Masculinity and Foundation Phase Teaching: Exploring the Identities of Male Teachers in Mpumalanga Schools

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Declaration

I, Vusi Msiza, declare that

1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.

2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

3. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

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As Supervisor, I hereby approve this thesis for submission to be examined.

Professor Thabo Msibi

Dedication

The dissertation is dedicated to

My mother *Anna Mahlangu* and my late father *Steve Msiza*

For the incredible gift that they have given me, which is LIFE.

Acknowledgements

I thank God for the guidance, protection and strength to overcome the challenges that I had to face in the writing of this thesis.

I would like to acknowledge the following people for their support in my academic journey:

Abstract

The phenomenon of male teachers teaching in foundation phase classrooms in South Africa remains an under-researched area of work. Men who choose to be foundation phase teachers are often criticised and ridiculed (Petersen, 2014). This is because foundation phase teaching is considered by society to be women's work. Using Connell (2005) theory of masculinities and the intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1991) as frameworks, this study seeks to explore how male teachers, who are already in the field teaching in the foundation phase, construct and negotiate their gender and professional identities. A case study methodology was used in the study, with Mpumalanga province being the case under exploration. Nine participants were observed and each interviewed twice. The study found that male teachers in the foundation phase are constructing their identities by positioning themselves as parents, mainly 'fathers', to the learners in the classroom. Also, the study found that an appeal to traditional gender roles was made, with male teachers in the phase taking senior grades within the foundation phase (such as Grades 3 and 2), with the lower grades like Grade R and 1 being seen as suitable for females. Another finding of the study was that the male teachers negotiated their identities by constructing themselves as pioneers, powerful, better physical education teachers and knowledgeable compared to their female counterparts. The study concludes by suggesting that more research focusing on masculinity in relation to foundation phase teaching in the South African context is needed. The Department of Education is called upon to re-visit their recruitment policies and programmes in order to attract more male teachers into the foundation phase, in order to 'normalise' the male presence in this phase.

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Chapter 1: Background and Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Foundation phase teaching, which is between Grades R to 3 in South Africa, has historically been dominated by female teachers, with a small number of men joining the phase (Mashiya, 2015). There have been efforts to increase the number of male foundation phase teachers by the Department of Education in South Africa, including its provincial departments, but these efforts have been minimal. The Province of Mpumalanga has been an anomaly in that an effort to increase the number of qualified foundation phase teachers resulted in more male teachers.

Since males joining the foundation phase is something new in South Africa, there appears to be an increasing focus amongst scholars on understanding why men, particularly black men, choose to teach in the foundation phase. Bhana and Moosa (2015), who focus their work on pre-service male teachers, state that the reason why men are reluctant to join the foundation phase is mainly because of the gender inequality that exists in the phase. Given that few male teachers join the foundation phase, together with the negativity often associated with male teachers teaching in the foundation phase (Mills, Martino, & Lingard, 2004) it is therefore important to explore identities of male in-service teachers in schools, especially in a rural, conservative context such as the Mpumalanga province.

As a male foundation phase teacher, and having spent four years in an early childhood degree programme with other men, this has given me an indication of how the society perceives men in the foundation phase and how this influences negotiation of identities. During my studies there was a number of men disassociating themselves from the foundation phase teaching. For instance, some of my male peers deregistered courses in the foundation phase because they thought the phase was too "feminine" and not intellectually challenging. Other male students chose not to attend because of the dominance of females. Having experienced this, it became important to conduct a study on male identities in the foundation phase, with a particular focus on in-service teachers.

Chapter contains the background of the study and the rationale. This will be followed by the focus and purpose of doing the study. The objectives, research questions and the significance of the study will thereafter be discussed and an overview of the study IS provided.

1.1 Background and rationale

Foundation phase teaching in relation to masculinity, is a thriving yet contested body of knowledge. In international research there appears to be two views dominating the field: the conservative view which calls for more male teachers in the phase because they are perceived to be role models and father figures to boys in the foundation phase (Carrington, 2002; Lahelma, 2000; Skelton, 2002) and the progressive view which challenges the status quo, and provides a critique of the gendered discourses supporting such pressures, arguing that while having male teachers in the foundation phase is important (Brownhill, 2014; Martino, 2008b; Mills et al., 2004). This work has assisted in obtaining a sense of the various debates taking place in foundation phase education. However, this work does not necessarily engage with the South African context, where there has been limited research regarding male foundation phase teaching. In South Africa the research done covers the following aspects: male pre-service teachers, their experiences during teaching practice (Mashiya, 2015) and the reasons why they do not choose foundation phase specialisation (Petersen, 2014). However, because of its pre-service focus, this research has not highlighted the experiences of in-service teachers. Furthermore, this work does not focus on teachers' identities, which form the interests of this study. As foundation phase teaching has been previously regarded as women's work, I hoped to explore the gendered nature of the field. I am a male foundation phase teacher and, as mentioned earlier, there has been an increase of male teachers in Mpumalanga province, despite the conservative and rural nature of the province. Men are, for instance, still expected to engage in rite of passage initiation ceremonies in the province, ceremonies often not practiced in cities. The need for this study is driven by the limited work that concerns male foundation phase teaching in South Africa and the need to explore how rurality and conservatism impact on teacher identities.

As noted above, work exploring masculinities in foundation phase teaching is very limited in South Africa and is only at its infancy. The studies that have been conducted on male teachers teaching in the foundation phase has mainly focussed in the foundation phase. Among the first studies done was by (Mashiya, 2015). This work found that male pre-service teachers in the foundation phase are perceived as role models, father figures and contributing towards outdoor activities. Since this work, there have been other scholars that have done similar work. Bhana and Moosa (2015); Mashiya, Kok, Luthuli, Xulu, and Mtshali (2015); Petersen (2014) have all done similar studies, focusing on male pre-service teachers, with the difference being the focus on the perception of male teachers in the foundation phase, low enrolment in foundation phase

specialisation and the gender divides that exist in the phase. What all these studies reveal is that teaching in the foundation phase is still very much perceived in gendered terms. While these studies are crucial, as they provide an understanding of the gendered dynamics that exist in foundation phase teaching, they fail to illuminate the ways in which in-service male teachers construct and negotiate their identities, which is the primary focus of this study. This is the gap that this study hopes to close. The study will contribute to a growing and crucial field of foundation phase teaching. Having given and highlighted the scholarly reasons for pursuing this study, I will provide personal reasons that have motivated me to doing the study.

The fact that I am a male foundation phase teacher is among the chief reasons for wishing to complete this study. Initially, when I enrolled for a Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Development and Foundation Phase, there was much criticism from people on campus, friends, family members and other teachers during the teaching practice. The criticism sought to question my masculinity and sexual orientation, with some even questioning my manhood. During teaching practice other teachers would come to my class pretending to want to borrow something, but their intentions were to observe how I taught the learners. Often they would ask how I was coping with young learners in the foundation phase. My experiences as a student studying foundation phase teaching, as well as my experiences during teaching practices, triggered an interest into exploring how male teachers in the field understood and positioned themselves as men in the field, how they experienced teaching in the field and how they negotiated an identity that may not necessarily be welcomed in the field. The study therefore is being pursued for both personal reasons as well as the scholarly reasons highlighted above.

1.2 Focus and Purpose

The focus of this qualitative case study is on male teachers who are employed to teach in the foundation phase, within the context of the Mpumalanga province in South Africa. The Mpumalanga province was chosen because it has recently decided to increase the number of male teachers in the foundation phase, who are mainly teaching in rural communities. The province became a suitable site to undertake the study. Moreover, the focus is on in-service black male teachers who are currently in the field and teaching. This is because, in the international perspective and in South Africa there is not enough literature focussing on black male teachers who work particularly in the rural communities.

The purpose of the study is to explore the identities of male foundation phase teachers teaching within the context of the Mpumalanga province. This study explores how they construct and

negotiate their gender as well as professional identities in a teaching context that has been perceived as being exclusively for the preserve of women. It also explores how their various identity markers such as gender, sexuality, race and class intersect to produce a particular subject position.

1.3 Objectives

The three objectives that the study aims to achieve are as follows: firstly, the gendered and professional identity constructions of foundation phase male teachers in Mpumalanga schools will be explored. Secondly the reasons for the type of identity constructions exhibited and narrated by foundation phase male teachers in Mpumalanga schools will be investigated. Finally, an understanding into how foundation phase male teachers negotiate their identities in professional teaching contexts such as Mpumalanga will be sought. These are contexts which are rural and generally perceived as conservative. Therefore in the next section the three critical research questions that will assist in achieving e these objectives will be discussed.

1.4 Research questions

In line with the objectives given in the previous section, below are the three research questions for this study.

1. How do foundation phase male teachers in Mpumalanga schools construct their gender and professional identities?
2. Why do foundation phase male teachers in Mpumalanga schools construct their identities in the ways they do?
3. How do foundation phase teachers negotiate their identities in conservative professional teaching contexts like Mpumalanga?

1.5 Significance of the study

International studies have explored the phenomenon of masculinity and foundation phase teaching as indicated in the background section (Carrington et al., 2007; Jones, 2008; Mills et al., 2004; Skelton, 2012). In South Africa there have been efforts to explore and understand men who are teaching in the foundation phase. Scholars Bhana and Moosa (2015); Mashiya (2015); Mashiya et al. (2015); Petersen (2014) have all focused on pre-service male teachers. This study is also important because it is focuses on an issue (masculinity in relation to foundation phase teaching) long ignored in literature. It focuses on male teachers in the foundation phase, within the context of Mpumalanga, South Africa. The study is therefore important for South Africa in terms of its potential impact on policy as well as shaping how

one may understand foundation phase teaching. The study is also important internationally because it contributes more knowledge to the international literature by offering the South African experience, an experience that is currently not in evidence.

The study explores the rural context of teaching in the province of Mpumalanga, which is often ignored or undermined because of its geographical realities, such as the infrastructure. The next section presents an overview on how the chapters in the study have been organised.

1.6 Overview of the study and conclusion

This section presents an overview of the five chapters. The chapter that follows is Chapter 2, which will locate the study in the existing literature both internationally and local (South Africa) and will attempt to show a gap of knowledge that exists in the South African context. The study will commence with a discussion on the theoretical frameworks, which is the Connell theory of masculinity followed by the second theoretical framework which is the intersectionality theory. This will be followed by a literature review, which will be organised according to context, that is, international literature followed by the South African literature. This is done due to the limitation of studies in South Africa. Lastly the gap in existing literature will be demonstrated and the importance of why the study is needed in order to close the gap will be discussed.

The literature review chapter is followed by Chapter 3 which is the methodology of this study. In this chapter a discussion on the philosophical assumptions is presented, including the ontology, epistemology and paradigm. In addition the methodology, approach and the data generation methods are discussed. In the section that follows the data generation process is discussed and an explicit explanation is provided on how the data was generated and the duration of the data generation as well as the details of the participants. In the final part issues of trustworthiness and data analysis strategy are discussed and ethical concerns are addressed in this study.

Chapter 4 focuses on data analysis and the presentation of findings. In this chapter the analysis strategy that was used in the analysis of data is highlighted. The findings will be presented under each theme that was formed. The first theme looks at how the participants construct their identities and negotiate them in the foundation phase, the discussion then progresses to the notion of gender roles that are perceived in men who are teaching in the foundation phase. The next theme looks at how male teachers navigate through the societal expectations, also the

privilege that they have by being men. The last discussion focusses on how the contexts influence the construction of identities as well as negotiation.

Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings under each research question and shows how the findings responds to the research questions. The implications of the study to policy, practice and for research that will be conducted in future is also discussed. This will be followed by a section where the limitation of the entire study is scrutinised, followed by a discussion that draws on the four chapters and draws the study together. The final chapter provides the conclusion to the thesis. Chapter 2 will now turn to a discussion of the theoretical framework followed by the review of existing literature.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a thorough background of the study, while also discussing the rationale, key research questions and main objectives of the study. This chapter will review related literature, as well as present a theoretical framework for the study. The literature review discusses previous research with the view to clearly identifying the gap that this study aims to fill. According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014) a literature review places a research study into the context of previously completed studies and shows how the proposed research fits into that particular field. Additionally it demonstrates that the researcher has read widely on the topic of study. Given that the phenomenon of the study concerns masculinity in relation to foundation phase teaching, the chapter will present a review which is categorised according to themes. The chapter is divided into three parts: the first part discusses the theoretical frameworks for the study, this is followed by a review of literature which explores teacher identities and how they are constructed. A conclusion is presented thereafter, clearly highlighting the gaps and questions that emerged from the review of literature. As Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) argue, literature should be clear as to where the new ground is being broken, and how and why the proposed study fits into existing knowledge

2.1 Theoretical Frameworks

In this study two theoretical frameworks will be used in understanding how foundation phase male teachers construct their identities, i.e. the theory of masculinity as espoused by Raewyn Connell and the feminist theory of intersectionality theory. Both these theories were used to complement each other given the contested nature of theories when pertaining to identification. Connell's theory of masculinity is used primarily to explain the various ways in which men construct their identities in varying spaces, while the theory of intersectionality seeks to unpack the various ways in which identities intersect with one another to produce particular types of experiences. This theoretical framework section commences with a discussion on Connell's theory and its applicability to this study. This is followed by a discussion on intersectionality and its purpose in the study.

2.1.1 Theory of masculinity

Masculinity in the foundation phase teaching is an under-researched area, particularly in a developing context like South Africa. This study will use Connell's theory of masculinity to understand the various ways in which male teachers construct their masculinities.

For Connell (2005), masculinities are constructed as hierarchical, historical and multiple entities. This suggests that masculinities are constructed socially through interaction in our everyday lives, whether at home, in the community or workplace. In exploring the notion that masculinities are constructed, Connell suggests that certain behaviours are regulated by society through certain rules or actions. Through such rules, expectations about what is considered masculine behaviour often dominate. For example, some societies expect men to be strong, play sport, be superior to women and not cry. Often, behaviours which deviate from this construction are considered feminine and undesirable. The discourses and constructions around masculinities often ignore the fact that it is common for men to have characteristics that are considered feminine (Connell, 2000). In addition, Alsop, Fitzsimons, and Lennon (2002) note that the societal constructions of masculinity are premised around the idea that to be a real man, one has to reject and distance oneself from any behaviour and activity construed as feminine. Therefore, the authors argue that manhood is often demonstrated for other people's approval, for example, other men and other women in the society.

Connell's argument is also on masculinities that are hierarchical, that is that there are some that are dominant over other men as well as women. Connell (2000) refers to the form of masculinity that is honoured and desired in society as hegemonic masculinity. Connell (2000) demonstrates the complexity of domination and subordination by drawing our attention to the home context. For example, at home a father could possess hegemonic masculinity and be dominant over the whole family, while his sons could exhibit subordination. The hierarchy of masculinities is also visible within various institutions such as corporate business, schools, homes and churches. Often violence is used to maintain a hierarchy among men and also in relation to women (Greig, Kimmel, & Lang, 2000). In a schooling context, violence is often directed by boys to other boys they deem to be 'weak', for example boys who engage in same sex relations. Such violence is also visible through the bullying that occurs in schools (Herek & Berril, as cited in Connell (2000). It must therefore be noted that men use force, power and violence to maintain the hierarchy in their various contexts: home, schools, churches and business (Connell, 2005).

For Connell (2000), masculinities are also produced through processes of history. Masculinities have been constructed and taught continuously through culture, such that a boy is taught that he is superior to girls and other boys, and this can be traced back to the 18th century and beyond. In order to understand masculinities historically, we need to study the changes in social relations and acknowledge that gender as a social pattern is a producer and product of history

(Connell, 2005). Furthermore Connell (2000, p. 216) writes " different cultures and different periods of history construct gender differently", therefore how masculinities are performed in the present-day moment should inform us about the historical processes that have produced such actions. Given the historical, hierarchical and constructed nature of masculinities, a single institution cannot produce men who construct their masculinities in exactly identical ways. This point is explored in the next paragraph.

The last marker of masculinity that Connell (2000) explores is the multiple nature of masculinities. Connell notes that masculinities are multiple; in that there are various ways in which masculinity is constructed. For example, hegemonic masculinity seeks to be in the dominant position and be recognised as the only way in which manhood can be expressed. There is also subordinate masculinity, which is refers to those masculinities that are not idealised in a national context, and are viewed as 'not man enough'. These relate to homosexual males. Another form of masculinity that Connell explores is the complicit masculinity. These are men who benefit from hegemonic masculinity, yet they are not part of the hegemony and do not enact behaviours that seek to be dominant (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). For example, such men often perform their expected gender roles without necessarily exhibiting violence, a trait valued by hegemonic masculinities. Connell also explores another expression of masculinity, which is marginalised masculinity. This form of masculinity is based on the premise that gender intersects with race and class, with a direct effect on the ways in which men express their masculinity. For instance, a successful black athlete may not necessarily wield the same authority as a white man in a racial society, given the hegemony of whiteness (Connell, 2005). While black men may on one hand express hegemony, they are on the other marginalised by social certain systems which impact on the ways in which they may construct themselves. This racialisation is what Connell refers to as marginalisation, hence the notion of marginalised masculinities. Connell also explores exemplary masculinity, which are masculinities of certain sporting people, for example. She further states that this exemplary trait has been taught and produced historically and is often used as test of masculinity in individual men. Connell (2000) states that multiple masculinities are a result of the many ways of learning to be a man, and also enacting manhood in a given space. In addition, Connell argues that multiple masculinities are not only constructed by individuals, but they can be sustained and produced by culture, organisation or institutions.

This study seeks to explore how the male participants express their masculinity, using Connell's theory. The context may produce a variety of other masculinities beyond Connell's

theory as has been explored by other studies (Field, 2001; Morrell, Jewkes, Lindegger, & Hamlall, 2013; Ratele, 2013; Ratele, Shefer, Strebel, & Fouten, 2010; Waetjen & Mare, 2001). However, Connell's theory provides a basis from which these various masculinities can be studied. The framework will assist in understanding the type of masculinities the male teachers perform and exhibit both in relation to their identities as teachers as well as their positioning as men. The next section will focus on the limitations of this theory.

2.1.1.1 Limitations of theory of Masculinity

Within the theory of masculinity the concept of hegemonic masculinity has been criticised as using an "identifying strategy by which one names what one is looking for – that is, hegemonic masculinity – in advance of 'finding 'something which seems to fit its description" (Moller, 2007, p. 65). When researchers use the theory of masculinity they nominate a behaviour that is gendered and shows power over other men and women, and declare it hegemonic masculinity. Demetriou (2001) has also argued that the presentation of hegemonic masculinity as violent, criminal and thoroughly heterosexual. In addition hegemonic masculinity appears to be closed and unified and does not incorporate otherness; either you are subordinate or marginalised. Another criticism that emerged from literature is that an exercise of power, especially gendered power, is quickly equated to the logic of hegemonic masculinity and domination (Moller, 2007). Criticism has also extended to the methodological area of the theory, for instance Demetriou (2001) has argued that Connell's empirical and historical account of masculinity is totally inconsistent with her theoretical articulation of the hegemonic masculinity concept. This is consistent with a critique raised by Moller (2007) that Connell often draws on the life history interviews of adult men, wanting to know about their high school experiences. This is problematic because these men are no longer involved with the day to day routine of high school participation. Therefore they cannot give a comprehensive account of what happens in schools. Lastly, Moller (2007) argues that the concept of hegemonic masculinity makes it challenging to understand complexity and diversity in different contexts. In the next paragraph the rationale for the continued use of the theory is provided despite the existing criticism.

This theory was selected because it is a fundamental theory on masculinities internationally and it offers a clear account of different masculinities. Demetriou (2001) states that Connell should be given credit for revealing that multiple, historical and hierarchical masculinities exist, how they are constructed and the power they wield over femininities. This theory has given an indication on how identity is constructed among men and it will be useful to study male identities which is the focus of the study. In order to highlight the complexity in the study

of masculinity, especially when race, class, context and gender are concerned, the study is augmented by the theory of intersectionality which will be discussed in the section that follows.

2.1.2 Intersectionality theory

Given that this study is s not simply about the gendered nature of professional practice, but also includes an interrogation of other social identity markers, the intersectionality theory, another feminist theory, will also be employed to facilitate an understanding of how race, sexuality, social class, ethnicity and gender connect in the ways in which the male foundation phase teachers negotiate their identities. Intersectionality was first introduced to study the various ways in which race mediated the experiences of black women in the United States (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Shields, 2008). According to the study by Crenshaw (1991) intersectionality theory was founded because there was evidence that violence experienced by women in the USA was shaped by various dimensions of their identities such as race and social class. For example, when white women fight against sexism for all women they often do not pay attention to the fact that black women experience racism as well. Carastathis (2014, p. 307) points out that "intersectionality insists that multiple, co-constituting analytic categories are operative and equally salient in constructing institutionalised practices and lived experiences". In addition the focus of this theory is on how individuals/groups simultaneously experience both oppression and privilege, which is influenced by their contextual position. For example Levine-Rasky (2011, p. 241) states that "gender is always raced and race is always gendered. There are racialized differences within social class groups as there are social class differences within racialized groups". It is therefore significant to consider how different markers intersect in order to understand how the social world is constructed. Thus the theory also assists in understanding how various identity markers produce a particular type of subject position (Levine-Rasky, 2011; Symington, 2004; Valentine, 2007). Given this example, it can be said that we are members of more than one community (of different identity markers) and when all these markers intersect they produce a particular experience (Symington, 2004). In this study therefore, intersectionality will assist in understanding how the various identity markers of the male participants produce particular subject positions and the effects of those subject positions on classroom practices and actions. Intersectionality and the theory of masculinity will therefore be the two frameworks used in this study.

2.1.2.1 Limitations of the intersectionality theory

Intersectionality theory has been criticised by (Carastathis, 2014; Ludvig, 2006; Nash, 2008; Phoenix & Pattynama, 2006). Ludvig (2006) argues that the social world is insurmountably

complex and the infinite differences that exist in the social world position the intersectionality theory as weak and problematic. Ludvig (2006) further argues that it is impossible to take into account all the difference at any given moment. Too often it is not possible for a woman to decide whether she is discriminated against because of colour, gender or accent (Carastathis, 2014; Ludvig, 2006). Intersectionality is also commonly criticised that it lacks methods that are associated with it or at least methods we can draw from (Nash, 2008; Phoenix & Pattynama, 2006). While these critiques may to an extent be valid, it is important to note that some come from a limited understanding of the framework itself. For instance, it is this complexity that Ludvig (2006) highlights that intersectionality proves successful. One is not just black, a woman and heterosexual. These identities are always circulating and affect the way in which we choose to present ourselves.

Intersectionality assists in understanding social complexity diversity in different contexts, especially, in the context of this study, where the theory of masculinity cannot reach social complexity and diversity. Therefore, this theory and the theory of masculinity complement each other.

Having presented the theoretical foundations of the study, a comprehensive review of the literature is provided. The discussion is divided into four parts; the first part maps masculinity in the South African context; this is followed by an international and national perspective on the male foundation phase teaching. The review is then drawn together by considering teacher identities in both the international and the South African perspective.

2.2 Mapping masculinity in the South African context

The phenomenon of the study is masculinity in relation to foundation phase teaching in the context of South Africa. It is important to review the literature around masculinity that has emerged in South Africa, with the aim of mapping the field. The intention of doing this is to understand the discourses and constructions of masculinity in different contexts, including education.

Scholarship on masculinities in South Africa has considered masculinities from the days of colonialism onwards, especially looking into how masculinities were constructed in relation to race and ethnicity in the country. Morrell (1998) states that during the period of colonialism and apartheid, there were Afrikaner and British masculinities which were dominant over women and people of colour. In addition, it appears that these masculinities were also constructed on the basis of military domination, family domination and domination in sports

and schools (Morrell, 1998, 2001b). Morrell (2001b); Waetjen and Mare (2001) which indicates that Zulu men (as a group that fought often in the colonial wars such as the battle of *isandlwana*) remained in subordinate social positions and later validated violence as a strategy to deal with the inequalities which were imposed by the apartheid government on black men. During the apartheid era whiteness was linked to hegemonic masculinity, in a sense that black men were referred as boys, not being man enough due to the colour of their skin.

Linked to the discussion above on Zulu masculinities, authors such Bhana, de Lange, and Mitchell (2009); Morrell (1998); Morrell et al. (2013); Waetjen and Mare (2001) have written on such masculinities. Amongst other things Zulu masculinities have been constructed on wars, loyalty, violence and great respect for the tribe, for example, to this day it appears that Zulu men are negotiating their identities in relation to their role model Shaka, who, according to the Zulu nation, represents an ideal Zulu masculinity (Waetjen & Mare, 2001). Also the interaction between culture and the Constitution is highly contested, in that men view the human rights discourse as a threat to their masculinity and culture. Masculinities are constructed through different social channels, and that masculine identities are also formed then.

Another dimension of masculinity explored in the literature concerns how masculinities are constructed in the context of education in South Africa. Morrell (2001a) reports that masculinities in schools remain under-researched. In his research on corporal punishment and masculinity in schools, he found that male teachers were seen as wedded to their authority and the use of corporal punishment underpinned by the belief that a male teacher has to be a strict disciplinarian and use power in order to be taken seriously. Such actions, it can be argued, are expressions of hegemonic masculinity (Morrell et al., 2013).

Existing literature in the country has also focused on how masculinities are constructed in various fields, for example in certain cultures, business and political organisations (Ratele, 2013). In the context of education, Bhana (2009) finds that often in schools, especially foundation phase grades, teachers contribute towards the reproduction of gender inequalities by approving hegemonic masculine values. Such values are endorsed particularly when assigning roles. This is evident in the generic language used in the classroom that seeks to present some boys as superior to other boys and girls such as assigning girls only to clean the class. According to Bhana (2009) this is also evident when teachers conform to the assumption that 'boys will be boys'. Furthermore, Bhana et al. (2009) indicate that male Zulu teachers influence learner interaction in schools (between males and females and also between males

and males),male learners positioning themselves in hegemonic ways, for fear of being regarded as weak by both the learners and the male teachers in schools in KwaZulu-Natal province. It is important to cite the work of Bhana (2009); Bhana et al. (2009) point out that teachers in our schools are not operating in a vacuum; they play a key role in either perpetuating the gender inequalities that exist in societies or addressing them. Issues of masculinity and dominance go to the extent that male teachers start to demand respect from women through violence, arguing that violence is a result of not being respected (Bhana et al., 2009).

A key body of scholarship in the post-apartheid era has focussed on the construction of masculinity among young people. Clowes, Lazarus, and Ratele (2010) found that young men often valued the notion of fathers and father figures. This is linked to the construction of men as providers, especially in the disadvantaged South African communities (Clowes et al., 2010; Morrell et al., 2013; Walker, 2005). Furthermore, research by Ratele et al. (2010) suggests that boys (and men) tend to attach their masculinity to activities. Such activities are often labelled as being for men and others as being for certain type of men and women. For example, how men talk, walk, cook and sit was seen by young people as important. Cooking was rejected as being the key domain of women (Ratele et al., 2010). This review of literature on young people shows how notions of masculinities are linked to power, even among young people, and how power manifests itself in the actions of men.

The review has sought to show how power manifests itself in the actions of men in the country. A study by Walker (2005) on masculinity in South Africa suggests that men who perform alternative types of masculinities, such as gay, soft, subordinate and many other masculinities, are subjugated and are treated as nonentities. Walker (2005) points out that in Johannesburg men who do not smoke, drink alcohol and socialise or hang out with other men who position themselves as powerful are often insulted and called derogatory words like 'ibhari', 'born again' etc. This shows that within masculinities there will always be those who want to assume the dominant and powerful positions, as highlighted by Connell (2005).

The issue of initiation (circumcision) and masculinity remains an important issue of investigation in literature on masculinity. This is because certain cultural groups, such as the Ndebele, Tsonga, Sotho and Xhosa, perceive these practices as closely intertwined with the projection of accepted forms of masculinity. The work of Field (2001) has explored how circumcised men are constructing their masculinity and new identity attained from the initiation against women and other men who have not undergone the initiation practice. This has also

been shown by Vincent (2008) who argues that initiation and circumcision is conducted for a number of reasons but centrally how to be a powerful man and dominant over others. What this shows is that a large portion of men in South Africa construct and validates hegemonic masculinity.

An important element that emerges from literature on masculinities on the post-apartheid era concerns the ways in which some men are beginning to contest some of the hegemonic views of masculinity. In a study conducted by Sideris (2003) it was found that men in the Nkomazi district within the province of Mpumalanga represent a progressive group of men who reject violence, and are involved in human and gender rights activities. They do not avoid work traditionally constructed for females only. Since masculinities are historical, in South Africa there has been a change in how they are constructed. Some scholars have argued that a key contributor to this change is the South African Constitution, as it aims to address gender inequality. Other factors that have contributed to this change include poverty (Morrell, Jewkes, & Lindegger, 2012) and education, in that they seeks to provide people with knowledge that will both change their lives and behaviour (Singh, 2001). These factors suggest that expressions of masculinities are never constant among men.

The above section suggests that there are multiple masculinities in South Africa and that there is no typical or constant one. Different masculinities play different roles, either supporting violence, gender inequality or rejecting the aforementioned behaviours (Morrell, 2001b). It is clear that masculinities are always under construction and are constantly changing (Ratele, 2013). Given this background, the focus is placed on the substantive issues of this study that is a review focussed on foundation phase teaching masculinities. Given the dearth of literature in the South African context, a review of the international literature is presented with the aim of exploring how male teachers in the foundation phase have constructed and negotiated their masculinity.

2.3 Male teachers and foundation phase teaching, an international perspective

Internationally, there exists a growing body of scholarship on masculinity and foundation phase teaching. A noticeable theme that emerges from the literature concerns how the scholarship has been divided across gender lines, with one group drawing on the conservative views of gender while the other draws on a progressive view. A synthesis on each of these views is presented below, starting with the conservative view.

2.3.1 Conservative view on male teachers in the foundation phase

International studies under this view have revealed that foundation phase teaching is constructed as being dominated by women, as feminising the boys and is unsuitable for men (Carrington, 2002; Skelton, 2002). Primary schools are often constructed to be feminised, because the teaching staff in such schools is predominantly female. Therefore, there is an assumption that the delivery of the curriculum and the expectations of the teachers favour girls only, thus causing boys to underperform (Mukuna & Mutsotso, 2011; Skelton, 2002).

In countries like the United States of America, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, there have been calls and recruitment campaigns for more male teachers in the foundation phase in order to have male 'role models', disciplinarians and 'father figures' for boys, especially those from single parent households (Coulter & McNay, 1993; Lahelma, 2000; Pepperell & Smedley, 1998; Skelton, 2002). The literature suggests that such a move would enable boys to develop alternative and more compliant forms of masculinity necessary in schools (see Coulter & McNay, 1993; Lahelma, 2000; Patrick, 2009). This view also suggests that boys would be assisted in achieving better grades were this to occur. For instance, Knight and Moore (2012) state that in Queensland, Australia, the government produced an official document in 2002 called 'Male teachers strategy' with the intention of identifying and recruiting males as well as recognising, and retaining those who are already teaching. The authors argue that recruiting male teachers would create an inclusive environment and exert an influence on the attitude of boys. In relation to the call for male teachers, some of the universities in the United States of America have offered incentives to those men who want to pursue foundation phase teaching as a career (Patrick, 2009). For instance, there is an organisation in the United States called 'Call Me Mister' that has offered to mentor and support male teachers to be better role models in schools. Such actions are built primarily on the patriarchal views of manhood, with gender practices highly essentialised.

The trends identified in Australia and in the United States have also been evident in the United Kingdom. For instance, Asthana (2009, July 12) reporter for The Guardian in the United Kingdom, reported that the Training Development Agency for schools (TDA), has been recruiting male teachers to join the foundation phase. Moreover the TDA believes that male teachers have a different approach in delivering the curriculum, in a way that boys enjoy it and assume that the boys are given the opportunity to learn how to become men. This suggests that the recruitment drive is underpinned by the view that females are feminising the boys and male

teachers will rescue them by being role models and father figures (Mills, Haase, & Charlton, 2008).

Within the recruitment drives for more male foundation phase teachers, scholars such as Carrington, Tymms, and Merrell (2008); Skelton (2009) suggest that the policy goal in all the countries where recruitments are held, should be to recruit and retain teachers of high calibre who want to make a difference in learners' lives rather than focussing on gender. Often male teachers who undertake role modelling are influenced by various aspects including context and situation, and most significantly by the expectation of others in society (Brownhill, 2014). Therefore the term 'role model' and its meaning appears to be used uncritically, taken for granted and treated as unproblematic in the conservative view of gender (Carrington & Skelton, 2003).

Having focused on the conservative view of gender internationally, the next section turns to the studies around the progressive view of gender, also within the international context.

2.3.2 Progressive view of male teachers in the foundation phase

What also emerges in the literature are voices of progressive scholars, who essentially seek to debunk the conservative view. Essentially, this literature challenges the construction of the foundation phase teaching as an exclusive feminine occupation. Furthermore, researchers under this view have sought to challenge the construction of foundation phase teaching as a female responsibility, while also countering the paranoia or rather, the moral panic that seeks to establish traditional and hegemonic forms of masculinity in the foundation phase teaching (Anliak & Beyazkurk, 2008; Martino & Kehler, 2006; Rezai-Rashti & Martino, 2010). For progressive scholars (Martino, 2008b; Martino & Kehler, 2006; Rezai-Rashti & Martino, 2010; Skelton, 2012; Wright & Callender, 2012), the call for more male teachers appears to be a development which has been triggered by some form of paranoia from some governments, that perceive women in the foundation phase as being an inappropriate gender for the teaching of boys. The result of this paranoia, the progressive scholars note, is a call from conservatives for more attention to be placed on increasing male teachers to teach in the foundation phase (Cushman, 2005) an issue already explored above.

An important critique that the progressive scholars present concerns the failure of the conservative scholars to advance their patriarchal argument. For example, Jones (2003); Mills et al. (2004) argue that the recruitment of more male teachers in the United Kingdom, United States of America, New Zealand and Australia has failed, primarily as such calls have been

premised on the wrong assumptions of gender, that is, that boys are being feminised by female teachers and that boys benefit from being taught by a male teacher. On the other hand progressive scholars point to Norway as being among the very few contexts where moves to increase teachers in the foundation phase have been successful. Such success has been mainly due to the inclusive manner in which Norway has approached the issue. For instance, they have successfully increased the number of teachers significantly in the last twenty years (Peeters, Rohrmann, & Emilsen, 2015).

Progressive literature has offered a critique on the role modelling campaign and explored the benefits of role modelling in the education of the learners. When looking at the benefits from the role model campaign, literature shows no evidence of positive educational outcome, neither to boys or girls. What emerges from the progressive literature is that it is not the gender but the quality and professional abilities of the teacher that matters in the classrooms. Brownhill (2014); Carrington et al. (2008); Malaby and Ramsey (2011); Martino and Kehler (2006); McGrath and Sinclair (2013); Wood (2009). Studies Carrington et al. (2007); Wright and Callender (2012) have indicated that the significance of matching pupils with the gender of the teacher, for example, boys learning better with a male teacher, should not be exaggerated, as there is no evidence supporting the assumption and whether learners do identify themselves with the identity of that teacher. A study by Skelton et al. (2009) that interviewed male teachers on whether they think they contribute something significant to boys' education only in the foundation phase. Skelton found that male teachers emphasised that when responding to pupils of both genders, the focus should not be on their gender but on the learning styles and environment setting.

Another important critique offered by the progressive scholars is that role modelling does not only reinforce the stereotypes and essential construction of gender held by the conservatives, but it minimises the opportunity to think and critique the stereotypes around masculinity in relation to foundation phase teaching (Cushman, 2005). This suggests that schools function to produce and reproduce a patriarchal cultural system. For instance (Mills et al., 2008, p. 82) argues that "the call for more male teachers is clearly linked to attempts to make schools (more) masculine institutions". Given the critique offered in this discussion by progressive scholars, Siefert (2011) and Knight and Moore (2012) argue that, what the male teachers are pressured to model and be as father figures is often not what the learners need and the type of masculinity that they wish to identify themselves with. Little is known about the characteristics that boys are lacking in the foundation phase that only male teachers in the foundation can exhibit.

Literature in the progressive view has also sought to challenge the construction of male foundation phase teachers as child molesters. Scholars who hold this view have noted that men avoid and fear to be branded as molesters, especially when working in the foundation phase (Anliak & Beyazkurk, 2008; Martino, 2008b; Skelton, 2003, 2009). In light of the phase being constructed as a female occupation, men are constructed as untrustworthy around the learners (Skelton et al., 2009). Rentzou (2011) highlights the context of Greece where society still questions the motives of the men who teach in the early years. The suspicion extends to parents who only accept those men familiar to them to work with their children (Rentzou, 2011). This does not only happen in Greece, but Siefert (2011) also states that in the United States principals who have male teachers in their schools are faced with the challenge of assuring parents that the male teachers are not child molesters and can be trusted. Moreover, Mukuna and Mutsotso (2011) found that even in Kenya, the gender of the teacher was a point of concern for parents, especially when deciding on schools for their children. Mills et al. (2008) note that the suspicions placed on male teachers also affects the male teachers personally, as even if the male teachers feel valued in the occupation, they are often conscious of the surveillance from suspicious eyes within the school. This shows that the gender performance of male teachers in the foundation phase is often policed and regulated in their respective schools, a point that progressive scholars find highly problematic, not least because of the effect of such regulation on individual teachers.

In terms of the experiences of male teachers who teach in the foundation phase, several studies Jones (2007); Martino (2008a, 2008b); Mills et al. (2004); Skelton (2012) have found that, given the negative construction of men as molesters who choose to teach in the foundation phase, men who do not possess or show traditional masculinity traits are often negatively labelled. These men are often constructed as wanting to be women, 'wimpy', gay, effeminate and 'abnormal' and having the ulterior motives of recruiting young boys into an alternative lifestyle (such as a gay lifestyle). In their study Mills et al. (2008) argue that time and again the society uses homophobic discourses to police men. In relation to the construction of male teachers in the foundation phase, Pulsford (2014), who sought to understand the experiences of men who teach in the foundation phase in the United States, found a constant struggle among the men to define and negotiate their own male teacher identities within an environment constructed as a female prerogative. The men opt to denigrate their female colleagues in order to establish and show off their non-female nature (Pulsford, 2014). This suggests that attention should be given to how men perform and negotiate their masculinities as well as how it impacts

on their pedagogical practices in the classrooms (Drudy, 2008; Foster & Newman, 2005; Haase, 2008; Malaby & Ramsey, 2011; Martino, 2008a; Pulsford, 2014). The review has shown how the field is emerging within the international perspective and the two views of gender. The next section will focus on race, which is another issue emergent from literature.

A key issue that emerges in the review of international literature is the little emphasis on race in the process of theorising the experiences of male teachers in the foundation phase as opposed to gender. For instance, studies conducted have noted an absence of black male teachers in the foundation phase internationally. For example Martino and Rezai-Rashti (2010) finds that there are very few black males who choose to be foundation phase teachers in the United States because teaching was historically regarded as a women's task. In addition Bryan and Browder (2013) argue that when black male teachers decide to enter the phase, they encounter challenges which are caused by their positioning in education and the greater society. For instance Brown (2012) highlights that black males are regarded as disciplinarians and coaches for various sport codes and not regarded as teachers who should be dealing with teaching and learning in the classroom. This has resulted in the United States government seeking to increase the number of black teachers in the foundation phase to address racial, gender inequalities and negative projection of black male teachers. Critical scholars such as Martino and Rezai-Rashti (2012b); Maylor (2009) are beginning to explore how race and masculinity in the foundation phase impact on pedagogical practice and negotiation of teacher identities. In addition Brockenbrough (2012) states that research on race and masculinity will assist in understanding the nature and ways of how black male teachers position and construct their masculinities within the teaching context.

Some studies have explored the intersectionality of race, class, ethnicity, sexuality and gender in terms of how the latter connects and impacts on how male teachers teaching in the foundation phase negotiate their male identities (Martino, 2008a, 2008b). In addition, literature in the United States suggests that men in the foundation phase who reside in middle-class communities experience a form of masculinity that is different to theirs when they are at work: for example, Martino (2008a) points out that black men often police themselves; they often fear wearing floral shirts or doing something perceived as not an appropriate expression of hegemonic masculinity within the community and the school, in an attempt to avoid being labelled as feminine, effeminate and perhaps gay. Meanwhile in their own middle-class communities, these men are comfortable to wear those clothes that are constructed as feminine because the nature of sexism, racism and violence is not rife (Martino, 2008a). These

experiences show that social class and gender as markers impact the ways in which black male foundation phase teachers negotiate and construct their teacher identities, within the professional teaching contexts, an issue that will be fully explored in this study.

Having focused extensively on the international literature in the above discussion, literature emerging from the South African context will be discussed.

2.4 South African Studies

2.4.1 Existing literature

As pointed out earlier, there has been very little done in South Africa in terms of focussing on the construction of male teachers in the foundation phase. Work that has explored foundation phase teaching has generally tended to focus on pedagogical strategies of teachers as well as curriculum delivery in the foundation phase; for example, strategies on teaching language, maths and generic knowledge in the foundation phase (Ebrahim, 2010; Hugo, 2013; Verbeek, 2015). There has also been work focussed on foundation phase teaching as a career choice for students (Excell, 2014; Petersen & Petker, 2011; Steyn, Harris, & Hartell, 2011) as well as content knowledge in foundation phase teaching (Lenyai, 2011; Muthivhi, 2014) The studies perhaps ignore the fact that teachers have identities that they bring into the classroom and schooling environment. The next section will focus on existing studies in South Africa that have written about male foundation phase teaching.

2.4.2 Studies on foundation phase male teaching

Studies that exist in the foundation phase, with a particular emphasis on male teacher identity issues, have focussed on pre-service teaching, particularly the experiences of the first cohort of male foundation phase pre-service teachers produced by two universities in South Africa (Mashiya, 2015; Petersen, 2014). Consistent with international studies on male teacher identities, these studies reveal that men in the foundation phase, within the context of South Africa, are constructed as role models, surrogate fathers, disciplinarians and unsuitable for the phase, including the implied threat of child molestation (Mashiya, 2015; Petersen, 2014). A study by Petersen (2014) on the views of two foundation phase first year cohorts at the University of Johannesburg, found that male teachers are viewed and put into the following categories: 'the good' which are those who are perceived to be role models, 'the bad' which consists of the view that the phase is not suitable for men and 'the ugly', which is the view that associate men with child molestation. Consistent with Peterson's study, Mashiya (2015), in a study on the first cohort of male pre-service teachers to specialise in foundation phase, found

that male teachers in schools are thought to have brought more physical education and coaching in sports. The findings also highlight that there was a significant academic improvement in learners' work because they were taught by pre-service male teachers during their teaching practice (Mashiya, 2015). A theoretical study by Mashiya et al. (2015) on an overview of the gender divides that exist in early childhood education within the South African context, sought to answer a critical question of why male students are not willing to choose foundation phase as their specialisation. The study found that too often the foundation phase is regarded as a last resort/option for applicants who want to be teachers. Lastly they recommended that gender roles in the early years should be rethought and reconceptualised in order to involve more men and benefit those learners who do not have father figures. A study by Bhana and Moosa (2015) on male pre-service teachers, with a focus on why they did not choose foundation phase as a specialisation, found that the foundation phase is considered as a female occupation. The study also found that men who teach in the foundation phase, are suspected of being "abnormal". In addition, Bhana and Moosa (2015) note that it is important to engage men in the foundation phase within the context of South Africa in order to change the gendered contours of teaching. While the above four studies have been helpful in giving an indication of how the field is emerging, they are silent on experiences of male in-service teachers when it pertains to foundation phase teaching, particularly on how these male teachers negotiate their identities in environments traditionally associated with women. This is a pertinent concern for this study.

Given the limited research directly focusing on male teachers in the foundation phase, it is important to explore research that explores how teacher identities are formulated from a both the South African and international point of views.

2.5 Teacher identities

In this section the discussion is on both the international and South African literature on how teachers construct identities. Teachers have identities and it is incontestable that they come to the classroom with those identities and that, to some extent, these identities have an influence on how teachers carry out their pedagogical practice in their respective classrooms (Flores & Day, 2006). Jansen (2001, p. 242) notes that "teacher identities could be described as the way teachers feel about themselves professionally, emotionally and politically given the conditions of their work". This definition indicates that teacher identity is multifaceted. Barrett (2008) and (Jansen, 2001)argue that a teacher's qualification, subject competence and preparation are some of the things that contribute to how teachers understand and seek to identify themselves professionally. Samuel (2008) points out that identities vary and the quality of education which

the teachers have undergone is one of the contributing factors. Day and Kington (2008) state that identity is the image of ourselves that we use to make sense of ourselves and also it is an image that we present to others (society) about ourselves. Turning to the work of Beauchamp and Thomas (2009); Flores and Day (2006), these scholars note that identity is defined as an ongoing process, one that is dynamic rather than stable and it entails making sense and re-interpretation of a teachers' values and experiences. They further state that identity involves a person and a particular context. Clearly teachers operate in different contexts, and this highlights that identity is negotiated across all the contexts. However, within a single professional context like a school, Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) reveals that teachers construct and negotiate their identities in a unique way. In addition Samuel (2008) argues that teachers cannot be identical in terms of experiences, personality and training. He maintains that there is no uniform way of being a teacher.   According to Sachs, as cited in (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009) teacher identity is the principal aspect of the teaching profession, because it serves as a framework for teachers to know how to act, how to be a teacher and how to understand their place in the environment that they are in. Given these arguments, it can be seen that teachers are constantly forming and reforming their identities.

Having noted in the previous paragraph that identity involves a person and a particular context, this paragraph considers how the self, context and society play a role in teacher identity construction. Flores and Day (2006) argue that personal factors, social factors and cognitive responses influence the identity construction of a teacher. Furthermore, an example in this regard is provided by Day (2002) that teacher professional identity is still seen as an expectation of society and this identity often distinguishes teachers from other occupations. According to Day (2002) literature shows that society influences how teachers construct their identities, as teachers often try to act or behave in ways determined by society. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009); Day and Kington (2008) argue that there is an inevitable interrelationship between the personal and the professional, in that emotions, personal stress and professional pressures have an influence in creating a teacher identity. Furthermore, these scholars argue that the identity of a teacher is shaped during their interaction with other colleagues, management, learners and parents in a professional teaching context. In an identity construction process Kelchtermans (1993) suggests that there are five interrelated parts when the professional and personal evolves: *self-image,* how the teacher describes himself, *self-esteem,* how one is defined by the self or others and how the self as a teacher is evolving, *job motivation,* what makes a teacher remain or leave the job, *task perception,* how the teacher defines his

occupation and *future perspective,* which includes a teacher's future expectation in their job. The literature highlights clearly that there is a strong interrelationship between the professional and the personal when constructing a teacher's identity.

Amongst other things that have emerged from literature in relation to the context in which the teachers are located in when constructing the professional teacher identities, is the influence of the experience that the teachers had with their educators in the past. Flores and Day (2006) have drawn attention to the fact that teachers appear to construct their identities in line with that of their previous teachers. This means that teachers use their former teachers as a frame of reference when constructing, negotiating and making sense of their own teacher identities within a particular context, here the professional teaching context.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has presented theoretical frameworks and also reviewed related literature with a focus on various themes that have emerged from the literature. It has also shown how the field is emerging from both the international and South African contexts. The review suggests that much has to be done in understanding male foundation phase teaching in general as well as how various identifications shape how male teachers construct their gender and professional identities. It can be clearly seen from this review that there is a need for this study, especially considering the paucity of studies in the South African context. Through conducting this study, it is hoped that more knowledge on the identity construction of male teachers in the foundation phase, alongside their gender identity negotiation strategies and classroom practices, will be generated. The study will therefore contribute to foundation phase teaching and the field of masculinities. This study therefore asks the following questions:

a) *How do foundation phase male teachers in Mpumalanga schools construct their gender and professional identities?*
b) *Why do foundation phase male teachers in Mpumalanga schools construct their identities in the ways they do?*
c) *How do foundation phase teachers negotiate their identities in professional teaching contexts in Mpumalanga?*

Chapter 3 will focus on the philosophical underpinnings of the study, in particular the ontology, paradigm and epistemology of the study, as well as the methodology selected, including the choice of participants and how ethical issues were addressed.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter a review of literature was provided, drawing on international and local scholars who have written on male teachers in the foundation phase. This chapter provides a discussion which is divided into three section. The first section presents the philosophical underpinnings of the study, which includes the paradigm, ontology, epistemological assumptions and the location of the study (with provided maps where necessary). The second section will focus on the research methodology that was followed in this study and the data generation process that the study engaged with. The last section will focus on ethical issues, trustworthiness and data analysis strategy that was used to analyse the data in order to arrive at the findings. The discussions on all the sections in this chapter are important as this chapter locates the research in the field and explains from a methodological point of view, how the study was undertaken. This is essential for the study's credibility (Cohen et al., 2011).

3.1 Section A: Philosophical underpinnings and context

The study is located within a qualitative research approach. According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014) And Cohen et al. (2011), a qualitative approach is characterised by its aim to collect verbal, textual, visual and observational data to provide an in-depth understanding of actions and meanings. Qualitative research therefore enables researchers to understand the world in ways in which people behave, interpret, understand and solve their problems. In addition to the previous definition Creswell (2013) notes that qualitative research addresses the meaning that individuals or groups of people ascribe to certain social or human problems, for example, how male teachers construct their identities within a particular setting or context. Qualitative research is meant to approach the world "out there", and to understand, describe and explain a particular social phenomenon (Flick, 2007).

Merriam (2009, p. 5) notes that "qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences". Using a qualitative research approach enabled an understanding of how people interpret their experiences and meanings in relation to their context. Creswell (2013) argues that one cannot separate what people say, particularly from where they say it. In qualitative research the interpretation and meaning are context based (i.e. one cannot separate what male teachers in Mpumalanga say from the context that they are located in). Since the phenomenon of the study was foundation phase teaching in relation to masculinity, Merriam (2009) notes that the key goal when conducting a qualitative research is to understand the

phenomenon of interest from the interpretation and perspective of the concerned participant and not the researcher's. In order to fully understand the phenomenon of the study, the participants, who are located in a context and who experience the day to day operations, constructions and interpretation within the context, had to be involved.

Sampling in qualitative research is often not random but mostly purposeful and rather small as researchers using this approach are expected to spend a reasonable amount of time in a natural context (Flick, 2007; Merriam, 2009). During their time in the field, qualitative researchers may collect words, photos, observations and conduct interviews which are later transcribed into text and analysed. The empirical material used by a researcher is mainly textual, instead of numbers, and also contextual (i.e. generated within a certain context) (Flick, 2007), especially considering that the important aspect of the approach is to explore actions, experiences and meanings. Given the small sampling size within the qualitative ways of conducting research, Stake (1995) states that the key focus during data generation is on the understanding of human experience in a manner of chronologies rather than cause and effect.

This study was centrally about exploring people's interpretation, behaviour and meaning in a particular context, such as exploring the identities of male foundation phase teachers in the context of the Mpumalanga province. A qualitative approach was therefore the most suitable approach to use for this study. The above discussion serves as the motivation for the choice of the qualitative approach for this study. In the next section the philosophical assumptions of this study will be discussed, with an aim to demonstrate consistency between the chosen approach for the study and the philosophical underpinnings that informs the project.

3.1.1 Philosophical underpinnings- Interpretive paradigm, Ontology and Epistemology

Researchers bring a particular paradigm (worldview), belief, ontological and epistemological assumptions to any research project being undertaken. It is therefore important for a researcher to understand and discuss the philosophical assumptions that underpin the study (Creswell, 2013), in order to position the study within a particular view. Moreover paradigms carry their own ontological and epistemological underpinnings that cannot be proven or disproven empirically (Scotland, 2012), for instance in the interpretive paradigm, knowledge is subjective, constructed and there are multiple realities. Given the nature of the study, in that it sought to explore and understand a specific phenomenon in its context, this study was therefore informed by the interpretive paradigm. Cohen et al. (2011) states that this paradigm aims to understand the subjective world of human experience. The purpose of an interpretive paradigm

is to develop greater understanding into the behaviour, attitudes, perceptions and beliefs of the participants, because the paradigm is underpinned by the notion that behaviour, beliefs and experiences are dependent upon the context of the participants (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Furthermore, Maree (2007) argues that understanding the uniqueness of a particular context is important when interpreting the meanings constructed within.

Within the interpretive paradigm, ideologies which might have come about from the construction of meaning are not questioned but accepted as experiences that represents the interpretation of the participants (Scotland, 2012). Subjectivity in the paradigm is not deemed as failure that is required to be removed, but considered as a significant element of understanding (Stake, 1995). The worldviews and interpretations in social science research are equal to the population of the world, because people think and behave differently. In addition, since the world is made up of people and they all have their own beliefs, assumptions and personal experiences in this paradigm, their interpretations are accepted as true, given that they (people or participants) are the ones who have lived through those experiences and constructions (Maree, 2007). Merriam (2009) argues that knowledge that is constructed during experiences of individuals cannot stand outside its interpretation, which means knowledge is known through the subjective experiences of people and their individual views and interpretations (Creswell, 2013).

As indicated earlier in this section, paradigms carry their own ontological and epistemological assumptions; given the interpretivist ontological position of the study, the construction of ontology will be explored, According to Humphrey (2013) ontology is the nature of how reality is constructed, that is, how we construct the nature of things, processes and ourselves as human beings. Creswell (2013), (Maree, 2007) and (Scotland, 2012) note that reality is socially constructed, it is multiple and constructed at an individual level (differs from person to person and across time). De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, and Delport (2011) state that reality should be interpreted in the way participants construct it and present it to the world. The authors argue that language is the key feature when constructing reality because meaning and interaction takes place through a language. According to Maree (2007, p. 54) " truth is therefore not an objective phenomenon that exists independently of the researcher". This implies that the researcher cannot be separated from the research that he is conducting and research findings are created or socially constructed instead of being discovered in this paradigm.

In terms of the epistemology of the study, the researcher in the research process should not decide on what is knowledge but report on what the participants perceive as knowledge (Maree, 2007). It is recommended that in this paradigm researchers should use multiple ways of generating data and spend more time in the field with the participants, in order to understand what they really know, how they construct their reality and what do they view as knowledge. This is important because the ontological and epistemological positions of the study are consistent with the paradigmatic choice. Creswell (2013) notes that it is important to conduct a study in the field where, for example, participants work or reside because these contexts are important in understanding the subjective experiences of the participants. Humphrey (2013) argues that philosophical assumptions undertaken in any research project have implications for methodology and methods.

3.1.2 Location of the study

The study was carried out in various schools within the province of Mpumalanga, in South Africa. The province has a population of approximately five million. It is located in the north east South Africa; the neighbouring provinces are Limpopo, Gauteng, Free State and KwaZulu-Natal. Mpumalanga has four districts, namely Bohlabela, Nkangala, Ehlanzeni and Gert Sibande. Nkangala district is the largest in the province and six out of the nine participants are located in this district; one in Gert Sibande and two in the Ehlanzeni district. Mpumalanga, an evidently diverse province, dominated by rural communities and represent a range of cultural and tribal groups that are present in South Africa. These include Ndebele, Zulu, and Swati, Tsonga and Sepedi and others. The male teachers who participated in this study are black and employed in schools across the province; the majority of the teachers are also members of various rural communities who are either working in a rural school in another district or in the same area that they were born and grew up in.

The province is largely dominated by the mining industry and has a number of power stations that generate electricity. The majority of the participants and the schools they are employed at, are located in areas that are close to mines. Many of the learners' parents, especially their fathers, uncles and brothers, including a few female relatives, work in the mines. Some of the parents only return to their respective homes once a month due to work constraints. The areas where the schools are located in are administered by the chief of the area, with some chiefs having direct influence on what happens in the schools in terms of governance.

Figure 3.1 below shows all nine provinces in South Africa, highlighting the location of Mpumalanga. Figure 3.2 is a map of the Mpumalanga province which provides details the towns and cities in the province. The aim of these maps is to illustrate the geographical position of the province and where the participants originate from.
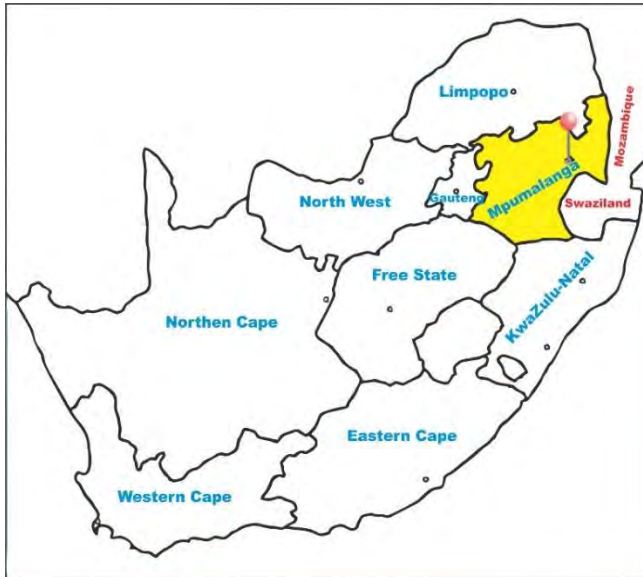

Figure 1 Map of the Republic of South Africa

(Luventicus, 2013)

Figure 2 Map of Mpumalanga Province

(SA Places, 2015)

3.2 Section B: Research methodology and data generation

Research projects are guided by a particular research methodology. For instance, there is a Narrative study, Life history, Comparative study, a Case study methodology and more.. Given that the focus of the study is on male foundation phase teachers located in a specific context. The case study methodology was selected for this study.

3.2.1 Case Study Methodology

Yin (2003, 2009) defines the case study methodology as an in-depth study of a particular case within a contemporary real life context, especially when boundaries between the phenomenon and that particular context are not explicitly evident. Maree (2007); Yin (2003) state that a case study research methodology is used when there are 'how' and 'why' questions. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) notes that a case study is descriptive as it addresses the question of what it is like to be in any situation or context. A case study research methodology can be used for an event, individual or a group (Cohen et al., 2011). Qualitative case studies allow for a phenomenon to be explored in its context, using multiple data generation sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Moreover, Maree (2007) considers the method of multiple data generation sources as being the key strength for case study methodology, especially when the aim is to obtain rich data and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Case study methodology can be categorised into two types: there are multiple case studies and a single case study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). In multiple case studies, the researcher chooses one issue and explores it across all the cases. For example, studying masculinity in relation to the foundation phase in all nine provinces of South Africa and the provinces being the cases. In a single case study the researcher chooses one issue and studies it in one case within a bounded system (i.e. bounded by time or context). In this study the bounded system was the Mpumalanga context in which the male teachers taught. The study therefore became the single case study in that it focused on the experiences of male foundation phase teachers teaching within the context of the Mpumalanga province.

Considering the interpretive position taken early in this study, and that case study methodology studies a phenomenon in its real-life context, a case study research methodology was the most suitable for this study because of its ability to provide a comprehensive understanding of the meanings, interpretations, beliefs and constructions of the individuals in their context. As Yin (2012) argues, case study methodology is utilised to cover a broad range of contextual and complex issues in a natural setting. While arguing that case study research was appropriate for

this study it is important to consider the unit of analysis in that particular case. Maree (2007) points out that one of the critical factors in case study research is the unit of analysis.

When conducting a qualitative case study, Merriam (2009) highlights that the researcher should identify the bounded system of the case, as well as the unit of analysis. The identity management and negotiation of masculinities for male foundation phase teachers in the Mpumalanga province was therefore a case (or unit of analysis) in this study. This case was chosen because Mpumalanga had recently embarked on a campaign to train young foundation phase teachers to teach in foundation phase, with forty-one out of a total of ninety-two teachers in the Mpumalanga ECD/Foundation Phase Project being male. This suggested a concerted effort from Mpumalanga as a province to address the shortage of male foundation phase teachers, making Mpumalanga a suitable site to study. It was therefore of great interest to explore how teachers who teach in a professional context like Mpumalanga negotiate their professional and gender identities in professional spaces traditionally associated with women.

Case study as a research methodology has been criticised on the number of aspects such as its focus on a specific participants or unit of analysis, which makes it impossible to generalise its findings that are generated from case study research to a wider population. Another criticism that has emerged is that a case study consumes much time and is often costly (Meredith, 1998). Lastly Meredith (1998) indicate that quantitative researchers criticise case study methodology in that it is often subjective rather than objective.

The above limitations/criticism of case study methodology have been addressed by indicating that the study cannot be generalised, as it is a qualitative study where the participants provide their experiences and thoughts. Also, a reasonable amount of time was spent with the participants, to ensure that intensive data on this phenomenon could be gathered. Lastly, as that the qualitative approach is subjective, various methods to limit the subjectivity such as a reflective journal was kept to ensure trustworthiness, which will be discussed in a later section.

3.2.2 Sampling

Sampling involves making decisions about which participants and how many and which events, objects and behaviours to include in the study (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). There are two major techniques of sampling, probability sampling (which focuses on randomness) and non-probability sampling (whereby the researcher choses participants without knowing the entire population and likelihood of selecting certain participants) (Check & Schutt, 2012; De Vos et al., 2011; Maree, 2007). Therefore this study employed the non-probability technique of

sampling and it has used snowball sampling as a strategy of recruiting participants. In this type of sampling the researcher identifies a small number of individuals who match criteria that he/she has established for the purpose of generating data in the study. These individuals are then used as participants to identify other people who fit the criteria (Cohen et al., 2011). Another definition of snowball sampling is that the researcher works with an informant who provides information or details of friends, colleagues and family who might fit the criteria and are willing to participate (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). Scholars such as Penrod, Preston, Cain, and Starks (2003, p. 102) argue that "the conceptual underpinning of snowball is that members of a special or rare population are familiar with others in that population".

Cohen and Arieli (2011); Magnani, Sabin, Saidel, and Heckathorn (2005) note that the snowball sampling strategy has the following limitations: it is not representative of the larger population, it can result in a biased selection of a participant who will do the referrals and lastly, it is termed by some of the researchers as a sampling strategy that should be used with other strategies.

The limitations were addressed by explaining that the unit of analysis was the identity management and negotiation of masculinities for male foundation phase teachers in the province of Mpumalanga and the focus was on depth rather than breadth. To avoid bias in the selection of participants it is explained in detail in this section how the sample was compiled. Given that the participants in this study were difficult to reach, especially noting that in South Africa there are few male teachers in the foundation phase, snowball sampling became the only strategy that could be used to compile a reasonable sample size. According to Merriam (2009) the criteria set to recruit participants should reflect the purpose of the study and guide the researcher in identifying participants who can provide rich information. In this study, the first few participants were selected on the basis of convenience and later they referred to other people who fit the criteria of the study. Often convenience sample is selected for various reasons, including the availability of the participants and location (Merriam, 2009), like in this study where participants were not easily accessible. In this study, the following criteria were developed to obtain the participants; they were chosen on the basis of being male; they taught in the foundation phase and that they were employed in schools within the Mpumalanga province. Snowball sampling was suitable for this study because the study focussed on a group that was not easily accessible. Cohen et al. (2011); Hogan, Olade, and Carpenter (2014); Sadler, Lee, Lim, and Fullerton (2010) highlight that this type of sampling is used where a topic is sensitive or participants are not easily accessible and the strategy is able to reach the target

group in a more pragmatic manner. The type of participant for the study (i.e. Foundation Phase male teachers in the Mpumalanga province) was identified and there were male teachers who had recently graduated from the University of KwaZulu-Natal who were available to participate in the study and were able to assist in tracing other potential participants the point of entry was therefore these teachers.

Given that the snowball sampling chain can be influenced or entirely broken, De Vos et al. (2011) argue that the researcher should ask for more than one name of potential participants from the target group. Each participant who was in the first group was able to refer the researcher to other individuals who met the criteria and they were requested to speak to the potential participants first; once interest was established, the participants were requested to communicate with the researcher. This ensured a diverse group of participants, and also that the research was ethical in that only participants who had an interest in the study were pursued for the study. It was hoped to engage the Department of Education in Mpumalanga to refer and identify male teachers in their data base as it would be beneficial to include male teachers who have been in the system for a longer period of time (five years and more). However, snowball sampling as a strategy was able to assist in reaching the sample size initially envisaged without approaching the Department of Education. The sample size of the study was nine participants, which was adequate as a significant amount of time was spent with the participants and multiple data generation methods were used.

The nine participants that that were observed and interviewed in this study were all from the Mpumalanga province and in which they also taught. Their ages varied between 24-55 years old and they taught several foundation phase grades between grades R-3. One of the participants taught in a multi-grade classroom, teaching Grade 2 and 3 learners in one classroom. The teaching experience of the participants varied between eight months to thirty years. The details of the participants are profiled in the table below.

Table 0.1 Details of the participants (pseudonyms)

No	Pseudonym	Age	Grade	Teaching Experience
1	Tom	26 years	R	3 years
2	Themba	24 years	3	1 year 7 months
3	Victor	26 years	2	1 year 7 months
4	Sipho	24 years	3	1 year 7 months

5	Phumelele	32 years	3	1 year 7 months
6	Mandla	25 years	2 & 3(Multi-grade)	1 year 7 months
7	Thabang	55 years	3	30 years
8	Wandile	30 years	3	08 months
9	Xolani	27 years	2	1 year 7 months

3.2.3 Data Generation

Interpretive methods yield insights and understandings of behaviour and interactions, and also explain those particular actions from the perspective of the participant (Scotland, 2012). Yin (2012) points out that often case studies benefit from the use of multiple data generation methods. This study utilised two methods of data generation, these being individual semi-structured interviews as well as lesson observations. Swanborn (2010) argues that observation as a data generation method is a significant component of a case study research. One lesson from each of the nine participants were observed. Observation was a suitable method as it yielded first-hand/live information from a naturally occurring situation, such as how men exhibit their masculinity and relate to young learners (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Cohen et al., 2011). In addition Maree (2007) states that observation enables the researcher to gain an in-depth insight and clear understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The purpose of observation was to provide the knowledge of the context through the captured incidents, behaviour, performance and used as reference with the subsequent interviews (Merriam, 2009). In this study the interaction of the male teachers with the learners in their classrooms were observed in order to explore the various ways in which they negotiate their male identities. The semi-structured observation method was used. Semi-structured observation is when the researcher records the findings using some established key observational items in order to illuminate issues in a less predetermined manner. The approach also allows the researcher to add more observational items as the research process ensues (Cohen et al., 2011). Thus the study utilised the semi-structured observation.

The second data generation method used in the study were semi-structured interviews. The nine participants were interviewed twice. These interviews were conducted during lunch periods and after school, depending on the choice of the participants. For example, some participants had programmes that run after school as well as their own personal commitments; these participants suggested that the interviews be conducted during their lunch break. The process of teaching and learning was not interrupted as the interviews lasted for about an hour

which is the duration of the lunch period. It provided for adequate time to generate data as it was the second interview and conducted after the observation. Also, the conversations were conducted in spaces where participants felt most comfortable such as in the office and in the researcher's vehicle. Those participants that were interviewed after school often preferred to use an administrator's office either or their classroom, after all the learners had gone home as it provided adequate privacy. Those who were interviewed during their lunch break opted to be interviewed in the vehicle and suggested a quiet parking space where there would be no interruptions. Creswell (2013) notes that the place selected for the interview should be quiet and free from any distraction. The participants also indicated that they were comfortable to be interviewed during their lunch break.

The durations of the interviews were approximately sixty minutes per participant, the details per participant are provided in the table below. Semi-structured interview conversations allow for flexibility for the researcher to have predetermined questions that are open ended and accommodate any issue brought up by the participant which the researcher may not have thought of (De Vos et al., 2011). This method enables the researcher to engage and respond to the situation at hand, particularly how the participant views and interpret the world. The researcher is required to be attentive to the participant's responses in order to capture new themes that are relevant to the phenomenon (Maree, 2007; Merriam, 2009). During the data generation process power relations can influence the interview process, thus researchers need to consider how their position can influence the participants (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014), especially in sensitive topics as presented in this study. To address the power relations between the researcher and participants the interviews (as stated above) were used and the participants were interviewed in a place where the participant was comfortable. Goodson and Sikes (2001) maintain that interview-conversations are concerned with breaking the power influence and establish positive and trusting relationships between the interviewer and participant. Interviews conversations differ from semi-structured interviews, in that the data is generated through conversations that allow the participant to be more comfortable than through responding to tight one- on-one interview questions. Goodson and Sikes (2001) assert that important information might be lost when using a too tight interview schedule.

As stated earlier, within the qualitative research there are multiple realities, Maree (2007); Stake (1995) state that interviews are the main route to multiple realities and assist researchers to understand how the participants construct their knowledge and social reality. Each participant was interviewed twice. The first interview was mainly an introduction to the

research process and focused on establishing rapport with the participants. The participants were visited in their respective schools prior to the date of data generation and the researcher introduced to the leadership of the school, and most importantly familiarised himself with the context. The duration of these first interviews lasted approximately 30-40 minutes per participant. In addition, contact was maintained with the school and the participants and they were reminded a week prior to the visit for the second interview. The second interview was mainly to address the key questions of the study. The participants were interviewed in a language that they were comfortable in and the languages that were used were IsiNdebele, IsiSwati, isiZulu and English and in most of the interviews the participants responded in English. It is also important to note that IsiNdebele, IsiSwati and IsiZulu are similar languages in South Africa which fall under the Nguni languages. An audio recording device was used to capture the interview and they were later transcribed to text. As the researcher was also a qualified foundation phase teacher, after the interviews generic issues about the foundation phase were discussed and some participants would enquire about campus life and related materials for a foundation phase classroom.

The semi-structured observations and the second interviews were both conducted in one day. One lesson was observed in the morning after classes had commenced, and the observations lasted for about 45 minutes to an hour. The observations were mainly based on how the teacher interacted with the learners in relation to his gender as well as comfortability in teaching young learners. The focus of the observation was not on the content being taught but more on the gendered discourses circulating in the classroom interaction between the teacher and his learners. Also, the teachers were interviewed for a few hours after being observed. As indicated earlier, this type of arrangement depended on the teacher's schedule and preference (whether being after school or during his lunch). The table below highlights the time, date and the duration of the second interviews.

Table 0.2 Second Interviews: Date and time

No	Pseudonym	Date	Observation Time	Interview Time
1	Tom	27/07/2015	09:00am	11:35am
2	Themba	28/07/2015	09:15am	12:32pm
3	Victor	29/07/2015	08:30am	10:40am
4	Sipho	30/07/2015	09:40am	14:30pm

5	Phumelele	31/07/2015	09:30am	10:15am
6	Mandla	04/08/2015	08:50am	09:40am
7	Thabang	05/08/2015	08:30am	10:05am
8	Wandile	06/08/2015	09:15am	10:15am
9	Xolani	07/08/2015	09:30am	11:30am

3.3 Section C: Ethical issues and data analysis strategy

3.3.1 Ethical issues

Ethics are a crucial element that requires careful consideration in research, especially research that involves animals and humans (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Protecting the autonomy of the participants and making sure the study does not harm anyone are some of the significant consideration one has to make when conducting research. In this study voluntarily participation was promoted and was achieved through the sampling strategy used, and participants who were interested volunteered to participate in the study. Participants were given informed consent letters, so that they could grant permission and agree to participate in the study. The letter contained the details including the title and purpose of the study as well as an option that enabled the participant to withdraw from the study at any given time should they wish to. Moreover the letters clearly outlined that the identity of the participants would be kept confidential.

A discussion with each of the participants were held on the content in the consent letter and what the topic was about. Since male foundation phase teaching is an emerging phenomenon in the South African context, the participants were interested in the study and eager to begin the data generation. All the details contained in their informed consent letter were explained to them. After having been referred to interested participants, the interview began by thanking them for their effort and interest in the study and thereafter they were briefed about the topic and purpose before they could sign any forms. Attention was paid to the fact that the study should not violate any of the ethical principles of research and it was emphasised that they could withdraw from the study as any point, should they so wish

The informed consent letter was a two page document whereby and the researcher only kept the one in which the participant has signed. The letter can be accessed in the appendices. All the participants gave consent to being audio recorded and the researcher explained that the interviews will be transcribed into text.

Since the schools in which the participants are located and employed at served as gate keepers, the gatekeeper consent letter contained details of the study and a request for permission from the school principal to conduct the study within the school premises. Full permission was granted by the principals to interview the participants. To guarantee the school's anonymity, pseudonyms were used in this study when referring to the schools that participated in the study.

Since the unit of analysis or the case included Mpumalanga province, permission was sought to conduct the study within the province. The request letter was sent to the provincial department of education and was approved on the 30th June 2015. The Department of Education had clear guidelines on how one should go about applying for permission and hence their research manual was used to compile a document that was submitted for permission. The province emphasised that the period of data generation must not interrupt teaching and learning in schools, hence the participants were interviewed after school. The ethical principles prescribed by the Department were adhered to, including that a copy of the research approval should be presented to schools during visits to make schools aware that the study had been provincially approved.

Along with the permission from the Department of Education, permission was also sought from the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Ethics office. The full ethical clearance was applied for through the University Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics. On the 13th July 2015 the study was granted full approval. The participants and the schools were notified of the visits for introduction and data generation dates. Data generation was conducted between July and August 2015.

3.3.2 Trustworthiness

Validity and reliability cannot be addressed in the qualitative research in the same way as quantitative research. In qualitative research, instead of validity the concept of trustworthiness, which includes dependability, confirmability and credibility, is used (Shenton, 2004).

The term dependability in qualitative research is also referred to as reliability in quantitative research. According to De Vos et al. (2011) researchers should ask themselves if the research process is logical, systematic and well documented in a way that the reader can comprehend. The dependability of the study was enhanced by using an audit trail where the data generation and analysis procedures are made transparent, and the researcher looks for possible bias or distortion, while noting that bias cannot be completely erased in a qualitative research (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Golafshani, 2003). A detailed report of the research process was

provided to ensure dependability of the study and so that the reader is able to follow and examine the research processes and steps that were followed when the study was conducted.

Confirmability is concerned with whether the findings reflect the real experiences of the participants (Shenton, 2004). The study has used data saturation (this occurs when the researcher reaches a point where data starts to speak for itself, and no new data is emerging) (Punch, 2009). Furthermore a detailed description of the transparent methodological research process were provided (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Shenton, 2004). This was done so that the reader can determine whether they would have come to the same conclusion. Each individual can interpret qualitative research in their own way, making the idea of arriving at the same conclusions virtually impossible. As a foundation phase teacher myself I was reflexive and paid attention to my own positioning, and how my experiences can influence views of my participants.

Credibility focuses on how consistent the findings are with participants responses. Cohen et al. (2011, p. 183) assert that "the findings must define accurately the phenomena being researched". Thus, credibility was enhanced by obtaining detailed observation field notes and an audio tape recorder was used during all the interviews (Creswell, 2013). The credibility of the study was also enhanced by using multiple data generation methods in exploring the phenomenon (this, in quantitative research, is known as triangulation). During both the observations and interviews, participants were encouraged to be open and honest, as there are no right or wrong answers (Shenton, 2004). In addition transcripts were made available to participants to confirm if the transcripts reflected their views.

3.3.3 Data analysis strategy

The strategy used to analyse the data was through thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as a method that is used by a researcher to identify, analyse and report themes that emerge from the data. Attride-Stirling (2001) note that the method is used to unearth themes/categories and patterns that are salient to the text at different levels of the data generated. Thematic analysis is widely used across various disciplines, (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). Other scholars such as Tuckett (2005) suggest that the thematic analysis strategy is a systematic process of analysing the data. Historically, the strategy has been regarded as having systematic processes which are common to qualitative research.

Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that a thematic analysis is a foundational method for qualitative analysis, as it provides certain skills and knowledge that the researcher will be able to use in other forms of qualitative analysis. Given the notion that it is foundational and fundamental to research, Vaismoradi et al. (2013) state that there is often a stereotype (and a misunderstanding) made by other researchers who portray thematic analysis as the easiest amongst the qualitative methodologies without having a clear understanding of what it entails. Thematic analysis is flexible in that it specifies analytical procedures, especially on coding and developing a theme from the data. It can be used to address any research question within qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun, Clarke, & Terry, 2015).

Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2008) state that emerging themes from the data become the categories of analysis. Thematic analysis incorporates both the inductive (data driven or bottom-up approach) and the deductive thematic analysis (theoretical driven top-down approach) that could be used together or independently to identify themes from the data (Braun et al., 2015). There is often a debate on what constitutes a theme in a data set. According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 82) "a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set". The themes can be identified in two ways, either within each participant or across all data sets in order to find patterns. In this study both inductive and deductive reasoning were used together when analysing the data, in order to capture all the themes relevant to the phenomenon in the data set. Using the two together will ensure rich and sound findings.

The level at which thematic analysis is used can be associated with the realist, constructionist and interpretive paradigm. When the researcher identifies the themes in the data, either within or across the data, there is a level of interpretation of what has been identified. Within the thematic analysis there are two approaches to analyse data, namely latent and semantics approaches. The latent approach searches and identifies the themes within one participant, and the semantic approach searches for patterns across all the participants; this therefore involves interpretive work (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In addition thematic analysis mainly deals with data that captures people's interpretations, meanings, constructions and assumptions. This method is important because it acknowledges the multiple realities of individuals and is useful in understanding the theme that will emerge from each participant to form a pattern.

Thematic analysis has six stages of analysing a data set. The diagram below illustrates the stages adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006),

| 1. Familiarising yourself with the data |
| 2. Generating Initial Codes |
| 3. Searching for themes |
| 4. Reviewing themes |
| 5. Defining and naming themes |
| 6. Producing the report |

Analysis involves back and forth process through the six stages
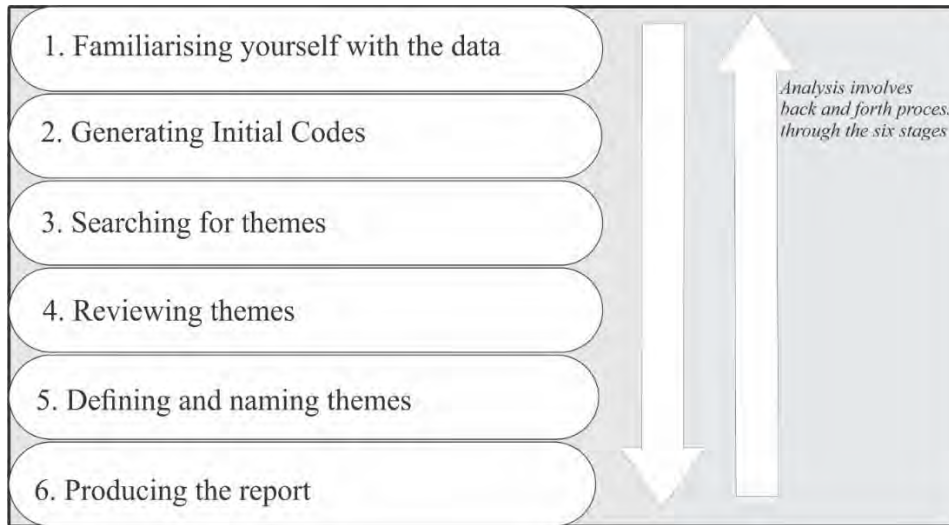
Figure 3 Stages of Thematic Analysis

When analysing the data for the study, the stages above were a reminder that thematic analysis is not a linear process but a recursive activity that goes through these stages as well as the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The arrows on the right of the diagram indicate the movement a researcher has to engage with when analysing the data and also affirming that the process is not linear but requires time, clear analytical thinking and going back and forth. It is important to highlight that the stages of thematic analysis include the three core processes that many researchers consider, i.e. data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). When following the six stages the researcher is able to do all the three.

In the first stage the interviews were transcribed into text and all the interjections were captured, such as the "uhm's" and "hmmm's" in the conversation. Each transcript was read carefully to understand what the participants were saying. While reading, notes (initial codes) were made on the transcript and tried to get what emerged from the text. Since two methods of data generation were used in this study, the observation field notes and generated codes that also contributed to categories from the interviews were taken into consideration. During stage two features of the initial codes made earlier with each participant were noted, but in this case it was done across the data set where the code role model emerges across all the data sets of the participants. While looking across and within the participants and going back and forth, themes were identified by collating the codes that had the same features and formed potential themes. All the codes that could relate to role modelling as a possible theme in the data were combined.

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In stage four the themes were reviewed and maps of the themes were drawn to establish whether the codes linked to the initial codes.

Having reviewed the themes at the previous stage, each theme was defined and given names that would be used during the data presentation. For example, a theme titled "Notions of gender roles in the foundation phase" was named by re-reading and going back and forth in all the stages of thematic analysis to ensure a systematic process of generating and naming the themes. Amongst other things used were separate booklets/sheets for each stage. This made it more transparent and better to analyse the data because of the clear systematic process of thematic analysis.

The last stage of thematic data analysis presents the themes and forms a discussion that includes the theoretical framework of the study as well as the arguments from the literature. This stage is visible in the next chapter where the themes will be discussed in detail and quoting verbatim from the transcripts.

3.4 Conclusion

The chapter has provided the methodological positioning of the study and contained three sections; section one was the philosophical underpinnings and the paradigm, section two presented the methodology, methods, sampling and data generation, and the last section discussed the ethical issues and the data analysis strategy that was chosen for the study. Chapter four contains the   findings on the initial research questions.

- *How do foundation phase male teachers in Mpumalanga schools construct their gender and professional identities?*
- *Why do foundation phase male teachers in Mpumalanga schools construct their identities in the ways they do?*
- *How do foundation phase teachers negotiate their identities in professional teaching contexts in Mpumalanga?*

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

4.0 Introduction

The previous chapter has discussed and provided reasons for the research methodology employed in this study. This chapter presents the analysis of data and the findings. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) state that the purpose of the chapter is to present findings with a certain amount of interpretation in order for the readers to comprehend the study. Similarly Samaras (2011) asserts that the analysis chapter is about a process of understanding and interpreting the data of the study. According to Cohen et al. (2011) analysis draws together all the relevant data from various data streams and preserves the coherence of the material.

The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part is the presentation of findings under different themes is followed by the conclusion that draws the chapter together and moves to the next chapter which is chapter 5.

The three research questions mentioned previously have assisted in generating four themes. The themes are as follows; Constructing and negotiating identities in early childhood development; Notion of gender roles in early childhood development; Navigating through societal expectations and privilege. Each theme contains subcategories that are discussed and aligned with the theme.

4.1 Constructing and negotiating identities in ECD

The first theme, which is constructing and negotiating identities in ECD, is presented in this section. Identity is defined as an image that we make sense of and present to the society about ourselves (Day & Kington, 2008). It is important to note the way in which teachers construct and negotiate their identities is unique, given their circumstances and experiences (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Tucker (2015) states that in the USA men in the foundation phase encounter complex circumstances when constructing and displaying their identities to colleagues, parents and the learners. The findings in the study suggest that male teachers in the foundation phase within the teaching context of Mpumalanga where the study took place construct their identities by drawing on the parents' discourse in order to justify their teaching in the foundation phase. The participants stated that they see themselves as parents to all the learners and serve as role models to those who do not have father figures at home and to young boys who are aspiring to be successful. The findings indicate that the notion of being a parent existed across all participants, including those who had children of their own. Those who have children saw a strong link between the interaction at work and how they relate to their own children at home.

Hunter (2006) states that men value fathering and will from time to time assume a social role of fatherhood. Participants noted that:

"Our society dictates that we should put more males in the field because we have fatherless children who are in the schools. I also see myself as a father to all the learners, what I normally say is that I'm the father in this classroom and you are my children" (Phumelele)

"Being a teacher is being a parent. I think I'm playing a father figure to this children, when they see me they see a father" (Xolani)

"Some boys do not get a father figure so if there is a male teacher I think there will be a balance in that in you are in this class you get a mother figure and also father figure in our classes. So you are being a role model to them they see you as a father" (Sipho)

"I said no since this is a child I'm his father and I would assist that child in a way that I would do to my own child. I play a role of a father to these learners even those who have fathers I'm a parent" (Victor)

What emerged from the findings is that the participants were constructing themselves as parents, mainly fathers, in the foundation phase. Each teacher constructs their identity in the patriarchal sense of what it means to be a man, working with children in the context where more would see themselves as fathers to the foundation phase children. The participants view themselves as fathers, suggesting that the gender order is not necessarily changed by introducing males into the foundation phase. In the above extract Phumelele and Victor are more concerned with closing a gap that has been created by other males in the society and thereby leaving the children without father figures. Also this outlines the hierarchy of masculinity in Phumelele's response by emphasising that he is the father in the classroom; this is synonymous with being the dominant head of the household. Furthermore there appears to be an understanding of role modelling discourse, especially in Sipho's response. He seems to support the conservative view of gender in foundation phase education and reinforcing the notion that female teachers are feminising the phase, which leaves boys vulnerable and feminine.

Drawing from observational data, it became clear that Victor refers to his learners in a manner which shows respect and perpetuates the idea of being a parent. During the lesson observation

he often referred to male learners as 'Baba Msiza' and to female learners as 'Mama Skhosana' which can be interpreted as father Msiza or Mr Msiza and Mother Skhosana or Madam Skhosana. This was a strategy he used to keep learners in order and concentrating. Embodied in this strategy is a teaching and reinforcement of gender differentiation among his Grade 2 learners. It appears that this is not only done to reprimand the learners but to represent his understanding of gender identity.

Furthermore there is another issue that emerged concerning role modelling and how the participants appeared to have the traditional or essentialised view of gender. Believing that problems facing boys can only be discussed and resolved by men is indicative of an essentialised understanding of gender. Phumelele in the extract below was often surprised when female learners approached him to share their stories, worries and problems. This comes as a shock to him because his understanding and construction of masculinity and femininity is founded on an essentialised idea of gender, which assumes that girls should talk to female teachers about their problems. Sipho and Phumelele note that;

> *"We play the role to all of them, but mostly to boys because some of the boys feel comfortable to speak to a male teacher than their female parents. I think for us being there is to bridge and fill in the gap. That at least there is a male that I can talk to with boys problems and some boys are really problematic. When the female speaks to them they don't understand and with a male they can talk to him" (Sipho)*

> *"Before we closed one child wrote and sent me a letter and said she wished I could be his father, that touched me a lot and it says I must push…push…especially it was a girl I would understand if it was a boy" (Phumelele)*

The idea that boys feel comfortable to speak to men as argued by Sipho in the above extract, seems to be something that he strongly relates to even outside the classroom. Masculinities are taught through history, and Sipho's statement highlights a teaching that has existed and taught more often at home. In society it is deemed appropriate for men to spend time with young boys and teach them how to be a man. This shows the importance to him which he regards it as useful for young boys in his classroom and entirely suggesting that only men can deal with problematic young boys. This gives an indication that this is the reason why they are constructing themselves as role models and fathers.

Responding to how they see themselves as men in the foundation phase, the participants used various words which appeared to be how they see themselves and negotiate their identities.

Findings show that participants used phrases such as *"I'm a teacher, professional, soft as well as patient"* and even said, they are *"normal just like everybody else"*. The findings indicate that participants responded in a way that sought to positions themselves as gender neutral and unaware of their gender in the phase; this reveals the complexities as well as multiple ways in which masculinities are constructed. In addition they construct their identities in line with the generic societal understanding of the foundation phase being understood as a place which requires patience, love and care, and also something that is strongly associated with females. Similarly Sumsion (2000) in her study found that male teachers seemed to conform to socially authorised constructs of being a man. Moreover, a study by Pulsford (2014), which focused on constructing identities, revealed that there is often a struggle for male teachers to construct and negotiate their identities in the foundation phase. Sipho, as seen in the extract below, seems to be contradicting and struggling to construct his teacher identity, as he tries to construct an identity that will satisfy the society and affirms his masculinity against being feminine and considered as effeminate or weak, at the same time he struggles to construct his identity in a way that the foundation phase is understood, that is, a caring and loving phase. Participants stated that;

> *"I'm just myself I don't change, when I'm down I'm down and when I choose to be patient it is because I'm like that, as well as my patience is not affected by the fact that I'm in the foundation phase"* (Victor)

> *"... [Sipho laughs].....i feel I'm not soft, I'm firm and I have that soft side of me"* (Sipho)

> *"I think it is really a normal thing to me, because I do not see maleness and any kind"* (Xolani)

> *"eh……for myself I'm just like anybody else teaching in the foundation phase, I have accepted myself and I learn more. It makes me feel not different. You know what brings us here is the curriculum and the learner, I'm here to implement the curriculum and to help the learner grow, if I'm doing that anyone out there is also doing that so there is no difference that's the reason why"* (Wandile)

As seen in the participant's responses, Wandile has stated that he is only in the school for the curriculum and the learner. This shows that he is oblivious of the fact that within different types of curricular activities we have a hidden curriculum, wherein issues of gender are implicated. This is a clear illustration that there is a constant struggle for male teachers to construct and

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negotiate both their gender and professional identities in teaching contexts. Tennhoff, Nentwich, and Vogt (2015) reveal that being a professional is used to counteract the differences of gender amongst men and women, as gender is not explicitly stated and reinforced. As illustrated by Wandile's response that he is just like everybody else, counteracts the gender differences that exist amongst the foundation phase teachers. This statement suggests that there should not be an analysis or interrogation of him in the phase traditionally constructed for females only. He foregrounds the argument that like everybody else, he would like being normal which is a similar sentiment held by Xolani. Tennhoff et al. (2015, p. 347) argue further that "claiming the subject position of the professional has a protective character: men are able to protect themselves from the potential mistrust by engaging in the subject position of the professional". Furthermore, implicit in the term 'professional' is a gendering process that marginalises women as subjects and subordinates what is considered feminine in that particular space (Whitehead, 2002). This suggests that identities constructed by the male teachers in this study are used as a protective barrier against what they consider feminine, ultimately positioning women and femininity as subordinate to the male.

While the data have shown how male teachers construct themselves, it is important to highlight what Mandla and Phumelele have said in terms of constructing their identities; that they grew up and went to school in the same area although there is a seven year age difference between them and that they teach in different schools located in separate districts. The data in the extract below show that the two participants see themselves as teachers who are in the schools to make a change and contribute significantly, suggesting that being a man (his sex) contributes something significant to the school. Also another aspect that emerged was that they felt they have increased the enrolment in the foundation phase classes, because they are men. Unlike in other studies where male teachers are seen as a threat, in this instance it appears that parents are also supporting role modelling. Noting the fact that they grew up in the same context (location), it suggests that the manner in which they construct their identities is influenced by their upbringing, as is evident in their responses below;

> *"I see myself as a pioneer and a leader in this foundation phase and it's a new thing, which is not familiar with men and in most cases it is regarded as female job. Being there and being among the first to do this job I see myself as a pioneer..... I see myself as someone who is going in there to make a change to contribute" (Phumelele)*

"I see myself as someone who want to make a difference not only in the kids I teach but in the entire society, because we are creating the next generation, for me personally I do not play with children at home, I do but it is not my thing. But here at school I do, it's just my job. E.g. being a police officer when you go to arrest someone you have to be rough but it doesn't mean you have to be rough even at home. Your profession is your profession…….. I have even increased the enrolment because others have brought their learners because of me being here" (Mandla)

In relation to how Phumelele and Mandla position themselves in the foundation phase specialisation, it seems that they construct themselves as being important and experienced compared to the other men who are entering the foundation phase teaching. Phumelele has highlighted the fact that he was amongst the first to be appointed in the foundation phase and this makes him stand out as a pioneer. Considering that masculinities are constructed, Ratele (2013) argues that amongst other things that men learn about with regard to masculinity, is comparing themselves with others and comparing themselves to their earlier lives.

An important comparison is made by one participant, Mandla, concerns how he understood and constructed himself within the foundation phase environment. He views male teachers in the phase in the same way as the male nurses in clinics and hospitals. The central concern was that if male nurses are able to cope and do their work, it should not be a problem working in the foundation phase of a school doing work that was traditionally associated with women; most importantly, his father was a male nurse. The response he gave indicates the exemplary masculinities that Connell (2005) explored, whereby men construct their identities in relation to certain people that serve as role models and to an extent validate their own masculinity. He stated that;

"Like my dad used to be a male nurse. It is one and the same thing if ever you are a male nurse you do everything, you do maternity and you can bath a person who is a female. so same thing applies I see no difference being a male nurse and being a male foundation phase teacher I think it's one and the same thing" (Mandla)

Morrell (1998) outlines that masculinities are not only different from one another but they also change over time. Ratele (2013) adds that masculinities are always under construction. Mandla's response here symbolises what Ratele (2013) argued, as referred to earlier on, when he stated that men learn masculinity by comparing themselves and being addressed by other men. Constructing an identity in the foundation phase is compared and understood in relation

to the work done by male nurses. When Mandla is constructing his masculinity in terms of that of his father and positioning his father as someone he looks up to, it suggests that as a male foundation phase teacher he has therefore constructed and negotiates his masculinity relationally.

The literature on male foundation phase teaching has shown that in many countries like the United States of America, United Kingdom and Australia, including a few studies conducted in South Africa there appears to be a suspicion of child molesting by men teaching in the foundation phase (Martino, 2008b; Petersen, 2014; Skelton, 2009). The data in the extract below shows that the participants are aware of the allegations and they constantly police themselves and adopt certain methods of delivering the content and interacting with the learners, in order to avoid being branded as paedophiles. Similarly Mills et al. (2008) state that the mistrust has an influence on male teachers personally, since they are often confronted with the constant surveillance in the school by teachers, parents and community members. Furthermore a study by Cushman (2012) found that male teachers who monitor their behaviour are challenged on a daily basis as they do not want physical contact when confronted by a group hug from the learners, especially in the mornings, there is often a feeling of loss and uncertainty from the male teachers. In responding to how they see themselves as men in the foundation phase, participants noted that:

> *"I think I'm playing my role carefully and doing my work right, because if I wasn't doing it right they would've complained. Like I'm being a teacher and not doing those things people suspect we do to the children e.g. abusing them" (Xolani)*

> *"I don't think a parent would allow a male teacher to touch their female child, I don't think so, I don't know maybe they will allow it but I don't think so……. your colleagues will trust you but the parents we coming from different societies, cultures yes. There are parents who would come to the school and say I want to register my child and say go to Mr Themba and say a what? A male teacher no ways. You see?"(Themba)*

> *"We spoke and hold her but bearing in mind that there should be visibility between me and other learners so that they cannot think I'm doing things to her, because as young as they are, they are quite aware of these things of sexual harassment so I had to make sure everyone sees that I'm not doing anything but giving her comfort" (Phumelele)*

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> *"It is fearing though coming to a community where you will be a male teacher since we are living in a society where there is rape. I think we are part and parcel of showing the community that not all men are like that. It shows that there are still males who can be a man being man is being responsible and taking care of the community, family and so on. And being male is just a gender and I associate myself with being a man"* (Mandla)

The above quotations show the level of suspicion and self-policing by the participants. Xolani explicitly says that he plays his role carefully and this indicates that he is under surveillance and also polices himself in order to project an identity as well as behaviour that he thinks is acceptable for a man to have in this phase. This is similar to Phumelele's response which also includes self-policing and assumes that learners are also aware of child molesting. The responses show the societal teachings about gender and projects men as posing a danger to children. Themba's response reveals an understanding that it is acceptable in class for a man to touch a young boy because he is also a male but it is unacceptable to touch a girl. What this suggests is that in this setting, the concern is more about paedophilia which is in a heterosexual form, as opposed to a homosexual setting where paedophilia is more on the homosexual side, although one can also argue both. Mandla's response in particular suggests that being in the foundation phase is part of showing the society that men can also be with children without molesting them and that such behaviour should be equated with being responsible. He said this because of the nature of violence that is perpetrated on children in South Africa and he justifies himself as being a different man. This suggests that within the cohorts of male foundation phase teachers, there is an attempt to differentiate and separate those who are being man enough and responsible from those who are recognised because of their gender. Bhana et al. (2009) state that placing male teachers to work with children is hoped to be a critical process for gender transformation in South Africa.

Another issue that was common to all participants was an effort to prove a point that even men can do it and do it well. The findings suggest that male teachers in this study construct their identities against those of their female colleagues, seeking to obtain the dominant position and against the societal notion of early childhood development and a foundation phase exclusively for females. The following responses from the participants bear relevance:

> *"With maternity it is when a doctor receives a child during labour, a male doctor or nurse is required and given authority to perform that duty regardless of gender,*

coming to the society we are growing up in a society where male are dominant and I grew up seeing my uncles, so why as males we are excluded in building a foundation of a child? I see it that way…… Sometimes I feel like I should prove the teachers wrong" (Mandla)

"But I always wanted to be in Grade R simply because I wanted to completely change the perception people have that male teacher cannot teach young kids" (Wandile)

"I think by us being here we are bridging that gap and thought to myself I want to prove them wrong that even a male can be in foundation phase" (Sipho)

*"Since I got here and the issue of male teachers, always when I teach and give work, I make sure that I compete with other females and I want to dominate over them. [**Vusi:** when you do this, is done because you want to show off that you are a competent teacher fully prepared by the University or to prove that you a male?]…yes, I have the thing that I'm a male and I can do better than them. I have the thing that I can teach them and they can pass [**Victor** stresses the words…with finger gestures]"* (Victor)

What I found based on the data above is that, some of the male teachers were sexist as they saw their placement in the phase as a way to show up to female teachers and to further dominate the field, as it can be seen from Victor's extract above.

Having discussed how men construct their identities in the foundation phase, findings show that for all the participants interviewed, teaching was not their first priority, some have taken it as a last resort, a second option or a stepping stone. They did not want to be teachers and especially foundation phase teachers. Firstly they have stated that teaching in the foundation phase was a decision that was taken by the sponsor that funded their degrees and to some, it was a decision taken by the principal in the school arrangement with the educators. It appears from the data in the extract below that some male teachers have been moved to the foundation phase due to the shortage of teachers (female teachers in particular) to fill the vacant teaching positions. The findings indicate that male teachers only came to a full acceptance that they are foundation phase teachers, during their first teaching practice that was conducted in Grade R and the voluntary services they provided to early childhood centres in the community. According to Mashiya et al. (2015), a study on men in the foundation phase found that this phase is often taken as a last resort and in some cases taken because of the funding

opportunities. Also Petersen and Petker (2011) found that it is mainly a combination of personal, social and most importantly, economic motivations which underpin, encourage and inspire students to choose foundation phase teaching. Below are some of the responses from the interviews:

> *"You know the time we were filling the forms the contracts for the bursary they said it's for Grade 1-4. And I thought I will teach grade 4 if I go because as a guy I cannot teach foundation phase. And also the environment that we are in, we are used to the fact that male teachers are in grade 4. So when we get to university they say no guys you are mistaken its grade R-3. For few minutes we wanted to turn take back home. So then we came to our senses and decided to take it" (Sipho)*

> *"When I was filling the form I was thinking I'm going to be an accounting teacher and then to my surprise they said no we want ECD teachers and thought I would learn along the way" (Wandile)*

> *"when I got there the bursary suggested that we do foundation phase because there is uhm…a gap in the foundation phase especially males so, firstly it was something strange and not being sure that I will manage, but after studying and doing my practicals so I realised that there is nothing" (Xolani)*

> *"when I applied I thought I was applying to be an FET teacher but they told us we gonna to ECD, I thought If I'm clever enough I would change my course and FET modules. On my first practical I started to fall in love with teaching it was grade R at a local school" (Mandla)*

It would appear that the foundation phase was not a personal choice for these teachers in the initial stage. It is clear from the beginning that these male teachers considered the phase to be a female domain and for this reason did not initially choose to teach this phase. As Xolani noted, as a male he found it strange to be in the foundation phase and his teaching practice gave him a different perspective; this is consistent with the views of Everitt-Penhale and Ratele (2015) that constructions of masculinities are different between and within various situational contexts. For instance, in this case, the financial situation influenced the decision for these men to construct their new masculinity bearing in mind that their identity would be questioned because of male rarity in the foundation phase. Also their admission that they began to enjoy the foundation phase indicates acceptance and a change of identity in terms of their professional and gender identities. Mandla and Wandile exhibit the societal understanding of male teachers

to belong in the senior grades like secondary school. Teaching according to them was never about the foundation phase but rather about being an accounting teacher; this indicates that they were undermined and denigrated in the foundation phase. Because of the shortage of accounting teachers in South Africa (Manda, 2014) Wandile wanted to be an accounting teacher. He constructed himself as smart, intelligent and superior in the society. This is consistent with the Bhana and Moosa (2015) study which found that men who take up a teaching career are expected to step up (choosing secondary grades) and not step down in choosing foundation phase grades, which are seen as an easy option. This suggests the intention of the participants was to step-up while their funding sponsors wanted them to teach in the foundation phase which is looked down upon in the society. It is clear that the above participants became foundation phase teachers mainly because the school had a shortage of teachers in the foundation phase; also, the principal in the extract ahead felt that the male teacher had a suitable personality to teach young learners. Embodied in this notion of 'personality for learners' are those characteristics that are constructed as feminine and that only females should exhibit them. He noted;

> *"The principal amongst the teachers decided to take me to foundation phase because I'm a soft person, he thought I would handle the young kids with the care and I would not punish them like others do" (Thabang)*

This suggest becoming a foundation phase was teacher was used to identify him as having traits that are associated with foundation phase learners. He therefore referred to himself as someone who became a foundation phase teacher because of a lack of teachers in this phase. He also indicated that he uses this perspective to understand the involvement of other male teachers in the foundation phase. He asserted that;

> *"I do not see difficulties as a man, to me it's just work and taking the learners from the known to unknown..... When I see a male in the foundation phase what comes to my mind is that there is a shortage of teachers" (Thabang)*

4.2 Notion of Gender roles in early childhood development

One of the aspects that emerged from the data collected is how men viewed certain roles in the foundation phase classes as being for females only and would not see themselves doing such tasks even though mandated to do so. The findings suggest that the participants feel that certain duties in ECD teaching are for females. These include traits like showing care, love and nurturing to children. Moreover, when a female child cries or accidently wets herself, some of

the participants saw this as something that should be addressed by a female teacher, because it is a woman's duty to take care of the child. This appears to be essentialising the gender role and perpetuating stereotypes about acceptable tasks for men. In his comment below Themba suggests that only female teachers in Grade R can teach learners who are new from pre-school to get used to the schooling environment. The idea that men and women are expected to do different work in the South African context is not new (see Bhana et al., 2009). This is clearly evident in Themba's response when he notes that;

> *"I believe that grade R is good for women then the other grades are good for men because when you are in grade R you just came from crèche, so the controlling part in terms of the schedules on what you do and when you do it you haven't learnt them." (Themba)*

Thabang notes in the extract below that he has not only separated a role that should be carried out by women, but also suggests that men should teach in the higher grades because learners in Grade R are afraid of them, and further suggests that in Grade R, learners should be nurtured, which is what men do not have. The fact that learners in the foundation phase appear to be scared of the teacher, according to Thabang, suggests the existing status that men are positioned in, within the society.

> *"uhm....yes yes..we must leave them and get to senior classes, intermediate. The learners are afraid of a male teacher in grade R perhaps there are female teachers they start to nurse them from then and the learners get used to having a female teacher"(Thabang)*

> *"When a child wets himself I call my other female colleagues to take care of him or her. Its not that I'm disgusted or something" (Tom)*

Bhana and Moosa (2015) argue that men who position the foundation phase as suited for females because of the assumption that women nurture and provide motherly love, is nothing but a reinforcement of gender roles, especially where men are seen to be incompatible with children and in particular child rearing. This is clear that the participant not only associated certain practices with women, they also constructed the entire phase around love, care and nurture. This shows that *Tom's* response in the above extract is premised on gender roles, especially by expecting female teachers to leave their own teaching commitments and fulfil their societal expectation which is taking care of a child. This is consistent with Connell (2005) who argues that men construct their masculinities against other men and women (subordinate).

A study by Petersen (2014) has shown that in one university in South Africa, the foundation phase is not considered a suitable profession for men. Haase (2008) states that men distance themselves from mothering roles or practices considered as feminine, and opt for more masculine ways of doing things. For instance, Tom delegated women to take on tasks that were considered feminine, such as assisting a child who has accidently wet her pants or comforting a child during tough times in his/her life. Drawing from the observation findings, it was noted that during lunch break, Victor instructed the older girls from the intermediate phase to dish up food for his Grade 2 learners, while other teachers were doing this for themselves. This appears to be another way in which men distance themselves from duties which are considered by the society as the female prerogative.

Participant Phumelele asserted that in his classroom he has to negotiate between being a father and a mother to his learners, ultimately having to perform what he regards as a motherly role, especially in addressing emotional issues that learners experience. This suggests that providing emotional support is associated with being feminine and therefore considered as women's duty. Interestingly, regarding African men he has noted that they are absent and he emphasises only their provider role which is consistent with Hunter (2006), when he argues that the fatherly role is often associated with playing the provider/breadwinner role in households as opposed to giving emotional support. He considers emotional support as a motherly role because the geographical context in which he is located constructs masculinity as being about provision as opposed to emotional support. He notes that;

> *"I will say in most cases we as Africans, as males in Africa we do not pay much attention to children we only have the stereotype that I have to work and I have to provide and then I have to show masculinity by hiding my feelings without showing that I have been touched by something. Then I was emotional also because I had to hold my own tears just not to show the children that I'm crying because I could feel the pain of that child, of having lost especially a mother. Knowing very well at the back of my mind if the mother has died almost everything of this child might also die, because fathers I know they are always absent. So I just took upon it that I will be a mother and I had to show compassion that I can feel your pain too"*
> *(Phumelele)*

From the above extract it is clear that Phumelele is aware of how masculinities are constructed in relation to women and child care. Moreover, he is aware of gender regimes in the teaching

context of South Africa. Similarly Bhana and Moosa (2015, p. 5) states that "masculinities are produced in disassociation from women's work, children and care". This suggests that men distance themselves from doing what is considered feminine or women's work. Phumelele expects a woman to deal with such issues. There is a strong emphasis on the perception that the absence of a mother in South Africa symbolises an absence of emotional support, when he said 'almost everything of this child has also died'. Phumelele in the above extract constructs himself in line with the essentialist view of gender, while at the same time exhibiting a non-hegemonic trait of masculinity which is crying, he has stated that he nearly cried but held the tears back because of the presence of his learners.

Another finding is the projection of female teachers in the foundation phase as lazy, irrational and gender biased. Findings show that even though men have separate activities in the phase based on what is suitable for men and women, the male teachers are positioning female teachers as individuals who are too lazy to offer sporting activities and most of all to initiate physical education lessons. The findings indicate that male teachers' understanding of roles in the foundation phase are deeply premised on the traditional ways of constructing masculinities and roles. Mashiya (2015) states that the pre-service male foundation phase teachers in schools are expected to contribute to the sporting activities and initiate the physical education lessons in their respective classrooms. Also Skelton (2012) found that male teachers are positioned as a positive antidote to what is called a feminised profession, mainly in sports and physical education activities. This is evident in this study even though the focus is on in-service teachers, thus Phumelele mentions how he excels in physical education as a man;

> *"One thing I we are excelling in as men is physical education because I would not*
> *say other things but other teachers they are old and cannot take the children away*
> *to be flexible that's the passion we bringing because we want the children to play*
> *while they are learning. Because I make sure that I play with them of which other*
> *female teachers are not willing to do it" (Phumelele)*

Phumelele is not only highlighting the issue of gender but age as well. He suggests that women in the foundation phase are old and unable to initiate physical education activities. Connell (2008) has argued that women and men are treated differently. Men are constructed as appreciating sports compared to women (Connell, 2008). In this case Phumelele is seen as "using sport to perpetuate patriarchy by reinforcing a sexual division of labour"(Kidd, 2013, p. 556). Creating sexual divisions of labour between him and his colleagues at work, suggests that

sports in various institutions is still used as a key factor to re-masculinise or marginalise other forms of masculinities and femininities. In sports masculinity has been accorded superior weighing which holds more power, authority and reputation for men who engage in it (Skelton, 2012).

Some of the participants presented female teachers as irrational and gender biased in their respective foundation phase classrooms. Xolani notes that;

> *"I think foundation phase should include everyone. Sometimes the male kids feel left out because the female teachers are gender biased they believe that females should be cleaning and involving them in other things. I remember even when I was still at school that was the case. So if teachers will have the perception that we are all human, gender is just there but we are equal I think everyone will understand that male teachers can teach in the foundation phase" (Xolani)*

Not only women are constructed as gender biased but Xolani's response suggests a concern on gender equality when assigning duties, especially when he sees boys being left out when duties and other activities are allocated in classrooms. While positioning women as biased, men are seen as a vehicle to rescue boys from the feminised practices. A study by Skelton (2002) shows that there is an assumption that the expectation of teachers and how they relate to learners will favour girls only, given that the phase is already considered as female dominated. Xolani positions women as being biased and also suggests that more men should be included in the foundation phase. He states further that this was the case when he was still a learner, which is similar to what Flores and Day (2006) have illustrated in that teachers appear to construct their identities in ways of their previous teachers when they were still learners; their identities are modelled on past experiences, however such conduct is in contrast with Samuel (2008) when he argues that there is no uniform way of being a teacher. Xolani seems to be advocating for gender equity towards the end of his response, yet sometimes exhibiting a traditional view of gender.

Moving on with gender bias and projecting women as irrational, it appears that Mandla and Phumelele are advocating for the involvement of males in the foundation phase and seeking gender equity while using conservative views of gender and stating that boys need men to maintain their masculinity. Female teachers appear to be projected as irrational when relating to young learners. Other findings are that women are seen to be shouting and often controlled by emotions when they have to administer discipline and relating to learners in the foundation

phase classes. Responding to whether foundation should be left more to women or include men, Mandla and Pumelele note that;

> *"I think it is not fair when it is dominated by females only, I think males are more sensitive and they are more understanding as compared to females, females will shout, insult and beat the learners with books. Most of the times women are controlled by emotions and men are able to control their emotions. And they know when to act. I think foundation phase should be equal"* (Mandla)

> *"normally females shout to learners when disciplining, we males we come at the different level of which we are not easily angered females they lose it and start to shout calling all names. But to us we are able to say it politely and say to the child this is not what I expect from you, without using other disciplinary measures, I think we need male teachers in order to guide them and to teach them other things such as discipline. When you shout they get used to it"* (Phumelele)

The notion that women shout at learners and are emotional, according to Mandla and Phumelele renders males more suitable than female teachers in the foundation phase. These findings are consistent with Mashiya (2015) that pre-service male teachers have demonstrated a skill in disciplining the learners without shouting, and often speak quietly to them. This is another way to determine what men and women can do in the foundation phase, based on the notion that women are emotional. Embedded in their statements is the notion that women should carry out the lesser important and lower status (subordinate) tasks, such as assisting learners who have wet themselves and dishing up for learners, while men are given duties that require them to use power and influence, for instance, discipline. Since men are perceived to be less emotional. This method maintains the current unequal gender order in the society that positions men as dominant and rational. Hjalmarsson and Löfdahl (2014) argue that the positioning of men through a discourse of being better disciplinarians suggest that women in the foundation phase are seen as incompetent in controlling and disciplining children, which in turn reproduce hegemonic masculine practices.

Placing men in the foundation phase suggests that it has not yet addressed the issues of inequality and shaped gender equity in South Africa. Instead this indicates a continuation of constructing masculinity against what is feminine (Connell, 2005). Stating what females should do as compared to male teachers, is a sign that men disassociate themselves from what is considered non-masculine (Bhana & Moosa, 2015). It can be seen clearly that men are

perpetuating and reinforcing traditional ways of being both a man and woman, as well as the roles that are attached to each gender. For instance, positioning Grade R as exclusively for females and associating emotionality with females, while men are perceived as immune to emotions, which is consistent with masculinity in the society. Lastly the findings suggest that in the foundation phase there is still a problematic perception of gender and teaching.

4.3 Navigating through societal expectations and Privilege

Male teachers are working in a society that has certain expectations in the environment they are located in. Mashiya (2015) finds that very few men teach in the foundation phase in the South African context, and this small number is due to the ongoing societal and cultural bias against those men who want to work in the foundation phase. Connell (2008) states that in an institution or society there are multiple definitions of what it means to be a man in as much as there are diverse ways for men to live in gender relations. Findings in this study shows that male teachers are expected to perform or model certain ways of being a man. For instance one element common to all the participants is the expectation to be disciplinarians, not only in the foundation phase but in the entire school, another element is the expectation of male foundation phase teachers to be involved in sports and initiate sports. Cushman (2005) has argued that the assumption of men as being the best disciplinarians, sport coaches and strongest members in the workplace creates difficulties for both them and the learners who are trying to understand non-sexist principles, as women are not involved in such activities. Age is also used as a factor in schools to determine the teachers who will be involved in sports. Findings indicate that amongst the males in the school there is a hierarchy of masculinity and the dominant position is determined by age. Victor is expected to take sports due to his age, this implies that he was positioned at a subordinate level of masculinity within the hierarchy that exists in his school. Therefore it suggests that male teachers are confronted with having to navigate their way through the societal expectations of what it means to be a man. As not all men love and enjoy sports. Victor, Mandla and Phumelele reveal that;

> *"Teachers also expect the learners to fear you and it is wrong. Using myself as an example, structurally (my body) older people fear and respect me [Mandla is a body builder with big muscles]. But learners they respect me but not scared, we have good communication as you observed"* (Mandla)

> *"We are given sports and told that we are young we have to deal with school sports"* (Victor)

"To an extent last year a parent came here from Mozambique came often to school and said we need more male teachers because their child from Mozambique in schools was a problem but now he is disciplined because I think he is the male teacher. We can see that you are putting order and giving the child direction" (Phumelele)

Male teachers in schools are associating fear and intimidation with being a man, as stated by Mandla. There is an expectation that, based on his gender and physical presence, learners will automatically fear him and he can command respect in the school. However, the findings based on observation show that Mandla did not command respect solely because of his gender; but also because he communicated very politely and in a friendly way with the learners during his lesson. Thus he is left to negotiate his way through the expectations of modelling what he is not. His gender is therefore considered as a competency and suggests a form of positional authority that can be turned into a tool to compel discipline in the classroom and school (Hjalmarsson & Löfdahl, 2014). This is consistent with Connell (2000) who maintains that masculinities are not only constructed at individual level but they are also constructed and continuously sustained by culture, organisations and institutions. In this case Mandla is expected to assume a dominant position of being a man. In addition, Whitehead (2002) states that male bodies are a place in which masculinity appears as an illusion that it emits powerful semiotic presence in the social space. This outlines that Mandla's physical structure is understood as a symbol to instil discipline and fear.

Linked to the previous theme on gender roles in the foundation phase, Victor in the extract below has further revealed that sexist parents bring learners into his classroom because of his gender and further make denigrating comments about female teachers such as 'women are lazy and they only sit down'. This suggests that Victor as a man in the foundation phase is expected not to perform what is considered to be feminine by the parents and the entire society. Also in this theme it is an expectation that comes from the society as opposed to how they construct themselves. Victor states;

"Actually there is a parent who took a child from another school and said to me it was because the parent heard that there was a male teacher in Grade 2. He doesn't want his child to be taught by a woman, women are lazy, and they sit and only give instructions" (Victor)

Hjalmarsson and Löfdahl (2014) note that teachers (like Victor) are constrained by the gender order which exists in the society, which conditions them as to how they should see themselves as teachers. The statement by the parent implies that they expect Victor to be a role model and exhibit characteristics that are not feminine as well as assume the dominant position. Implicit in his statement male teachers are constructed and expected to be active and should not sit down like their female counterparts.

As noted earlier in the chapter, gender policing exists, especially in the construction of masculinities in the schools. It is as if some of the participants are policed by parents and colleagues in schools, who constantly monitor and make comments on how male teachers are relating to learners and carrying out the pedagogical practice in their respective classrooms. During a conversation with a member of the school's management team, the question arose whether the researcher was the partner of the male foundation phase teacher, insinuating that all the young men visiting the participant are in a relationship with him. This shows the nature of gender and sexuality policing as well as the assumption that all young men visiting the school are in fact partners of the participants. As a result Martino (2008a) has argued that too often male foundation phase teachers who engage in same-sex relations choose to act straight due to the homophobic surveillance and the policing of masculinities that exist in schools. Findings from the data in the below extracts show that teachers are policed by both the parents and colleagues. They note;

> "Each time they come to school they pass by my classroom to see a man teaching young children……. They only come to say, we just wanted to see it ourselves that you are the one teaching here" (Phumelele)

> "Locally it still doesn't go down well in their throat, they always make comments and wow foundation phase, and go on to say even teaching doesn't suit you" (Mandla)

> "they confessed that you are a male teacher but you have a woman heart because we cannot stand what is happening in the foundation phase but we have been observing you from a distance, not even alerting you that we are looking at you" (Wandile)

Passing the male teacher's classroom it was observed as bringing confusing on whether they are curious about male teachers or was it a way of policing the men teaching in the foundation phase grades. As can be seen above, parents find it difficult to accept that men teach in the

foundation phase and then arrive to confirm this. With Mandla it they went to the extent to evaluate him and came to the conclusion that the phase was not suited to him. Rentzou (2011) found that parents are concerned about the motives of men who want to be in the foundation phase. It can be seen from the findings that there is ongoing doubt and suspicion including gender and sexuality in the context of foundation phase teaching. There is an expectation for men to perform certain types of masculinities, including an ongoing gender policing. Wandile's experiences with his colleagues in the above extract highlights the nature and extent of gender policing and sexism in the school environment.

Findings show that there are expectations and many questions from colleagues in various schools in which the male teachers are located. These expectations are not limited only to teaching spaces but extend to teacher training workshops and meetings. The participants noted that colleagues ask questions, such as how the participants take learners to the toilet and how do they comfort them when they cry. They reveal that;

> *"uhm….i had the first time experience last year in June luckily there was a curriculum advisor who knew very well that there are foundation phase teachers, everyone was asking and wanted to know more on how I'm handling children and talked about children wetting themselves how do you go about handling that. I said luckily enough there is a programme of the school and I have set mine to make sure that doesn't happen and I have allowed them to feel comfortable in way that they can come to me and request to go to the toilet. So that was the way for me to avoid that. Up until now I haven't had that problem. In workshops people are very interested and those from above would think I'm running away from work and to me teaching is teaching and preparing to go to classroom is one and the same thing whether you in foundation phase or upper classes"* (Phumelele)

> *"uhm…since I got here they had this thinking that we in the phase because it is an only phase available not because of qualifications. So the more we told them about our qualification having been graduated for foundation phase, they got surprised because they are not used to see a man in the phase"* (Victor)

Phumelele experienced a question about dealing with learners who wet themselves. He notes that classroom management skills are necessary in order to avoid confrontation with a learner who has accidentally wet her/himself. Also common to both Phumelele and Victor, as seen from the extracts above, is a perception held by colleagues both in schools and workshops, that

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male teachers are in the foundation phase because they cannot find employment elsewhere and they are attempting to avoid the workload. This shows a gendered interpretation and expectation from colleagues including viewing foundation phase teaching as a lowly occupation, as Bhana and Moosa (2015) noted.

What also emerged from the data is that, in schools male teachers are mocked and called names for being in the foundation phase. For instance, other teachers in the school are referring to male teachers as 'mam or miss'. This suggests that their colleagues in the schooling environment believe that foundation phase is for females only. Sipho and Tom revealed the following;

> *"They were surprised, and said wow really grade 2. And some joked about it and call me as 'mam Sipho' and start to call you mam. Even with the learners at first they used to call me mam. First time in the workshops they thought I was with the Curriculum Implementer maybe to connect a projector or something even the Curriculum Implementer was surprised and requested that I become a member in the cluster because I'm the only male, she also wanted to feel and know how it is like to have a male foundation phase teacher. And I took up the offer" (Sipho)*

> *"**Tom:** when I arrived here there was negativity, others would call me names, such as "mam". But I it never bothered me because I know who I am and I love my job. It didn't matter to me.*

> *Vusi: how long did this treatment by your colleagues calling you mam took?*

> *Tom: yeah it lasted for almost a year. It took me a year but I never had any problem.*

> *Vusi: were there any intervention from the senior staff members when they heard other teachers calling you mam? Or it was something you joked about?*

> *Tom: Not as such, but principal would say stop referring to sir as mam"*

Sipho's described, despite joke about it, is a tactic of oppression and a tool to make male teachers feel uncomfortable and not part of the team. It also shows the gendered nature of their colleagues in believing that the foundation phase is a female occupation. Similarly with Tom it indicated that he was in the wrong place as a man, because they perceive foundation phase teaching as for females only. The findings show the construction of the phase as feminine and

the expectation that men who teach in the phase are feminine. It can be argued that the positioning of male teachers in the foundation phase suggests that they are not masculine enough. Alongside the expectation and negativity, Sipho was rewarded by the curriculum implementer requested him to join the cluster based on the fact that he is a foundation phase teacher and a male. The Curriculum Implementer projects masculinity or manhood as something superior, which needs to be celebrated and ultimately lived. This indicates patriarchal conditions in the schools.

Another response to the question of how colleagues perceived a male teacher in the school or during the workshops was presented by Mandla who noted that;

> *"They have liked it, but although at the beginning they had that thing to say we want to see the outcomes, their actions spoke louder than words [**Vusi**: make an example…]. Uhm……it's not easy to make an example but there are people who are expecting something and I had to deliver but only to find that once you bring the product I don't think anyone can go further. [**Vusi**: what is the perception in workshops?] ….firstly they were surprised, but usually the management in districts they acknowledge and applaud. E.g. one curriculum advisor said usually in grade 5 teachers would say 'this is not your granny's place in foundation phase. So she argue that maybe the perception will change and even the status. Because other people undermine the foundation phase. However there are few who will say don't you think you should change the phase?" (Mandla)*

Seemingly Mandla's colleagues were anticipating that he will fail as a teacher in the foundation phase. This is because they construct the phase as a female enclave thus expecting men to fail. In this case the curriculum implementer assumes that men will change the image of the phase, given that men are constructed as superior, active and influential in society. Given that male teachers are seen as changing the status of the phase by the curriculum implementer, in Mandla's extract above, it is unavoidable that the suggestion is gendered and patriarchal.

When male teachers are attending workshops with various foundation phase teachers from the district, the majority of the attendees are female teachers. Findings in the extract show that Wandile has been engaging in a self-policing process drawing from actions including gestures made by females and this leads him to assume that other female teachers are policing him and questioning his masculinity. Policing in this study appears to be enacted by the society as well as by individuals themselves. Policing is in fact influenced by societal expectations of how and

what male teachers should do in the foundation phase and leaves male teachers to find ways to navigate through the expectations. He revealed that;

> *"There is this saying which goes as actions speak louder than words. These people you can see that they are accepting when they see a male teacher in the workshops but when you look at the way in which they look at you. And then look at them talking to one another you can see that there is something though they cannot come to you and say man are you not in the wrong place, you can see all that written in the faces and when whispering to one another, so that's the thing. Somehow you would see that at first they couldn't accept it but as time goes they get used to it"* (Wandile)

As noted in the previous extract, that male teachers constructed themselves as disciplinarians, in this theme teachers are expected by the society (mainly parents) to be disciplinarians. It has also emerged from the data in the extract below that other teachers in the school environment expect male foundation phase teachers to move up to intermediate and senior phase grades, not because they are qualified or experience to teach these grades, but because of an assumption that they will instil discipline. Thabang reveals that;

> *"Female teachers are complaining saying I must go back to intermediate. Because they are afraid of intermediate learners and changing me to the upper level. They think as a man I will have enough energy to discipline them. When going for workshops I find other males and it is not likely that I'm alone, out of 10 we are four. And it becomes clear that it is work we must do and not only specified to a particular phase"* (Thabang)

This suggests that female teachers in the school are positioning themselves as inferior in the upper grades and unable to conduct their pedagogical practice. The perception here is that because the male is a disciplinarian, by implication he is also violent, and these female teachers expect them to use the violence in an intermediate space. This is consistent with Bhana et al. (2009) who report that issues of discipline in schools are attended to by a disciplinary committee which is made up of male teachers only. Therefore this suggests that even in the professional teaching space masculinities of male foundation teachers are constructed and expected to be performed in the traditional gender way. Thabang does not report gendered expectations in the workshops, because he is not the only foundation teacher present and thus he does not feel subordinate, because there are other males.

It appears that being a man in the foundation phase does come with some privileges. It is what Connell (2005) calls the patriarchal dividend, meaning all men are benefiting from the hegemonic masculinity that undermines women and other men. Findings have shown that males in the foundation phase are respected by the parents and colleagues including the learners. According to Hjalmarsson and Löfdahl (2014), male teachers benefit from being men in the foundation phase especially since they are in the minority. For instance, Themba stated that if he was not respected by the learners he would have demanded respect. Also, he felt that learners would undermine him because of his age, probably equating him to the age of their siblings. He notes:

"I think with the African context..eh..children respect males more than women, that's the culture. If I was not respected maybe I would have changed the course because eh….i would in the end demand respect if there were not respect. You also can't work in a environment where you are not respected….I'm also young and they take that into perspective as to say he is maybe younger than my brother or sister and they take that into perspective and that also counts in their respect and what I also look into" (Themba)

Often people use culture as a shield to reproduce and reinforce hegemonic masculinity. Themba's response reflects the hegemonic social teachings of how to be a man, and demand respect. This is similar to what Bhana et al. (2009) found, that Zulu male teachers demand respect from their female colleagues, as well as in their relationships where female partners are *expected* to respect their boyfriends. Respect in this case is considered to be a confirmatory tool that validates his masculinity regardless of his age. Drawing on Connell (2005) who holds that masculinities are hierarchical, it appears that Themba's age positions him and makes him feel subordinate (less respected) in society. According to Campbell (1992) such behaviour shows an inability to live up to the socially accepted role of being a man and their right to demand respect from children and women. It is evident that respect is demanded not only in relation to women and men who are regarded to be subordinate, but includes children as well. In the context of Themba being an African male teacher in the rural areas of Mpumalanga, Bhana et al. (2009) argue that rigid notions of masculinities such as Themba's are defended by invoking a patriarchal content of culture.

Having argued that men benefit from the respect and treatment they receive as males in the foundation phase, findings show that respect is not only demanded but also valued by the male teachers. Victor asserts that;

"uhmmmm…..so since I got in this school we have that respect, we are highly respected as male teachers in the foundation phase, like they assume that we know it all. So that has boosted my confidence"

Respect is given to male teachers on a problematic assumption that they "know it all", it appears that there is an association of gender and knowledge, that male teachers are deemed more knowledgeable. Connell (2008) states that gender is not a property which individuals bring into neutral organisation context, but gender relations are embedded in the organisation in four dimensions, these being division of labour, power relations, emotional relationships and organisational culture. This suggests that a school as an organisation has ways to divide labour, to assign authority to a particular gender, to bring people together and holds beliefs about gender. In the case of Victor, it is that males are perceived to be more knowledgeable and skilled. It can be seen explicitly that men in the foundation phase do celebrate this privilege. Furthermore, in the context in which Victor is located, findings show that there is an ongoing construction of superiority and dominance as well as reinforcement of hegemonic practices by him over his colleagues, Victor maintains that it is not only his gender that is respected, but also his level of education, which has given him a chance to construct himself as dominant, and a thriving male teacher in the foundation phase. He states that:

*"uhm…since I got here they had this thinking that we in the phase because it is an only phase available not because of qualifications. So the more we told them about our qualification having been graduated for foundation phase, they got surprised because they are not used to see a man in the phase. As time passes and looking into the work we do, it is different from theirs and they end up asking for assistance, so with the colleagues they are used to the idea. [**Vusi:** Do you think you are coping because you are a man or is how you were taught?]…..i think the standard of my education is way too high as compared to my other colleagues like the ones I got here. It is not because of I'm a man or woman" (Victor)*

This indicates how different markers such as gender, class and context intersect to produce a subject positioning. Victor is a male who went to a respectable university in the country and is working in a rural school, is familiar with technology and the devices such as laptops and

tablets available in the school. He therefore positions himself as superior in terms of knowledge and class in relation to his colleagues in the school. This is consistent with Mashiya's (2015) study which found that pre-service male teachers brought new expertise into schools with regards to taking over the equipment that was not in use, due to the lack of expertise in schools. Also this is similar to a study conducted by Tennhoff et al. (2015) in Switzerland who looked into the intersectionalities and professionalization in early childhood education. The study found that male teachers claim a subject position of being a professional and legitimise this by their professional knowledge, beliefs and qualifications and thus seek to distance themselves from their female colleagues perhaps because they are not skilled and qualified enough. This can be identified in Victor's statement that female teachers end up requesting assistance from them as male teachers; this affirms his beliefs about his education, superiority and the patriarchal dividend he receives from the current gender order.

Another thing that emerged from the data concerns the age of the participant, being younger than other colleagues in the school. Sipho in the extract below has experienced a different treatment from the parents and the community. His age has been used as a factor to undermine him and his other male foundation phase colleagues, as they are mistakenly equated with matriculants (thinking they are grade 12 learners) and positioned as subordinate in the hierarchy of teaching. He asserts that;

> *"I ignore some of the comments people make and I only focus on what I'm here for that is teaching and learning. E.g. parents say we are young and why the school has hired matriculants they think we not qualified. At some point when learners are greeting us in the streets and parents would say these are not your teachers, they are learners from a certain high school located in the same community. Not unless you dressed more formally" (Sipho)*

This suggests an emerging issue that requires exploration in the future, a dress code which determines the image of a teacher, specifically the male foundation phase teachers. Sipho was policed based on his age and dress code in particular. The findings of this study are consistent with Msibi (2012), when he argues that clothing provides a vehicle for policing, to the extent that often men and women are monitored by others regarding their dress code. As Sipho has noted, respect or affirmation is given to them when dressed in formal wear. This is in line with Magwaza as cited in Msibi (2012) that dress communicates a particular message about one's sense of being as well as one's identity. Often in society wearing formal dress, that is, a shirt,

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tie, trousers and shoes is considered as being formal which is synonymous with corporate wear, power and being a gentleman which is inevitably accorded respect. Msibi (2012) has therefore stated that dress can be used as a marker of identity, given its connection to issues of power, religion, race and class. Implicit in Sipho's statement in the above extract is an indication that teachers are expected to wear in a certain way before they can be considered to be teachers, especially men. Also it shows that there is an expectation of role modelling such that parents assume dressing in a particular way will inspire the learners to follow suit. Lastly, in the context in which they are located, findings indicate that respect and class are accorded on the basis of age and the teacher's dress code. Understanding societal expectations in terms of how different markers such as gender and class intersect to produce an ideal teacher that the society requires in the foundation phase is critical. It shows how hegemonic masculinity and superiority exist in the spaces where teachers work and where they are faced with navigating their masculinities.

Societal expectations and assumptions in this study are not limited to what has been presented above. Findings indicate that when principals are recruiting teachers for foundation phase posts, male teachers are policed and denied opportunities. In the extract below Phumelele raised the concern of negative treatment when he was searching for employment and often second guessed that he is not qualified to teach in the phase. This depicts how the principals as participants in society expect men to look for employment in the upper grades within the primary school band, for instance the intermediate phase. Phumelele states that:

> *"When I started to look for job I had one experience in Middleburg of which he consulted with the UKZN and he said I have a post but let me think about it, especially when he saw the documents he realised that I'm qualified there was a smile in his face but he was not sure, he said let me consult with the school governing body after six days he called back and said its mine of which I had already got this one by that time. I said to myself that I had a job but it affected me because I felt like I was denied opportunities because of the fact that I'm a male"*
> *(Phumelele)*

The nature of policing, doubt and an extreme suspicion of men who enter the foundation phase teaching by principals is evident in Phumelele's response. The manner in which the principal has sought confirmation from the University and the school governing body appeared to be damaging to Phumelele's gender and professional identity, particularly as the attempt was to confirm with the University the legitimacy of his qualifications. While with the school

governing body, the principal sought approval to have a man in particular teaching in the foundation phase. Foster and Newman (2005) refer to this act as identity bruising that is caused by parents, colleagues and learners, in this case the act is premised on an understanding that foundation phase teaching is not suitable for men and men who enter have different motives as well as representing a non-hegemonic masculinity; in the end subjecting them to the wrath of the gender labour division. Amongst the four dimensions of gender mentioned by Connell (2008), organisational culture and division of labour in this case appears to be relevant, in that the school as an institution has certain beliefs about gender. Skelton (2009) has noted that often male teachers are recruited by school governing bodies for particular reasons such as discipline and other expectations.

Drawing from the findings in this theme it can be seen how male teachers navigate through the societal expectations and how are they privileged in some ways, in terms of their positioning in the society. Societal expectations and gender relations resulting from that data suggest the following; in the school context there are multiple identities constructed for male teachers and many of these identities are conflicting (Jones, 2003). The conflicting discourses are working towards producing subordinate and dominant masculinities (Jones, 2007). This is the struggle male teachers have encountered in society and have to navigate through every day. Jones (2008) argues that this act can be understood as positioning male teachers sometimes as demons and sometimes as superheroes.

4.4 Conclusion

The findings have shown that within the context of the Mpumalanga province, male in-service foundation phase teachers are constructing their identities by drawing from parental discourse and as such as seeing themselves as fathers in the phase. It is also clear that they are constructing their identities against what is considered to be feminine, as findings have indicated that there is still a division of labour in terms of gender, mainly in the Grade R context, which is part of the early childhood and foundation phase grades. It was also noted how male privilege and the patriarchal dividend are manifest within the construction of identity and foundation phase discourse. Common in these findings is that men still construct their gender and professional identities on traditional and conservative notions. They therefore position themselves as superior and dominant over their female counterparts and often push to take over and reclaim the dominant social status of men. This suggests that in the South African context there is a need for further exploration and understanding in terms of how men construct their identities in the spaces traditionally constructed as feminine. It is important to note that

in the findings presented, there is some degree of change, although not entirely. This suggests that there should be an intense gender interrogation in higher education institutions that prepare teachers for teaching in the basic institutions. In the next chapter a discussion of the above findings, recommendations and an overall conclusion is presented that will draw the study together.

Chapter 5-Discussion, Recommendations and Conclusion

5.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter an analysis of the findings was presented. In chapter 5, a summarised discussion of the key findings is presented. The chapter is divided into four parts and begins with a discussion of the findings. The findings are related to the theoretical frameworks, literature and, most importantly, the three critical research questions. The chapter seeks to show how the study has responded to the critical questions. This is followed by a discussion of the implications of the study on policy, practice and future research. The third section is a discussion on the limitations of the study. The conclusion to the chapter will draw the study together.

The purpose of the study was to explore the identities of male foundation phase teachers in Mpumalanga schools. The study had three research questions which were fundamental in directing the focus of the study and they are: 1. How do foundation phase male teachers in Mpumalanga schools construct their gender and professional identities? 2. Why do foundation phase male teachers in Mpumalanga schools construct their identities in the ways they do? 3. How do foundation phase teachers negotiate their identities in conservative professional teaching contexts like Mpumalanga? In the next section I present a discussion of the findings.

5.1 Discussion of findings

The three research questions informing the study. The questions were arose from a personal interest as a male foundation phase teacher, the primary objective being to discover how male teachers, specifically in-service teachers, construct and negotiate their identities in spaces that were traditionally set aside for females. The focus was on teachers teaching in the Mpumalanga province. The findings responded to the three research questions as outlined below.

Question 1: How do foundation phase male teachers in Mpumalanga schools construct their gender and professional identities?

The findings of the study suggest that male teachers in the context of the Mpumalanga province construct their identities by seeking to position themselves as parents and fathers. The participants constructed themselves in this way as they thought that a man in the foundation phase provides what they called the 'fatherly touch', particularly in the phase that was regarded by the participants and their communities as dominated by females. The "parent identity" appeared to have been adopted by all the participants even though the majority of them did not have children of their own. Those who did have children often compared what they did in the

phase with their own homes. This is not an altogether new finding. Studies in South Africa, (Mashiya, 2015; Mashiya et al., 2015), although in the context of pre-service teachers, note that male foundation phase teachers often play fatherly roles in class, noting that the high number of homes headed by mothers necessitates the presence of male teachers in the foundation phase. In this study, the findings also revealed that male teachers construct their identities as role models. They noted that they were role models mainly to boys who might find it difficult to speak to a female teacher about issues affecting them as boys. This was despite the fact that these were very young learners who often were only recently socialised into gender roles. It was clear that men in the foundation phase were uncomfortable when a female learner approached them for assistance; their role modelling discourse applied evidently only to boys.

An important finding in this study concerns the ways in which the male foundation phase teachers sought to distance themselves from emotional work. Any engagement with the roles traditionally associated with women such as care, cleaning and dishing food up was either delegated to children in the class or was redirected to female teachers. This suggests that men constructed their identities drawing largely on social norms in terms of what it means to be a male and what it means to be a female. Connell (2005) argues that masculinities are drawn from cultural practices and norms. This became evident in this study. What was even more intriguing was the ways in which women sought to reinforce social gender regimes and structures within the school setting, with questions being posed about the male teachers' masculinities and sexualities. This resonates with the ways in which patriarchy is internalised in these contexts.

Interestingly, the participants strategically sought to position themselves as more successful sports or physical education personnel in their respective schools. As Kidd (2013) argues, sports is one of the key mechanisms through which men seek to claim their manhood. The participants considered themselves as active, innovative and creative in initiating improved and more interesting physical education games and lessons in the schools, compared to those of the female teachers who they positioned as old. The participants argued that they excelled in sports because of their gender. This is consistent with a study conducted by Mashiya (2015), focusing on pre-service teachers in South Africa, which found that during teaching practices, male teachers were seen to be active in sporting activities, which suggest a positioning of being a better sports teacher.

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Alongside the positioning as a parent, findings suggest that teachers constructed themselves as 'professionals' and 'normal'. The identities of being a parent and a professional were common amongst all the participants' responses. Sumsion (2000) in a study that focused on how male teachers construct and negotiate their identities, found that men in the foundation phase believe having a higher degree or being more knowledgeable in the school will increase their professional and personal power within the space perceived as female dominated. In this study it was found that participants constructed their identities on the basis of being knowledgeable and more qualified to be in the foundation phase, which is similar to the above study.

Another finding that emerged from this study were the ways in which the men sought to invert the negativity associated with male teachers teaching in the foundation phase by positioning themselves as pioneers, leaders and role models who are there in the schools to make a change in the teaching space. The identity of being a pioneer was a result of those who were part of the Mpumalanga government cohort, as they noted that they want to be the best in the phase and setting an example to other male teachers in the province. Connell (2005) noted that masculinities are hierarchical, such that within a group of men, some often position themselves as powerful and leaders.

The above points suggest that male teachers construct their identities on the basis of existing social norms. While they are aware of the challenges presented by being a male in the foundation phase, they use several strategies to invert these challenges in order to appeal to traditionally accepted forms of masculinity. The discussion will now turn to address the second research question explored in this study.

Question 2: Why do foundation phase male teachers in Mpumalanga schools construct their identities in the ways they do?

As already established above, the driving reasons for constructions of identities that male teachers adopt concerns the ever-present patriarchal and heteronormative cultures that exist in the context. The findings show that male teachers construct their identities around being a parent and being professional mainly because they do not want to be undermined because of their gender in this phase. By appealing to professionalism and parenting, the teachers tried to gain the respect of their learners, colleagues and communities. This is consistent with Tennhoff et al. (2015) who find that in Switzerland male teachers identify themselves as professionals because they do not want their gender to be compared with femininity. Taking the positioning of being a parent, professional and "normal", it is argued that, was a strategy to avoid being

associated with female roles and being called names such as 'Mam Tom" (Madam Tom). In addition, findings have shown that the gender and sexuality of the participants was policed, and it is such policing that often led to the positioning adopted by the participants.

Further, as argued above, they construct their identities as superior and knowledgeable compared to female teachers because of their societal position as men. Connell (2005) states that masculinities are multiple, constructed, historical and hierarchical, here the men position themselves as role models mainly to boys in the foundation phase. This suggests a paranoia that men have towards everything that is considered feminine by the society and a perception that it will make boys effeminate boys and ruin the male privilege that exists in the society. Being a role model to boys appears to be a way in which they can maintain the historical dominance of men over women and other subordinate men, even in spaces where women dominate. Martino and Rezai-Rashti (2012a) note that there exists a gender regime that continuously supports the hegemonic practices of men. Therefore, the performative (Butler, 1999) construction of the men was mainly a tool to reinforce patriarchy.

Comments and statements made by the curriculum implementers and parents about men in comparison to women is also a way in which hegemonic masculinity is reinforced in the foundation phase. It is also the reason why the participants constructed themselves as pioneers, difference makers and better disciplinarians, in comparison to women who were perceived as incompetent in delivering pedagogical content, administering sports and physical education activities as well as instilling discipline to learners. As Hjalmarsson and Löfdahl (2014) show in a study conducted in Sweden, how men who exhibit hegemonic masculinity are often perceived as real professionals while those who exhibit something different are not valued and are often regarded as feminine. Males in the foundation phase in this study, within the context of the Mpumalanga province, construct their identities in the way they do because they think they are a solution for gender equity and because they believe that they are role models to boys. In the next question findings on how they negotiate their identities are discussed.

Question 3: How do foundation phase teachers negotiate their identities in professional teaching contexts in Mpumalanga?

Common to all the participants who were interviewed in the study, is the fact that that they negotiated their identities through working hard and aiming to prove a point that even men can teach in the foundation phase. Out of the nine participants one indicated that he views the foundation phase male teachers in the same way he views male nurses, especially since his

father was a male nurse. Identity in this way is negotiated through following exemplary masculinity, that if his father was able to do the work associated with females he too can do it.

Findings revealed that there exists a gender labour divide within the foundation phase, including early childhood development. One participant out of the nine that were interviewed, teaches in Grade R, and the other eight argued that Grade R was more appropriate for females because learners require more attention and patience, and are not used to formal schooling at that level. A study conducted by Bhana and Moosa (2015) in South Africa, focusing on male pre-service teachers, found that within the phases of schooling, the foundation phase is regarded as having a low status and people who get in are considered as stepping down while men are perceived as effeminate. Therefore within the context of foundation phase which is considered as stepping down and feminine, the majority of the male teachers in this study teach in the senior grades of the foundation phase. Findings suggest that male teachers find Grade 2 and Grade 3 more interesting and more suitable for men. This was because they assume that in Grade R learners are still crying and often still wet themselves. This is thus associated with femininity as a certain degree of maternal care is required. The participant in Grade R often requests female colleagues to assist when confronted with a child who has accidentally wet his/her pants. This is an indication that the division of labour is done purely in gendered terms.

Amongst the participants there were a variety of ways in which they negotiated their identities such as those participants switched roles with female teachers and performed those roles that were considered as "fatherly". This mainly was about providing guidance and engaging in sporting activities. Findings have shown that men are aware that they are perceived as superior and strong, and that they should not cry at school, especially in front of the learners. Other participants use the constructs of being a parent or teacher to negotiate their gender identities in responding to duties that are constructed as feminine. It was clear that the teachers policed their actions by ensuring that they did not engage in activities that would have positioned them as child molesters. For example, they talked to a female learner in the presence of other learners as a way of ensuring that they were not seen as paedophiles. Interestingly, in this context, the paedophilia was not so much concerned with the same-sex as opposed to the opposite sex. This is mainly due to the teacher's own positioning as heterosexual males in a context that only supports heteronormativity. In Australia it was found that male teachers regard the 'parent' identity as an advantage, because to the society it legitimatises their involvement in the foundation phase, especially noting the high suspicion of child sexual abuse (Sumsion, 2000). Furthermore Sumsion (2000) found that men in Australia usually locate themselves within the

"socially authorised" constructions of being a man in order to hide or minimise their otherness. Recommendations are presented which are structured as a form of implications.

5.2 Implications

In the previous section a discussion of the findings was presented with the intention of responding to the initial three critical research questions that have guided and informed the study. It is imperative to indicate how the study will be relevant to various segments of the society. Discussions will therefore be presented on three elements, which is policy, practice and future research.

5.2.1 Policy

It is clear from the findings that male teachers construct their identities in multiple ways, also there are various reasons why they construct the identities in the ways in which they do. It is suggested that the Department of Education in the context of Mpumalanga should implement their existing programme of recruiting foundation phase teachers by being inclusive of both male and female teachers. The programme should therefore clearly determine the importance of foundation phase teaching and also emphasise issues of gender equity in the recruitment drive. The programme should cut across various segments in society, for instance, introduce the foundation phase teaching in various matriculant career exhibitions in order to recruit more interested individuals. Furthermore, it is also suggested that perhaps there need to be policies in the country that encourage more men to enrol in the foundation phase in order to demystify the field as a female field. The policy needs to ensure that it moves away from positioning males as "rescuers" or "role models" mentality and value offering children a comprehensive education.

5.2.2 Practice

The implications in terms of practice in this section is divided into two parts, the first being what the institutions of higher learning responsible for initial teacher education should do, followed by the practices that should be adopted in schools in societies where the schools are located. I propose that there should be a module that is compulsory in higher learning to addresses issues of gender, sexual diversity and race in relation in each band of schooling: for example, one for primary school student teachers and another for secondary school student teachers. In this way issues of gender will be discussed in a more comprehensive way. Dealing with the problems of gender roles and gender stereotypes should be an important component of this module.

For schools, the Department of Education should initiate an awareness programme that will involve school governing bodies, management teams and the learners on gender and sexual diversity. In this way all the immediate stakeholders in the schools will be involved and they will contribute to the knowledge and information to different levels. For example, the School Governing Body will feed back to the parents and community, learners to their peers, and principals, including other members of the school management team, will provide feedback to their colleagues. Addressing gender and sexual diversity requires the collective involvement of all the stakeholders in schools.

5.2.3 Future Research

This was a Masters study, exploring the identities of male foundation phase teachers in relation to gender, and possibly the first study in the South African context to look into in-service teachers in the foundation phase. It is suggested that there should be more research that interrogates further the phenomenon of male teachers in the foundation phase. Also more research will contribute and expand the scholarship of foundation phase teaching and teacher identities because as noted earlier in this study, there is paucity of like studies.

Given that the Mpumalanga province as a context was amongst the first provinces to recruit a large number of male teachers into the foundation phase, there is a need to explore this area of work in-depth from different research angles and explore other male foundation phase teachers in various provinces across South Africa. Such studies will assist institutions, departments, schools and communities in responding to and understanding male teachers that are in the foundation phase.

5.3 Limitations of the study

Participants in this study all reside in the province of Mpumalanga and they are predominantly young males. Therefore, their views and understanding reflected in this study are their own experiences and positioning. It is possible that other male foundation phase teachers in a different context, for example, Limpopo, might have different views and constructions on the same topic. Therefore the findings cannot be generalised. Also, as a male foundation phase teacher, there was the concern with subjectivity as couple of participants knew me, and this may have changed their responses in order to fit in with what they thought I wanted to hear.

Considering the limitations mentioned above, there was a commitment to strengthen the study beyond the existing limitations. Through snowball sampling I managed to find a male teacher who is older and has a longer experience in the foundation phase teaching. In order to address

subjectivity I used a reflective journal from time to time during the course of the study; this was done to avoid subjectivity and interference with the experiences of the participants. Semi-structured observations were used to see how male teachers relate to learners, construct and negotiate their identities as a tool to verify what they said during the interviews. Secondly, semi-structured interviews were used which gave participants an opportunity to engage freely in the conversations about their experiences. I also interacted with the participants after transcribing and gave them the opportunity to see whether the transcripts represented their views, thus strengthened the trustworthiness of the study. It is acknowledged that someone who is not a foundation phase teacher and who does not reside in a rural context might have carried out the study differently, using other theories, methods and questions.

5.4 Conclusion

Initially this study sought to explore the identities of male foundation phase teachers in relation to their masculinity, within the context of the Mpumalanga province. The interest was on how they construct their gender and professional identities and I also explored why they construct identities in the way they do. Lastly I also explored how they negotiate their identities in the conservative professional teaching contexts like the Mpumalanga province. I have presented and discussed findings which suggest that males in the foundation phase construct their identities by drawing on parental and role modelling discourses. Also there exists a hierarchy of masculinities that gives a dominant status to some men over others within the foundation phase teaching. It was found that society's understanding of gender influences the construction of identities, despite findings suggesting that masculinities are negotiated through creating a gender labour division within the foundation phase thus positioning women as intellectually and emotionally inferior. It was shown how the institutions of higher learning responsible for teacher training, scholars and the Department of Education can intervene to deconstruct the negative perceptions of gender in relation to the foundation phase across all stakeholders, including the community.

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Appendix 1-Informed Consent form

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Edgewood Campus

Room 04 Postgraduate House

Private Bag x 03

Ashwood

3605

18 June 2015

Dear Sir

<u>**REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION**</u>

My name is **Vusi Msiza**, I am a **Masters of Education** student at the **University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus** in Pinetown. You are invited to participate in my study titled: **Masculinity and Foundation Phase Teaching: Exploring the Identities of Male Teachers in Mpumalanga Schools**. The purpose of this study is to explore how male teachers construct and negotiate identities and experiences in a foundation phase context.

I intend to observe one lesson in your classroom and also have a semi-structured interview conversation with you to gain in-depth understanding into your experiences and how you negotiate and construct your male teacher identity within the foundation phase context. The duration of data generation will be three to four weeks. I will introduce myself to the school and meet with you, observe your come for a lesson and conduct interviews with you.

Should you wish to contact me, my supervisor or the UKZN Ethics office please see details below:

Supervisor	Researcher	Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Administration
Name: Prof Thabo Msibi **Qualification:** Phd **Telephone No:** 031 260 3686 **Cell:** 072 422 7261 **Email:** msibi@ukzn.ac.za	**Name:** Vusi Msiza **Qualification:** Bed Honours **Telephone No:** 078 300 2709 **Email:** vusimsi@gmail.com	Research Office, Westville Campus Govan Mbeki Building Private Bag X 54001 Durban 4000 KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609 Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Kindly note the following:

1. Your confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed, you will only be identified by your pseudonym. (not your real name)
2. Your involvement is purely for academic purposes and there are no financial benefits involved when participating in this study.
3. There are no right or wrong answers; respond to each question in a manner that will reflect your own personal opinion.
4. All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality
5. You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalised for taking any of the above actions during data collection.
6. The interview may take approximately 90 to 120 minutes and under no circumstances will you be coerced to disclose information you do not wish to disclose.
7. Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
8. The data will be stored in a safe place and be destroyed after a period of five years.
9. If you consent to be interviewed, please indicate whether or not you will allow the interview to be recorded (by ticking as applicable):

Equipment	Consent	Do not consent
Audio equipment		
Photographic equipment		
Video equipment		

Thank you for your contribution to this study.

Declaration

I……………………………………………….. (Full name of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire

_____   _____

Signature of the Applicant   **Date**

Appendix 2- Letter to the Principal

Edgewood Campus

Room 04 Postgraduate House

Private Bag X 03

Ashwood

3605

18 June 2015

Dear Principal

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN A MALE FOUNDATION PHASE CLASSROOM

My name is **Vusi Msiza**, Student number **210555110,** I am a **Masters of Education** student at the **University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus** in Pinetown. The title of my study is: **Masculinity and foundation phase teaching: Exploring the identities of male teachers in Mpumalanga schools**. The purpose of this study is to explore how male teachers construct and negotiate identities in the foundation phase context.

I intend to observe one lesson in the teacher's classroom and also have a semi-structured interview conversation with him. I kindly request your permission to conduct the study on your school premises with a male foundation phase teacher. Teaching and learning will not be disturbed and I will interview the teacher after school when teaching and learning is no longer in place. Both the interview and observation will take place on the same day. I will communicate the date, but it will be between July-August 2015. I will introduce myself to the School a day or two prior to the data generation date,

Please note that the information in this research will be kept confidential (including the name of the school and participant) and the research will only be used for educational purposes towards my degree. Since the study is about male teachers, during data analysis I will identify the teachers using pseudonyms where necessary.

You are kindly requested to complete the attached declaration form to acknowledge the permission granted to me by the school to conduct my study.

Should you wish to contact me, my supervisor or UKZN Ethics office, please see details below:

Supervisor	Researcher	Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Administration
Name: Prof Thabo Msibi **Qualification:** Phd **Telephone No:** 031 260 3686 **Cell:** 072 422 7261 **Email:** msibi@ukzn.ac.za	**Name:** Vusi Msiza **Qualification:** Bed Honours **Telephone No:** 078 300 2709 **Email:** vusimsi@gmail.com	Research Office, Westville Campus Govan Mbeki Building Private Bag X 54001 Durban 4000 KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609 Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this study

Kind Regards

Vusi Msiza

School address:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Tel/Cell: _____

____/___/2015

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Administration
Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

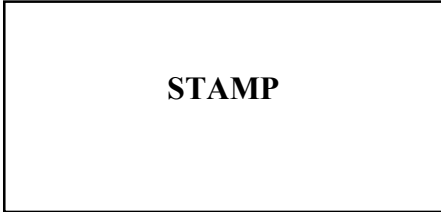**LETTER TO GRANT PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE SCHOOL**

Declaration

I…………………………………… Principal of……………………………… (School name) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project and I grant permission for…………………………….. (Researcher's name) to conduct his Masters of education research at my school, by observing one lesson of the male teacher and one interview.

I understand that all the information will be kept confidential and will only be used for the educational purpose of his Masters of Education degree.

_____   _____

Principal   **Date**

```
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Appendix 3-Data Collection Instrument

Semi-Structured Observation Schedule

Part 1: Information

Name of the participant: _____   Time: _____

Date of Observation: ____/____/2015   Place: _____

Subject/Lesson: _____

Part 2: Main predetermined observation aspects

1. Interaction and treatment of learners in terms of gender
2. Classroom Management (is disciplined and respect demanded because he is A male ? How are duties allocated to learners?)
3. His reaction towards learners if they mistakenly refer to him as Miss and comfortability in relating to young learners.
4. Allocation of classroom chores (is this gendered?)

Additional information from Observation

<center>**Semi-Structured Interview Schedule**</center>

Part 1-Information

Name of the participant: _____   Time: _____

Date of Interview: _____/_____/2015   Place: _____

Part 2: Interview questions

1. Tell me about yourself:
    -   Where do you come from?
    -   Where did you grow up?
    -   Why did you become a teacher?
    -   How you became a foundation phase teacher?
2. How do you see yourself as a male teaching in the foundation phase?
3. How do the community members perceive you as a male foundation phase teacher?
4. How do your colleagues in the school and in workshops perceive you as a male?
5. Have there been complaints from parents about your being a male in the foundation phase?
    -   If yes, how were these complaints addressed?
    -   If not, why do you think this is the case?
7. Comment on your experiences as a male teaching in the foundation phase. Have these experiences changed how you teach and relate to your learners?
8. How do you deal with the negative ideas/comments around male foundation phase teaching?
9. Do you think foundation phase should be left more to women? If so, why?
10. If you were to teach in a different context (urban areas), do you think you would have the same experiences that you have now? Explain.
11. If you had a choice, would you change the grade that you are currently teaching in?

NB I will use probing questions during the interview.**

<center>97</center>

Appendix 4-Ethical Clearance

UNIVERSITY OF ™
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

13 July 2015

Mr Vusi Jan Msiza 210555110
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mr Msiza

Protocol reference number: HSS/0897/015D
Project title: Masculinity and foundation phase teaching: Exploring the identities of male teachers in Mpumalanga schools

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 10 July 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

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 discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

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

Yours faithfully

....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

Cc Supervisor: Dr Thabo Msibi
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor P Morojele
Cc School Administrator: Ms T Khumalo/Ms B Bhengu

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

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Appendix 5-Mpumalanga DOE Approval

education
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Building No. 5, Government Boulevard, Riverside Park, Mpumalanga Province
Private Bag X11341, Mbombela, 1200.
Tel: 013 766 5552/5115, Toll Free Line: 0800 203 116

Litiko le Temfundvo, Umnyango we Fundo   Departement van Onderwys   Ndzawulo ya Dyondzo
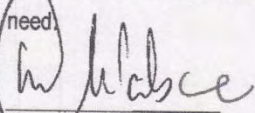
Mr. Vusi Msiza
Private Bag x03
Ashwood
3605

RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: MR VUSI MSIZA

Your application to conduct research was received. The title of your study reads: "Masculinity and foundation phase teaching: exploring the identities of male teachers in Mpumalanga schools." I trust that the aims and the objectives of the study will benefit the foundation phase educators and learners. It therefore gives me pleasure to approve your application subject to you observing the provisions of the departmental draft research policy which is attached. You are also further requested to adhere to your University's research ethics as spelt out in your research ethics document.

In terms of the draft research policy data or any research activity can only be conducted after school hours as per appointment. You are also requested to share your findings with the relevant sections of the department so that we may consider implementing your findings if that will be in the best interest of the department. To this effect, your final approved research report (both soft and hard copy) should be submitted to the department so that your recommendations could be implemented. You may be required to prepare a presentation and present at the departments annual research dialogue.

For more information kindly liaise with the department's research unit @ 013 766 5476 or a.baloyi@education.mpu.gov.za.

The department wishes you well in this important project and pledges to give you the necessary support you may need.

MRS MOC MHLABANE
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

30 / 5 /15
DATE

MPUMALANGA
THE PLACE OF THE RISING SUN