason that MacPhail and Campbell (2001) argue that the need for men to engage in sex with

multiple partners, combined with negative attitudes towards condoms and the primacy of fertility, places their sexual health at risk.

In Zulu-speaking parts of South Africa, the *umuzi* (homestead) is headed by an *umnumzana* (homestead head) who could, depending on the resources available, marry polygamously (Hunter, 2005). According to Hunter (2005), ‘big’ men accumulate many cattle, take several wives, and thus build a successful homestead; the more wives a man has the more labour he is able to control and more esteemed a household head he becomes. This cultural practice is reminiscent of the current president of the country who is sanctioned by his Zulu culture to have many wives (Robins, 2007). The president’s strong hold on culture was also evident during his rape trial in the Johannesburg High Court, where he constantly used isiZulu cultural idioms to express himself. For example, he addressed the judge as ‘*Nkosi yenkantolo*’ (the king of the court) and referred to his accuser’s private parts as *isibaya sika baba wakhe* (her father’s kraal) (Robins, 2007). He also admitted that he entered this kraal without *ijazi lika mkhwenyana* (the groom/husband’s coat) or what non-Zulu-speakers would call a condom (Robins, 2007). Due to such articulations, he was referred to as a “real Zulu man” (Robins, 2007, p.164). This shows how men’s understanding and practice of culture, or rather a patriarchal gender order, perpetuates gender inequality, whereby women are subordinated and oppressed by men who engage in multiple concurrent relationships.

Drug use and risky sexual behaviour

According to Cooper (2002), studies examining the link between alcohol and risky sex at the global level typically ask participants about their overall involvement in some high-risk behaviour and their overall frequency and quantity of alcohol use. Generally, where this approach has been used strong relationships between alcohol use and indiscriminate behaviours were found, but inconsistent ones between alcohol use and protective behaviours (Cooper, 2002).

In the study conducted by Jeftha (2006) there was considerable ambivalence expressed about the impact of drinking on safe sex practices. In this study participants indicated an understanding that drinking alcohol might lead to unprotected sex, which could, in turn, lead to unwanted pregnancies and STIs (Jeftha, 2006). Therefore, it is clear from the above statement that achieving masculinity is at times connected with risk taking behaviour such as

substance abuse. Jeftha (2006) further asserts that smoking, drinking and experimenting with drugs is now regarded as an acceptable behaviour for young men.

Conclusion

This review has looked at the local and international research concerning male sexuality. The aim of this review was to explore studies that focus on young people`s constructions of gender and sexuality in the age of HIV/AIDS. By going through the literature, I discovered significant issues related to my topic. Firstly, by looking at HIV/AIDS statistics among young people, I discovered that across all race groups, girls are the most infected group. Secondly, this review looked at the constructions of masculinity and sexual behaviour, and it found that an important element of contemporary masculinity is the importance of having many girlfriends and non-marital sexual partners (Raffaelli, 2005). Thirdly, it was noted that behaviours such as boys having multiple partners and engaging in unprotected sex are subject to influences most likely to come from the people an adolescent spends most time with (Cooper, 2002). Furthermore, it was discovered that young people at times worry that asking for their partner to use a condom would imply that they think their partner is diseased, and as a result they regard condom-free intercourse as a sign of trust (Marston & King, 2006).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study explored the meanings that this group of African boys' attach to their sexualities. The focus is on the ways in which their articulations of masculinity are connected to their constructions of sexuality and sexual risk, particularly in this age of HIV/AIDS. This chapter gives a description of the research process used to generate data.

Research Design

This study explored African boys' articulations of masculinity, sexuality and sexual risk in the age of HIV/AIDS. Therefore it is clear that an exploratory study such as this was not looking for quantitative data, but rather relies on the perceptions, views and experiences of the participants. This could only be captured through qualitative research methods. In other words, this study sought in-depth description of African boys' experiences in terms of their sexuality and risky sexual behaviours. Therefore, in order to collect such data the most suitable research method had to be employed, hence, the adoption of a qualitative approach.

This study used a qualitative research approach to explore what explanations African boys offer for engaging in risky and unsafe sexual practices. This approach was employed because researchers engaging in qualitative research are able to obtain textual data (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2011). Therefore, this approach enabled me to obtain textual data from talking to participants. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006) qualitative research explains people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions. Therefore, using this research approach was very instrumental in allowing me to hear the boys' perceptions and views around their sexuality.

The interpretivist paradigm

This study adopted the interpretivist paradigm, with the intention of obtaining deep insight into the complex world of the lived experiences from the point of view of the group of boys

who participated in this study. Interpretive research assumes that reality is socially constructed and the researcher becomes the vehicle by which this reality is revealed (Cavana et al., 2001). In this paradigm, a researcher interprets phenomena in terms of the meanings that participants assign to them (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). This means that a researcher is not expected to be judgemental but to consider all perceptions as a way in which the participants construct their worlds. Hence, this paradigm regards reality as a social construction, whereby individuals ascribe meanings to specific events (Cavana et al., 2001). In other words, people construct themselves and others in order to make sense of their world, and these constructions become their perceptions which they consider as their truth, and thus inform their actions and thoughts (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Therefore, my primary goal for conducting this study was not to find “truth” but rather to understand issues of sexuality and, risky sexual behaviours from the participants’ perspectives.

The research site

The research site is a high school which is situated in a black township area called KwaMashu about 20 kilometres from the city of Durban. Poverty, crime and unemployment plague the people in this area and present challenges to family and community life. Many of the learners in this school are faced with financial hardships such as poverty since most of them are raised by single parents, some of whom are solely dependent on government grants. Indeed, positive changes have occurred in South Africa since the end of the apartheid era, and access to necessities such as electricity and water is increasing in the township. KwaMashu has more than seven high schools; therefore I had to be selective in choosing the school I would use as the research site.

There are two reasons why I chose this school as my research site, namely convenience and accessibility. In terms of convenience, this is a co-educational high school where African boys attend, and this made it possible for me to find young African men who are 16 turning 17 as the targeted age group of the study. With regards to accessibility, although I do not teach in this school, it is about 3 kilometres away from my school where I teach. This made it easy to get to this school at times that were convenient for the participants.

Sampling

According to Cohen et al. (2011), the quality of research stands not only by the appropriateness of the instrumentation but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy used. For that reason this research targeted a specific group of learners. It is not the intention of this research to attempt to generalise the findings to the wider population. Rather this is a study that aimed to investigate the specificities of a small sample of boys. In my opinion working with a small group is easier in terms of manageability.

I used purposive sampling whereby seven African boys aged between 16 and 17 were selected from a large group of Grade 10 boys. After permission was given to me by the principal, I was then referred to one of the female teachers who teaches in Grade 10. This teacher assisted me in selecting the boys who are 16, turning 17, from different classes of Grade 10. This selection was based on the boys' interest in participating in the research. Initially I managed to get a group of ten boys; however when the study was explained to all of them, three of the boys who had initially been selected decided to withdraw from the study, claiming that they were very shy talking about sexuality issues. I decided to ask the group of seven boys who remained as to what they think could have been the reasons for their peers withdrawing. They seemed to share the view as one of them emphasised that the boys who withdrew from participation do not speak a lot even about less personal issues. I did not replace them as I thought that seven was still a suitable number for a group discussion.

Data collection

To generate rich data I used both a focus group discussion and individual interviews. Both focus group discussion and individual interviews were held at school in the Deputy Principal's office. This venue was recommended as the appropriate venue by the school's clerk because the Deputy Principal was on sick leave during the days of my interviews.

Focus group discussion

To generate data, I conducted one focus group discussion with a group of seven boys. This focus group discussion took approximately 60 minutes. Cohen et al. (2011) argue that focus group discussions can generate a wider range of responses than can individual interviews.

Moreover, focus group discussions can also bring together people with varied opinions, or as representatives of different collectivities (Cohen et al. 2011). This study sought detailed responses, in-depth and descriptive data; the focus group discussion was the most suitable tool to achieve this goal. Therefore, the criterion of fitness for purpose was addressed. According to Cohen et al. (2011), this `fitness for purpose` approach means that the data collection method used in the study must be consistent with the kind of data that a researcher wants to collect. This necessitated that I made it possible for the boys to be able to speak about their personal lives and sensitive issues, and I achieved this by constantly presenting myself to the participants more as a student than a teacher or any figure in authority. For example, less formal language was used in seeking clarity to some of the responses that participants gave to one another as the discussion progressed. This made them feel more comfortable giving clarity to their responses and discussing their personal experiences.

The focus group discussion was most suitable to the data I wanted to collect since it allowed participants not only to direct their responses to me but also to challenge each other's views. For example, one boy expressed that if you engage in flesh to flesh sex with a virgin you cannot become infected with HIV/AIDS and this got the majority of boys nodding their heads in agreement. However, to my surprise one boy challenged that, by arguing that a girl could be a virgin only to find that she had been infected by her mother while she was still an infant. This left other boys puzzled because they did not know about mother to child transmission (MTC). It is for this reason Morgan (1996) suggests that focus group interviews do not simply explore what people have to say, but provide insight into the sources of complex behaviours and motivations. The discussion in a focus group is, therefore, far more than just the sum of separate individual interviews. This is evident in the way my participants during the discussion both queried each other's responses and explained themselves to each other. This interaction offered valuable data on the extent of consensus and diversity among the participants (Morgan, 1996). As a researcher I was able to ask the participants themselves for comparisons among their experiences and views more than would have been possible with individual interviews alone (Morgan, 1996). Furthermore, the ability to observe the extent and nature of participants' agreement and disagreement was a unique strength of focus group discussion.

Individual interviews

During the focus group discussion some boys dominated the discussion and this led to other boy's views being somewhat silenced and suppressed. This had a negative impact on the amount of data I collected. This was evident when I went through the data starting to make meaning of it, as I realised that there was a need for me to return to the field and interview specific boys individually. I conducted semi-structured open-ended individual interviews with four boys. An interview schedule was used for all of these interviews and each interview lasted for about thirty minutes. Two participants of these four boys were rather passive in the focus group discussion, while I felt that I needed to hear more from the other two. Therefore, conducting individual interviews with them was intended to give them enough time to share their perceptions about their sexuality. Most importantly, individual interviews were conducted in order to elicit more data and to highlight inconsistencies, conflicting notions and contradictions in the responses given by these boys during the focus group discussion.

The main strength of the individual interview is that I was able to adapt the questions where necessary, clarify doubts and ensure that the responses were properly understood, without any unnecessary pressure from other participants as can be the case in focus group discussion (McMillan, Schumacher, 2006). As a researcher I achieved this by repeating and rephrasing the questions and clarifying where necessary for each participant until he understood.

Researcher's experiences

Choosing to work with boys was vital for me because I wanted participants who would not necessarily be intimidated by me on the basis of my age and professional status. Furthermore, as a Zulu speaking person, I am aware of the general apprehension and scepticism of Zulu speaking parents around issues of sex and sexuality particularly between adults and children. Talking about sex and sexuality to young people is taboo amongst the Zulu community. Therefore, in an attempt to avoid additional negativity from the parents I decided to work with boys, because I assumed that working with girls would have evoked apprehension amongst parents. This would have been due to the general anxiety that Zulu communities

have about the discussion of sex between adults and children, and between men and girls as they fear the possible developments of 'sugar-daddy' relationships.

After selecting the participants I had to explain to them the role they were going to play in the study. This involved clarifying the interview as a data collection method that was going to be used. I also informed the participants that the venue where the interview was going to take place was the Deputy Principal's office. Participants were somewhat intimidated when they learnt that they would be interviewed in the Deputy Principals' office. However, I tried to reassure them by explaining that the venue would solely be used as an interview venue, and that there would be no interference by any school educator during the discussions. What transpired though was not what I had been promised, as there was too much noise which came from the educators sitting in the staffroom and in other areas surrounding the deputy principal's office. This increased my anxiety before the interview, because I was thinking that my participants would be slightly intimidated and that my recording would be inaudible with so much interference. It is worth mentioning that my participants were very tense when they went through the staffroom to the Deputy Principal's office. However I was very surprised to see them relaxed and willing to start the interview even when they heard the noise from educators in the staffroom. They must have realised that educators in the staffroom were not paying any attention to the on-going sessions and this allowed them to discuss issues openly. As a result, the recording of the interview with a tape recorder and a cell phone as the backup was audible, because participants spoke loudly and clearly.

On the other hand, getting boys who know each other even outside of school environment was an advantage, since they were not afraid to express themselves about anything, that is to say no one demonstrated any signs of discomfort discussing sexuality issues. Perhaps because I have a youthful physical appearance, they did not treat me as an adult. I managed to allay their fears and suspicions and they seemed to be at ease when talking. They also seemed to enjoy talking and interacting.

Data collection and analysis

The data generated through the focus group discussion and individual interviews was transcribed, after which it was taken back to the participants to confirm and verify that what was contained in the transcripts was in fact what they said. Since transcribing was the most difficult task, it took me approximately three weeks to finish the transcripts of the focus group discussion. The transcribing of the four individual interviews also took me approximately three weeks to complete. Thereafter, I took the transcripts to the participants so that they could verify the data. However, it is important to mention that I had to read my transcripts several times before I could make sense of the data. Going through the raw data repeatedly enhanced my understanding of the data. As I read the transcripts I was able to find patterns of responses, concepts and issues that were recurring, and this was instrumental in the formation of themes emerging from the raw data (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003). This inductive process was vital in ensuring that the data was well organized into themes so as to bring meaning to the responses given by participants. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) suggest that qualitative data analysis is all about making sense of data according to the way participants have defined the situation. Hence, some of the themes in this study have been formed from participants' verbatim descriptions or responses. After the themes had been formed, I then employed masculinities theory and concepts such as sexuality and sexual prowess to understand all my data (Cohen et al., 2011).

Validity and Reliability/Trustworthiness

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), in qualitative research validity can be measured through the honesty, depth and richness of data. On the other hand, Cohen et al. (2011) state that the subjectivity of participants in terms of their opinions, and perspectives make qualitative data somewhat biased. For this reason, validity was a matter of degree, since I am not absolutely sure that it was completely addressed. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) define validity as the degree of congruence between the explanations that participants offer about the phenomena, and the realities of the world. Therefore, in an attempt to enhance the validity of the data, this study adopted a strategy of using participants' verbatim language throughout as well as allowing the participants to read the transcripts to check that they were properly represented.

In an attempt to reduce elements that would contribute to invalidity, I tape-recorded the focus group discussion and individual interviews so as to ensure that I capture the verbatim responses from the participants in order to avoid misrepresenting them. Using seven participants from different classes widened the scope of the study in terms of sources of data, in that a response from one participant was either interrogated further or confirmed by other participants and this resulted in descriptive data being produced. As Cohen et al. (2011) concur, during focus group discussions participants question each other and explain themselves to each other. Therefore, the type of data collection method alone contributed in strengthening the validity of the data. The returning of the transcripts to the participants to verify their responses also strengthened the validity of the data.

According to Cohen et al. (2011), in qualitative research reliability can be regarded as a fit between what a researcher records as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched. It is clear from the above statement that it was important to take note of the consistency in the responses given by participants during the focus group discussion and individual interviews. As a result, in an attempt to enhance reliability/trustworthiness an interview schedule containing the same format and sequence of questions for each participant, was used particularly in the individual interviews. As Cohen et al. (2011) suggest that changes in wording, context and emphasis undermine reliability, because it ceases to be the same question for each participant.

Ethical measures

It is important to note that not everyone is comfortable discussing sexuality and sex-related issues; for some this means that such issues should not be discussed, particularly by learners. This necessitated me to take ethical issues seriously before the commencement of data collection. Hence, I wrote letters that explain in detail the research and its purpose to relevant stakeholders in an attempt to get permission to carry out the study/research. The first letter went to the principal of the school, asking for permission to conduct the study in his school. Knowing that parents, most of the time, do not approve of children's being involved in sex-related discussions, I wrote a letter to the participants' parents and guardians asking for the involvement of their children in the study. Participants came back with

positive responses from their parents concerning their participation in the study; hence they were given consent forms for both themselves and their parents to sign.

Thereafter, I explained to the participants that in order to protect their identity, pseudonyms would be used in the writing up of data, analysis and final report. I further assured the participants that should they feel uncomfortable about their involvement in the study, at any time, they would be at liberty to stop the interview and withdraw from the study. According to Cohen et al. (2011), the way of protecting a participant's right to privacy is through the promise of confidentiality. Therefore, I promised the participants that I would ensure that the information collected from them would not be disclosed in any way that might identify them and enable them to be traced. Cohen et al. (2011) further note that some participants might refuse to cooperate when assurance of confidentiality is weak and vague. Therefore, in order to encourage them to be cooperative during the study, I explained thoroughly to them that they would in no way be harmed while participating in this study as a result of the information they would give.

Limitations of the study

There were limitations due to the methods of data collection that I used in this study. At first, focus group discussion was used with the hope that this would generate sufficient data; however, this did not happen. There was a limitation in this because group interaction required mutual self-disclosure. However, it was noticeable that some issues, particularly those that required the participants to be more specific and explicit concerning their sexual life, were not acceptable for discussion among other participants. As a result there was a problem of only one voice being heard, from one participant who dominated the group. This sometimes led to one-sided data being produced. Hence, individual interviews with some of the participants were conducted.

Since this study adopted a qualitative approach, subjectivity and its possible effects on the process of data analysis were inevitable. In other words my understanding of the participants, and my own perceptions on the issues covered by this study, were vital to the way in which I interpreted the data. In fact, by adopting a qualitative approach in this study, it meant that I

relied on the participants' openness and honesty in responding to the questions I posed to them. However, I note that honesty is an element that is not easy to measure. Hence Jeftha (2006) states that truthfulness at all times has the potential to be a most important limitation in any study where a qualitative approach is applied. For this reason, I always tried to ensure that my participants were comfortable and willing to participate, by posing questions to them in a very polite manner, rather than simply demanding the responses.

Conclusion

This section of the report has concentrated on the research design and methodology used to conduct this study. This section further discussed the suitability of the research style, paradigm, sampling strategy and data collection method that were used in this study. Moreover, strategies to enhance validity, and ethical issues were also discussed so as to maximise the trustworthiness of the study. This section of the report also discussed the limitations of the study. It is important to note that using individual interviews to complement data collected through focus group discussion worked well. This is because in the individual interviews participants responded from their own perspectives and relating to their own individual experiences with no intention to impress or perform as it, occasionally, seems to be the case in focus group discussions.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this chapter I analyse the data generated through one focus group discussion and four individual interviews. Masculinity theory and concepts such as sexuality and sexual prowess are employed in analysing this data. According to Cohen et al. (2011), qualitative analysis involves organising and explaining the data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation. However, it is important to note that interpreting those definitions remains a vital role for me as a researcher. Hence this data is going to be presented and discussed in terms of themes, owing to an inductive process whereby patterning of responses was noted as I went through the raw data. The following themes emerged:

- Having sex without a condom: 'the wrong way'
- Myths: Flesh to flesh sex with a virgin does not get you infected with HIV/AIDS
- Masculinity and sexual prowess: An issue of double standards and peer pressure
- Alcohol and other drugs take away inhibitions
- Social networks expose boys to too much sex

Having sex without a condom is 'the wrong way'

Documented research by Selikow et al. (2009) shows how boys engage in unprotected sex because they prefer "flesh to flesh" sex. However, the boys in this study talk about having sex without a condom as a wrong way. It was evident during the focus group discussion that sex is the key topic in the discussions that boys have when they are together. It is their belief that discussing other issues other than sex might see them missing out on vital and updated information around sex, as one boy explained:

Basically, discussing sex with friends presents us a good platform not to be shy about something that concerns us, because if we do not talk about it we would stay uninformed and un-updated... if we do not talk about it we would lack information. As a result we would be at risk of practising it the wrong way (Menzi).

The above quotation demonstrates the advantage that boys believe they have, when they discuss sex and related issues. This also highlights the benefit of and the role that peer groups or friend groups play in disseminating valuable information among the group of friends. However, I asked them what was meant by being “at risk of practising it the wrong way” as they claimed would be the consequence if they do not discuss sex. In response these boys asserted that engaging in unprotected sex and the reluctance to use a condom during sex is indeed practising sex the wrong way. In an attempt to emphasise the detrimental consequences of practising sex the wrong way, participants linked it to opportunistic diseases. One boy further explained that, *the wrong way is the way of doing sex that puts you in danger such as having sex without a condom which puts you in danger of getting diseases like STDs and HIV* (Menzi). Furthermore, Siyabonga responded by saying *the most critical one is the reluctance by boys to use condoms during sex intercourse which then leads to unprotected sex*. As a Zulu speaking person who grew up in a rural area where many people use culture to justify their practices, I am familiar with the influence from the society that discourages the use of condoms, as it is believed that a condom minimises the pleasure during sex intercourse. According to Hunter (2005), some of these cultural practices encourage vagina dryness in order to enhance friction for the penis and hence create pleasure for the man. However, the perceptions of these township Zulu speaking boys regarding condom use suggest resistance to the kinds of traditional norms typical of Zulu culture.

¹ **Zulu (isi) (n):** Zulu language; Zulu habit or custom; Zulu manner or life

Zulu (um-ama) (n): member of the Zulu race (Dent & Nyembezi, 2006)

Reasons for not using a condom

First sex

The next extract shows that as much as the participants are in favour of protected sex, there are situations whereby they find themselves under pressure to engage in sex without a condom. As Siyabonga in an individual interview asserted, *It is very rare that on your first time to have sex you use a condom, this is because the focus would be on experimenting what you would have long been talking about.* It is clear from this statement that no matter how willing and knowledgeable a boy might be in terms of using condoms, the excitement to engage in sex for the first time overshadows all the prior knowledge when a boy is about to initiate sex. It is for this reason that Selikow et al. (2009) state that despite adequate knowledge of the benefits of condoms, many young men still find it difficult to use a condom. Similarly, South African research indicates that, while adolescents have knowledge about sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS, this knowledge does not necessarily translate into safe sexual behaviour (Shefer, Ratele, Strebel, Shabalala & Buikema, 2007). In other words the eagerness and anxiety supersedes boys' rational thinking and as a result they expose themselves to sexual risk.

A sign of mistrust

What also prevented some boys from engaging in safe sex by using a condom is that, when they use a condom their partners would think they do not trust them and eventually refuse to have sex with them. As Menzi explained that *there are those girls who are fit and if you try having sex using a condom to those, you lose them because they think you do not trust them.* It is clear from this statement that boys also worry that asking for their partners to use a condom implies that they think their partners are diseased, thus, condom-free intercourse can be seen as a sign of trust and insisting on the use of a condom as a sign of mistrust. Similarly, girls behave in the same way as Reddy and Dunne's (2007) study found; for many of the girls 'unprotected sex' was seen as 'safe sex', and 'protected sex' was seen as 'unsafe sex' because it put the possibilities for love and trust into jeopardy. Girls in this study regarded the loss of a partner and love as a negative consequence of safe sex (Reddy & Dunne, 2007). This is the same feeling of fear that boys in my study have and which causes them to continue engaging in unprotected sex. This undermines any knowledge of and commitment to practising safe sex. Hence it is argued that, despite the improving knowledge of sexual risk, the majority of

cases of HIV transmission persist as a result of unprotected sexual intercourse (UNAIDS & WHO, 2005).

Myths: 'Flesh to flesh sex and sex with beautiful girls does not get you infected with HIV/AIDS'

It was also evident that boys have certain others beliefs about sex and risk. Some participants believe that engaging in sex without a condom is the most enjoyable thing to do; hence they said; they are tempted not to use a condom when they engage in sex. Some of them believe that they are not at risk by engaging in unprotected sex since most of the people with whom they have sex are virgins. As one of the participants explained that:

What I know is that young people like me do not like using a condom they just want it 'flesh to flesh'. I think this is because they assume that since they have sex with younger people maybe they are not at risk to get infected (Anele).

This quotation shows ignorance on the side of boys, as if being young is considered synonymous with being pure, which encourages them to engage in unprotected sex with young girls without fear of infection. It is clear from the above statement that there are various explanations that boys give for engaging in risky sexual behaviours such as unprotected sex. A common myth, particularly among Africans, that when you have a flesh to flesh sex with a virgin you do not get infected with HIV/AIDS, seemed to prevail during the focus group discussion. This was evident when Siyabonga in support of his friend argued that *Indeed when you have a flesh to flesh sex with a virgin you do not get infected, whatsoever*. Lwazi concurred with the previous argument and even emphasised that *...When you have sex using a condom you do not enjoy it*. This is consistent with what Anderson (2009) and Hunter (2002) claim, that young African men living in townships largely construct their masculinity in terms of their sexual prowess, whereby they seek sexual gratification through 'flesh to flesh' sex.

However, a different perspective from Ntando changed the discussion away from the initial apparent consensus that when you have flesh to flesh sex with a virgin you do not become infected. This participant acknowledged that 'flesh to flesh' sex with a virgin is the most

enjoyable sex, but asserted that it is risky in terms of getting infected with HIV/AIDS. In supporting his argument, Ntando explained that *A person could be a virgin, only to find that she was infected by her mother while she was still an infant.* It is worth mentioning that looking at this issue from this perspective was an eye-opener to the rest of the participants who had not considered the possibility of mother-to-child transmission. This was evident when most of the boys started nodding in agreement to what Ntando had said. Furthermore, Lwazi thought there is another significant pushing factor that causes boys to continue engaging in risky sexual behaviour despite the dangers involved. As he said, *Some of us, but not me, engage in risky sexual behaviours because they are already infected so they believe they have got nothing to lose when they engage in unprotected sex.* It is clear that boys hold on to this myth because they lack information about getting re-infected, which as a result makes a person succumb more quickly to AIDS. Furthermore, it is evident from the above quotation that boys are more interested in their sexual gratification and less concerned about infecting their partners or people they have sex with; as they believe *They have got nothing to lose* (Lwazi). However, there was obvious ambivalence in Lwazi's statement when he said "some of us, but not me" because 'us' is inclusive of him. This may be an unintentional confession of his engagement in risky sexual behaviours such as the one alluded to above.

Apart from the myth around the virgins, participants expressed that some girls are complicit in promoting and encouraging flesh to flesh sex; hence they are complicit in perpetuating risky behaviours by persuading boys to engage in a flesh to flesh sex. This was clearly expressed by Thokozani as he claimed that *...At times it's a girl who would complain and say she doesn't want to be the only one getting injured during the sex intercourse and she would demand that we engage 'skin to skin' because that's how she enjoys it.* Marston and King (2006) assert that girls perceive sex without a condom as a way of showing that they trust their boyfriends. However, this also shows how girls expose themselves to risky sex by compelling boys who want sex to consent to unprotected sex. This further shows that boys are not always in control of how sex occurs; as a result, subverting the norm that boys are the ones who determine how sex occurs. Girls are implicated in negotiating the nature of sexual intercourse too. Some resistance in this regard was forthcoming from one of the boys who said: *...This is negligence on the side of a boy, how can you allow a girl to tell you what to do and what not to do in something that concerns your life, because sex is about your life* (Siyabonga).

What is interesting is the contradiction regarding sex that emerges from the patriarchal gender order that is oppressive of women and girls. This boy is enacting masculinity, one of domination and girls are rendered powerless especially with regard to sex. This is another way in which boys construct their masculinity, as they regard themselves as the hunters and initiators of sexual activity, the ones with the more powerful and demanding sex drive (Jeftha, 2006). It is clear that Siyabonga does not think it is man enough for a boy to allow a girl to take control or to have a say during the sexual intercourse, but he believes that as boys they are powerful leaders in an intimate relationship. Siyabonga displays responsible sexual behaviour but at the same time exhibits male dominance that reinforces the leading roles men and boys take in sex. Thus there are ways in which the patriarchal gender order can be used to support rather than undermine responsible behaviour.

Furthermore, it was evident during the focus discussion that most participants have a belief that having flesh to flesh sex with a physically attractive girl is safe. As Menzi said, *It is only when you have sex with those girls whose physical appearance does not satisfy you that you can worry about using protection.* All these boys appeared to know was that an infected person is easy to identify through physical symptoms. However, Lwazi asserted that his fellow participants are in fact *...judging a book by its cover when they sleep with a girl without protection just because she looks beautiful.* The assumption that beautiful girls are automatically exempt from sexually transmitted diseases is problematic. This belief exposes these boys to risky sex because they do not use protection when having sex with physically attractive girls. As Wilson and Eckel (2006) state, some young people attribute a variety of characteristics to others on the basis of physical attractiveness.

Masculinity and sexual prowess: An issue of double standards and peer pressure

Despite the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS among young men in South Africa, research shows that they continue to engage in risky sexual practices in their attempts to demonstrate their masculinity (Jeftha, 2009). In order to achieve their dominant positions boys sometimes demand for 'flesh to flesh' sex and engage in sexual intercourse with multiple partners (Hunter, 2002). Selikow et al. (2009) concur with this when they argue that masculinity is closely related to engaging in sex, therefore, boys may unwillingly engage in sex, rather than take the risk of their friends being told, that they are abstaining from sex. This is an explicit

display of compulsory heterosexuality where boys in fear of *labels and name calling* (Bongani) engage in risky sexual behaviour.

During the focus group discussion it was discovered that the meanings boys give to their sexuality are also influenced by external factors whereby they imitate what their peers do in order to gain social status amongst the hierarchy of peers. This was evident when I asked the participants what motivated them to have sex for the first time and one boy responded by saying:

For me I can say it was because of friends as we used to talk a lot about the importance of having girlfriends so as to avoid being treated like 'sissy'. In fact it is a matter of just doing what others do; otherwise, you succumb to labels and name calling (Bongani).

It is clear from this statement that boys succumb to peer pressure because there are behaviours that they consider as ideals of manhood which would not see them being labelled as sissies. As Jeftha (2006) states, boys who are less rigid in their aim toward sexual satisfaction, or who do not talk about their sexual experiences, risk derogatory labels that reflect unwelcome attributes, such as unattractiveness or having homosexual tendencies. Anderson (2009) in her study of youth in Durban also found that boys who display effeminate tendencies or openly demonstrate 'gay' attributes are ostracised, ridiculed and alienated by boys who view themselves as 'masculine'.

According to Cooper (2002), indeed some adolescents are influenced by people around them to engage in risky sexual behaviours. This influence is most likely to come from people an adolescent spends more time with and those whom he or she feels more comfortable discussing sex-related issues with. This was borne out in this study as Menzi claimed that when they are together they talk more about sex than any other issues. Connell (2000, cited in Anderson, 2009) describes this as getting 'dirty books' out, where talking about girls and sex is an open validation of their masculinity. Thus some participants acknowledged that there are certain behaviours that they engage in due to pressure from the society. These behaviours include boys having multiple partners and engaging in unprotected sex. This behaviour was also confirmed by Siyabonga when he said, *Having many sexual partners gives you a certain*

status in this community as a boy. The ability to demonstrate sexual prowess is an indicator of hegemonic masculinity and achieves much status, therefore pressure from peers and the society places these boys at risk. In the African context polygamy is legitimated in the name of culture. If the man affords to pay the bride price for all his wives then he is allowed to have many wives (Ngubane, 2010). However, it is regarded as promiscuity for a woman to have multiple partners. Such practice shows double standards. Also in the South African context, Anderson's study (2009) of Coloured boys in Durban shows that many boys in lower and middle income groups accept and defend the double standards that they are allowed additional sexual partners while their girlfriends are not.

This means that the boys do not only feel pressured to engage in these behaviours from their peers, but also from the community at large through its expectations of how a 'real man' should behave. In other words, these boys behave in this way in order to meet what the patriarchal society in which they live expects of them. Since their society regards having multiple partners and engaging in sex as an ideal manifestation of masculinity, these boys feel pressured to behave in a way that is in conformity with those expectations. This resonates with Selikow (2004), who states that sexually assertive male behaviour is regarded as a prominent factor in being a real man. As a result, these sexually assertive males put themselves at risk when they begin to engage in unprotected sex.

Elements of peer pressure were evident where, boys trust each other in the name of friendship and rely more on the information given by friends than a parent figure. This apparent approval of advice from friends though has a further gendered dimension. This was articulated by a boy who was still furious about the way he broke up with his girlfriend. Lowering his voice, but still showing signs of anger this boy said;

We quarrelled, because she liked listening to her friends, who would tell her many stories about me. I used to tell her that those stories were not true but she opted to listen to her friends. Due to the ongoing quarrel between us our relationship had to come to an end (Siyabonga).

So the boys regarded their friends' advice and input as vital to them earlier, but now Siyabonga berates his girlfriend for listening to her friends. This boy seems to be promoting the double standards that boys can listen to one another but girls should not, and that they should only listen to boys.

The boys' early involvement in sex was also attributed to peer-pressure, as Ntando claims, *Some of us would involve themselves early in a sexual intercourse just because they want other people to know that they are sexually active.* Therefore, being sexually active is somehow fashionable, as it is also evident from the study by Selikow et al. (2009) where boy participants boasted about their engagement in sex. In the same study Selikow et al. (2009) assert that in circles of friends where boys are sexually active, the pressure to engage in sex is intense. Clearly, peer-pressure is, to a certain extent, responsible for the boys' involvement in some of the risky sexual behaviours.

In some townships the number of girlfriends a boy has is a defining feature of what it means to be a man (Brown, Sorrell & Raffaelli, 2005). Selikow (2004) concurs with this as he states that male sexuality in the township is defined by how many sexual partners men have and sexually assertive male behaviour is regarded as a prominent factor in being a "real man." As a result not having any girlfriends, or only having one girlfriend, is viewed as abnormal, and it is associated with poverty and weak manhood while having many increases the status of males (Selikow, 2004; Brown, et al. 2005). It is, therefore, important to note that the notion of having more than one girlfriend was very prevalent among my participants. In other words some of the participants regarded having more than one sexual partner as something they are obliged to do in order to be regarded as real men. As Lwazi stated, *The first one is my real girlfriend because I love her, but the other two I am just following what other boys do because I don't even know how we got into a relationship.*

Furthermore, the perception that boys' desire for sex is a natural phenomenon was expressed by the participants in their defence for engaging in sex. As Menzi stated that in *the locations where we live people would look at you differently if you do not show an interest in girls, in sex to be specific ...they label you as 'Sisi-bhuti' meaning 'Sister-brother'.* It is, therefore,

clear from this quote that some boys engage in these risky sexual behaviours, because they want to prove that they are *real men not homosexuals* (Menzi). In addition Lwazi emphasised that *Having many sexual partners gives you a certain status in this community and that is why we always would want to prove that we are real boys by taking drugs and engage in sex with different girls*. It is clear that the hegemonic and ideal masculinity that boys measure themselves against and are measured against by others, manifests itself through boys' willingness to engage in sex and to have many partners. As Mahala (2007) states, sexual prowess is also a feature of hegemonic masculinity, in that some men want to prove their masculinity by engaging in rampant hyper-sexuality whereby they have multiple sexual partners.

However, it was evident among the participants that they have different views when it comes to what they call 'unstable' relationships. Some of the participants characterised the state of not being in a stable relationship as encouraging and contributing towards very risky sexual behaviour. Their definition of unstable relationship is 'having many sexual partners and sleeping around'. This was evident when participants were being asked what behaviours they regard as risky sexual behaviours, and Menzi responded by saying;

It's this thing of having many sexual partners or sleeping around, that thing is really bad. Going around sleeping with anyone you meet is a very risky behaviour, because you might end up getting infected with many diseases.

Much research into adolescent sexuality has treated adolescents in a stereotyped and one-dimensional way with inadequate attention to young people whose views and behaviours challenge dominant stereotypes (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001). However, the above quotation shows that there is resistance by some boys to traditional masculine norms and dominant stereotypes. Boys in this study view many sexual partners as a risky behaviour which makes one susceptible to being infected with HIV and STI's. Menzi in the above quotation shows awareness of the risks involved in multiple partner relationships. Similarly, boys in MacPhail and Campbell's (2001) study indicated that they would make use of condoms to prevent pregnancy with regular partners but that condom use is most important for preventing getting a disease in casual relationships. This resistance to some traditional norms by certain boys clearly shows the existence of alternative ways of thinking and being.

Alcohol and other drugs take away inhibitions

The study conducted by UNAIDS (2000) found that many [young] men believed that by using alcohol and other substances, these not only helped to prove their manhood, but they also assisted them with fitting in with their peers. This study also found that young people sometimes smoked dagga/marijuana or drank before going to parties, as they believed it gave them the 'courage' to find a partner (UNAIDS, 2000). As Menzi said, *I do not drink alcohol willingly but I feel pressurised because naturally I am shy so it takes away all the shyness in me*. However, this places this boy at risk, as the study by Castilla et al. (1999) found that sexual risk behaviours such as sex with multiple partners and failure to use a condom regularly, were more frequent among persons who had been drunk or used cannabis or cocaine. It is, therefore, clear that use of alcohol, and other drugs is associated with sexual behaviour involving greater risk of HIV infection or transmission.

Furthermore Menzi said, *When I'm drunk I act like a real man and approach any girl*. It is evident that alcohol removes inhibitions and empowers (even if in a false sense) some boys. Having alcohol leads to unprotected sex which could, in turn, lead to unwanted pregnancies and STIs. Nevertheless, achieving masculinity is what appeared to be the priority to the participants. As Menzi further stated, *Being a real man is related to having sex, therefore, at times, I just engage in sex so as to feel more of a man, regardless of the consequences*. Judging from the fact that they seemed to know about the consequences of engaging in sex while under the influence of alcohol, I then asked what else acts as a pushing factor. Ntando responded by saying, *Alcohol or just drug abuse is a key pushing factor. You know when alcohol runs into your veins you do not listen even to a person who you would listen to under normal circumstances, because it gets you involved with other boys' girlfriends and that gets you beaten up*. It is clear from this quotation that some boys do know that using drugs and drinking alcohol is detrimental to their well-being. There is evidence that alcohol causally disinhibits sexual behaviour and that drinking alcohol increases the likelihood of sexual activity, enhances sexual experience, and promotes riskier sexual behaviour (Cooper, 2006). In other words, alcohol creates a myopia in which incompletely processed aspects of immediate experience exert undue influence on behaviour and emotion (Cooper, 2006). As a result, boys find themselves engaging in unprotected sex with different partners. Cooper's (2006) study raises the possibility that alcohol can either inhibit or promote sexual contact, depending on the individual. An individual might also drink and have risky sex as part of a

lifestyle that peers believe defines a real man (Cooper, 2005). This construction of masculinity through the drinking of alcohol applies also to youth in other African countries. For example, much significance was attached to drinking alcohol as a marker of student masculinity at the University of Botswana, with the University bar a “conspicuously masculine space” (Ouzgane & Morrell, 2005, p.225).

Despite the significant role that alcohol seems to play for these boys in their sexual life, in an individual interview, Menzi acknowledged that:

...wanting to engage in a sexual intercourse when you are under the influence of alcohol is the most risky sexual behaviour. This is because when you meet a girl you simply take a girl straight home and enjoy yourself, and this puts you in danger of getting infected and die before time.

It is clear from the above quotation that, among other things, participants regard alcohol usage as a risky sexual behaviour. The participants asserted that, most of the things they do when they are under the influence of alcohol are wrong. In an attempt to express how risky abusing alcohol is, one boy explained that when you are drunk you cannot remember what you would have done the previous day. In support of this another boy said, *I agree with Menzi that alcohol plays a major role in motivating boys to have a sudden desire for sex. For example, my brother has two children and he does not know or remember the time when he had sex with his girlfriend, simply because he was drunk* (Bongani). Boys allude to the ability of alcohol to increase sexual desire which sometimes causes them to have unprotected sex, as a result leading to unplanned pregnancies which bring a lifetime responsibility and lasting consequences. Although alcohol was mentioned by almost all participants as a problematic drug, ‘umqwinyo’ (a drug) was also mentioned as the most dangerous drug that tempts most boys to behave in a manner that endangers their lives. As Lwazi articulated:

In my neighbourhood on Fridays, some boys usually go to a certain place near my home where 'umgwinyo' is sold and buy it. After taking it they look for girls and just have sex with them particularly the girls that normally hang out with them.

This boy believes that the behaviour demonstrated by those boys in his neighbourhood is a risky sexual behaviour ...*because they do not consider safety when they engage in sex in such situations (Lwazi).*

However, participants did not seem willing to take all the blame in terms of engaging in risky sexual behaviours, as they assert that girls are not innocent 'victims' of unprotected sex. Participants articulated that girls too, do drink alcohol and take in 'kuber' (a drug) with the intention to do away with their shyness so that they enjoy themselves sexually. 'Kuber' is a stimulant that enhances and alters the mind. 'Kuber' has become one of the latest trends among young people, reaching school grounds and it is said to have the effect of making learners stimulated while lowering their inhibitions and making them susceptible to risky behaviours such as carefree sex and many other things. Menzi articulated, *There is something that is used by girls to boost their desire for sex. It is known as kuber (drug), so I think it also causes them to succumb easily to sex and even jack-rolling.* It is clear from this statement that both boys and girls lose control after using drugs. As Menzi further asserted, girls are equally active in engaging in risky sexual behaviours as boys, *because of the influence from their 'kuber', which after taking drives them to have sex immediately.* The study by Anderson (2009) found that some boys cite some girls as taking leading roles in initiating sex. The boys' assertions here resonate with Anderson's study (2009) in destabilising the dichotomy of innocent girls and villainous boys.

Social networks expose boys to too much sex

The research shows that media contribute to the boys' behaviours or their choice to engage in risky practices in a negative way, in that, it makes them want to experience some of the lifestyles, such as drugs and overt sexual experimentation (Jeftha, 2006). However, the findings of my research attribute the willingness to engage in such risky sexual behaviours to constant use of social networks such as Mixit and Facebook by youth. As Lwazi explains:

Social networks play a role in exposing us to too much sex because we even get a chance to send one another some porno and sex videos.

The key role that is played by social networks in sharing sex videos was also confirmed by other boys as Menzi said, *I strongly agree, some boys watch porno even in class in the presence of an educator. They would watch it under the desks while the educator is busy explaining physics.* Anderson's (2009) study also found that video clips of boys having sex with girls are often circulated via cell phones and internet sites. When asked how it benefits them watching and sharing sex videos with friends, Ntando responded by saying, *There is some good in it because you learn new styles and it helps you see if you still get erection quickly which is always a good thing for a boy.* According to Johansson and Hammaren (2007), there has been research exploring the significance of boy's use of pornography in private within the context of social networking with other boys (homosociality) and in the social construction of hegemonic masculinity. Fordham (2006) states that boys use pornography as a tool to assert masculine dominance by boasting loudly among themselves of the things they have seen with the intention that girls will hear them. It is clear that boys sometimes use cell phones as sexual tools which they use for sexual gratification, when they watch sex videos, take pictures and share them amongst themselves. Thokozani added by saying; *Hey! When you watch sex from a cell phone, you really feel like doing it for real with anyone around you, so it does lead us to engage more in sex.* Therefore, the danger of porn is that it stimulates desire and boys seek satisfaction which could potentially place others in danger of being coerced. Waltman (2010) states that pornography has been found to desensitize societies to violence against girls, inspiring rapes and contributing to the sexual subordination of girls to boys.

Furthermore, it was evident that participants do not see anything wrong with their regular use of social networks. Anele, who initially disclosed that he does not have a girlfriend, articulated that, *Social networks are not as bad as most people think, it is up to an individual what intentions he/she has when he/she uses these networks. Those who use it in a wrong way really are just pursuing their career of becoming sex slaves.* It was clear from this statement that not all boys use social networks for voyeurism and to be stimulated, but there are those who use it as a cheaper way of communicating with people not around them. Anele

acknowledges the benefits of social networks and in so doing asserts that the abuse thereof is problematic. It is clear from the above statement that it is not necessarily the social media that encourages boys to engage more in sex, but rather their misuse of it in ways that obsessively expose them to sex, and this needs to be reviewed.

When asked what they think could be done to discourage the use of social networks by youth, Anele responded by saying, *There is a role that Life Orientation could play, but I think it is made difficult by the fact that it is parents who buy cell phones for their children not teachers.* In short participants expressed that, a Life Orientation teacher's interference could result in serious tension between him/her and the parents. This, according to the participants, would be due to the fact that their *...parents insist that we must have cell phone to facilitate communication at any time* (Siyabonga). Furthermore, Anele emphasised that parents need to *...ensure that their children are occupied with some chores and avoid giving everything a child wants because they get spoiled.* The focus on materiality has been cited by some boys as integral to the problem; therefore, parents indeed have a significant role to play in terms of discouraging sex video sharing by not buying their children expensive cell phones.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This study sought to explore the meanings that a group of African boys give to their sexualities. The study acknowledges the diverse sexualities that have been demonstrated. Sexuality has been explored, in order to better understand the explanations and motivations that boys offer for engaging in risky sexual behaviours. Given that HIV/AIDS has become an important issue in the area of sexuality studies it is imperative to understand youth sexuality in order to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS as well as other sexually transmitted infections. Therefore, it remained the focus and purpose of this study to explore the meanings boys give to their sexuality in this age of HIV/AIDS. This study engaged with masculinities theory to gain insight into the perceptions, attitudes and behaviours around the risky sexual practices of the group of boys. The study posits that the ways in which boys construct their masculinities is largely responsible for the types of sexual behaviours, attitudes and practices they engage in.

Summary of the study

Chapter One introduced the focus and purpose of the study. In Chapter Two I drew on local and international literature to discuss the existing studies that focus on young people's constructions of masculinity and sexuality in the age of HIV/AIDS. Chapter Three describes the choice of research methodology used in this study. Since this is a qualitative study which is positioned in the interpretivist paradigm, certain principles had to be followed. Therefore, in this chapter I explained and justified my choice of sampling which was purposive sampling, and my data collection methods, namely focus group discussion and individual interviews. Furthermore I explained the method used in analysing the data, and then looked at ethical issues. In Chapter Four, I analysed the data generated through focus group discussion and individual interviews. Pre-determined masculinities theory and concepts such as sexuality and sexual prowess were employed in analysing this data. This chapter presented and discussed the data in terms of themes, owing to an inductive process, whereby patterning of responses was noted as I waded through the raw data. This discussion was strengthened by the use of participants' quotations and other related literature. I now present the main findings of this study, offer recommendations and highlight the significance of these findings in terms of race, class, gender and sexuality.

Summary of the research findings

The risky sexual behaviours that boys engage in are closely related to their constructions of masculinity because in their community it is still regarded as being a 'real man' to have multiple concurrent relationships. A lack of interest by boys in heterosexual relationships is regarded as evidence of being homosexual and leads to being subjected to a multitude of homophobic remarks. It is, therefore, clear that heterosexuality, sexual prowess, homophobia are hegemonic masculine forms that acquire much social status and are the ideals of manhood in this community. The key findings that emerge from the data analysis in this study are presented in the following paragraphs. They are presented and summarised in relation to the research questions of this study. Three key findings emerged from the data analysis. These are (i) unprotected sex and myths around sex, (ii) societal influence and peer pressure, and (iii) drugs/alcohol and social networks.

Unprotected sex and myths around sex

While the literature such as Selikow et al. (2009) shows how boys engage in unprotected sex because they prefer "flesh to flesh" sex, the boys in this study also regarded having unprotected sex as the wrong way and as risky behaviour. In an attempt to emphasise the dangers of practising sex the "wrong way", participants linked it to opportunistic diseases, whereby one boy further explained that, *The wrong way is the way of doing sex that puts you in danger such as having sex without a condom which puts you in danger of getting diseases like STDs and HIV*. For this reason boys argued that sex should remain the key topic in the discussions that they have when they are together. Boys believed that discussing other issues other than sex might see them missing out on vital information.

The data also suggests that boys have certain beliefs about unprotected sex. Contradicting their previous argument about unprotected sex as the 'wrong way', participants believed that engaging in sex without a condom is the most enjoyable thing to do; hence; they said they are tempted not to use a condom when they engage in sex. Some of them explained that they are not at risk by engaging in unprotected sex since most of the people with whom they have sex are virgins. However, there was a different perspective from another participant who acknowledged that flesh to flesh sex with a virgin is the most enjoyable sex, but denied that it is not risky in terms of getting infected with HIV/AIDS.

Societal influence and peer pressure

Despite the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS among young men in South Africa, research shows that they continue to engage in risky sexual practices in their attempt to demonstrate their masculinity (Jeftha, 2006). In order to achieve their dominant masculinities, boys sometimes engage in sexual intercourse with multiple partners (Hunter, 2002). During the focus group discussion it was discovered that the meanings boys give to their sexuality are also influenced by external factors whereby they imitate what their peers do in order to gain acknowledgement from them. Furthermore, participants acknowledged that there are certain behaviours that they engage in due to pressure from their patriarchal society. These behaviours included boys having multiple partners and engaging in unprotected sex.

Drugs/alcohol and social networks

The study conducted by UNAIDS (2000) found that many [young] men believed that using alcohol and other substances not only helped to prove their manhood but also assisted them with fitting in with their peers. Similarly, this study found that boys sometimes intentionally drink alcohol in order to take away inhibitions and be able to approach any girl around them with the aim of having sex. It is, therefore, clear that use of alcohol, and other drugs is associated with sexual behaviour involving greater risk of HIV infection or transmission.

The research shows that media contribute to the boys' behaviours or their choice to engage in risky practices in a negative way, in that, it makes them want to experience some of the lifestyles, such as drugs and overt sexual experimentation (Jeftha, 2006). However, the findings of my research attributed the willingness to engage in such risky sexual behaviours to constant use of social networks such as Mixit and Facebook by youth. It is clear from the evidence that boys sometimes use cell phones as sexual tools which they use for sexual gratification.

Implications and recommendations

It was evident from the findings of this study that most of the participants resort to risky sexual behaviours because most of the time they are idle both at school and home. This is due to the fact that their community lacks facilities where activities that unite and engage people could be organized. With local leaders on board, organising regular local sports tournaments would be possible and this would gather all the youth together for a good cause, therefore, time for engaging in risky sexual behaviours would be minimal. This positive attitude would then be evident in various schools in the township because schools are extensions of the community, therefore, the youth would go to school having gone through a paradigm shift with regards to their life style. Since KwaMashu township has been able to produce well known soccer players in the past such as Siyabonga Nomvete and Siboniso Gaxa, using such icons to emphasise the idea of sport as a safe activity for youth to engage in would have a positive impact on the lifestyle of the youth in the township. The Daily Sun reported that the initiative that was taken by Siboniso Gaxa being accompanied by Siyabonga Nomvete, former soccer star Sugar Ray, and eThekweni Mayor Obed Mlaba in June 2005 to visit his former high school Nqabakazulu in KwaMashu to motivate the youth was applauded by many people in the township (Mjoli & Ntuli, 2005). This newspaper reported that in his speech Gaxa said, “With this visit I want to show the other children from undeveloped township schools that they can make it if they focus on what they want in life... because youth must do everything they can to reach their goals” (Mjoli & Ntuli, 2005, p.10). It is clear that increasing the frequency of such initiatives in the township by different stakeholders would, in turn, increase the probability of youth realising their potential and goals. As a result, the youth would refrain from engaging in risky sexual behaviours.

Furthermore, participants stated that peer or friends groups play a vital role in giving them all the information they need with regards to sexuality related issues. Therefore, peer groups could be used to disseminate valuable information whereby participants educate and affirm each other. Such peer groups could also be used to create awareness about mother-to-child transmission of a virus as something that most participants were not aware of, and of course other various issues that concern the youth such as HIV/AIDS, safe sex etc. Potentially, peer education would provide boys a proper platform and context for the collective renegotiation of dominant norms of behaviour that might be placing their sexual health at risk. One participant stated that media and social networks should be used for good causes. Therefore a

school based campaign that discourages the use of social networks for sexual gratification and exploitation of girls, whereby boys share sex videos and pictures of naked girls, could be organised. This might result in a paradigm shift on the sides of boys and they may realise the need to start using their cell phones and social networks for good purposes.

On the other hand, boys spoke about girls in ways that challenge the construction of girls as innocent victims of boys' hyper-sexuality and other risky sexual practices, as they sometimes willingly take part in such activities as unprotected sexual intercourse. Therefore, I believe that future research could benefit from researching both girls and boys in terms of their articulations of gender, sexuality and risky sexual behaviours. More research where the focus is on girls is necessary to get their views, perceptions, etc. This is due to the fact that my study unintentionally placed girls in an awkward position to be judged by boys, since girls were not part of the discussions and interviews of this study.

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APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



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Westville Campus
Private Bag x54001
Durban, 4000
Tel No: +27 31 260 3587
Fax No: +27 31 260 4609
Ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

18 April 2011

Mr. S Ngubane 205521573
Faculty of Education

Dear Mr. Ngubane

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0088/08N
PROJECT TITLE: African township high school boys' articulations of gender, sexuality and sexual risk in the age of HIV/AIDS.

NEED FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL WAIVED

I wish to inform you that the need for ethical review has been waived because this protocol forms part of a broader research protocol which has already received ethical clearance (HSS/0088/08).

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

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

Yours faithfully


.....
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

cc. Supervisor - Prof. D Bhana
cc. Ms. T Mnisi/Mr. N Memela

APPENDIX 2: EDITOR'S LETTER

Crispin Hemson

15 Morris Place

Glenwood

Durban

South Africa 4001

hemson@ukzn.ac.za

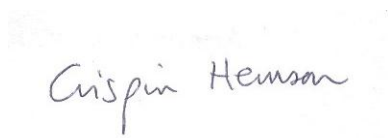
C: 082 926 5333

H: 031 206 1738

19th December 2012

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to record that I have carried out a language editing of the dissertation by Sibusiso Ngubane, entitled **African township high school boys` articulations of masculinity, sexuality and sexual risk in the age of HIV/AIDS.**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Crispin Hemson". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Crispin Hemson

APPENDIX 3: LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL ASKING FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH AT SCHOOL

Siphosethu Primary School

P.O. Box 27076

KwaMashu

4360

The Principal

J.G. Zuma Secondary School

20 Dalminey

Inanda

4310

20 April 2011

Dear Sir

Request for permission to undertake research

I am Sibusiso Ngubane a student enrolled for a Masters degree at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. I wish to ask for your permission to undertake a research. This will entail interviewing six boy learners. The details of the study are outlined below:

The title of my study is: African township high school boys` articulations of gender, sexuality and sexual risk in the age of HIV/AIDS.

In this study I will seek to explore the following:

- a) What do African boys regard as risky sexual behaviour?
- b) What explanations do they offer for engaging in risky and unsafe sexual practices?
- c) How is gender connected to the ways in which they construct their sexuality?

I also wish to guarantee you that this study will be grounded on University principles such as honesty, justice and respect. Participants will be treated with fairness and honesty, and I will ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Participants will be free to withdraw from the research at any stage without negative or undesirable consequences to themselves.

I hope my request will be taken into consideration.

Yours faithfully

S.S. Ngubane

APPENDIX 4: PRINCIPAL’S INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Declaration:

I _____ (full name of principal) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this letter and the nature of this study and I, therefore, consent to my school participating in this research.

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL

DATE

APPENDIX 5: LETTER OF CONSENT TO PARTICIPANTS ASKING FOR PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW THEM FOR THE STUDY

Dear Participant

25 April 2011

I am a Master's student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I would like to invite you to participate in a study that I am undertaking as part of my degree. I will require for you to participate in one focus group interview, and later to participate in one individual interview which will most probably take one hour of your time.

A brief description of the study follows:

The title of my study is: African township high school boys' articulations of gender, sexuality and sexual risk in the age of HIV/AIDS.

In this study I will seek to explore the following:

- a) What do African boys regard as risky sexual behaviour?
- b) What explanations do they offer for engaging in risky and unsafe sexual practices?
- c) How is gender connected to the ways in which they construct their sexuality?

The interview will be audio-taped. I will be careful to use the information that you supply in a manner that will ensure your anonymity. In order to protect your identity I will use a pseudonym in my transcripts and my research report. If you are uncomfortable at any time you are at liberty to stop the interview and withdraw from the study.

Universal principles such as honesty, justice and respect will direct my research. I hope that this research will make a positive contribution to the teaching and learning processes regarding sexuality and risky sexual behaviours.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully

Researcher (S. S. Ngubane)

APPENDIX 6: PARTICIPANT'S INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Declaration:

I _____ (full name of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this letter and the nature of this study and I consent to my participating in the research.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

**APPENDIX 7: LETTER OF CONSENT TO PARENTS/ GUARDIANS
REQUESTING PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW THEIR CHILDREN AT
SCHOOL**

Dear Parent

27 April 2011

African township high school boys` articulations of gender, sexuality and sexual risk in the age of HIV/AIDS.

My name is Sibusiso Ngubane and I am currently studying towards a Master's degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). As part of the requirements of the degree, I am required to complete a research dissertation. My study aims to understand the explanations that boys give for engaging in risky sexual behaviours, and the meanings they give to their sexuality.

In order for the study to be a success, I require seven boys aged 16 turning 17 to participate in the research. I would be grateful if you would consent to your son participating in my study.

If you choose to allow your son to participate in this research, he will be invited to participate in a focus group discussion and later in an individual interview. The completion of the process will take about 1 hour for focus group discussion and about 30 minutes for individual interview. This will be done during the sports period in school.

Participation is completely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw your son and your son has the right to withdraw himself at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained at all times and in the analysis of the data and the completion of the dissertation.

A summary report of the findings will be made available to the participants.

If you would like any further information or are unclear about anything, please feel free to contact me telephonically on (082 736 8189).

Your cooperation and your son's participation is valued and appreciated.

Kind regards

Researcher (S. S. Ngubane)

APPENDIX 8: PARENT’S INFORMED CONSENT FORM

DECLARATION BY PARENT OF PARTICIPANT

I, _____, IN THE CAPACITY OF PARENT/GUARDIAN OF _____, HEREBY CONSENT VOLUNTARILY TO ALLOW MY CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ABOVE-MENTIONED STUDY.

SIGNED AT _____ ON _____ 2011.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF PARTICIPANT: _____.