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**Multiple Partnerships among Young College Students in Durban:
Perspectives and Experiences**

Masters dissertation by

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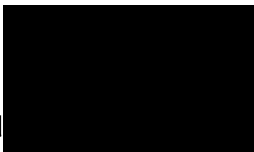
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DECLARATION

I, Nqobile Makhanya declare that:

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

Multiple sexual partnerships remain one of the main drivers of HIV in the sub-Saharan African region. While young people are vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, they are more likely than adults to engage in risky sexual behaviours such as multiple sexual partnerships and unprotected sexual practices. Younger people in higher education institutions often engage in risky sexual behaviours to sustain their university lifestyle. Studies suggest that young people face financial challenges when they get to university, which often leads them to try to obtain financial support from their partners in exchange for material gains. Power dynamics are recognised in such relationships, and this puts women's health at risk and leads to intimate partner violence, sexual coercion, inability to negotiate condom-use and increased alcohol consumption. For that reason, the aim of this study was to unpack the perspectives and experiences of students pertaining to multiple sexual partnerships in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. Qualitative data used in this study was collected from 20 young male and female students aged 20 years and over. The findings of this study showed male students are more likely than female students to report having multiple sexual partnerships. It was clear that Zulu cultural beliefs and values promote multiple sexual partners for men, noting that a man is only a 'real' man when he has more than one sexual partner. However, sexual double standards exist, as men are praised for their sexual relations with multiple women, whereas girls and women are derogated, stigmatised and labelled negatively for similar behaviours. Students also noted facilitating factors of multiple sexual partnerships, noting the importance of maintaining cultural norms and values pertaining to manhood through polygamy for family survival and growth. In addition, students emphasized that social media, desire for financial support and long-distance relationships facilitated their engagement in multiple sexual partnerships. On the other hand, inhibiting factors included religion, noting that engaging in sexual behaviours outside of wedlock is a sin and immoral. Additionally, students also noted that the fear of contracting sexual transmitted diseases and being stigmatised for engaging in multiple sexual partnerships inhibited them from engaging in such activities. Overall, this study recommends engaging young men and women in sexual and reproductive health rights conversations to make them understand how such risky sexual behaviours poses a serious threat to the overall health outcomes and longevity.

Keywords: MSP, risky sexual behaviours, students, material gains, gender beliefs

DEDICATION

To my grandmother; May Makhanya, I dedicate this dissertation to you. Thank you for being my pillar of strength. Your constant prayers, teachings, endless support and encouragement have got me where I am today. I know no greater love; you are a blessing from God.

I also dedicate this work to my parents; Nonhlanhla Angel Makhanya and Sandile Frank Ndlanya, thank you for your love and support.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ART	Antiretroviral Treatment
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HSSREC	Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
MCP	Multiple Concurrent Partnership
MSP	Multiple Sexual Partnership
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
SANAC	South African National AIDS Council
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
STATS SA	Statistics South Africa
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
USA	United States of America

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The sub-Saharan African region carries a disproportionate burden of HIV, accounting for more than 70% of the global burden of infection, with 76% of HIV-infected young women in the region (Kharsany and Karim, 2016; Dwyer-Lindgren, 2019). Multiple sexual partnerships (MSP) have been identified as one of the drivers of the high rate of HIV prevalence in the sub-Saharan African region (Mhele, 2017; Dwyer-Lindgren, 2019). Studies show that the high HIV incidence and prevalence observed in sub-Saharan Africa has been driven by high levels of multiple sexual partnerships (MSP) (Lurie and Rosenthal, 2010). Manjengwa et al. (2019) defines multiple sexual partnerships as having had more than one sexual partner in the past 12 months. Moreover, multiple sexual partnerships include overlapping or concurrent partnerships (Lurie and Rosenthal, 2010). Research in South Africa suggests that men are more likely to report MSP than women, with younger men reporting more sexual partners compared with their older counterparts (Mane and Aggleton, 2001; Meyer-Weitz et al, 2003; Shisana et al, 2009). Additionally, gender norms and beliefs that men's sexual desires are uncontrollable and gendered role beliefs about the appropriateness of refusing sex play a significant role in encouraging multiple sexual partnerships (Meyer-Weitz et al., 2003; Lurie and Rosenthal, 2010).

Young people in higher education institutions are more likely to engage in risky behaviours such as MSP, with hopes to have access to finances for subsistence needs and access to lifestyle items (Shisana et al., 2014). Studies investigating reasons for sexual debut in Durban universities suggests that while young men are likely to be persuaded by peer pressure into having more than one sexual partner, young women are most likely to be vulnerable to these risky behaviours due to poor socio-economic backgrounds (Akintola et al., 2012; Thobejane, 2017). According to Pettifor (2004) education tends to increase women's choice and power in relationships. In most financially-stable communities, there is a continuing notion that educated women are powerful and dominant in decision-making (Jana, Nkambule and Tumbo, 2008). However, this seems to contrast with the context and realities of most South African communities, as a result of the increasing rate of HIV infections and unplanned pregnancies among young women in higher-education institutions (Mbele et al., 2018).

University students often constitute young and mostly unemployed people from different communities and socio-economic backgrounds with a variety of stereotypes and life perceptions (Jagessar and Msibi, 2015). While some families are able to afford and financially support their children in universities, most cannot. Consequently, most impoverished South African students are funded by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), which sometimes is not enough to cover both subsistence and social needs of young people. Studies have shown that when young people are faced with financial difficulties, they tend to find other means of attaining financial support including engaging in risky sexual behaviours and MSP (Adinma, 2016). A study by Thobejane (2017) in South Africa has shown that blessers play a crucial role in sustaining the livelihoods of young female students, as they contribute to their financial needs such as paying for their tuition fee, food and accommodation. Additionally, in the study, students indicated that if they are in a relationship with someone who does not provide for them, they often find an alternative partner who will support them financially and in most cases, this is usually the blessers (Thobejane, 2017).

According to Luke (2005), women's reasons for engaging in MSP are rooted in the need to make ends meet and pay for university fees through economic gains in exchange for sexual pleasure, and emotional support and they have to maintain it for maximum benefits, whereas for men some of the reasons for MSP includes peer pressure, masculinity and to receive complementary labels. Studies show that most female students engage in MSP as a coping mechanism to deal with financial difficulties and stressors (Crandall et al., 2017; Daly, 2017). In addition, the choice of having more than one partner has also been influenced by the fear of rejection and the pressure to conform to gender norms of manhood and masculinity (Tibesigwa and Visser, 2015). Having a poverty-stricken background with a lack of disposable income encourages young women to engage in risky sexual behaviours. Sexual behaviour among university students show patterns of risky behaviours that are characterised by a constant change of sexual partners (Adinma, 2016).

According to Daly (2017), both males and female students experience peer pressure, which often leads them to engaging in risky sexual behaviours to impress their friends. Numerous students are getting into MSP because they consider it to be a fashionable thing to do and to fit in with a certain crowd, as their peers are doing it as well. While studies show that women experiencing sex for the first time in higher education institutions is due to the impact of peer

pressure (Akintola et al., 2012). However, Tibesigwa and Visser (2015) argue that peer pressure is more an influential factor of having multiple sexual partners among young male students. In addition, young men engage in sexual behaviours due to peer pressure and they are often more promiscuous to prove their masculinity (Akintola et al., 2012). Research shows that promiscuity mainly has to do with an innate, intense sexual drive, which is one of the factors leading both male and female students into MSP (Akintola et al., 2012; Kelly and Ntlabati, 2002). There have also been incidences where some students are sexually inexperienced when they get to higher education institutions, and this often leads them into wanting to experience more of their sexual life (Akintola, 2012; Kelly and Ntlabati, 2002). The rise of multiple sexual partnerships among students is often caused by a range of factors for both males and females, where there is more exposure to new ideas such as sexual liberation and feminism, even though these ideas do not promote or advocate for MSP. Moreover, some risky behaviour are done to fulfil political statements against notions of masculinity, going as far as saying if men can have multiple sexual partners then women can too (Fatusi and Wang, 2009). According to Fatusi and Wang (2009), substance use and early sexual debut increases the possibility of multiple sexual partners.

Studies investigating underlying risks of MSP influences found that financial incentives that comes with having multiple partners are usually the main cause of transactional sex, as most students coming from poor socio-economic backgrounds experience financial difficulties (Mutinta, 2014; Wamoyi, 2019). University students usually engage in transactional partnerships to gain material or monetary goods to sustain themselves for a period of time (Daly, 2017). This study also adds that these types of relationships are primarily dependent on survival systems by financially distraught young women and that sex and money are constantly traded inside these sexual relationships (Daly, 2017). Engaging in transactional partnerships is more common among female students as opposed to male students. This behaviour is prevalent and has given birth to the phenomena of blessers and blesses in South Africa (Thobejane, 2017).

A study by Daly (2017) shows that there is a growing number of young women in universities who have sexual relations with older men called 'sponsors'. This research seeks to unpack the perspectives and experiences of students pertaining to multiple sexual partnerships in Durban. This is critical in understanding the various factors that affect young, college students to engage in such risky sexual behaviours. The focus is on understanding the

perspectives and experiences of multiple sexual partnerships among young students in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

1.2 Problem Statement

Research indicates that African young women are most likely to be involved in multiple sexual partnerships (MSP), as they come from previously disadvantaged communities (Daly, 2017; Thobejane, 2017). The need for financial support in higher education institutions remains one of the driving factors for students to engage in risky behaviours, which often exposes them to sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV and unplanned pregnancies (Daly, 2017; Thobejane, 2017). The notion of ‘sugar daddy’ and ‘blessed’ has become a trend in most developing countries, including South Africa (Hoss and Blokland, 2018; Daly, 2017). Sugar daddies and ‘blessers’ are older men, preying on young women, showering them with expensive gifts and financial support in the face of poverty in exchange for sexual pleasure. This notion of dating older men in exchange for money is not done by specific people as there are also incidences of educated women being attracted to older men, mostly in universities these women are looking for financial support and to be taken care of (Hoss and Blokland, 2018). Moreover, these transactional sexual partnerships make more women become disproportionately burdened with contracting HIV, leading to poor sexual and reproductive health (SRH) outcomes. According to Daly (2017), different socio-economic circumstances lead people to become involved in activities they would not engage in for the benefit of financial and emotional stability. MSP and transactional sex differs respectively between males and female students. This research sought to solicit reasons for engaging in multiple sexual partnerships by exploring the perspectives and experiences of university students and ascertain opportunities and constraints of changing behaviour.

1.3 Rationale of the study

This study engages in qualitative research to explore the perceptions and experiences of young university students and their involvement in multiple sexual partnerships. Studies of this nature have been conducted with the specific focus on how substance abuse (Norris, Kitali and Worby, 2009), poor socio-economic backgrounds (Mutinta, 2014; Crockett, Raffaelli and Shen, 2006) and peer pressure (Daly, 2017; Tibesigwa and Visser, 2015) influences young students into engaging in risky sexual behaviours by being in multiple

sexual partnerships. For that reason, this study seeks to explore the perspectives and experiences of young university students to understand the various key factors they consider influential in their engagement in risky sexual behaviours. This remains a critical study as it allows us to understand the perspectives of students engaging in risky sexual behaviours. This research aims to provide rich perspectives on multiple sexual partnerships among young students in a higher education setting in Durban.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The overall aim of this study is to unpack the perspectives and experiences of students pertaining to multiple sexual partnerships in Durban. The specific objectives guiding this study are:

- To understand attitudes to multiple sexual partnerships among male and female students.
- To investigate facilitating and inhibiting factors towards multiple sexual partnerships among male and female students.
- To ascertain the opportunities and constraints on changing behaviours.

This study has several key questions that are critical in guiding the development and conduct of this research. These research questions of this study are in line with objectives of the study and these help the researcher to adequately address the study. The research questions are as follows:

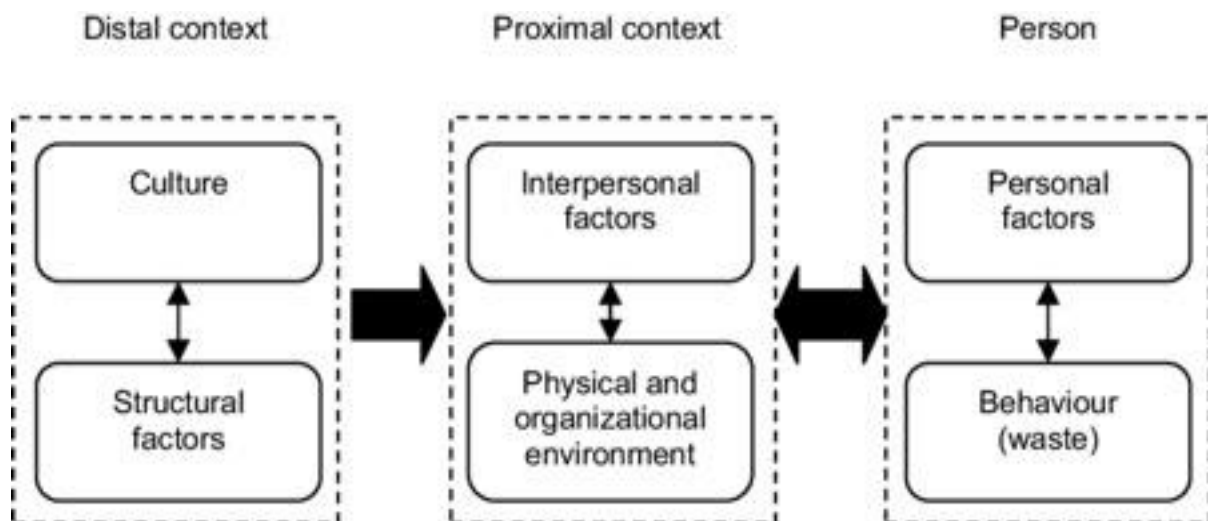
- What are the attitudes of students towards multiple sexual partnerships?
- What are factors promoting or inhibit students from being in multiple sexual partnerships?
- What are the opportunities or constraints on changing behaviour?

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This research is guided by theory developed by Eaton, Flisher and Aarø (2003) to explain unsafe sexual behaviour among South African youth. The theory was developed to review factors promoting and perpetuating unsafe sexual behaviour among people between the ages

14 to 35 years. Eaton, Flisher and Aarø (2003) found that 50% of young people were sexually active by the age of 16 years, which is more or less the age at which they finish high school and enter university (Eaton, Flisher and Aarø, 2003). It is pivotal to acknowledge the umbrella factors contributing to sexual activeness, and these include poverty and social norms. The theory looks at a variety of socio-economic and health dynamics such as the vulnerability to health risk and severity of health outcomes. It also acknowledges the likelihood that a changed behaviour is likely to protect an individual against perceived risks. Moreover, the theory deals with behaviour in a distal and proximal context and processes. It states that behaviour is dependent on thoughts and beliefs which leads to vulnerability and health risks. Most research pertaining to the severity of health outcomes use theories and models of health behaviour which are ‘social cognitive’ dealing with the interaction between people, their behaviour and their environments.

Figure 1.1: Liberty Eaton Theory



Source: Eaton, Flisher and Aarø (2003),

According to Eaton, Flisher and Aarø (2003), in order to understand sexual risk behaviours in the Southern African context, one needs to consider the interactive effects of factors at the three levels such as: 1) the personal factors which includes cognitions and feelings relating to sexual behaviour and HIV/AIDS, as well as thoughts about one’s self, 2) the proximal context, which comprises of interpersonal relationships, the physical and organisational environment, and 3) the distal context, which includes culture, societal norms and structural factors. The theory displayed in Figure 1.1 shows the relationship between sexual behaviour, personal factors and proximal and distal contexts which aims to show both subjective and

objective influences on sexual behaviour. The study draws on the theory to help solicit factors that promote or perpetuate unsafe sexual behaviour to understand and reveal student's knowledge and beliefs, interpersonal factors, culture and self-esteem and intentions on multiple sexual partnerships. For that reason, the theory will assist the researcher in showing vulnerability to health risks, severity of the health outcome and therefore ascertain opportunities and constraints on changing behaviour.

1.6 Structure of Dissertation

This research is organised into five chapters. Chapter one outlines the background, objectives, rationale and significance of this study. The next chapter reviews the relevant literature pertaining to multiple sexual partnerships among university students. Chapter three presents the procedures followed in making this study a reality and outline the data collection process and provides an explanation of the research techniques adopted. Chapter four reports on the findings of this study, and describes the main themes that emerged during interviews. Chapter five includes the discussion of the findings and previous literature, recommendations and the conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents literature conducted and published both locally and internationally. As the previous chapter elaborated, the overall aim for this study is to unpack the perspectives and experiences of students pertaining to multiple sexual partnerships in Durban, South Africa. Few studies have explicitly examined factors associated with concurrency in a South African context, and this study aims to contribute to this body of knowledge. It is critically important to understand these factors. This chapter aims to provide literature on young people and their engagement in multiple sexual partnerships to understand their reasons for engaging in such risky sexual behaviours. It is therefore from various premises that this chapter will review pertinent and relevant literature that outlines the factors influencing multiple sexual partnerships. This chapter discusses the social and health phenomenon of multiple sexual partners and the effects this type of partnership has on young people.

2.2 Youth and multiple sexual partnerships in research

Multiple sexual partnerships (MSP) have been identified as one of the driving forces for the high prevalence of HIV in sub-Saharan Africa (Anteneh, 2013; Mhele, 2017; Pilgrim, 2015). Studies define MSP as having two or more sexual partners that overlapped in time, and usually in the past 12 months (Anteneh, 2013; Manjengwa et al., 2019). There seems to be consensus in terms of defining MSP, as other scholars simply define MSP as having more than one sexual partner over a period of time and this is usually done for sexual pleasure or with the hopes of attaining financial returns (Mutinta, 2014; Nshindano, 2008). These type of relationships or partnerships are usually referred to as serialised partnerships, one sexual partner after the other, simultaneous or concurrent sexual partners that overlap in time.

Research shows that MSP tend to be a risky sexual behaviour in which young people engage, and in different contexts in Africa many adolescent and young people reported and declared having had multiple sexual partners (Agardh, Tumwine and O'stergren, 2011; Amon et al., 2011; Anteneh, 2013). Factors such as sex, level of study, religiosity, peer pressure and alcohol use among university students have been associated with increased engagement in MSP. Studies show that young men are more likely to report MSP as compared with young women, with more men reporting more sexual partners (Shisana et al., 2014). According to

Shisana et al. (2009), 30% of young men aged 15 to 24 years reported more than one partner in the past twelve months, which was an increase of 7% from a study that was undertaken in 2003. In a study in South Africa, it was found that those young men with multiple sexual partners received complimentary comments from their peers and were called “top dogs” or “ingagara” (Selikow, 2004). However, when a woman engages in such risky sexual behaviours, they are often labelled with derogatory terms such as “loose” or “isifebe” which makes them seem promiscuous (Selikow, 2004).

Some consequences of engaging in MSP have been attributed to the increased risk of HIV transmission in South Africa. These include high partner turnover, presence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), forced sex experiences, alcohol and drug use, unprotected sex and certain intravaginal practices like ‘dry sex,’ which are common practices throughout South Africa (Lazarus et al., 2018). Furthermore, empirical research has shown that high partner turnover, concurrent sexual partners or having multiple sexual partners (promiscuity) has become one of the leading causes for the spread of HIV in the developing regions including South Africa (Lazarus et al., 2018; Mhele, 2017). Promiscuity has become a common practice among adolescent teens, young adults and married people. Moreover, a significant number of people in relationships practicing promiscuity or engaging in MSP do so without caring about the consequences these have on facilitating HIV transmission.

Prevention of HIV in adolescents and young adults remain critical to the control of the pandemic overall, as approximately 45% of people who become HIV infected each year are aged 15-24 years (Pettifor, 2009; Pilgrim et al., 2015). Young women in the sub-Saharan African region account for 76% of HIV-infected youth, with most acquisitions and incidences occurring through heterosexual intercourse (Pilgrim et al., 2015). In South Africa, young people remain at high risk for transmitting HIV as a result of their vulnerability (Mah, 2010). In a study by Pettifor et al. (2005), South African youth reported consistency in terms of the relationship between a number lifetime sex partners and HIV infection, as it was found that increasing lifetime number of sexual partners was significantly associated with HIV infection among both young men and women.

Research has attributed the heightened risk of HIV, at both the individual and population levels as a result of engaging in risky sexual behaviours such as MSP and lack of condom use (Manhart et al., 2002; Mhele, 2017; Mutinta 2014; Nshindano and Maharaj, 2008; Swartz, Colvin and Harrison, 2016). According to Shisana et al. (2014), research in South Africa

shows that men are more likely to report MSP behaviours than women with younger men reporting more sexual partners with their older counterparts. It has been clear that gender and societal norms consider men's sexual desires uncontrollable and gendered role beliefs about the appropriateness of refusing sex may lead to encouraging an individual to engage in multiple sexual partnerships (Shisana et al., 2014). The practice of MSP have increased the incidence and prevalence of HIV, especially in countries that are generally overwhelmed by the HIV epidemic, where sexual networks makes the spread of HIV more rapid (Mutinta, 2014).

2.3 Determinants of multiple sexual partnerships

Research shows that multiple sexual partnerships are often driven by a variety of determinants, which are usually perpetuated by gender norms and beliefs, pressure from peers, economic vulnerability and poverty, dissatisfaction in main relationships and alcohol use (Kenyon et al., 2010; Shisana et al., 2014).

2.3.1 Societal norms and beliefs

Studies also suggest that young women are particularly vulnerable due to the gendered nature of roles within heterosexual relationships (Amaro, 1995). Gender norms and beliefs that men's sexual desires are unchangeable and uncontrollable play a significant role in encouraging multiple sexual partnerships (Higgins, Hoffman and Dworkin, 2010; Shisana et al., 2014). There is a continuous permissive attitude toward MSP, as measured by the belief that men have the right to have sex with other women, and this often inspires the occurrence of this behaviour (Mhele, 2017). According to Mhele (2017), South African communities seem more accepting of MSP among males than females. In a study conducted in Botswana, one male respondent outlined that "a bull cannot be contained in a single kraal", which means that a man cannot have one sexual partner and still be consider a man (Carter et al., 2007). In this study, sexual concurrency was defined in terms of norms that support multiple sexual partnerships in Botswana, the findings represent beliefs and norms that in principle would support or be associated with concurrent sexual behaviour (Carter et al., 2007).

Gender-related norms and beliefs have also been recognised as key drivers of HIV vulnerability globally (Carter et al., 2007). Gender norms seem to give men more power over women, and this often promotes HIV risk behaviours such as multiple sexual partnerships as acceptable and regarded as an expected masculine behaviour (Hunter, 2004). A study in

South Africa found that MSP is associated with a higher social status within the community and also, defines manhood, as this may be a source of power and even contribute to men's self-worth (Shisana et al., 2014). Consistent with research by Potgieter et al. (2012), cultural definitions of masculinity often normalise sexual adventure or the need for multiple partners, and fosters a sense of invulnerability and shapes negative attitudes about women. A study in South Africa highlighted that concurrency may be a social norm that is resistant to change (Mah and Maughan-Brown, 2013).

Studies have found similar factors for multiple concurrent sexual partnerships (MCPs), and it was clear that these studies highlighted social norms that are cultural and gender-related (Jana et al., 2007; Nshindano and Maharaj, 2008). According to Hoss and Blokland (2018), one of the cultural factors influencing MCPs included the commonly held belief that having multiple partners, particularly for young men in South Africa, was an acceptable norm. Consistent with a study in Tanzania, young men's concurrency was associated with inequitable personal gender norms (Yamanis et al., 2016). Additionally, young men's personal gender norms that were associated with concurrency, such as men who held inequitable attitudes towards women would be more likely to have multiple sexual partners. Gender norms tend to underscore men's power over women in sexual relationships, as gender norms may also be related to men's decisions to engage in concurrent partnerships (Yamanis et al., 2016). Another study in a university setting in South Africa found that female participants cited reasons for having multiple partners so that they are now able to follow the same gender norms governing multiple sexual partnerships that have traditionally applied only to men (Psaki, Ayivi-Guedehoussou and Halperin, 2013).

2.3.2 Peer pressure

Peer pressure has been used when people talk about behaviours that are not considered socially acceptable or desirable, such as an experimentation. Peer pressure tends to be one of the factors as to why individuals have multiple partners, so that they do not to feel left out. According to Mutinta (2014), peer pressure is strongly correlated with multiple sexual partners. According to Shisana et al. (2014), monogamous men in the sub-Saharan African region are seen as lacking the foundation of 'real manhood', incapable of convincing females and interpreted 'not man enough' when they do not have multiple partners. Simbayi (2009) noted that young men are often peer pressured into having multiple sexual partners to prove

normality and masculinity. While research shows that machismo is a form of masculine behaviour, which comprises of the man's desire to take sexual advantage of women, the failure to assume responsibility for the consequences of such actions, and the self-praise for sexual exploits within the sub-culture of the peer group (Sara-Lafosse, 1998). In a study in Nigeria, young men who have had many sexual partners were accorded a higher social standing amongst their peers (Izugbara and Modo, 2007). Mutinta (2014) also found that adolescents who were staying alone or with peers were more inclined to engage in MSP, with 42.4% reporting peer pressure as the underlying influence for initiating sexual intercourse.

In a study conducted at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, it was found that peer pressure tends to be a strong underlying factor to have multiple sexual partners among students aged between 19 and 25 years (Mutinta, 2014). In Tanzania, peer pressure to engage in risky sexual behaviours tends to be more pronounced for young men than young women (Yamanis et al, 2016). In addition, when men socialise in the same venues, it is possible that the younger men become more socially influenced by the behaviours of their older peers. Qualitative evidence also suggested the importance of sexual behaviour norms in a Tanzanian context, indicating that men pressure and encourage other men to engage in sexual risk behaviours (Yamanis et al., 2016). According to Shelton (2009), men's interaction with peers is likely to shape their sexual attitudes and behaviours. Studies have also shown similar determinants for women compared to those of men, as a study by Mlambo, Peltzer and Chirinda (2016) found that women also experience high peer pressure to engage in risky sexual behaviours. This is consistent with a study conducted in Kenya which suggested that young women also have sexual partners because of peer pressure (Longfield et al., 2004).

According to Nshindano and Maharaj (2008), peer pressure was a major barrier for most respondents to changing one's own behaviour. The study was conducted in Zambia among university students, and it was clear that in most cases when a person wants to change their behaviour, they would fear ridicule, loss of status and friendship as a result they failed to maintain the standards of machismo. It was also that social status among male students was maintained through being seen with multiple sexual partners, and for some; having multiple partners was a way of proving manliness in a social environment that equates multiple sexual partners with being a 'real man'. This study in line with the findings of a study conducted among university students in Nigeria, found that many male students tried to live up to the 'cultural expectations' influenced by polygamy and peer pressure emphasizing that being in a multiple sexual partnership as a man is acceptable (Olaniran, Persson and Oyekanmi, 2013).

Consistent with findings from a study undertaken in Kenya, which found that male students taught each other sexual heroism and competed as to who would have the highest number of girls attached to them. Others bet over having sex with certain identified girls and in the process influence each other's decisions (Othero, Aduma and Opil, 2009).

2.3.3 Economic vulnerability and poverty

There are various factors that are attributed to increased economic vulnerability leading to the likeliness to engage in risky sexual behaviours in exchange for monetary gains. Poverty and low economic status of women have been cited as factors for the disparity in having multiple sexual partners or engaging in transactional sexual pleasure in exchange for monetary gains. According to Kenyon et al. (2010), one of the contributory socio-economic factors for MSP included the pervasive way in which sexual pleasure could be exchanged for material goods and money in settings of extensive poverty and inequality (Kenyon et al., 2010). Consistent with early literature, which found that many young people, especially women often engage in transactional sex in exchange for monetary gains and gifts (Hunter, 2004; Dunkle et al., 2007). Additionally, the association between sex and monetary gain has been a factor in driving multiple sexual partnerships.

Research indicates that young women engage in MSP mainly as a result of economic deprivation and vulnerability, and engaging in transactional relationships is chiefly driven by the exchange of sex for social and financial gain (Stoebenau et al., 2016; Muchiri et al., 2017; Maughan-Brown, Evans and George, 2016). According to Mah and Maughan-Brown (2013), women in concurrent relationships were more likely to report engaging in transactional sex. Additionally, these women were more likely to report transactional sex and problems in negotiating condoms and refusing sexual intercourse. This means that transactional exchange often leads to gender imbalances around sexual intercourse and sometimes leads to coercive sex. Sexual partnering between young women and older men, who might have acquired HIV from previous relationships remain key factor driving HIV transmission.

According to Van Schie (2016), older partners who are normally referred to as “blessers” and “sugar daddies” threatens the fight against the prevention of HIV infection among young women. “Blessers” are often older men with financial capability to provide financial support and shower their young lovers with gifts they believe they need to fit in with their peers to feel more accepting of themselves. Using this capability, sugar daddies often find it easy to

manipulate sexual partners by forcing them to do anything they want and to engage in unsafe sexual intercourse without a condom. Moreover, these relationships are usually characterised by limited power of women to suggest and propose the use of condoms because they fear being perceived as promiscuous by older men or losing the benefits of being in sexual partnerships with them (De Oliveira, 2016; Luke and Kurz, 2002). These age-disparate sexual partnerships are usually linked to increased HIV-risk among young women (Maughan-Brown, Evans and Gavin George, 2016).

Multiple sexual partnerships are likely to continue thriving as women who are exposed to poverty resort to sex with different men as a means of survival (Kaufman and Stavrou, 2004). Young women also sometimes use sex as a means to acquire financial support and escape poverty (UNAIDS, 2016). According to Nshindano and Maharaj (2008), poverty remains one of the reasons young women have commodified sex. This means that women in dire economic circumstances agree to sexual relationships with men in exchange for financial support. A study in Nigeria suggested that young women may have as many as three simultaneous sexual relationships while she makes her way through university-perhaps with a teacher in order to ensure good marks, a 'sugar daddy' or 'sponsor' who can pay her living expenses and school fees, and a boyfriend for emotional reasons (Hallman, 2005). It is important to note a distinction between commodified exchanges of sex and receiving gifts that are considered a normal part of relationships are not always clear (Hallman, 2005).

Pascoe (2015) argues that poorer women may have little choice but to adopt risky behaviours that put them at risk of HIV infection, including engaging in transactional and intergenerational sex, early marriage, and relationships that would expose them to violence and abuse. Poorer and less-educated women may be less knowledgeable about health risks and SRH outcomes, and therefore are less able to adopt HIV risk-reducing behaviours. A study in Tanzania found that young women enter transactional sexual relationships in pursuit of material commodities such as gifts, money, cell phones and expensive alcohol from sexual partners when they have younger sexual partners they have serious relationships with (Wamoyi et al., 2019). In support of these findings UNAIDS (2018) also found that young women may have older partners for material benefits and at the same time have boyfriends closer to their own age with whom they have more serious relationships.

2.3.4 Dissatisfaction with main relationships

According to Davis et al. (2006), satisfaction of one's needs is likely to depend on successful communication of those needs to others, as well as successful negotiation and resolution of conflicts surrounding them. While the sense of emotional satisfaction from sex is likely influenced by physical satisfaction, inhibited sexual communication is negatively related to sexual satisfaction, including strictly physical satisfaction and also the sense of control over how, when, and whether to have sex (Davis et al., 2006). Research shows that dissatisfaction with the main relationship is a contributing factor for engagement in multiple sexual partnerships for both men and women (Cox et al., 2014). In a study conducted in Tanzania among people in relationships, it was found that participants more commonly reported financial dissatisfaction as a contributing factor for women engaging in multiple sexual partnerships within a stable relationship (Cox et al., 2014). While emotional and sexual dissatisfaction was also reported men and women noted how potential outside partners are often evaluated based on what they are able to offer compared to their stable partners (Cox et al., 2014).

The findings from the study by Davis et al. (2006) showed that participants in their current sexual relationships, 44% of them rated overall satisfaction with their relationship and how much they were "in love" with their partners. This means that the majority, 56% from the sample were not generally satisfied with their relationships and may have engaged in multiple sexual relationships to get sexual, emotional and physical satisfaction from another person. A report in South Africa by Jana, Nkambule and Tumbo (2008) revealed that many participants reported being sexually dissatisfied with their 'steady' or 'love' partners, and discussed looking for variety, sexual adventure and specific physical characteristics in additional sexual partners. In addition, respondents generally spoke of a lack of communication between partners on sexual issues in relationships, and this lack of communication between partners contributed to sexual dissatisfaction. Consistent with findings by Govender (2019), one of the factors for engaging in multiple sexual partnerships for both men and women included obtaining sexual satisfaction from partners where a spouse could not provide sexual satisfaction and also to cope with male infidelity or male domination.

An empirical investigation by Davidson and Hoffman (1986) explored the meaning and/or function of sexual fantasising for married women and whether any differences existed between married women who are satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, or dissatisfied with their current sex life. Of all respondents, 51% of those individuals who reported

satisfaction with their current sex partner reported having engaged in solitary masturbation, in comparison to only 40% of those individuals reporting dissatisfaction with their current sex partner (Davidson and Hoffman, 1986). Additionally, for respondents; solitary masturbation was not necessarily used as a technique for coping with sexual dissatisfaction but to enhance sexual pleasure. This implies that as much as some people might be dissatisfied with their current sex life, sexual pleasure could be one mechanism that is used to enhance their sexual life to prevent themselves from engaging in risky sexual behaviours with multiple sexual partners.

2.3.5 Alcohol use

Sex and gender roles may influence the extent to which alcohol use increases sexual risk taking (Carey et al., 2016). While research suggested limited evidence in associating alcohol use and the practice of risky sexual behaviours (Lin et al., 2005), more research shows that alcohol consumption is associated with the risk for STIs, including HIV/AIDS (Kalichman et al., 2007). According to Cook and Clark (2005), alcohol elevates sexual risks through multiple channels, including risk-taking personality characteristics, drinking environments, expectations regarding the effects of alcohol on risk-taking and the psychogenic effects of alcohol on decision making. There has been a link between engaging in risky sexual behaviours and alcohol consumption (Kalichman et al., 2007; Mlambo, Peltzer and Chirinda, 2016). Mlambo, Peltzer and Chirinda (2016) looked at the predictors of multiple concurrent and multiple sexual partners in South Africa among youth aged 18 to 24 years, and one of their findings was on alcohol use. It was clear that hazardous or harmful alcohol use was associated with multiple sexual partners among both women and men. Most studies found that engaging in sexual behaviours while intoxicated with alcohol suggests that people are less likely to think about condom use (Simbayi et al., 2005; Zuma et al., 2003).

A study done in the United States of America (USA) aimed to identify factors which are associated with multiple concurrent partners, found that alcohol and drugs influenced people to have multiple concurrent partners and to engage in risky sexual behaviours (Santelli et al., 1998). Recent research shows many studies document the association between alcohol and multiple sexual partners (Aicken, Nardone and Mercer, 2011; Patrick et al., 2012). In line with the study in the United States of America, alcohol use is associated with multiple sexual partners. Studies show that although men consume more alcohol than women, women are

more vulnerable to alcohol's effect due to smaller body mass and are more likely to engage in multiple sexual partnerships than men (Carey et al., 2016; Nolen-Hoeksema, 2004). This is consistent with findings from a study in Uganda that shows that women are vulnerable to engaging in risky sexual behaviours once they have consumed alcohol (Schulkind et al., 2016). In addition, another study showed that engaging in heavy drinking doubled the likelihood of having multiple partners only for women (Hutton et al., 2008). According to Carey et al. (2016), alcohol use increases the risk of multiple partners to a greater extent for women than for men.

A study by Carey et al. (2016) in the US linked depression with alcohol use and multiple sexual partnerships, and it showed that depressed patients in an STI clinic had more lifetime sexual partners than non-depressed patients. This suggests that depression can be associated with both alcohol use and with multiple sexual partners, and because depression is more common among women, the association between alcohol use and multiple sexual partners among women could be explained by the higher rates of depression among females. In line with findings by Chitwood, Comerford and Sanchez (2003), alcohol and drug use increases the likelihood of engaging in sexual risk behaviours such as multiple sexual partners, sex trading, and unprotected sexual intercourse. In Uganda, alcohol use is high, and is similarly associated with low or inconsistent condom use, greater number of sex partners, and more extramarital relations, as well as HIV risk behaviour across settings (Kiene et al., 2017).

2.4 Consequences of multiple sexual partnerships

The determinants of multiple sexual partnerships pose serious health risks to individuals who engage in them. One of the main consequences is HIV transmission among sexual partners, as they tend to engage in unsafe sexual intercourse and risky sexual behaviours which often lead to the contraction and transmission of HIV.

2.4.1 Prevalence of HIV and STIs among youth

According to Avert (2018), statistics on HIV/AIDS infections indicates that South Africa has the highest prevalence in the world (Avert, 2018). The estimates show that 21% of the global population living with HIV can be located in South Africa with 7.52 million people by 2018 (Statistics South Africa 2018). According to UNAIDS (2017), new HIV infection rate has risen to 270,000 in South Africa and about 110,000 people died from AIDS-related illnesses in 2017. This is despite the fact that South Africa has the largest antiretroviral treatment

(ART) programme which is predominately financed through its own domestic resources. South Africa invests more than \$1.34 billion annually to run its HIV programmes to reduce new HIV infections (UNAIDS, 2017). However, even though the new infection rate and death rate is significantly high and South African government been burdened by the increase in HIV prevalence, there has been a significant success in the roll-out of ART programmes with the national life expectancy rising from 61.2 years in 2010 to 67.7 years in 2015 (SANAC, 2017).

Multiple sexual partnerships have been identified as a potential driver in the HIV epidemic in southern Africa (Cox et al., 2014). One of the prominent determinants of the spread of STIs and HIV among young people is equivalent to changes in sexual partners, early sexual debut, lack of condom use and engaging in risky sexual behaviours (Kelley et al, 2003; Mhele, 2017; Mutinta, 2014; Shelton et al, 2007). A study conducted by Kelley et al. (2003) in the United States found that people who were in concurrent relationships were more likely to report STIs than those on sequential relationships. This is consistent with a study by Halperin and Epstein (2004) which found that individuals with concurrent sexual partners are more likely to transmit the infection to others quickly. In addition, if an individual has a sexual partner who practices concurrency, then their risk of acquiring STIs increases and this may present an added risk by linking sexually active individuals in varying degrees to larger sexual networks. This means that having unprotected sex with the multiple sexual partners exposes an individual to every other person they have had sex with without the knowledge of an STI or HIV.

Early sexual debut has been associated with the increased likelihood of risky sexual behaviours later in life (Zuma et al., 2010). Research shows that young people who initiate sex at early ages are more likely than those who do not initiate sex early to experience risks of poor sexual and reproductive health outcomes such as abortions, STIs including HIV/AIDS, sexual abuse, unplanned and repeated pregnancies (Falb et al., 2015; Raj, 2010). This is consistent with O'Hara et al. (2012) who found that early sexual debut is associated with risky sexual behaviour and an increased risk of unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections later in life. In addition, another study suggested that early sexual debut often leads to increased sexual risk-taking behaviours, such as having multiple partners and not using contraceptives, and may be independently associated with pregnancy (Baumgartner et al., 2009).

The general discourse on HIV prevention has been largely saturated by abstinence and condom use messages. However, various studies have emphasised the importance of fidelity and partner-reduction in prevention of HIV transmission (Mhele, 2017; Muthenheri, 2014). The emphasis is generally based on arguments that suggest MSP to considerably increase the global HIV epidemic levels (Green, 2003; Morris and Kretzschmar, 1997). Considering that most HIV infections are transmitted through an engagement in sexual behaviours, evidence suggests that multiple sexual partnerships and risky sexual behaviours contribute more to new HIV infections (Green, 2003). Moreover, while it is often argued that the number of sexual partners is not significant if a person who has multiple partners uses condoms, other research on condom use have suggested that condom use globally is not consistent, and inconsistent condom use increase the chances for an individual to contract STIs and HIV (Hearst and Chen, 2004).

The most vulnerable groups in South Africa with higher HIV prevalence rate includes young women, orphans, men who have sex with men, transgender women, sex workers and people who abuse drugs and alcohol (Brink, 2017). Multiple and concurrent partnerships, low and inconsistent condom use, alcohol abuse (together termed risky sexual behaviours) and low levels of male circumcision have been shown to be the key drivers of the epidemic (Choudhry et al., 2014; Manjengwa et al., 2019; Townsend et al., 2010). According to Mah (2010), concurrency or overlapping sexual partnerships remains a critical element and partnership dynamics plays a significant role in HIV transmission. Furthermore, empirical research suggest that MSP is an important factor in facilitating HIV transmission (Nshindano and Maharaj, 2008). Green (2003) and Morris and Kretzschmar (1997) argued that if it were not for MSP, new HIV infections would have been prevented. According to Shisana et al. (2014), theorist argue that the high HIV incidence and prevalence in sub-Saharan Africa are driven by high levels of multiple sexual partnerships, specifically among young people.

While risky sexual behaviours are known to be drivers of the spread of HIV, cognitive factors such as perceived susceptibility to HIV, monetary benefits with an exchange of sexual pleasure and self-efficacy also play a significant role in influencing those risky behaviours (Manjengwa et al., 2019). According to Morris (2001), most of the increased individual-level risk of acquiring HIV are associated with concurrency resulting from having a partner who engages in concurrency and thus increases an individual's potential exposure to primary HIV infection by "connecting" that individual to an expanded sexual network. In a study conducted in United States among STI clinic users, it was found that even if users controlled

a number of the sexual partners, both adults and adolescent users who engaged in concurrency were at risk for STIs (Gorbach, Drumright and Holmes, 2005; Rosenberg et al., 1999). This is consistent with another study in the United States, which found that having had concurrent partners was associated with a history of an STI (Laumann et al., 1994). In Tanzania, a study found an association between concurrent partners and herpes among male bar and hotel workers (Kapiga et al., 2003). However, a study in South Africa found that having a partner who engaged in concurrency was not associated with HIV infection for men and women (Steffenson et al., 2011).

2.4.2 Intimate partner violence

Power inequalities and gender norms in relationships continue to increase women's HIV risk through multiple pathways, including norms of male toughness and acceptance of intimate partner violence (IPV) perpetration, violence as a way to control women and maintain male dominance, notions of masculinity that endorse multiple partners and condom less sex for men, and notions of femininity that value women's compliance and placing others' needs above their own (Jewkes and Morrell, 2010). Research throughout sub-Saharan Africa points to intimate partner violence (IPV) as one of the vulnerabilities to HIV, and is associated with the risk of HIV infection, alcohol consumption by the male partner, multiple sexual partners, inconsistent condom use and sexual coercion (Kiene et al., 2017).

IPV is often argued to be the biggest contributor of new infections with an estimated 20–25% of new HIV infections in young women (De Oliveira, 2016). Research shows that the relationship between IPV perpetration and HIV among men may be explained by the co-occurrence of IPV perpetration with other forms of HIV risk behaviour, such as multiple sexual partners, unprotected sex, and transactional sex (Decker et al., 2009; Hembling and Andrinopoulos, 2014; Raj et al., 2008). In addition, this pattern of behaviour may be shaped by gender inequality and socio-cultural beliefs and norms promoting machismo and dictating that men should demonstrate their masculinity by controlling women and being sexually promiscuous (Decker et al., 2009; Dasgupta et al., 2018).

A study in a peri-urban setting in South Africa assessed the extent and correlations of IPV to explore power inequalities and the role of sexual and social risk factors in the production of violence among young women (Zembe et al., 2015). The study found that women often negotiate power and control if exposed to intimate partner violence in sexual networks such

as multiple sexual partnering, transactional sex and age mixing. Young women who self-reported more than one male sexual partner in the past three months and reported friendship or acquaintance with one or more women who have multiple sexual partners were more likely to experience IPV. Furthermore, the findings also showed that young women reported high rates of sexual risk behaviour such as concurrency (87%), transactional sex (91%) and age mixing (59%), when an assessment on the associations between IPV and sexual risk behaviours, sexual IPV was significantly associated with age mixing and transactional sex with the most recent casual partner (Zembe et al., 2015). In addition, engaging in transactional sex with the most recent casual partner almost doubled the likelihood of having experienced both sexual and physical IPV in the past 12 months for respondents (Zembe et al., 2015).

In Uganda, IPV was common among young sexually active women (Zablotska et al., 2009). In line with a previous study in sub-Saharan Africa which found that young women were commonly assaulted and violated by their intimate partners (Watts and Mayhew, 2004). Other studies have shown that forced sex and wife beating are often accepted or even expected expressions of masculinity (Jewkes et al., 2003), while women are usually expected to satisfy their partners' needs. In addition, men may use violence in response to their partner's accusations of infidelity, as both physical violence and sexual coercion were significantly associated with having more than one sexual partner (Karamagi et al., 2006; Zablotska et al., 2009). Research on risky behaviours suggest that women with a history of abuse have a greater likelihood of encountering an abusive partner in a multiple partnership (Zablotska et al., 2009).

In rural South Africa, it was found that among pregnant women and their male partners, sexual intercourse and HIV sexual risk behaviour was frequent, including unprotected sex, multiple partners and sexual partners of unknown serostatus (Peltzer et al., 2013). In this study, it was interesting to see unprotected sex to be higher among male partners who were aware of the HIV negative status of their female partner, who had multiple sexual partners in the past month and those who experienced low levels of minor partner violence. In addition, while it may be understandable that male partners have unprotected sex with an HIV negative partner, it might be disturbing to note that male partners with multiple sex partners also have more unprotected sex (Peltzer et al., 2013). Consistent with another study in South Africa, men who have multiple partners had committed IPV in the past 12 against their female sexual partners (Townsend et al., 2011). In addition, while men who have multiple female sexual

partners are at increased risk for HIV as a product of having many partners, the study found that those men who engaged in a range of behaviours that increase the risk for HIV transmission towards female partners had also been violent (Townsend et al., 2011).

A study in Uganda on transactional sex and IPV shows that high rates of emotional, physical, and sexual IPV were identified among women engaging in transactional sex and in multiple sexual partnering (Sileo, Kintu and Kiene, 2018). In relationships where women have been found or suspected by their partner to be in a multiple sexual partnership, they are likely to be victims of IPV. According to Ruark et al. (2014), conflict and violence, including physical violence directed at women, usually erupted in a relationship when infidelity was suspected or discovered. In this study among young adults in Swaziland, women reported feelings of deep hurt, anguish, jealousy and revenge when they discovered a partner's sexual affairs, and while women freely acknowledged that infidelity was rife within their social networks, they had often believed their partnerships to be exceptions to the rule, involving true love and commitment (Ruark et al., 2014).

2.6 Summary

This study reviewed pertinent literature on a local and global level to understand how multiple sexual partnerships tend to be one of the risk behaviours that contribute towards the prevalence of HIV infections among youth. This study builds on current research that deals with young people and MSP, and the underlying risks for engaging in such multiple relationships. The determinants that facilitate young people to engage in risky sexual behaviours were discussed, and the consequences and risks for having multiple sexual partners was also outlined both in a local and global context. Overall, it was clear that young people in higher education institutions can easily be exploited and this often increases HIV prevalence among young people.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study aims to explore factors that persuade young people to engage in risky behaviours to understand the experiences and perspectives of university students towards multiple sexual partnerships (MSP). In this chapter, the researcher focuses on the process of data collection and analysis. This chapter is divided into five sections; the first section gives an overview of the study context. The second section explains the research methodology chosen for this study. The third section outlines the research approach and data collection process followed in this study, and this includes the sampling technique, the recruiting process and the research instrument chosen. The fourth section explains analytical frameworks and matters of ethics. The last section explains the limitations of the study.

3.2 Study Context

KwaZulu-Natal is located in the east of South Africa and is the second most populated province according to the 2019 mid-year population estimates from Statistics South Africa (2019). South Africa has a population of approximately 58.78 million people, with KwaZulu-Natal constituting approximately 11.3 million people (19.2%) (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Africans constitutes 80.7% of people in the country, followed by Coloureds with 8.8%, Whites with 7.9% and Indian/Asians with 2.6% (Statistics South Africa, 2019). This study was conducted at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN) in Howard College campus which is located in a suburban area in Glenwood with just over 46 520 students across all the colleges (University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, 2017).

The Howard College campus is one of five campuses at UKZN and reflects true diversity in which it is located, with students and lecturers from a variety socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. The racial diversity at UKZN is similar to that of the South African racial diversity stated by Statistics South Africa. UKZN has a remarkable reputation in academic excellence which has landed the university at a well-deserved third position among 16 universities in South Africa (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2017). The University of KwaZulu-Natal is a university that is “academically excellent, innovative in research, critically engaged with society and demographically representative; and is redressing the disadvantages, inequalities and imbalance of the past.” (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2017).

Howard College campus has four colleges or schools including Humanities, Agriculture, Engineering and Science, Law and Management Studies and Health Sciences colleges. College students are often young, with the majority aged between 18 and 35 years, and this is usually the time where sexual experimentation occurs as they are transitioning into adulthood. While there are various definitions used for youth, this study uses the definition adopted by the South Africa's National Youth Commission Act (1996), which defines youth as those individuals falling between the ages of 14 and 35 years.

Figure 3.1: Map of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College campus



Source: (Google Maps, 2019)

3.3 Research Methodology

Philosophical underpinnings in research remains one of the crucial components that shapes research designs and approaches adopted in the study to support its credibility and validity (Jackson, 2013). According to Buckley and Chiang (1976), research methodology forms a research design by which the researcher maps out an approach to problem-solving. This part of the chapter explains the advantages of the qualitative research design.

3.3.1 Qualitative research methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research design because it allowed the researcher to be subjectively engaged in the subject matter that is being studied. According to Jamshed (2014), a qualitative research methodology is considered to be suitable when the researcher either investigates a new field of study or intends to ascertain and theorise prominent issues. This is often developed to obtain an in-depth and extensive understanding of the issues by means of their textual interpretation (Jamshed, 2014). Fossey et al. (2002) suggested that a qualitative research design is often well suitable in understanding socio-economic phenomenon within their context, by allowing the researcher to unpack all the links among the concerns and behaviours of the phenomenon. Moreover, a qualitative research design allows health researchers to make use of wide-ranging techniques to identify the stressors, causes and what really matters to people being studied.

This type of research methodology helped the researcher to explore and understand fundamental reasons leading students to have multiple sexual partnerships and provide insights and experiences from the student's perspectives. The study aims to build on the available literature to help find resolutions to the problems and disproportionate burdens caused by multiple sexual relationships. As a result, the qualitative research methodology is most suitable for this study because it aims at understanding reasons that causes students to engage in risky behaviours such as multiple sexual partnerships, and this is done by soliciting thick descriptions and understanding the perspectives and experiences of young people in multiple sexual partnerships.

3.4. Data collection process

When conducting research, it is of vital importance for researchers to provide real life experiences in order to support the arguments on the subject matter. The data collection process remains one of the crucial processes in research as it allows researchers to gather data using the chosen research instrument and relevant research approaches. This study used in-depth interviews and snowball sampling to allow the researcher to gather qualitative data among the recruited participants. These processes are explained further to show the reader how the researcher went about recruiting the participants and collecting qualitative data from them.

3.4.1 Sampling

This study used a snowball sampling technique. This non-probability sampling technique is relevant in terms of asking questions such as ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘how’, and individuals are only chosen selectively through social network structures. According to Heckathorn (2011), the snowball sampling method was coined for means of studying social network structures and it is often relevant in studies that require hidden or hard-to-reach populations. This type of sampling follows different stages in finding the most appropriate respondents that will be able to relate to the subject matter that is being studied. Further, the researcher uses snowball sampling because this technique relies on referrals and helps the researcher to get necessary participants that could be difficult to locate (Neuman, 2014).

As previously noted, this study focuses on the factors leading young people to engage in risky sexual behaviours such as multiple sexual partnerships. This study may be offensive to some individuals, as they might have not engaged in this kind of behaviour, hence the researcher used the snowball sampling to recruit participants that knew someone who might have had engaged in this type of sexual partnership. The snowball sampling technique remains beneficial and suitable in recruiting and locating people who are involved in MSP and who know others that would be keen to participate in a study of this nature. For that reason, the snowball sampling began by asking the friends of the researcher if they have been in multiple sexual partnerships, and followed on asking them if they know of anyone who might have been involved in multiple sexual partnerships. This process of recruiting participants was useful in locating potential participants as recommended by others (Browne, 2007).

Data gathering remains one of the key components for every scientific study, as the data is meant to contribute in better understanding the literature evaluated in the study and the theoretical framework chosen (Tongco, 2007). The sample consisted of twenty participants. Participants included ten males and ten females between the ages of 20 to 32 years. All recruited participants were from Howard College campus at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Snowball sampling was used to identify and recruiting participants who had an ability to produce quality information on their perspectives and experiences of being in multiple sexual partnerships. As previously mentioned, the researcher first approached a few individuals from Howard College campus, and was referred to other participants who were

willing to share their insights on MSP. Table 3.1 shows the profile of participants. The youngest recruited respondent was a 21-year old undergraduate female student whereas the oldest respondent was a 32-year old postgraduate male student.

Table 3.1: Profile of participants

Participant Number	Gender	Age	Marital status
1	Male	32	Single
2	Female	21	Single
3	Female	24	Single
4	Male	31	Single
5	Male	24	Single
6	Male	23	Single
7	Male	28	Single
8	Male	31	Single
9	Male	29	Single
10	Male	25	Single
11	Male	31	Single
12	Female	23	Single
13	Male	25	Single
14	Female	24	Single
15	Female	22	Single
16	Female	26	Single
17	Female	27	Single
18	Female	23	Single
19	Female	24	Single
20	Female	26	Single

3.4.3 In-depth interviews

This study used in-depth interviews to collect qualitative data from participants. In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research method which seeks to conduct individual or one-on-one interviews with a smaller number of respondents in separate locations to explore their perspectives on the social phenomenon that is being researched (Boyce and Neale, 2006). In this study, in-depth interviews were used to understand student's lived experiences of multiple sexual partnerships to understand their reasons for engaging in this risky sexual behaviour. In-depth interviews were employed to explore thick descriptions of individuals' understanding, experiences and perceptions of multiple sexual relationships. According to Newcomer, Hatry and Wholey (2015), this type of research instrument allows and provides guidance for soliciting narratives of the participants without disturbing their story, as the researcher tends to only follow up once the respondent has shared their opinions and experiences. Additionally, this data collection method allows the researcher to use probes for clarity (Newcomer, Hatry and Wholey, 2015). As a result, the in-depth interviewing technique has also been recommended by Neuman (2014) to attain and understand individual personal perspectives and experiences. Hence, this study aimed at soliciting young people's perspectives and experiences of multiple sexual partnerships.

The venue that was used to conduct in-depth interviews was a room in the residence. Interviews were also conducted in areas suggested by the participant because the interviewer wanted participants to feel safe. A voice recorder was used to capture and record all the information shared by respondents to maintain and ensure authenticity, fairness and trustworthiness. During the interviews, the researcher also took notes of the key points while recording the interviews to help in formulating the themes that emerge across all interviews.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Before embarking on this study, the researcher had to apply for ethical approval. Ethical approval was granted by the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC). It was specified in the application that all participants recruited must be above the age of 18 years to prevent any requirements of permission from legal guardian of participants. The study was identified as sensitive because it deals with risky sexual behaviours, and it was clearly noted that the researcher should remain conscious when conducting interviews. Interviews were then conducted after the

study was approved, and the consent form was brought along to the participant to read and sign to abide by the regulations of this research. If the participant experienced discomfort, and perhaps psychological stress, students were free to stop the interviews or continue but refer them to the university psychologist for further counselling.

3.5.1 Credibility and reliability

Validity, reliability and rigour are important in qualitative research. A research study is valid and reliable when it is accurate and consistent, within different contexts and different methods used to find the results (Guest, McQueen and Namey, 2012). According to Neuman (2014), in qualitative research authenticity rather than reliability, is often the concern. This study put every effort to ensure and maintain trustworthiness, comfortability and credibility, as respondents participated to this study voluntarily and shared their experiences to the best of their abilities. Neuman (2014) noted that the components to maintain fairness and credibility allow participants to be asked open ended questions as the most effective in qualitative research as these bring out genuine understanding of people's experiences. Additionally, it is of great significance that reliability addresses the overall consistency of a research study's measure (Neuman, 2014). The truthfulness and trustworthiness of this research makes the study valid, as it reaches authenticity rather than having a one sided research study. This was being done through analysing the different responses from interviews against the literature that has already been conducted and published for use. This study did not support generalisations but it recorded data subjectively and comprehensively.

3.5.2 Data analysis

This study adopted a thematic analysis strategy, which allowed the qualitative data to be coded into salient themes. In accepting the trustworthiness of the data collected, the researcher made sure that themes were coded and reflected what was raised by participants during the interviews. Nowell et al. (2017) suggested that a thematic analysis strategy provides core skills for conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis because of its wideness across a range of research epistemologies. This strategy allows one to identify, analyse, organise, describe and report themes found during the interviews. In this study, the researcher first collected qualitative data using in-depth interviews and coded all these

interviews and picked by significant points that were suitable themes that would represent and reflect the issues raised by participants during interviews.

3.6 Limitations of the study

One of the major limitations of this study was the sensitivity associated with the topic. Some may experience difficulties talking about personal experiences of multiple partnerships. Another limitation included language as a barrier of communication, as some respondents preferred to respond in their home language and some preferred to respond in English. Some of the words mentioned by some participants who responded in their home language were very difficult for the researcher to translate and understand, but these were recorded and were sent to professional translators for further review and translation. Participants who responded in their home language allowed them to freely express themselves in any way that they wanted to provide rich and quality qualitative data.

3.7 Summary

This chapter discussed the methodological techniques and procedures followed to make this research a reality. These procedures were clearly defined to elaborate each of the adopted research technique guiding this study. The qualitative research implemented was adopted to allow the researcher to gain insights on each student's perspectives and experiences on multiple sexual partnerships. This study draws on in-depth interviews conducted with twenty male and female students who are currently registered at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and were the 18 years or older. These participants were recruited using snowball sampling because they were referred to the researcher by other participants who either has participated in the study or heard about this research around campus. Every participant who participated had to be sure about the regulations of this study by reading the informed consent and sign it to confirm their voluntary participation in the study. The data analysis strategy was also explained. As a result, the next chapter reports the findings from the in-depth interviews collected and these were categorised into salient themes.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

Previous research shows that multiple sexual partnerships are often influenced by a variety of determinants such as peer pressure, societal beliefs of masculinity and femininity and economic vulnerabilities, which often force individuals to engage in risky sexual behaviours (Kenyon et al., 2010; Mutinta, 2014; Shisana et al., 2014). The purpose of this chapter is to draw on the findings of the qualitative data collected among students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. As previously mentioned, the overall aim of this study is to unpack the perspectives and experiences of students pertaining to multiple sexual partnerships in Durban, South Africa. The chapter starts by describing the sample characteristics of participants and thereafter presents the main themes that emerged from the interviews. The major themes outlined includes attitudes to multiple partnerships, factors facilitating and inhibiting multiple sexual partnerships, and opportunities and constraints for changing behaviour.

4.2 Sample characteristics

Table 4.1 displays the sample characteristics of participants. Qualitative interviews were conducted with 20 university students (10 females and 10 males) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban. Interviews were held in different venues to ensure maximum comfort. The sample included 14 students that resided at the university residences, and 6 students that lived at home and were postgraduates. The age of students ranged between 21 to 35 years, and this allowed for diversity and inclusivity of both undergraduate and postgraduate students. All students were single, and none reported being married or divorced. Seven students were receiving a salary and reported some form of employment to generate an income. The majority of students (18) received money from various income sources such as salary (for those employed) and through families and university funding. One respondent reported male partners as their main income source. Eleven were undergraduate students, whilst the remaining nine were postgraduate students.

Table 4.1: Demographic profile of participants

No.	Gender	Age	Level of study	Marital status	Employed	Income Source
1	Male	32	Honours	Single	Yes	Salary
2	Female	21	Bachelors	Single	No	None
3	Female	24	Bachelors	Single	No	Funding and partners
4	Male	31	Bachelors	Single	Yes	Salary
5	Male	24	Bachelors	Single	No	Family
6	Male	23	Masters	Single	Yes	Salary
7	Male	28	Masters	Single	No	None
8	Male	31	Masters	Single	Yes	Salary
9	Male	29	Honours	Single	Yes	Salary
10	Male	25	Masters	Single	No	Other
11	Male	31	Honours	Single	Yes	Salary
12	Female	23	Masters	Single	Yes	Salary
13	Male	25	Bachelors	Single	No	None
14	Female	24	Bachelors	Single	No	Funding
15	Female	22	Bachelors	Single	No	Funding
16	Female	26	Masters	Single	No	Other
17	Female	27	Bachelors	Single	No	Family
18	Female	23	Bachelors	Single	No	Funding
19	Female	24	Bachelors	Single	No	Family
20	Female	26	Bachelors	Single	No	Men

4.3 Students' definition of 'multiple sexual partnerships'

During the interviews, a clear consensus across all students was notable in terms of defining multiple sexual partnerships, as they described this form of partnership as having more than one sexual partner. Participants 5 and 7 noted:

“Multiple sexual partnership is when you have two or more sexual partners or sexual relations.” (Participant 7, Male, 28 years)

“It is having more than one sexual partner and engaging in sexual activities with all of them.” (Participant 5, Male, 24 years)

It was also clear that participants linked their definition of multiple sexual partnerships to cultural beliefs and values. It was evident by the use of isiZulu terms and expressions used to describe these types of social relations. The term *isoka* was widely used during the interviews to describe a man with multiple partners, and it is worth noting that the term *isoka* was perceived as a great compliment for some young male students. In general, the Zulu term *isoka*, which is mostly used to refer to multiple sexual partnerships, depicted the cultural values and beliefs of the Zulu culture and the importance of having more than one partners for marital practices such as polygamy.

Participants also noted that the term *isoka* is often given to men who have many girlfriends, referring to them as a ladies’ man or an attentive gentleman because he is able to attract women. However, in contrast to *isoka*, the term *isishimane* was also used by participants to describe someone who does not have a partner or has only one partner, and it was clearly raised by male participants that this was not a nice term to be called such a man, as it is considered an insult. Consequently, the interviews showed that being *isoka* is considered a natural, admirable and traditional part or attribute of African manhood, as men are expected to demonstrate their sexual prowess by their multiple sexual partners. Participants 9 and 16 expressed that:

“In my understanding, it is having more than three girlfriends because according to me since I am a Zulu guy, that is what you call ‘isoka’.” (Participant 9, Male, 29 years)

There is even a term for it called isoka. This is when a man has more than one partner in their lives, and traditionally; we conform to polygamy and the practices of having several women in one man’s life which is perceived a normal thing. (Participant 16, Female, 26 years)

Participant 10 attributed multiple sexual partnerships to the blesser-blessee phenomenon, which became prominent in South Africa in 2016 (Mampane, 2018). This phenomenon is a form of transactional sex where an older, rich man tends to entice young women with money and expensive gifts in exchange for sexual favours. The student noted:

“It is having a one-night stand, having many girlfriends or many boyfriends as your sexual partners. For this blesser-blessee thing, I sometimes think it links with prostitution, where they exchange money for sex or gift.” (Participant 10, Male, 31 years)

It was clear that participants did not have a nuanced understanding of multiple sexual partners, as they did not draw a distinction between sequential and concurrent partners. Also, multiple sexual partnership can be defined as having had more than one sexual partner ‘in the last 12 months’ preceding the interview (Exavery et al., 2011), and this was not clearly specified by participants.

4.4 Attitudes towards multiple sexual partnerships

In the interviews, it was clear that participants had different attitudes towards multiple sexual partnerships, as some perceived this behaviour as acceptable, while others believed that it is an immoral behaviour. While the existence of cultural norms has an impact on male students engaging in multiple sexual partnerships, female students have done so mostly for economic reasons.

4.4.1 Gender norms

During the interviews, participants emphasised that when someone has multiple sexual partners, they are often labelled as promiscuous. However, the use of labels is not the same for men and women. Sexual promiscuity is defined as the engagement in non-committed sexual activities, with non-monogamous partners such as one-night stands, and with multiple sexual partners (Jones and Paulhus, 2012). Sexual promiscuity has remained a morally stigmatised practice for women and is generally considered as a major risk factor underlying many negative behaviours such as drug use, violence, unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) (Poppi, 2019). In the Zulu culture, there are terms that are given to a man and woman that engage in any promiscuous behaviours such as *ingwenya* and

isifebe, which means *whore* and is used to refer to a woman whose behaviour is considered sexually promiscuous and against natural order. It is also important to note the sexual double standards that exists, as men are rewarded and praised for their sexual encounters with multiple women, whereas girls and women are devalued, stigmatised and labelled negatively for similar behaviours.

“A girl is ‘ingwenya’ and a guy is called ‘umshayi wesinqa’. Ingwenya will obviously have a boyfriend and then she will have side partners.” (Participant 12, 23 years)

Ingwenya in the Zulu culture is used to refer to a woman that is promiscuous and sleeps with multiple men. The direct translation of the word *ingwenya* is crocodile, and is used to describe women who are seen as powerful and dominant because they are able to ‘handle’ more than one man. Men do not give these women any title in a relationship but rather they are seen as the casual sexual partner. On the other hand, the direct translation of *umshayi wesinqa* is ‘the one who slaps ass’, and it is used to refer to men who are fond of sexual activities and have many sexual partners. Participants believed that multiple sexual partners are normal or acceptable for men, whereas women are given negative labels and derogatory names. During the interviews, it was clear that male students did not have any problems with attracting women and dating them because this behaviour is seen as common and natural for them. In the interviews, Participants 4 and 15 noted:

“For us men, this is a normal behaviour and being told you are promiscuous- it is just water under the bridge. As men, we do not judge each other for having more than one sexual partner, in fact you get praised for engaging in this form of partnership.” (Participant 4, Male, 31 years)

“If you are a woman, people end up seeing you as a cheap piece of trash and end up calling you derogatory names.” (Participant 15, Female, 22 years)

One male student (Participant 4) emphasised that promiscuity could also be due to vengeful behaviour against an unfaithful partner who betrayed them in the past. One participant noted that their engagement in multiple sexual partnerships was when they had discovered that their

partner was cheating, and this became an emotionally devastating event that forced them to seek revenge.

“It could be retaliation from infidelity.” (Participant 4, Male, 31 years)

4.4.2 Needs satisfaction

Participants noted that people engage in multiple sexual partnerships for a variety of reasons, as long as one gets what they want out of that sexual partnership. Some participants (12 and 18) regarded this behaviour positively, as it allowed them to have their needs satisfied, sexually and/or financially.

“I think it is for financial needs, to get ahead in terms of academics or get residence or something like that.” (Participant 18, Female, 23 years)

“From what I know, I am saying this because I have a lot of male friends that often emphasise that they cheat or have many partners because they are never satisfied by having one girlfriend.” (Participant 12, Female, 23 years)

Two male participants believed that there was nothing wrong with having multiple sexual partners especially when their partners were boring and no longer satisfying them. Evidence suggests that people who are bored in a relationship may cheat or engage in multiple sexual partnerships even if they had not necessarily planned on it (Davis et al., 2006). Two male participants (1 and 11) noted:

“Nothing really prevents me. Like I said, I like having multiple partners so I do not imagine myself having a single partner. It is boring too.” (Participant 1, Male, 32 years)

“Yes, a lot. In fact, they love them. Someone once told me that their partner is boring because he is too trustworthy and he is an idiot, he listens to everything. I sit with people like this and they even say if the guy is not violent he is not man enough because when we fight he should also discipline me.” (Participant 11, Male, 31 years)

4.5 Facilitating factors to multiple sexual partnerships

There are many factors that contribute to the formation of multiple sexual partnerships. These include cultural norms and values, power dynamics, social media, desire for financial necessities and long-distance relationships.

4.5.1 Cultural norms and values

Cultural norms and values play a pivotal role in the lives of many. During the interviews, it was noted that the many cultures in Africa recognise the importance of polygamy in family survival and growth. In order for a man to achieve and ensure the continuity of the family, women are expected to bear many children and in this way contribute to large households containing many young males. Consequently, participants emphasised that this is a cultural norm that has influenced many young males to engage in multiple sexual partnerships and this has become a highly embraced and valued practice that most men use to prove their masculinity. Participants 1 and 3 noted:

“We see people in polygamous relationships, and this is considered a cultural thing most of the times in our culture. I feel like as young men; we want the same thing because to us it seems like it is a good life to have two women instead of one. So culture and their values behind it influence our decision making when it comes to multiple sexual partnerships.” (Participant 1, Male, 32 years)

“The acceptance of a polygamous relationship affects the decision of having multiple sexual partnerships because polygamy is something that is acceptable in our society and a practice that is common especially in the Zulu culture.” (Participant 3, Female, 24 years)

One participant made reference to the phrase ‘*kuyicala ukudlula intombazane emgwaqeni ungasho lutho*’ which means that men have to ‘win’ over many women to demonstrate their status in the community. By so doing men show that they are successful in attracting women. The Zulu culture promotes multiple sexual partnerships because it makes a man feel as if they are a ‘real’ and ‘alive’, especially even in rural areas. According to the participants, the Zulu culture and its beliefs encourage men to have many sexual partners, while women are expected to be submissive to men. Two male participants (5 and 6) stated:

“Growing up it was expected for a guy to ask out girls. ...In the Zulu culture; there is a phrase that often says “kuyicala ukudlula intombazane emgwaqeni ungasho lutho” which means that you need to talk to more women as much as possible to prove your masculinity. Obviously when you talk to women as much as possible, you are most likely to have multiple sexual partners.” (Participant 5, Male, 24 years)

“A man is a man by having many wives, it is an ideology of polygamy. So you find that when you grow up, they tell you that for you as a man to fit in your tribe or people, you need to have multiple sexual partners. This also leads to some males degrading and taking women for granted and expecting them to be submissive.” (Participant 6, Male, 23 years)

Although many of the participants have expressed that they believe the Zulu culture is a driver of multiple sexual partnerships, one disagreed. Participant 7 argued that polygamy is misunderstood, as it happened for specific reasons and is not just for everyone. Polygamy according to this participant meant affordability to sustain and take care of all women in that relationship, and then can only be considered a polygamist. This participant also added that when a man was financially stable in the past, they saw an opportunity of being in a polygamous relationship which they could sustain the household through providing food and taking care of their needs. However, in some instances, the reason to be in a polygamous relationship for some men was due to an early death of a male sibling, where the brother that was still alive would take over the duties of the deceased sibling. This meant that the man would take care of his brother’s wife and children.

“People misinterpret our culture. Before in the Zulu culture, taking a wife meant you were able to take care of that woman. You cannot take a wife to starve her, hence in the past; one had to have cows and be wealthy so to be able to take care of that woman. Also, in the Zulu culture as a man, if your brother never got married or died there is a ritual that must be done and that is when you would take a second wife for him in order for the family to grow.” (Participant 7, Male, 28 years)

Other reasons for men engaging in multiple sexual relationships included a man marrying an infertile woman who cannot produce children for him. The Zulu culture shuns adoption and would rather raise their sibling's children because it is important to raise a male child to carry their surname. Therefore, to avoid divorce, men would just take a second wife who would assist in bearing children.

“It also happens that you take a second wife or have another sexual partner on the side because the one you would have might not be able to bear children. So, this is done to extend the family name.” (Participant 7, Male, 28 years)

4.5.2 Power inequities

In the interviews, it was clear that multiple sexual partnerships are sometimes perpetuated for different reasons such as an urgent need of something at that particular time. For example, a person may need some financial assistance and will then be pressured to have sex with another person in order to get financial gains in return. Some participants mentioned other students who fell victim to this as a result of desperation. It is not uncommon for women to engage in sexual relations with older men in return for their personal gains. Participant 7 noted:

“What promotes multiple sexual partners is power. People who are in powerful positions tend to have multiple sexual partnerships. For instance, in working environments, women would sleep with employers for positions- that is power. In university residences, residence assistants apparently sleep with students when students are in need of residence.” (Participant 7, Male, 28 years)

Power dynamics were also noted in the instances of transactional sex, when older men would engage in sexual behaviours with younger women in exchange for money. Participants believed that men who are in a better financial situation have more power than women, especially when they are still studying, and women have limited negotiating power because of their dependency on those men. However, this has many consequences for the wellbeing and health outcomes of women due to their inability to negotiate for safer sexual practices.

Transactional sex has been found to increase the risk of HIV and other STIs, and can also result in unplanned pregnancies as well as other undesirable sexual and reproductive health outcomes, such as intimate partner violence, sexual coercion and increased alcohol consumption (Wamoyi et al., 2019). In the interviews, participants who engaged or knew of someone who engaged in multiple sexual partnerships with older sexual partners often experienced gender power imbalances that limited their ability to negotiate safe sex practices. They ended up doing everything that was expected of them in order to receive money. A female student (Participant 6) mentioned:

“...so you need an older person you can have sex with so you can get money to take care of your daily needs. However, this can also lead to excessive consumption of alcohol or substance abuse because most of those older men have a lot of money and are in different business; both legal and illegal. Hence, the use of drugs and alcohol is most likely since young women cannot even speak or make decisions when they are really in need of money or in that situation.”
(Participant 6, Male, 23 years)

“When a person has money and you do not, that person who has money can buy your life by buying you booze, books and food. That person would have more power over you than yourself having power over you. A blesser would say ‘here is R20 000 I want to sleep with you and/or without a condom for the entire weekend’. When you desperately need that money, what would you say?”
(Participant 15, Female, 22 years)

4.5.3 Social media

Social media has become an innovative platform where most people express themselves by uploading pictures, and sharing their feelings and insights in areas of interest. Social media platforms include both general sites for social networking, such as Facebook, and applications for mobile-based technology that are specifically designed to meet sexual partners (Krishnan et al., 2018). Social media has put pressure on many young men and women, as they desire to live lavish lifestyles similar to those individuals who display theirs on social media platforms. Social platforms have made it look acceptable to behave and act in any manner especially when one has money. Trends are set for people to follow and therefore

most university students often follow those trends to try and imitate them to become popular. However, these trends are often materialistic and staged, and older men use these platforms to lure vulnerable younger women into sexual relations by promising them that they will give them everything they want if they have sexual relations with them. Two participants (12 and 18) noted:

“When we look at social media today, people are living a lie and that false life looks nice, I will not lie. So that life that every girl is living on social media is the kind of life that I also want. If you look deeper into it, it is not that we are competing as girls but just that we like things.” (Participant 12, Female, 23 years)

“Nowadays on social media especially on Instagram, girls and even guys are living their best lives. I feel like some social media platforms promote the idea of women being dependent on men, as they are easily lured by men with money.” (Participant 18, Female, 23 years)

One male participant noted that social media has made it convenient for them to juggle women and they believed that social media lowers the costs of dating because it makes it cheaper to initiate sexual relationships. One male participant uses Tinder, which is a dating mobile application specifically designed for heterosexual people to meet sexual partners. This virtual platform enables heterosexual men and women to seek sexual partners in a quicker, easier and more discrete way, and allows for anonymity of both the seeker and the sexual partner. Participant 13 noted:

“I have used Tinder before while I was in a relationship. This app is sort of like a dating or hook-up site where you can easily reach multiple people in your area who are looking for a once off sexual thing.” (Participant 13, Male, 25 years)

4.5.4 Financial necessities

Money plays a huge role in the life of a university student especially when coming from a less privileged background. Many participants in the interviews reported coming from disadvantaged, low-income households, and most of them lived at university residences.

There are many reasons why university students are willing to engage in certain risky sexual activities such as engaging in MSP and not questioning condom use in exchange for money. Participant 20 revealed that greed and the love for money are also the driving factors for multiple sexual partners, and they had noted that they could do anything, even if it is risky, to get the money they want.

“It could be financial problems, whether it is your economic background or you are just addicted to money. Like myself, I am addicted to money, I am sorry. When I see a man I see money. So I can do anything to get money” (Participant 20, Female, 26 years)

Participant 12 described how transactional relationships occur, and how wealthier older men offer women material items in exchange for sex. Older rich men lure women with expensive things such as gifts, material and valuable items so that they can agree to be in a sexual partnership with them. Young university students are willing to take the risks as well as the consequences of infidelity and being stigmatised for engaging in a relationship with an older man. Hence, some students engage in such activities secretly because they have boyfriends on campus who are of a similar age as them.

“These men that are married or old, they are the ones with a lot of money most of the time. Us as the university students, we are dependent on our parents for allowance and the money that we get here at school. So when you have a blesser or you are approached by a blesser, you just know that engaging in a relationship with them, the end goal would be to benefit financially. Most of the time, these sides ‘concurrent partner’ are blessers that will be of financial gain.” (Participant 12, Female, 23 years)

4.5.5 Consequence of having absent parents

During the interviews, a few participants reported coming from extended families and families with an absent parent. It was clear that some families do not have the privilege of having both parents help to raise children within the household due to many different reasons, which could be death and separation of parents. In many instances, fathers are absent either because they abandoned their families or relocated elsewhere for the purpose of finding

employment. According to some participants (6 and 12), this has left a void that they have been trying to fill since they had no father figure in their lives. Absent parenting has caused some women to find comfort in older men. These women are trying to find a male figure to protect and provide for them, and this was also clear even in the statement of male students.

“It may be an issue of lacking a mother figure or a father figure such that you seek validation from the opposite sex.” (Participant 6, Male, 23 years)

“When a random male comes and says that they love you and want to spoil you, you accept that from anyone because you do not really know what love is from a male figure.” (Participant 12, Female, 23 years)

4.5.6 Long distance relationships

Long distance relationships are not easy to maintain, and participants noted that they have been tempted to cheat on their partners who lived far away. Two participants noted that they engaged in sexual relations with other partners when they were in a long distance relationship. This was emphasized as a facilitating factor to engaging in multiple sexual partnerships. In the interviews they expressed that they experienced loneliness and insecurity when their partners were away which led them to cheat and having sex with multiple partners. Participant 4 and 12 noted:

“Another factor promoting one to engage in multiple sexual partnerships would be being in a long distance relationship and the fact that it is difficult to trust your partner when they are distanced. So you just see an opportunity to cheat, with an idea that they are doing the same thing.” (Participant 4, Male, 31 years)

“You find that there is a girl that is involved with someone that is not from around here, maybe it is a long distance relationship. You will find that the main partner is that one from away, whereas on the side; she has many other sexual partners she messes with.” (Participant 12, Female, 23 years)

4.6 Inhibiting factors to multiple sexual partnerships

There are many factors hindering and inhibiting individuals from engaging in multiple sexual partnerships, and these include religious beliefs, the fear of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, and fear of being labelled and stigmatised.

4.6.1 Religious principles

According to the bible, sex was created as an expression of love for people that are married but people have decided to abuse it. Sex outside of wedlock is regarded as a sin because it steals the person's dignity and self-worth when done repeatedly and inappropriately through engaging in multiple sexual partnerships. Participants concurred that those with strong religious values hold a particular standing in the community. They visit church regularly and this helps in building a certain character. Certain behaviours are shunned by the community and regarded as immoral, therefore for some religious believers, it is often difficult to engage and talk about things considered immoral at church. In addition, many of these people would not want members of the church to be aware of the activities they do secretly that might be against their religion or that will disgrace the family name. Participant 12 and 15 who are church goers noted:

“What inhibits one to be in multiple sexual relationships is morals. I have told myself that some things are just not for me because I did not grow up or was taught that way and the fact that I am a child of God, a church goer and things are not done like this at church.” (Participant 12, Female, 23 years)

*“...norms especially if you are a pastor's child, there is a certain lifestyle that is expected from you. So let me just say church.”
(Participant 15, Female, 22 years)*

Men and women who are religious are less likely to engage in multiple partnerships. They are more likely to be seen as respectable and therefore they will avoid multiple partners as this could jeopardise their status in the community.

4.6.2 Fear of contracting sexually transmitted diseases

Sexual transmitted infections (STIs) can be contracted and transmitted during a sexual act between two or more people when practicing unprotected sex (Kirby and Laris, 2009). University students are particularly vulnerable to STIs as a result of their risky sexual behaviours. Although they are aware of the health risks associated with such behaviours, they are still willing to take risks in order to have fun and get some form of sexual pleasure. Participant 1 suggested that most students are well-informed of the health risks associated with multiple sexual partnerships, but they are still willing to engage in risky sexual behaviours.

“I would say everyone, including myself worries about health risks but there is just something that overrides the health risk even though you are aware of the HIV/AIDS statistics. That is why the number of people with HIV keeps growing.”
(Participant 1, Male, 32 years)

Two participants (1 and 17) noted:

“STIs, mainly HIV which is the deadliest and scariest that all students are aware of. We have awareness campaigns everywhere on campus but like I said, something that just overrides what you know about HIV or STIs and you just decide okay, let me date these two people.” (Participant 1, Male, 32 years)

“The one I fear the most is HIV, then there are STIs. I think that is the one thing that actually stopped me from doing it. Being sick is no child’s play.”
(Participant 17, Female, 27 years)

Although some participants know that there is an awareness about the health risks associated with multiple sexual partnerships, some participants disagreed that having multiple sexual partnerships increased the risk of contracting diseases, as they protect themselves by using condoms. One female student (Participant 20) noted that she only wants money from her partner and she takes the necessary precautions such as initiating the use of condoms and lubricants at all times, as it reduces the transmission of any type of STI. Further, she noted the use of measures to prevent HIV infection and pregnancy reduces the risks associated with multiple sexual partnerships.

“It can be either positive or negative depending on how you involve yourself with multiple people. If you are in multiple relationships because of certain things; for an example for myself I am involved with multiple people just because I want money from them. You get people who do not use protection and that is very important when you are multi-sexualising and stuff. So for me I do it but thinking of the consequences because I want money and not babies and/or sexually transmitted diseases.” (Participant 20, Female, 26 years)

Women who engage in relationships with older men are at a higher risk of HIV and intimate partner violence (IPV) (Fielding-Miller and Dunkle, 2017). During the interviews, participants stated that having multiple sexual partnerships can lead to abuse and violence. Participants noted that in most relationships, when a partner changes their behaviour suspicions of infidelity often arises that leads to accusation and bouts of jealousy. In most instances, male students find themselves in situations where they are not able to control their anger, which results in violence. Sometimes men use violence against their partners to “discipline” them. Participant 6 noted:

“Within multiple sexual partnerships, it brings forth violence and abuse. Some other people can go to the extent of committing suicide, there are many risks. Women are killed, maybe one partner feels as if you have been abusing them or he was in a cycle of whatever you are doing/cheating. (Participant 6, Male, 23 years)

One female student (Participant 18) who shared her experiences of intimate partner violence noted that for most women, economic dependence on their male partners may make it difficult to leave a violent or exploitative relationship. This participant was economically dependent on their male partner and they noted:

“...partner violence and women abuse as well because a person might feel territorial over you.” (Participant 18, Female, 23 years)

4.6.3 Social discrimination

In the interviews, it emerged that those in multiple sexual relationships or who enjoy a luxurious lifestyle through engaging in multiple sexual partnerships are usually easy to identify as they maintain a particular living standard. They are often treated differently by their peers as they live seemingly better lives and some of their peers tend to look up to them. One participant mentioned that women engage in multiple sexual partnerships in order to obtain a particular lifestyle such as carrying expensive bags and wearing expensive weaves in public. In addition, they are often compared to great celebrity names that are very successful, travel the world and live luxurious lives. Participant 10 noted:

“Everyone wants to wear Gucci, wants to have a weave and want to be like the famous people.” (Participant 10, Male, 25 years)

One participant added that with this lifestyle that is ‘praised’ on social media and in public, there is a lot of traveling involved and they ensure that they maintain this standard through being available for the men responsible for their luxurious lifestyles. In addition, the participant mentioned that this lifestyle is usually financed by more than one man. Participants noted that girls who maintain this kind of lifestyle are referred to as *slay queens*, which refers to a young woman who does not have money, but portrays a luxurious lifestyle that she is living. Participants revealed that this is supported by friends and also could be regarded as a driving force for multiple sexual partnerships among women. In addition, women enter into these relationships in order to live up to their peer’s lifestyle, and participants (2, 12 and 13) noted:

“They want to go on vacations, they also want to go to Dubai, Cape Town. So it is more about maintaining a certain type of lifestyle.” (Participant 2, Female, 21 years)

“Most of the time with uneducated girls or slay queens, the things they have and the lifestyle they live is from men. It is not usually one guy providing for that lifestyle.” (Participant 12, Female, 23 years)

“From my experience, no one has multiple sexual partners without any backing of friends. So for sure to change this thing you have to change friends, lifestyle, how you dress and the way you socialise.” (Participant 13, Male, 25 years)

4.7 Opportunities on changing behaviours

When individuals change or stop engaging in various risky sexual behaviours, their lifespan is often extended and this leads to a healthy lifestyle. Hence, there is a need for behavioural change for necessary transformation. The following section discusses some of those changes that can be implemented as recommended by participants during the interviews.

4.7.1 Awareness campaigns

There are many efforts put together by universities that help educate and raise awareness about serious issues affecting students such as the repercussions of risky behaviour. Participants mentioned that this also helps students become aware of services available. Creative ways to bring awareness helps get the message across, and this also creates an inviting space that allows for better attendance and more engagement. It is important for students to self-educate about the risks involved in engaging in multiple sexual partnerships. Participants 1 and 6 noted:

“Maybe more awareness campaigns and to shine a spotlight on the negative side of it instead of painting it as a cool thing.” (Participant 1, Male, 32 years)

“This is where you teach yourself and expose yourself to literature that is out there and available at your disposal, that you read up on the dangers of having multiple sexual partnerships, you read up on the effects of HIV. HIV does not only affect the physical but the mental, psychological and the spiritual aspects of your life.” (Participant 6, Male, 23 years)

Participants also mentioned that being innovative in addressing such issues will create more interest among students to understand issues that are happening around them and to know what to do when issues like these arise. Therefore, in order to address an issue, participants believed that everyone should be involved, irrespective of their economic background, population group or gender. Participant 12 expressed that:

“Interventions are needed and should be inclusive of both genders but girls first because it takes one girl to say yes then a male comes but if she says no it stops right there.” (Participant 12, Female, 23 years)

4.6.2 Good upbringing

Growing up in a stable home helps one to become more grounded. With both parents helping to instil the values and principles of how a girl and/or boy should behave when growing up helps give an idea when one is no longer in the right path. During the interviews, participants agreed that how a person is raised influences their decision making in later life. Experiences of abuse and the values instilled in participants also revealed how someone’s behaviour or thinking impact their decisions when it comes to relationships. Participants 6 and 10 noted:

“Your moral standing and how you were raised at home, how you want to be portrayed in society. Basically self-love and how you view yourself and how you want people to view you will actually inhibit multiple sexual partnerships.” (Participant 6, Male, 23 years)

“Someone’s background is very crucial. There are wrong things people do unconsciously because the mom or dad use to do it at home.” (Participant 10, Male, 25 years)

One participant (7) also noted that many individuals that are involved in multiple sexual partnerships are trying fill a void that exists in their life. Sometimes they do not feel complete because they did not experience love in their lives, especially in their early childhood.

“The thing of multiple sexual partnerships could also start at home in the way you were raised, it will protect you from outside temptations that could lead you to having multiple sexual partnerships.” (Participant 7, Male, 28 years)

4.8 Constraints on changing behaviours

There are many factors that prevent behaviour change, and these constraints include poverty, sexual dissatisfaction and substance abuse.

4.8.1 Poverty and unemployment

Many participants emphasised that poverty is a major barrier for changing behaviour, as this entails finding other means of surviving rather than engaging in risky sexual behaviours. This meant that some students had to maintain their source of income, which usually meant multiple sexual partners. Participants also mentioned that when someone comes from an economically disadvantaged background, they often tend to look for partners with money and who will be providers in their lives. Material possessions are very important to university students and they always get involved in risky situations in order to attain some luxuries. In addition, being unemployed also played a pivotal role for some students because they become dependent on their partners that bring some sort of security through providing food and giving them a monthly allowance. Hence, these students do not have their own income source, and therefore desperation meant that they became open to dating multiple partners.

“The fact that I do not have a source of income and I do not work, there is more chances for me to go date a blesser because the main aim is to get an income. If I come from a poverty stricken home and know I that guy will give me money, I will date him. I can do anything they want me to do” (Participant 15, Female, 22 years)

For some participants, it is a matter of lack of choice, as they do not know better or have grown to know that in order to survive, one should be open to engaging in transactional sexual relationships. Transactional sex entails exchanging sex in return for financial gains. One participant (18) mentioned that it is not only poverty stricken students that get involved in transactional relationships but people do it to attain a lavish lifestyle.

“If they come from a poor financial background and they do not work, they turn to anything to get a source of income. Some people just do it because of peer pressure though or they feel the need to lead a certain lifestyle.” (Participant 18, Female, 23 years)

“It is so funny because for the longest time I had thought that people actually engaged in the thing of blesser-blessee phenomenon are people that came from poor backgrounds but of late I have just realized that it is just a lifestyle.” (Participant 6, Male, 23 years)

Another participant concurs that for university students, it is not necessarily about one's background but the way in which one wants to live. Students do not care about what people will say, as they want to follow the latest trends in order to be recognised. However, peer pressure plays a disproportionate role because one has to maintain a certain status, and if they stop presenting that certain lavish lifestyle, they tend to lose their status among their peers. Hence, participants noted that having multiple partners was no longer an issue, especially when one sexual partner can pay the bills, the others' responsibilities are to ensure that the standards of their lifestyle are maintained. Participants 6 and 11 noted:

“Students get involved in multiple sexual relationships because of certain circumstances but then some of them they do it because they have to do it for their own beneficial reasons.” (Participant 11, Male, 31 years)

“You are in multiple relationships because one pays for your cell phone, the other one pays for your travelling trips so you end up having multiple guys with money that are all there to actually give you what you desire.” (Participant 6, Male, 23 years)

4.8.2 Sexual dissatisfaction

During the interviews, participants revealed that issues of lack of communication between partners especially about sex within the relationship could lead an individual to look for comfort and pleasure elsewhere. In addition, usually a partner would be scared to mention that the relationship has changed and that they are no longer satisfied with their sex life. Some really just want more adventure in their lives so they engage in multiple partnership to alleviate boredom in their relationships. Sometimes women may feel that they are not getting sexual satisfaction with their stable partner and they will look elsewhere. They start new relationships while maintaining their old sexual relationships as well. Participants 6 and 15 noted:

“Sexual dissatisfaction because maybe if your partner is not good in bed, I love this person but he is not giving me what I want which is what we as women want-

orgasms. So then you feel that I need to get it somewhere else as much as I love him, I will keep him and but I will get it from someone else.” (Participant 6, Male, 23 years)

“The other is sexual dissatisfaction because when your partner does not satisfy you and you cheat, that does not mean that you do not love your boyfriend, he just does not satisfy you.” (Participant 15, Female, 22 years)

4.8.3 Substance abuse

Substance abuse is associated with risky sexual behaviour, and when students in higher education institutions have fun while drinking, they end up doing things they would not normally do when sober. Participants mentioned that substance abuse also leads to casual sex, and which sometimes could mean sex without protection. This behaviour is a result of their alcohol use and leads to unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. In some unfortunate cases, rape even occurs when sexual intercourse was not consensual. Some partners force themselves on their partners or even friends that are present at that particular gathering. Participants 3, 5 and 6 noted:

“With some people, you find that when they are drunk or under the influence, they get a bit promiscuous.” (Participant 3, Female, 24 years)

“You also do get these type of sexual relationships where guys will be drinking and then they will invite girls over, they will buy them alcohol with expectations that they will have sex with them. Casual sex just happens and is not planned.” (Participant 5, Male, 24 years)

“Alcohol or substance abuse results in you being very high or drunk and acting on your emotions and you end up sleeping with a person that you do not even know.” (Participant 6, Male, 23 years old)

4.9 Summary

This chapter presents the findings from the qualitative data collected among university students in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. It was clear that students had a similar definition of

multiple sexual partnerships, as they stated that it is type of partnership when one has sexual interactions with more than one partner. However, they could not make a distinction between sequential and concurrent partners. The findings also showed that students hold different attitudes to multiple sexual partnerships, and it was clear that men are praised for having multiple partners, while women are given negative labels and stigmatised. Most men engage in multiple sexual partnerships to maintain the values of manhood and the cultural beliefs that a man is a 'real' man only when they have multiple sexual partners. The interviews suggest that students engage in multiple sexual partnerships for a variety of reasons such as financial freedom, peer pressure, poverty, sexual dissatisfaction and cultural beliefs and values. This chapter also explored the facilitating and promoting factors and how social media and peer pressure play a pivotal role in the perpetuation of multiple sexual partnerships. Finally, opportunities for changing behaviour were also outlined to help alleviate and address the consequences of multiple sexual partnerships, such as HIV transmission and intimate partner violence.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

Multiple sexual partnerships in South Africa remains a growing phenomenon among young university students. Students engage in multiple sexual partnerships for various reasons such as economic benefits, maintaining cultural expectations of masculinity and gaining status in society. Although there are efforts made by universities to highlight the risks of multiple sexual partnerships, students continually engage in these relationships. It is only when students experience challenges that threaten their physical and emotional well-being do they seek help. Students end up becoming dysfunctional at school due to the consequences of their behaviour. The overall objective of this study was to unpack the perspectives and experiences of students pertaining to multiple sexual partnerships in Durban, South Africa. drawing on qualitative, in-depth interviews. This chapter firstly provides a summary of the findings in relation to existing literature on multiple sexual partnerships. It also draws on the model of unsafe sexual behaviour developed by Eaton, Flisher and Aarø (2003) to explain the findings of the study. Finally, it ends with recommendations based on the findings of the study.

5.2 Discussion

Studies have defined MSP as having more than one sexual partner (Anteneh, 2013; Manjengwa et al., 2019). The results of this study suggests that participants had a fair understanding of MSP although they were not sure of the term used to describe it. The majority of students defined MSP as having two or more sexual partners. Some participants mentioned concurrent partners as being in a stable relationship while also having side partners or blessers at the same time. No respondent used the word sequential although they described some relationships to be temporary and occurring immediately after one ended. Others mentioned that an individual does not need to be physically intimate with a partner, therefore there are many other engagements which people get involved in that make them have more than one sexual partner. The study has found that MSP is highly associated with risky behaviour and other factors mentioned below. This is consistent with the theory, which stipulates health dynamics such as the vulnerability to health risk and the severity of health outcomes are as a result of risky sexual behaviours.

Participants agree with the literature that cultural norms and beliefs have an influence in encouraging MSPs among young people. Many male participants mentioned the Zulu culture with the tradition of *isithembu* (polygamy) whereby a man marries more than one wife, and that this tradition has made it easy for men to openly date or have more than one partner. A participant mentioned that besides this practice being socially accepted for men, the number of partners of men is seen as proof of masculinity and manhood, whereas women are still expected to be submissive and not engage in MSP. This is in line with the study by Mhele (2017) which states that communities are more accepting of MSPs among males than females. They mention how the status of men is elevated because of their promiscuous behaviour while women are demeaned and given negative labels. Within some communities' men with high social statuses are associated with power and it is usually those men that have multiple sexual partnerships as this is regarded as a masculine behaviour (Tibesigwa and Visser, 2015). There are also cultural terms such as *indoda emadodeni* that young men aspire to, which perpetuates the idea that having MSP as a man is desirable and something to be proud of. Some studies show that this is a societal norm that is unchanged (Mah and Maughan-Brown, 2013). The theory developed by Eaton, Flisher and Aarø (2003) emphasizes that culture plays a huge role with regards to this. Many Zulu participants mentioned polygamy as a historical tradition that has been practiced for many years.

Peer pressure is one element that is worthy of attention with regards to multiple sexual partnerships (Mutinta, 2014). According to participants, social media influences peers to live lavish lifestyles to maintain certain standards and conform to group norms. Most participants mentioned that peer pressure has made men and women adopt certain behaviours and to want to conform to certain groups where photographs of luxury goods such as expensive bags and trips are taken to show their fancy lifestyle. Participants acknowledged that their peers' views are important to them. According to some participants, social media also displays a certain standard of how one should look or behave in order to be accepted by peers and others in society. They behave in a manner that they know will be acknowledged and praised for. In line with a study conducted in South Africa, it was found that students fear ridicule, and loss of status and friendship if they change their behaviour (Nshindano and Maharaj, 2008). This is consistent with the findings by Akintola et al. (2011) which found that peer pressure makes young men want to prove their masculinity by being promiscuous, driven by their innate sexual drive. With reference to the theory by Eaton, Flisher and Aarø (2003), a person's behaviour can be influenced by lifestyle interests. In addition, there is a link between interests

and activities or lifestyle would cause individuals to want to engage in something that is against their principles. A participant stated that one can easily be drawn to another person's lifestyle not knowing the requirements to live it. They stated that this lifestyle could be easily sponsored by a wealthier man. Furthermore, the peer pressure theme relates to personal factors under the theory.

Most male participants mentioned their awareness of the risks involved in having multiple sexual partnerships, however, that did not stop them from engaging in risky activities. Some participants revealed their fear of contracting HIV/AIDS including STIs from multiple sexual partnerships. One participant mentioned that there is a higher risk among young women that date older men because those men are usually married or in stable relationships. Dating someone older raises a young woman's chance of contracting HIV or STIs because they are usually more experienced. The participant further explains that the commonness of transactional relationships among girls that started being sexually active at a younger age and there is a lack of negotiation of condom use among them. This is in line with a study by Pettifor et al. (2005) which states that women that engaged in sexual activities at an early age have a higher chance of getting HIV/AIDS than those that started at a later stage in their life.

Studies by Manhart et al. (2002), Mhele (2017), Mutinta (2014) and Nshindano and Maharaj (2008) reveal that lack of condom use has heightened the risk of HIV among the youth not only because of their engagement in risky sexual behaviour, but also the population at large. According to studies conducted in South Africa, it was found that young men are most likely to report MSP and having more sexual partners than women (Mane and Aggleton, 2001; Meyer-Weitz et al., 2003; Shisana et al., 2009). The findings align with Jewkes et al. (2012) who suggests that HIV/AIDS is fuelled by relationships between young women and older men. This is due to the vulnerability of young women getting involved in sexual relationships in exchange for material gains and money which heightens their risk of contracting the virus.

Participants mentioned coming from disadvantaged backgrounds which makes it is easy to accept any financial assistance to help them deal with their financial hardships. Women engage in transactional relationships or sexual activities for financial gains. According to Kenyon et al. (2010) poverty and inequality are drivers of transactional sex. According to Steffenson et al. (2011) these relationships usually occur concurrently with other relationships that are not satisfying. It could be that the first boyfriend did not have money or did not satisfy them sexually. Participants mentioned that men have to offer money to young

women in order for them to agree to the relationship and this is how older men begin to control younger women.

Some participants mentioned that they would do anything for older men in exchange for money. This shows how women or men engage themselves in risky sexual behaviours to attain money and sometimes luxuries which put them at risk of getting sexually transmitted diseases.

Participants revealed that dissatisfaction within a relationship happens when an individual is dissatisfied with a current partner and looks for a different partner to fill that void. Being dissatisfied does not mean there is love lost for their partner, but sexually it is no longer exciting. Dissatisfaction is not only sexual but financial and emotional too. Some participants mentioned that the further the partner lives, the greater is the temptation to cheat on them because of loneliness and lack of trust. In line with this, the study by Cox et al. (2014) found that dissatisfaction in a relationship leads to engagement in MSPs within a stable relationship. Most people that cheat are in relationships where they complain about the lack of communication. Some cope by using masturbation to enhance their sexual pleasure which for some prevents them from going out and engaging in risky behaviour. The theory suggests that interpersonal factors have a direct link with dissatisfaction in a relationship as this deals with the emotions of individuals.

This study found that alcohol and substance abuse are a result of reckless behaviour. Participants expressed that when invited for drinks with men, there is usually an expectation to repay the favour of free alcohol in a sexual manner. Further, they end up engaging in MSPs because of the alcohol consumed and this sometimes results in unplanned pregnancies and/or infections. Consistent with the findings by Kalichman et al. (2007) and Mlambo, Peltzer and Chiranda (2016) there is a link between risky sexual behaviours and alcohol use whereby consumption elevates certain personalities and allows for unusual behaviours to occur. Studies further show that women become more vulnerable when they have consumed alcohol because of their body mass, although men drink more (Carey et al., 2016).

The findings show that machismo is strongly linked to multiple sexual partnerships as men attach gender roles to it. They believe that they are superior, and society has normalised men dating more than one women. Some participants mentioned that being in a MSP can lead to intimate partner violence. In line with the study by MacPhern et al. (2012), power inequalities and gender roles play a huge role in increasing violence, vulnerability and sexual coercion.

Intimate partner violence is a major contributor to new infections as men demonstrate their masculinity over women by having more sexual partners. Consistent with a study in South Africa, it was found that men in MSP had high levels of intimate partner violence perpetrated against females, therefore it is more likely for those females to have increased risks of contracting diseases (Townsend et al., 2011). Some participants mentioned that they get into MSP because of revenge. They have been hurt by a partner and they want to engage in MSP to suppress their negative feelings. Others engaged in MSP so that if one partner decided to leave the relationship they would still have another. Some partners have possessive and aggressive traits and become violent towards their partners because they are insecure and do not want their partners to socialise with others.

5.3 Recommendations

The study recommends that students engage in more recreational activities to reduce their risky sexual behaviours. These activities could be participating in extracurricular activities such as sports or arts and drama after school or on weekends. This could keep students occupied with activities that will be more physically and mentally beneficial for them. Development outcomes of students will be improved and they could have a positive impact on their community. In addition, students would be able to recognize the choices and actions they make, and therefore have a better judgement on what is right from wrong. Knowledge and skills gained would be change their attitudes in behaviour and this would result in better actions. Female students should also learn to be independent and not depend on men. They should work hard for themselves, find jobs and keep themselves busy. If they are unable to manage working while studying they should excel in school so they may apply for bursaries that will ease the financial burden

More information should be disseminated on television, social media, radio stations, and most importantly in lectures on risky sexual behaviour and HIV/AIDs. Through these mediums of communication, more information is accessible and will allow knowledge to spread more widely and bring greater awareness to the population. The more the information travels, the more impact it will have on people's lives and the youth. Pamphlets in hospitals and clinics should be readily available by the doors so that students can get them without having to walk inside. Many health facilities are known to have nurses that shout when

students come for help with sex related issues so having necessary information at the doors will assist in providing knowledge to students that look for it.

Parents or family guardians should instil values and principles. It is important that family have a positive influence on children so that they know whom to look up to. This can occur in the way that they carry themselves around children and the advice and knowledge that they pass on. It is also important that they talk about how women carry themselves around men and how men should treat women. Praise and encouragement when someone has done right or has listened to the rules of the house helps uplift the child. They feel encouraged to carry on doing good because their efforts and good work are being acknowledged. This means that they will not behave promiscuously and stick to one partner if they have started dating or delay being in a relationship for as long as they can.

The study recommends that parents be open with their children to allow for less secrecy in the family when they start being sexually active. Black families usually never communicate about sex-related topics, however, the negative consequences of sex are communicated when a child falls pregnant, which is when they usually force them to get birth control to prevent it from happening again. Parents sharing their experiences and actually showing the children love at home will help children avoid finding comfort in partners or look for love outside of home. It would also break generational traditions of not communicating with children about sex. Since schools already provide some knowledge about sex and behavioural patterns, schools should add programmes that improve communication that occurs within a family about sexual risks and sexuality as that would be working directly with parents and their children (Miller and Vandenhoudt, 2007). Communication between the parent and child can reduce the child's sexual risk if they are more comfortable discussing sex-related topics.

5.4 Conclusion

This study aimed to add insights on perceptions and the experiences of MSPs in the hope of gaining contextual insights into the topic. It looked at different literature on why students engage in MSPs which showed that behavioural change is necessary and awareness is crucial. From this study it is evident that there are many factors such as money, power, desire for material goods and luxury, peer pressure, alcohol, and poverty that contribute to the rise in multiple sexual partnerships. The study showed that some women are dependent on men, therefore they are submissive to them and it is culturally acceptable. The findings show that

machismo can strongly be linked to multiple sexual partnerships as men attach gender roles to it, normalising the ideology of dating more than one woman to prove their manhood. While male participants in this study were aware of the risks involved in having multiple sexual partners, they continued to engage in such risky behaviours as a result of peer pressure. However, they also expressed fear of contracting HIV including STIs, which they believed that some of their female partners date older men who do not negotiate condom use, especially when sex is transactional. Transactional relationships meant that negotiating condom use was difficult and this increased the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases. For that reason, this study recommends that students engage in more recreational activities, attain satisfactory performance in school to be able to access bursaries, make use of available disseminated information, and empower themselves by becoming independent.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



03 September 2019

Ms Nqobile Makhanya (213518592)
School of Built Environment & Development Studies
Howard College Campus

Dear Ms Makhanya,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00000038/2019

Project title: Multiple Partnerships among Young, College Students in Durban: Perspectives and Experiences

Approval Notification – Full Committee Reviewed Protocol

This letter serves to notify you that your response received on 27 August 2019 to queries raised on 26 August 2019 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has 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.

This approval is valid for one year from 03 September 2019.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Rosemary Sibanda

/ms

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

APPENDIX TWO: GATEKEEPERS LETTER



Ms Nqobile Makhanya (SN 213518592)
School of Built Environment and Development Studies
College of Humanities
Howard College Campus
UKZN
Email: 213518592@stu.ukzn.ac.za

Dear Ms Makhanya

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) towards your postgraduate studies, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"Multiple Partnerships among Young, College Students in Durban: Perspectives and Experiences."

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by conducting interviews with students in the College of Humanities on Howard College campus.

Please ensure that the following appears on your notice/questionnaire:

- Ethical clearance number;
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using 'Microsoft Outlook' address book. Identity numbers and email addresses of individuals are not a matter of public record and are protected according to Section 14 of the South African Constitution, as well as the Protection of Public Information Act. For the release of such information over to yourself for research purposes, the University of KwaZulu-Natal will need express consent from the relevant data subjects. Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely



REGISTRAR (ACTING)

Office of the Registrar

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 8005/2206 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 7824/2204 Email: registrar@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

APPENDIX THREE: INFORMED CONSENT

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

For research with human participants

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date: -----

Greetings,

My name is Nqobile Makhanya from the University of KwaZulu-Natal in the School of Built Environment and Development Studies. I am under the College of Humanities at Howard College campus. My proposed qualification is Masters in Population Studies. My contact details are 079 422 9823 and email address is 213518592@stu.ukzn.ac.za or nqobilendlanya@gmail.com. The name of my supervisor is Professor Pranitha Maharaj and her contact details are 031 260 2243 and her email address is maharaj@ukzn.ac.za.

You are kindly being invited to consider participating in a study that involves the *Multiple Partnerships among Young College Students in Durban, South Africa: Perspectives and Experiences*. The aim and purpose of this research is to provide some insights into student's perspectives and experiences of having multiple sexual partnerships. The study is expected to interview 10 males and 10 females in Howard College campus residents.

It will involve the following procedures:

Participants will be expected to answer all interview questions asked about their reasons of having multiple sexual partnerships. The duration of your participation if you choose to enrol and remain in the study is expected to be an hour or less. During the conduction of the interview, I will be taking down notes and a voice recorder will be used to capture all

information correctly. During the interview please make sure that you are vocal and clear so all necessary information is captured.

The study may involve the following risks and/or discomforts:

Discomfort may occur when having to explain experiences or reasons of having multiple sexual partnerships. Assurance of confidentiality and anonymity may bring comfort as only the researcher and supervisor will have access to these records. We hope that the study will create the benefits by participants not experiencing any costs except their time taken to participate in the study.

Confidentiality and sharing of results:

Responses of the participants will be kept confidential, only the researcher and academic supervisor will have access to it for academic purposes. The recordings and notes captured during the interview sessions, including this consent form will be kept in the cabinet of the supervisor's office for safety reasons for 5 years. After 5 years, it will then be deleted and destroyed so that no one has access to it. I will make sure that any information that will be kept in the final report will not identify you as the respondent, you will be kept anonymous. Identity protection is crucial for this study.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number HSSREC/00000038/2019).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher via email at 213518592@stu.ukzn.ac.za or nqobilendlanya@gmail.com or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

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

CONSENT

I have been informed about the study of Multiple Partnerships among Young, College Students in Durban: Perspectives and Experiences by Nqobile Makhanya (student number: 213518592).

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study which involves answering questions that requires me to draw on the reasons for multiple sexual partnerships among students.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher at (cell: 0794229823 or email: 213518592@stu.ukzn.ac.za or nqobilendlanya@gmail.com).

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

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

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

Date

Signature of Translator
(Where applicable)

Date

APPENDIX FOUR: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Reasons for multiple sexual partnerships among male and female students at University of KwaZulu Natal, Durban.

Demographic profile

- How old are you?
- What is your race?
- What is your sex?
- What is your marital status?
- Are you employed? If yes, elaborate
- What is your main source of income?

Reasons for multiple sexual partnerships

- What is your understanding of multiple sexual partnerships? (personal views)
- What types of sexual partners do young university students have? Concurrent? Serial?
- What are the reasons to having multiple sexual partnerships among university students? Sexual dissatisfaction? Heart breaks? Substance abuse? Money?
- How does the family structure influence the decision of a male or female student having multiple sexual partners?
- How do cultural and social norms contribute to the decision of having multiple sexual partners?
- How does the "blesser-blessee" phenomenon perpetuate multiple sexual partnerships? Why?
- What are your perceptions on consequences of a male and female student with multiple sexual partnerships? Positive? Negative?
- What are risks associated with having multiple sexual partners?
- What are the barriers to changing the behaviour of having multiple sexual partners?

- What are the factors that promote and inhibit multiple sexual partnerships?
- How do students define "faithfulness" and partner "partner reduction"?
- Do you think it is difficult for a young person to be faithful to one person? Why?
- Do the youth tolerate unfaithful partners? Why?
- What do you think can be done to address this behaviour?